

PAST EVENTS – 2014

TOC Annual Rally – 15th/16th June

It is the love and the people who make our club: great fellowship, interesting conversation, good food, beautiful scenery and there is more; of course our cars, but that is just transportation.

Barry and Gloria Annells were very brave to take on the task of organising this event. This was the year Barry could pay a tribute to his father Fred Annells who contributed so much to our club, who sadly passed away only two weeks before the Rally. For me this Rally was a real adventure as till 3pm on Friday I was still waiting for John Gillard to deliver my Big 15 which I had never driven having purchased it from John a year ago. It was a wonderful sight to see my gleaming, silver Big 15 pull up in front of me in the glorious sunshine.

At the services near Stansted airport on Sunday it suddenly dawned on me that the weekend of the TOC rally 2014 has come to an end; what an amazing weekend. The cars, the people, the various activities. With hindsight you cannot plan for such a weekend, it just happens. Bev and Cleve had volunteered me or the mammoth task of writing this article on the annual task, it can't be that difficult. Then I realised that I have a limited amount of space to fit so much; with photos and stories, there were so many people and so many events. All in all there was so much going on, Gloria and Barry Annells had arranged an amazing weekend for us which was made even more amazing by the fantastic weather we had for the whole weekend. All the cars parked with the backdrop of Burghley house was a beautiful sight.

Most people arrived in good time on Friday and having checked into our rooms we ventured out on the patio for drinks and a very substantial barbecue. Many members knew each other. However as Anna and I are fairly new to the club it was a good opportunity to get acquainted with members who live further away from us.

We were all looking forward to our weekend, as the forecast was for good weather. Barry Annells made sure he spoke to everyone and handed out the programme for the weekend.

Saturday was a glorious sunny morning and we had a chance to look around the other cars in the car park. My car needed a little persuasion to get started with assistance from Graham Bradley and Eric Pennington with a starting handle. I felt reassured that in the present company I had nothing to worry about as we were surrounded by people who all had similar experiences and knew what to do, in fact later that afternoon Peter Simper, having seen me messing about with the car all day, just took the starter motor off the car and sorted the electrical problem and I have not had any problems since. He made the whole task look so simple, but it was a big job and I really appreciated his help. That is how we help each other at TOC. Our route on Saturday took us to the Nene Valley Steam Railway. On the way there we stopped at a lovely pub for lunch called The Falcon Inn in Forthinghay. The village was very quaint with a lovely old Church next to the Nene River. We took a walk to the river and realised that the church was all prepared for a wedding and we got to stand by the gate to welcome the bride in her classic car. She was blessed with a lovely day for her wedding. It was a good photo opportunity for all of us to take pictures of our cars in picturesque surroundings with stone cottages and mature trees.

We headed for Nene Valley Railway station for our ride on the steam train. The station had a great shop and an extensive collection of old carriages and engines. The place was set up like a museum with period buildings and signage. We were able to take some great photos at the station and on the trip, specially the monorail prototype which was the first of its kind.

Saturday evening was our Gala Dinner. Barry was helped by his son Peter to set up the video show and we had a few short and entertaining speeches. It was good to have dinner with friends for Barry and Gloria's wedding anniversary. We all talked about the trip to Burghley House.

Jonathan Hopper was keen to know about the concours competition, not knowing that he may win a prize himself for his 7C.

At Burghley House on Sunday we were guided to our designated parking spaces in a particular formation which separated different models of the Tractions. Bernie Shaw's Citroën Cloverleaf was very distinctive in yellow.

We had a walk around the House and had lunch in the conservatory restaurant. The walk through the surprise water gardens was amazing. To follow are the results of the Concours. The announcements were made by Paul de Felice and Cleve handed out the prizes. So it was the people and memorable moments that made the weekend such a success. Can't wait for next year's TOC rally

Dino Khan



CTAB Rally 11th – 14th July 2014

As a first time participant it has fallen to me to write the report for the 2014 Rally organised by the Club Traction Avant de Bretagne.

