

1958

LIEGE-BRESCIA-LIEGE

AND

MICRO MARATHON

The World's only International Rallies
for small-engined cars

2010

★ July 16-25, 2010 ★ September 5-11, 2010 ★

LBL/MM NEWS: FEBRUARY 2010

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The Organising Team for **Micro Marathon & Liège-Brescia-Liège** is led by Malcolm McKay, ClassicRallyPress Ltd, 9 Sycamore Leys, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2RH, England Tel: 0044 (0)7711 901811 www.classicrallypress.co.uk Email: LBLrally@aol.com

We've been quiet for far too long – apologies for the lack of a newsletter since December! Unfortunately rally organisation doesn't always go according to plan and we've been waiting for far-off authorities to send us the permissions that we were promised in December were "imminent" – only to have our plans there dashed as another organiser gazumped us and launched an event that, though 50% more expensive and only half as long (and apparently unknown to the authorities), bears some curious similarities to our closely-guarded plans. We have finally had to give up waiting and concentrate on our core products of LBL and Micro Marathon – so if any of you were waiting for our new event launch, we're sorry but it won't be happening, so get your entries in for LBL and MM instead!

After we ran **Liège-Brescia-Liège 2008**, where over 100 of you enjoyed a stunning 10 days exploring the classic rally routes of the 1950s, we received many plaudits for the event. You loved the spectacular route, you loved the exceptional value for money, you loved our unique new competitive format combining map plotting, navigation, circuit tests and endurance to find an overall winner, you loved the civic receptions and the museum visits, you loved the top quality hotels, you loved the fact that the entry fee covered everything including all lunches and even the maps, so all you had to buy was petrol and beer. And you loved the terrific support we had from Fiat, BMW, Michelin, Akomi and our many other sponsors.



Micro Marathon recce:
Welsh roads are equal
to the best in Europe

It was you, the competitors, who persuaded us that we should go on and organise more events, and spread our wings a little more widely...

Our policy has always been to run events that are new, unique, fun, challenging, educational, impeccably organised and exceptional value for money.

New and Unique: it's hard to get the message across that our events really are different – and they are all one-offs. If you have a car under 1000cc, you **MUST** enter **Liège-Brescia-Liège 2010** now, or you will miss out: you cannot enter in 2011 or 2012 because the event will **NOT** be open to your car! Remember, for 2010 the rally is open to cars with engines between 500cc and 1200cc. In 2011 it will only be open to 1000-1500cc cars and, if it runs in 2012, the capacity bracket will move up again. Grab your chance while you can – it's not simply a case of "Oh, I might have a go at that in a year or two"...

Exceptional Value for Money: is achieved by very tight margins and minimal advertising: many organisers spend fortunes on advertising, all of which has to be recouped from rally entry fees. We also have minimal overheads and have devised a system of competitive rallies that requires less marshals than any other, all of which keeps costs down, and all of those savings are passed on to you. The flip side is that we need **YOUR** help. We need you to spread the word, to tell your friends about our events, to tell fellow club members, to pester your club magazine and website editors if they're not publicising our events and to pass on their email addresses to us so we can put them on the mailing list too.

Liège-Brescia-Liège 2010 Preparations

NOW we need **YOU** to get your entries in!! LBL entries currently stand at under 20 – enough to run a fun event (all had a fabulous time with even lower numbers on Micro Marathon 2009) but plenty of room for more. We know that some are planning to enter late and we look forward to receiving your entries, but it makes our job very difficult if we cannot accurately tell our hotels, circuits, museums and other hosts how many people to expect. **PLEASE** get your entry in now if you can, or let us know that you are definitely going to send it later – it really will help us a lot to know. We have extended the deadline for entries at the rock-bottom rate of £3200 (2 people, 11 nights, all meals etc) until 31 March, after which the entry fee is £3400.

