



The **TRunnion**

Communicating with Lea Valley Group and the world

EXTRA supplement



202110 OCTOBER

2,000 miles in 48 hours !





Now it's the story of Katy's Kids
...told by Mike Aldridge.



Katy did RBR (the final episode)

What Katy did this time is the final episode in her exploits and it is pleasing to report that she completed the Club Triumph, Round Britain Reliability Run, without missing a beat, over the weekend of 1st-3rd October 2021. Read on why this is an absolute Triumph of the British motor industry from the 1970's.

When Phil Sanford and Mike Aldridge started talking at the end of 2019 about entering the RBRR, it quickly became apparent that the confines of a TR5 cockpit was not for them, at least on a 48 hour drive around Britain. That said, LVG member (& Club Triumph Chairman) Tim Hunt completed his 21st RBRR this year, all in his TR4A. Some feat when you consider it is run every 2 years (Tim has started 23 times with just 2 retirements).

The previous episodes of "What Katy Did" gave readers the build up to RBRR and at 6pm on Friday 1st October she set off at breakneck speed with a 3rd occupant of Mark Sanford (one of Phil's sons), up the A1. Thankfully, the start point at Knebworth was close enough to the A1 to prevent Katy and the 112 other Triumph starters, from getting caught up in any rush hour traffic.

The Covid pandemic had already delayed the event from 2020, so when fuel supplies started to become hard to find at petrol stations, it seemed like a perfect storm, trying to stop the enigmatic entrants from starting.



113 Triumphs queuing up at the start and Katy on her way out of Knebworth Park

It was great to have so many LVG members see us off (& also welcome us back) with Jon Evans gifting a toilet roll just in case we got caught short 😊. 3000rpm in a Dolomite Sprint, equates to around 75mph (indicated) and therefore you can work out when Katy had to pull over for the occupants first comfort break. The odometer showed 100 miles of the expected 2000, which would mean 20 stops over the weekend and if all were as unscheduled as this first interlude, Katy would be fed up of waiting outside the public conveniences for her occupants by the end, especially as the first was a rather hurried screech to a halt in the middle of nowhere (still on the A1].

9.08pm and we arrived at the first check point after 148 miles, at Weatherby services to find the car park full of RBRR entrants, we checked in and had our log book signed and then we were off again. Poor Katy only had a 10min rest before 3000rpm was back on the rev counter. It was about now that we all realised the magnitude of what we were trying to achieve. 2000 miles in 48 hours!!!



Weatherby Services car park on a busy Friday evening

11.54pm sees Katy pulling into a lay-by at Carter Bar where she left England and entered Scotland. Club Triumph were trialing an electronic app, so this was an electronic registration and Katy kept running, before we headed off 2 minutes later, towards Kinross Services. 2.05am Saturday morning and after 390 miles we arrive at Kinross Services. So far only Phil and Mike had been driving, so Mark took over to take us up to Skiach Services where we arrived at 4.40am. We are now about 25% of the way at 527 miles and it is still dark.

Being in Scotland, we are regularly in pitch black areas (other than for Katy's Halogen headlights, that have been on for around 11 hours at this stage). Sitting in a warm Dolomite cockpit belays the thoughts that it would be a cold dark exercise to fix any issues and so we are most grateful for Katy's reliability. One would think that with 113 Triumphs taking part that you would always be in sight of at least one other car. This was not the case, although you did sometime find you were in partnership with one or two others. The standard of all cars driving was generally good, with most looking to drive with gusto when appropriate, however we did find some a little slow at times, so overtaking was necessary. We did see one maniac who had a very noisy exhaust (and I mean noisy), overtaking with little regard to what most people would call sensible, on a public road.

7.10am and the first milestone was achieved. We had been on the road now for 13 hours, covered 631 miles and been stationary for 30 minutes at the most. Learnt to never miss the opportunity for a comfort break, even if you didn't think you wanted one and all had a drive and a period to rest in the back. Sunrise was officially 7.17am but from around 6.30am we had seen the darkness start to subside and we will always remember that sunrise as we approached our milestone of John O'Groats.

The wind was blowing and the roads were dry and we got the feeling that we were about to go into some fun driving out in the wilds.....we sure were..... but first, Breakfast!!!