It all started for Mary and myself at the 2013 AGM dinner when it was mentioned by those on our table that the Brittany Rally was well worth going on. I was already aware of it from Ian Harvey's article in a recent FP. Mary had been a little bit hesitant in agreeing to attend the AGM weekend so I wasn't sure

how she would take to several days with the cars and a bunch of people she didn't know, let alone a crowd of French as well!

By good fortune the Rally start was planned for not far from St Malo meaning that the transition mileage would be small. We live in Walkern, Hertfordshire and our village is going to twin with the French town of Lanvallay some 20 miles inland from St Malo. We had hosted a couple when they came over to the Walkern fair and also (as I have written previously in FP) a chap who used to own a Traction himself. The possibility of visiting our friends, together with having had a glass of wine had us agreeing that we would give it a go.

As July approached we contacted Martin Nicholson to confirm our interest. The final plans were only issued together with an entry form a couple of weeks before the event. The ferry was booked, and preparations made, including fitting a new carburettor as the old one leaked a bit.

I had also had the petrol tank refurbished as that also leaked via a crack where the breather pipe meets the filler neck. Mary doesn't like the smell of petrol so these were essential items. We set off for Portsmouth on Wednesday 9th July and had a pleasant overnight crossing to St Malo whereupon we visited our friends for lunch in Lanvallay and then carried on to our hotel at Quintin where the Rally was due to start the following morning. Our Traction had performed perfectly ok other than a little hesitation on warm starting. There we met Bernie and Pearl plus Martin and Vicki who were staying there – others stayed in local hotels or camped. At dinner we also met Tim Walker and Philippe and Sue Allison neither of whom we knew but whom we were to see a lot of in the next couple of days.

Thursday morning dawned a little dull and after a leisurely breakfast the idea was to drive the few hundred yards to the lakeside where registration was to take place. It was at that point that our Traction started but then refused to fire. Mary went to seek assistance but meanwhile I got it going and arrived at registration whereupon it stopped and wouldn't restart. Petrol was pouring out of the overflow. Bernie set to with screwdriver and spanner and had soon diagnosed the problem. The float had stuck down and what's more the hinge was upside down. The carburettor is an Indian copy and I understand that the castings are not too good. Having read about candidates for disaster of the Rally I was relieved that we were no longer a candidate. Thereafter the Traction performed faultlessly using no oil or water over some 600 miles. Except, that is, for needing to tap the carburettor with a spanner when it had been left standing, as the float now regularly stuck in the closed position!

Once registration was complete – 2 hours to register 30 cars! , a whistle blew and the convoy set off for a two minute drive to the local supermarket for petrol and also for picnic provisions. Some while later with cars dotted about all over the car park a further whistle meant we were finally on our way. This was accompanied by a variety of Horns, Klaxons, hooters, bells and sirens as if it were a football match. The convoy set off through the roads of Brittany preceded by 6 or 7 motorbikes who would leapfrog each other to mark for us the appropriate junctions and where necessary hold up the traffic . This was so much easier than trying to follow a roadbook – although one was provided with essential information. I hadn't realised until now that brake lights appear to be an optional extra on many Tractions! Throughout the rally the reaction of the public by the roadside was amazing, without exception showing great enthusiasm and amazement at the line of Tractions passing through the villages. The initial route was 65 km to Chateau de la Roche Jagu where the Tractions parked up for a 4 hour pique-nique. The journey was uneventful apart for Tim Walker's roadster losing its hub cap in front of us. Fortunately it went no further than the verge so hubcap and retaining bolt were soon reunited with its owner. Before lunch the sun came out and it stayed that way for the whole rally. Those who were camping (Camping fees and breakfasts were included in the rally fee along with entry to sights and the three evening meals) then went direct to the campsite at Paimpol some 15 minutes away while others went to their booked hotels. The campsite was the HQ for the rally.