LBL entrant Stephen Lloyd, whose all-original 803cc Morris Minor was in the last newsletter, asked some very sensible questions about the event, the answers to which bear repeating here for all to read. It's equally valid for Micro Marathon:

Documentation and Insurance:

You must carry with you the V5 Registration Document and your insurance certificate (and of course the current tax disc displayed in the windscreen). You must inform your insurance company that you are taking part in the **Liège-Brescia-Liège** rally – and that it is a tour with no timed sections on public roads. They may ask to see the rally regulations, but this should not present any problems, no competitors on our events so far have reported having any problems with this. The only area they might question is cover for the special tests on kart circuits, but as these are carried out with only one car on the track at a time and an average speed not exceeding 45kph, they are unlikely to refuse cover. As stated in the Regulations, it is your obligation to ensure that you are fully insured for the event – some rally organisers ask to see insurance documents at Signing On, but we do not. Insurance is a complex matter and rally organisers are not qualified to say whether a document presented to them constitutes valid insurance (it could, after all, have been cancelled and they have no way of checking) so we do not consider it appropriate for us to check.



Steve Armitage and Peter Wyles have entered this smart Hillman Imp 875 on LBL 2010: just one more Imp-family car is needed for a marque team!



Modifications

We don't make any restrictions, provided modifications are of a type that could have been made when the car was new; if of a later kind (such as a 1098cc engine, which was introduced on the Minor in 1962) they would move you to a later class.

Preparation

The key is to get the car working perfectly, as it would have done when new. The difficulty of course is knowing how good it was when new (for example, years ago a friend proudly showed me his newly-purchased Minor Traveller, and encouraged me to drive it; I'd been brought up and learned to drive in one, which my mother still drives, so was horrified when I came to the first corner and couldn't turn the wheel, the steering was so stiff. My friend had simply



assumed that the steering was heavy because it was an old car, when in fact it should be finger-light on the Minor. When I stripped it, I found no grease in the trunnions at all...).

The two areas that are most likely to make or break your trip are cooling and brakes -

Cooling: Unless there is proof that the radiator has been replaced recently, I would strongly advise getting it recored. Radiators silt up gradually and, while you may still be able to put a hose in one end and see clean water come out the other, the passages inside probably have a nice insulation jacket of lime building up, so that the radiator only gives 50% of its full cooling effect. That may be adequate for driving around the UK, but not the Dolomites in mid-summer! A radiator recore is the single most effective thing you can do to

improve cooling. The ultimate solution is to strip the engine and rod out all the cooling passages in the block and head as well, but that's probably not practical - anyway, it's the radiator that suffers most, as its passages are so small. Personally I avoid electric fans, as in my experience they can fail when you most need them and they restrict the natural airflow through the radiator. The standard mechanical fan worked perfectly well in 1953, so it should work equally well now (just check there are no cracks in the fan blades!). If there is any play in the water pump bearings, replace it - otherwise just keep it greased.

Brakes: You've got very small drums so they need to be working at optimum efficiency. Minor slave cylinders are notorious for sticking, especially the front ones, so strip and clean the brakes and make sure they're all working perfectly. Fit good quality brake shoes/linings; if it's possible to get uprated linings, go for them. When descending mountains, the brakes will probably heat up and start to fade if you drive hard - use engine braking as much as possible to reduce the load on the brakes. You could uprate to the later Minor drums (post-62) or even Marina discs; we'd overlook the later drums (it would have been possible to fit bigger drums from Wolseley 1500 or Riley 1.5 in the 1950s, both of which are even bigger than the later Minor ones) but if you fit discs, we'd have to move you to a later class.

Other areas to consider -

Clutch: obviously a good clutch is vital, so if it's biting at the top of its travel and/or there's very little adjustment left, it would be wise to replace it.

Gearbox and rear axle: drain the fluid and refill (ideally when hot, after a good run). If chunks of metal fall out or they are very noisy, it's time to replace: both will be under extra strain in the mountains.

Wheel bearings: check for play and/or grumbly noises. If in any doubt, replace - front wheel bearings are under great strain in the mountains and worn rears can lead to a halfshaft breakage.

Steering and suspension swivels: check for wear, replace if worn, keep well greased.