The RBRR entry fee of £130pp included breakfast at John O'Groats & Lands End, other than that it was everyone for themselves, catching something from a service station or eating and drinking the energy food we had stocked up with before we left.

It is only when you get into something like this, that you realise how we all take eating very much for granted. Most Triumph drivers can afford a healthy diet (that's not to say they don't also eat junk food), but what we eat usually has variety and taste. In just 13 hours of eating cereal bars and sweets we were really looking forward to our full English (this should probably be Scottish, but you know what is meant). The Seaview hotel at JoG did a sterling job getting 250+ people fed and watered without delay and before we knew it, we were back in Katy and heading around the Northern part of the North Coast 500.



Now an admission. We all know JoG is a pivotal destination, so usually you take lots of photos to record the feat, but we were such a well oiled and focused team that the best we got were a few pics of the Seaview hotel and didn't even go the last few yards to the iconic signpost. Doh, what numpties. Well we know for next time.

Mike was now at the wheel, so we knew we would get a real theme park ride for a few hours. Our destination for the next check point was the Falls of Shin, to get there, the route followed single track roads that included part of the North Coast 500

The scenery in this part of Scotland is stunning. Phil thought it "Bleak", but he thought many uninhabited parts of the route were bleak. Looking out of Katy's nice warm cockpit was indeed stunning, if we had been outside looking in, trying to fix a mechanical problem, I bet we would all have agreed it was bleak, especially as the rain started falling towards the end of this stage. 10.51am saw us arrive at FoS and we had a compulsory 90minute break before Mark took over driving again.



Tim Hunt arriving at Falls of Shin



Falls of Shin car park

The Perfect Storm weekend was not just due to Covid and fuel shortages, but also a Weather Low was approaching on high winds from the West. At 15.17 Saturday afternoon, practically the whole of Britain was enveloped in rain (see below). Thankfully we had headed North when the rain was in the West and as we came South the rain was moving Eastwards. This meant that although we did have heavy rain at times, it was not constant. Katy's wipers coped admirably and all drivers managed to miss some very large puddles. At least it wasn't snowing!!!



Saturday afternoon was a bit of a slog; we revisited Skiach services to fuel up and later on we had a second unscheduled comfort stop near Glencoe. Phil, once again made an emergency stop in a lay-by (can you see a theme starting??). The next main checkpoint was Gartcosh Social Club, which is in the middle of a housing estate on the outskirts of Glasgow. We arrived at 6.05pm and it resembled a visit to Phoenix nights. It would not have been out of place to see Max & Paddy on the door or see Brian Potter whizzing around in his wheelchair. The Social Club was a vibrant place and is apparently the centre of the local community, originally being established by the local rolling mill, which had long since closed.

We returned to England at 7.30pm and headed for Tebay services. Anyone who has visited, will know that this service station is not your typical site. We all had a hot meal from the very nice restaurant and as we were ahead of schedule took our time before leaving at 9.30pm. We had now done 1076 miles and we were well over halfway, so it was all downhill from here. At 11.30pm we fuelled up again at Gledrid Services and received a couple of bags of sweets, courtesy of the Marshalls at the checkpoint, after that the fun started!!!!

The opinion of why this section was our worst piece of navigation, was that we were all getting tired and the ability to correlate a roadbook to a map with assistance from Mr Google Sat Nav was sadly lacking. Within a couple of minutes of leaving Gledrid we were going native and taking our own route (not deliberately) and the resting team member had to delay his nap, as it was all hands to the pump to stop going off into the darkness completely the wrong way. How difficult can it be to find the A483 and go via Llandrindod Wells and Abergavenny? In the pitch black of 1am on a Sunday morning it's chuffin hard. When the resting member woke, he was greeted with the sight of a rather slow TR7 holding us up, but worse than that, his teammates had sunk into the trap of following a car that clearly didn't have a clue where they were going. We were now in Llandrindod Wells, but circled the town twice where the local Fire Brigade were out in force attending to a building well on fire. If we had an active dashboard camera we could sell the footage to Google as we charted every road in the town!!