On arrival at our hotel we found Phil Allison under his car trying to sort leaking brake fluid. A pipe had broken – one he had repaired a year previously and up until then successfully. With dinner looming at a restaurant a short drive away the pipe was temporarily sealed. At this stage it was looking like Phil's car

would be a prime candidate for disaster of the rally. We had our own problem at that stage – our house/dog sitter had locked herself out with the sheet of contact numbers also in the house! Fortunately I was able to give her our son's number who helped her locate the hidden spare keys. With the others already paired up to go to the restaurant 2 miles away we offered Phil and Sue a lift and off we went to restaurant Boscher overlooking the sea. It turned out that there was no rush after all as the French contingent together with those camping arrived some 45 minutes late. That time they had the excuse that they would have been erecting their tents etc. An excellent meal was served. With almost 80 people the noise level was rather high in the restaurant. Remi Guillou who seems to be the chief mechanic was consulted with a view to him securing an appropriate pipe to get Phil's brakes working again. We then retired to our hotel for the night. Next morning, having been told somewhat hopefully by President Hervé Pignon the night before that everyone must be on time, the Tractions duly assembled at the Railway Station car park at 10am ready for a trip on the Steam train "Vapeur de Trieux" to Pontrieux.

Remi had done his stuff again and had come up with a suitable connection to enable Phil to block off one brake and thus become mobile again. After much standing around the train departed at 11am – the organisers had clearly allowed plenty of leeway in the timing! – for the "Petite Cité de Caractere" Pontrieux via a stop half way for a glass of cider and a crepe accompanied by a musician.

On arrival at Pontrieux Herve set about trying to find the location of the mobile Galettes seller that had been arranged. A Galette made with egg, ham and cheeses was provided for all who wanted it and also crepes with caramel, jam or sugar. Some elected to have a meal in town as the evening meal would be late. A horse drawn carriage was also available for transporting members from the Station to the town and back for those who didn't want to walk. The toilet facilities at the Station were somewhat basic, including the most public Pissoir I have ever seen!

Returning to Paimpol there was a fascinating visit to the Abbaye de Beauport. Built on high ground, it dominates the landscape, with views of the sea. It was founded in 1202 and after the French Revolution passed into private hands and was ultimately purchased in 1992 by the 'Conservatoire du littoral'. Its remit is to preserve the structure while leaving the ruins untouched and also to protect and encourage the wildlife. Some of the ladies were concerned by the warning to remain on the paths due to the presence of snakes!

With time pressing next stop was an aperitif with the Motards, the motorbike riders, at the campsite. On offer was mostly Pastis or whisky and some soft drinks.

Terence McAuley came to the rescue with some Rosé and the Felices had a stock of beer. Between the Abbaye and the Aperitif those in hotels had taken the opportunity to nip back for a quick freshen up. Phil fitted the pipe to his car and pronounced it ok with a firm brake pedal. He would wait to test it the next morning so we took him and Sue to the Campsite and on to the Restaurant Terre-Nuevas at the Port in Paimpol where dinner had been arranged for 9pm. An excellent creamy fish and vegetable melange was the main course. We returned to the hotel at 12.30 after a rather long day. On Sunday there was good and bad news. Phil pronounced his car fit and well, so would be able to use that rather than being cramped in our car for the day. However Martin was absent from breakfast owing to feeling unwell due to a combination of omitting to take his medication at the right time and the creamy dinner of the night before. Rendezvous was the campsite again but as the first stop was to obtain pique-nique provisions we went directly to the supermarket by the station and took the opportunity to fill up. Once everyone had arrived, somewhat after the intended departure time the convoy set off on a pretty 80 km drive round the Circuit des Ajoncs (translation :- Gorse) . Ian and Liz Harvey's car wouldn't start initially but that just turned out to be a flooded carburettor. We ended up at the parking for the Ile de Brehat ferry some 6km from where we had started. Everyone settled down for another pique-nique whereupon the sound of spinning wheels heralded the arrival of chief mechanic Remi being towed up the unmade track to the parking. His Traction was mort and well and truly qualified to be disaster of the rally.