Suspension bushes: replace any dodgy bushes (stay with rubber, or if fitting polyurethane, make sure it has the same shore hardness as the originals: harder bushes put excessive strain on other components).

Rear springs: check for excessively worn or cracked rear spring leaves, replace if necessary (good secondhand may be best).

Interior: check under the front seats (and backrests) to make sure the diaphragms/straps are in good condition; if not, replace. It's important to be comfortable! The standard seats should be perfectly adequate, and much more comfortable on an event like this than 'bucket' competition seats.

Engine: much depends on what is known of the history of the engine. If it's low mileage (or low since full rebuild) and has been well maintained, then simple servicing is all that's required. Spares are another entire subject, but obviously make sure you take plugs, points, rotor arms (several, as they are notoriously unreliable), distributor cap and, just in case, a head gasket. If hardened valve seats have not been fitted, you will need plenty of lead replacement additive with you. Check the compressions and make sure all are good and near-equal. If not, check the tappet clearances and if all OK, consider a cylinder head overhaul. If the engine's history is unknown, you need to assess it thoroughly. Is it clean or covered in oil? Is there excessive oil smoke from the breathers? Are there any rumbling or knocking sounds? Does the oil pressure warning light take a long time to go out on starting, or (even worse) flicker at tickover after hard driving? If so, you should consider a bottom end rebuild.

This advice is really to help you avoid the frustration of a failure part-way through the event. The event is not excessively strenuous but normal driving in mountains does put a far greater strain on a car than it experiences in normal UK use. It's amazing what you can get away with - I once did an entire Rallye des Alpes with a totally worn-out engine in my TR2, surviving by careful driving and by keeping it well topped up with Penrite 25W60 oil, which I cannot recommend highly enough for a worn engine (when we ran out on the way home and could only get Esso 20W50, oil pressure dropped from 20-25psi to 10-15...).

Take with you contact details of helpful specialists, make sure they know in advance where you are going and what you are doing with the car and if they're enthused about it, ask if you can have a mobile number in case of emergency parts need in evenings/



weekends – if they're on the ball, they'll realise it's good PR for them to rescue you if you get stuck. Get the club to give you contact details of local members in the areas we're going through, who might be able to help you out if you need parts unexpectedly – it's good to let them know we are coming anyway, as they would probably like to come and cheer you on.

And finally, do make sure you have full European Recovery cover with Repatriation for the car and use of a hire car for you to complete your holiday. Despite the best preparation, unforeseen faults can occur – for the small cost of cover, you can have your car taken safely home (or back to Liège if you trailered it there) while you continue to drive with the rally.

Trailer – yes, you can trailer your car to the start and leave your towcar and trailer at the hotel in Liège for no extra fee.
Ferry/transport – we have negotiated 10% discount on SeaFrance fares which you can access by booking via the links page of the website.

Micro Marathon 2010, Wales, September 5-11



As announced last month, **Micro Marathon 2010** goes to Wales and offers a full circuit of the Principality, taking in the cream of its finest roads, ALL its race circuits and many of its most impressive castles, museums and historic places. Majestic mountains, rolling hills and glorious coastlines abound in Wales – and we guarantee you will see enough to convince you that Wales stands among the finest countries in the world for rallying.

We have just returned from a recce of the first few days of the event and can report that the roads are even better than we remembered, as quiet as the Pyrenees with equally stunning scenery, and the hotels are finer than we'd dared hope. Enjoy the photos that follow but please, if you're going to enter, do so quickly. **WE EXPECT TO CLOSE ENTRIES AT THE END OF MARCH!**



Wales's castles will feature strongly...



...as of course will its mountain passes

The rally is open to pre-war cars up to 1000cc and post-war (of a type built prior to 1976) up to 700cc: this year's event proved that the pre/post-war mix works really well and it would be great to see a clutch of Morgans, Austin Sevens, MG M-types etc joining the bubbles, 2CVs etc in 2010.

