

Alpine Classic Rally - 14th - 15th October

Or "Car 49 Where Are You?"

The Alpine Classic Rally is an annual event organised by the Classic Rally Club. This year five DSOA members tried their hand at rallying. The teams were Alan A (driver), Michael H. (navigator), Steve N. (driver), Claude M. (navigator), André B. (driver), with friend Charlie H. (navigator).

The Classic Rally Club committee really knows how to organise such events. The categories were Masters, Apprentices and Tour, we all entered the Apprentices section. Detailed instructions on navigation techniques were mailed to participants and a navigational night was held in late September. This involved the Clerk of Course giving a detailed lesson with examples being projected on a screen with the navigators doing practical written exercises.

The Saturday meeting point was at Lithgow so Alan, Michael & I bunked down at Claude's on Friday night, a few wines were enjoyed over a BBQ & last minute checking of navigation techniques saw an enjoyable, but subdued evening, in anticipation of the next two days. André and Charlie arrived bright and early on Saturday and we left for the meeting point at 6.30am.

The Saturday morning saw over 80 cars (a record field) marshalling at the Lithgow Public School for a BBQ breakfast before being flagged off at intervals from 9.00am. There to meet us at the start was Alan C. who had volunteered as a marshal on the first day (this would be the first and last time that Claude and I saw him).

The first day saw us driving over some beautiful back roads around Lithgow on our way to the overnight stop at Orange. The art of navigation is not an easy one to master, as my navigator soon found out. We spent most of the first day being totally confused going round in circles. We didn't make the lunch stop because we couldn't find it but I believe that it was great fun with a motorkhana organised.

We certainly got our monies worth as we saw more country than any other competitor. It didn't help that the navigator is blind and the driver is deaf. At some stages it was more like "Who is on first?". By late afternoon the decision was made to cut our losses and head to the motel in Orange (we knew where that was - yes we were the first car to arrive). It wasn't soon after we checked in, cracked open the first liquid refreshment and spread out the cheeses and prosciutto when I made the comment that Alan would be suffering withdrawal symptoms and, sure enough, a few moments later he and Michael roared into the carpark, frustrated and thirsty. Our first day of the rally and Datsuns were first and second (well it sounds better that way - doesn't it?).

André and Charlie made the motel later in the afternoon after a successful day and by late afternoon all the cars had checked in. The competitors were accommodated in three different motels, again great organising. A dinner at the Orange City Bowling Club was most appreciated that evening which gave all a chance to mingle and review the day's drive. It wasn't a late night as it was an early start the next morning. Claude and I did manage to sing rally songs until the wee hours of the morning. Such great hits as "Little Deuce Coupe", "Little GTO", "Mustang Sally" and of course the all time favourite "Am I Heading in the Right Direction?".

Next morning (slightly bleary eyed for some) the cars were flagged off at intervals from the Orange Civic Centre Public Car Park on the winding route back to Lithgow. Day two was more successful for car 49. We found the lunch stop and traversed the majority of the mapped route. The roads were fantastic and although there was a great amount of concentration involved both in driving and mainly navigating we did get the chance to appreciate our beautiful albeit dry countryside.

After a winding journey we all finished (car 49 was not last - well done Claude) at a Lithgow pub. We were blessed with great weather and all three Dattos performed flawlessly.

This was the firstly rally, at this level, I have participated in and both Claude and I had a wow of a time. The important thing to remember is that you are there to have fun, keep a good sense of humour and learn from your mistakes. Learning what you did wrong and adjusting at the next check point is what navigating is all about.

Car 49 was definitely an apprentice but the organisers and field marshals treated us kindly and with respect, you weren't made to feel silly. By the end of the weekend our heads were spinning with VRC's, Majors, TPC, UPC, MPMS (not for you ladies) DAFUCUT etc., etc., etc. The organisation was fantastic and even though car 49 didn't score very well we will be back in 2007 to see if we learnt anything in 2006.

We would recommend that every member should try a rally at least once, but make sure you try one that has been organised by the Classic Rally Club.

Alpine Classic Rally - contd.



The navigators - last minute checking



Two different Nissans



Modern weapon



Classics at the start in Lithgow



First in at Orange



Second in



Serious stuff



Ready to rumble on Sunday

Alpine Classic Rally - contd.



SJN & Claude



André & Charlie



AA zooming along a winding bit



Alan & Michael



ABT at the motorkhana



SJN kicking up some dust



AA - A passing manoeuvre



Hey Charlie which way now?