Martin had recovered sufficiently to join the group and had intended to join the group for just the afternoon activities. However due to the delay in setting off he and Vicki had been able to join the convoy

from the start. After lunch we boarded the Boat for the Ile de Brehat, a lovely car free island. Most just went for walks or sat at tables having a drink. Mary and I hired bicycles in order to go to the lighthouse at the very top of the island via the narrow paths. On a hot day some of the inclines were surprisingly steep. At 6pm we boarded the return boat and went straight to an aperitif at the Terrasses de Brehat restaurant. Herve was a little concerned that the French contingent were late as he had hoped that there would be some mixing between the two clubs. The aperitif was followed by an excellent 4 course meal – in fact too much for some. The seating for the meal was such that some of our members were next to CTAB members and some mixing did take place. It is obviously difficult to plonk a non-French speaker in amongst the French but a bit more mixing in wouldn't go amiss next time. They are a friendly lot. Perhaps on day one name badges and an aperitif / reception would encourage mixing.

Bastille Day Monday 14th July. Rendezvous was at the campsite. We arrived 15 minutes late having been to a boulangerie for some decent bread for the pique-nique. On arrival there was a Traction, bonnets up in the middle of the entrance. We asked the silly question as to whether the convoy had gone. No chance, it would be an hour or more before we set off. As we walked past the Traction a CTAB member said quite calmly in English “this one is not in use at present”. A rather nice expression.

The only TOC problems were Phil having an ignition switch glitch and Laurence Acher having a dodgy voltage regulator which meant he needed an assisted start and a top up from Peter Simper's battery.

Once we finally got going there was a very scenic coastal route to Bifot Point where boxes of oyster were unloaded for tasting along with some wine.

Then we moved on down the road to the Moulin de Craca for our final pique-nique at a cliff top field where there was to be Breton dancing. This was set up by the locals for Bastille Day rather than specially for us which was just as well because we had to set off for the final destination 60 km away 10 minutes after the dancing started at 3pm.

Those who were travelling back to the UK that day left us at that point as did some of the French who had longer journeys.

We set off in convoy towards Jugon les Lacs via some pretty roads but at some point various elements became split up. The lead group with the Motards at the front went off course some 30 km from Jugon resulting in a dual carriageway drive to the finish. A second group managed to get to Jugon following the correct route as they had a local member up front. Tim, Ian and Liz stopped for fuel and made their own way to Jugon as everyone had disappeared by the time they had filled up. Fuel was to prove important as Tony and Janet ran out on the dual carriageway and got to the finish having used their spare can.

Peter Simper was also very low on fuel. Despite only having done some 60 – 80 km a day I was glad that we had topped up each day. My fuel gauge is not to be trusted. Herve presented everyone with mementos of the Rally and Bernie presented Herve with a bottle of Jack Daniels from us all. Goodbyes were said and we set off 30 km to the hotel we had booked for the night, returning home on the overnight ferry on the 15th having visited our friends in Lanvallay again for lunch.

Overall the rally was very enjoyable with an interesting route, good visits, excellent food and good humour. What could improve it? I think some of the ladies in particular would like a bit of down time as the whole trip was quite exhausting for some. With several departing on the last afternoon and a longish drive to the final reception perhaps the farewell reception/presentation could be mid-afternoon after the piquenique.

Also, nothing to do with the organisation, I wish the Logis hotels would provide decent size towels that aren't like sandpaper!

On returning home I heard Mary on the telephone say to a friend “yes I would go on one again”.....! Next year the Rally will be based near Pont L'Eveque, Normandy.