We start from the National Microcar Rally at the Three Counties Showground at Malvern, Worcs, with a splendid run through tiny lanes, past castles, ruined abbeys and over the stunning Gospel Pass, to be at Brecon Castle in time for our Welcome Dinner. On Day Two we head north, through the Black Mountains, Powys and border country, to a night at the luxurious Lake



We have this private dining room for the Welcome Dinner at Brecon Castle...



...then we retire to this private bar in the Castle undercroft

Vyrnwy Hotel, in its glorious lakeside location surrounded by unspoilt mountains.

As well as more stunning mountain roads, Day Three sees our first Special Test, at Glan-y-gors kart circuit where we enjoy an 1100m twisty complex that'll make you dizzy. We head to the north coast, where we stay at the luxurious new Quay Hotel & Spa in a stunning waterside location between the mediaeval walled city of Conwy and the Victorian Spa resort of Llandudno.

Wednesday sees us head out to the island of Anglesey, where we link up with the Tour Britannia rally at Anglesey's Trac Mon circuit, returning to the mainland for a good look at Wales' highest mountain, Mount Snowdon, and another night in a fine modern waterside hotel: the Premier Inn at Caernarfon. On Day Five, we head south over the Cambrian mountains, taking in tiny



Tiny mountain roads are perfect for microcars...



...and Wales's myriad lakes add beauty to the dramatic mountain scenery

coastal roads with glorious views as we head down to the highly regarded Aberystwyth Park Hotel. On Friday we reach the southern coastline and visit the Pendine Land Speed Record museum on the evocative Pendine Sands, before heading to Wales' best known racetrack, Pembrey, for more fun tests followed by a night's rest at the Ivy Bush Royal Hotel in Carmarthen.

Our final day kicks off with a test at the 1050m Llandow kart circuit, before we head up into the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons, dropping back to the coast for a spectacular finish in Cardiff, hopefully in front of cheering crowds at the fashionable Mermaid Quay at Cardiff Bay - followed by a night in Wales's finest hotel, St David's, which combines award-winning architecture with panoramic sea views and pampering luxury: just what you need after a week in a microcar!

The event will run to our popular navigation/competition/circuit tests/museums/visits formula and you get all this for just £2300 (rising to £2500 at 31 March) for two people sharing a room, including ALL meals from dinner on September 5 to breakfast on Sept 12, plus maps, mechanical back-up and so much more: email or call us for Regulations and Entry Forms.



Relax in luxury at Lake Vyrnwy Hotel...



...where we enjoy this astonishing view at breakfast

SUBSCRIBER ADVERTS ARE FREE...

CO-DRIVER NEEDED FOR LBL 2010! Experienced rallyist Bryan Halladay has a competitive Simca 1000 lined up, but needs a co-driver to share costs: call him on 01926 499629.

STOLEN: We are very sad to report that would-be LBL2010 entrant Dr Giuseppe Spoto returned to London from spending New Year with his family to find his trusty 1964 Mini **STOLEN**. Please keep an eye out for this car, which disappeared from Camberwell Grove, London SE5. It is in excellent condition with satin beige interior, several grille badges and a clip-on mirror on the offside. Chassis no is A-2257/620817-M, engine 8AM-U-H/790121, registration BTP 827B. Any leads please to giuseppe.spoto@ntlworld.com or 07881 622032. Giuseppe is devastated and so are we, especially as he was hoping to bring the great Willy Cave as his navigator...



CO-DRIVER NEEDED FOR MICRO MARATHON! Veteran LBL/MM competitor John Ducker needs a co-driver for his well-travelled Heinkel 200: contact him on johnducker@tiscali.co.uk.

LBL/MICRO MARATHON-ELIGIBLE TRABANT P601 FOR SALE: Kevin and Loree have decided to go 4-stroke for LBL, so their trusty Trabi that ran so well round the Pyrenees and Spain is for sale! Must be the finest Trabi Combi in the UK, 1977 model with the much prettier curvy bumpers, mechanically sorted, £2000. Located Bucks/Oxon borders. To view, contact the rally office



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