With all three sleepy team members now attending to the problem, we took the opportunity to overtake the TR7 (it's driver came to a rapid standstill at a gate that they didn't know how to go around.....we did). Our target was Monmouth Services and we eventually pulled in at 2.35am. That was a 3 hour section where it is debatable if any of us knew where we were at any time.

We were now returning to England and utilising the M5 to get to our next checkpoint at Oakhampton. From there it was our penultimate milestone of Lands End. We pulled in at 7.52am and all 3 of us were looking forward to our second full English (it was English this time). Unlike JoG, we remembered to get a photo of the LE signpost. Our very own Wayne Scott was wandering about when we were looking for a cameraman, so he was asked and he obliged. Clearly we were all tired at this point, as Wayne took a selection of pics of the 3 of us against a post without any signs on it and the actual sign to the side of us (see below). Thankfully the error was spotted and we did get the shot we wanted. We all had a good laugh at our own expense.



Spot the real post



Here it is - it was a bit cool & windy too



Lands End was another imposed break and we left at 8.50am and starting to believe we might just do it and get all the way round. Katy was still running well, we found she had used a bit of water, so topped her up, but could not see where it had gone. We had been pushing her hard for over 36 hours, so she had every right to use a bit of water (she was probably just a bit thirsty). We headed for Bude Castle and arrived after another 2 hours and received free tea & coffee from the marshals.



Katy and Tim Hunt arriving at Bude Castle

The closer we got to the finish, the less tired we seemed to feel. The next section was across Dartmoor to Badgers Holt, arriving at 1.35pm and again we bumped into Wayne. He was taking part in his 7th or 8th event and we had a discussion around Tim Hunt's record number of entries. We calculated that Wayne would need to do the next 15 to catch Tim and at every 2 years it would take 30 years!!! Puts Tims exploits into perspective – he is awesome.

We now headed up the A303 past Stonehenge to the Haynes Motor Museum. This is a new facility and although we didn't have a chance to look around, it is somewhere that we would all find interesting. We left at 3.25pm with trepidation (that's not a 4th team member 😊) as we now had the M3 and M25 to encounter on a busy Sunday afternoon. We need not have worried, it was busy, but the traffic was flowing well and we saw more Triumphs on this section than we had seen since heading up the A1 at the start (other than at the various check points).

Phil had led us out of Knebworth Park on Friday, so we decided he should drive us in at the end. Club Triumph were trialing Rallyapp Live, an app that tracks progress. Amazingly we were electronically checked out at 6.09pm Friday and clocked back in at 6.09pm Sunday – a total of exactly 48 hours.

This was an unusual RBRR for many reasons, but it took place despite many obstacles. 176 Teams entered the event, 113 started, 14 retired (one of which had a crash – all occupants were fine) and 99 finished.

So, that was “What Katy Did” and if you have read this far, you will appreciate what a Triumph the Motor Industry of the 70’s produced. Katy travelled 1959 miles, running practically non stop and not once gave us any concerns. One of her crew was only born just after Katy was made and with a combined Team age of 175 (excluding Katy..... because you never reveal a ladies age 😊), it was also a Triumph of human endurance.

We know our readers will be wondering about fuel consumption. Well, the first thing to say, is that we never once had any issues getting fuel and that was E5 premium stuff. We did put in a splash of E10 to ensure we would have enough to get to a known supply, but didn’t need to. Scotland seemed to be normal and we didn’t see any signs of panic buying (unlike England). Total fuel usage was 271 litres and we spent £370 across 12 visits to top up.

Club Triumph have selected Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) as its chosen charity and Team 81 – Katy’s Kids were bowled over to raise £3,310 from the Team’s chums. A Massive thank you to everyone who donated and if you didn’t get around to supporting us, the Just Giving website will remain open until March next year. That is when those who completed the course attend a Gala Dinner and all the funds raised (£88,265 so far) are handed over to MNDA.

Would we do it again?

Without a doubt. It is one of those things that is infectious, however we all agreed that we would enjoy it more a second time round, as we would know what to expect and make time to savor the experience. That said, it was a brilliant event and we can recommend it as a motoring challenge for anyone.



From left to right, Mark Sanford, Mike Aldridge, Katy & Phil Sanford