Roger Gullen

80th Anniversary of the TA - Château de La Ferté Vidame – 13th/14th September

Happy Birthday Traction, September 13-14th

“80 ans Citroën Traction Avant” La Ferté Vidame

What a fantastic event! Being “relatively” new to the Traction and especially to the TOC this was the first Traction event we have visited for a long time and it was an event we wouldn’t want to have missed! To give you an idea of the TOC contribution; There was a total of 64 teams, 61 Tractions, 128 people from 13 countries (i.e. UK, Guernsey, Jersey, South Africa, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, Norway, Austria, Holland, Belgium, France and Germany). Unbelievable!

Hi, I’m Edwin Veltman from the Netherlands. It’s my turn to write an article for Floating Power; our event report of the 80th birthday celebration of the Traction Avant in La Ferté Vidame. As I’m new to the TOC, I was kindly requested to volunteer ;-) for this assignment (as many before me, this is a tradition) and of course I will give it a try!

For us, my wife Annette and I, coming to this event started during the summer last year. We have had a 1954 Traction Avant Commerciale for many years, but what started as an enthusiastic restoration project, slowly went to sleep. When we decided to move house in 2010 and then having a much smaller garage, we had no choice, and sold our car to Marcus Lasance, a very good friend of ours for at least 35 years.

But last summer Marcus had his 1955 Familiale up for sale, so we cleared out the garage, made some space, found out it would fit, and decided to buy the car from him. He kindly pointed out that the TOC was “THE” club to become a member of and also explained that Walter and Noëlla were organizing the trip to the birthday event in La Ferté Vidame. We agreed that we also had to go there as well, with the Familiale!

On Friday September 12th we drove from the Netherlands to Domain des Evis in La Chapelle-Fortin to meet Walter and Noëlla and other members of the TOC and to pick up the event details and welcome bag. However unfortunately we were not with our Familiale. We had run into several technical problems that we couldn’t get fixed in time to have the car running reliably enough to drive 1200 km during one weekend... We decided to take the same route as we would have with the Traction and drove relaxed over the French “Route National” passing quite a few Tractions on the way. At the meeting point we were introduced to several TOC members and it felt as if we were meeting up with family and friends! Chatting with old and new friends and already hearing Traction adventures, with a glass of wine in our hands and the sun above our heads. This was a great start to the weekend. Our B&B accommodation was about 25 km’s further on and we drove there leading the way for our new friend Jim Lee. The B&B “le Moulin de Sévoux” was an old mill, and the B&B run by a Belgian couple Eric & Nancy van Mechelen, in a wonderful, quiet area near Malétable. The rooms were beautiful and luxurious! The two other couples also staying there, Ian & Elizabeth Harvey and John & Margaret Moon had also arrived and in the evening we enjoyed a delicious dinner prepared by Eric & Nancy. During the dinner the discussions about Traction’s technology, nostalgia, memories and stories crossed the table as we “the newcomers” got acquainted with our new friends.

Day 1: On Saturday morning we got up quite early (for a Saturday morning at least) to drive out to the starting point for the drive over the PSA test circuit. Eric had arranged some extra baguettes that we prepared for lunch. We lead the way to La Ferté Vidame, but after less than 1 km we had already lost Ian and Elizabeth? We stopped and waited a few minutes, but they didn’t show, so probably having some sort of problem. The road was quite steep so we turned around to look for them. And of course they showed up quickly. Apparently Ian’s Traction has much more climbing power when you fully release the hand brake... ;-). This turned out to be the first of a few technical problems with the car during the weekend. Arriving at the agreed meeting spot, the first 25 cars had just left and the next group was parking cars, ready to go to the circuit. Marcus had decided to drive along in his former roadster with

Mick Popka. Luckily for me, I got to drive Marcus's Big 6, and was looking forward to the circuit! The group drove about a kilometer to the gates of the Centre d'Essai PSA test circuit where we waited a short time and were permitted access to the grounds; the cars parked neatly aligned inside the historic buildings courtyard. Waiting to be escorted to the museum to see the prototype 2CV's, everyone was chatting and standing around when suddenly we were directed to quickly move on? We thought we had missed something... anyway we got in and drove off, and before we knew it, we had exited the grounds again? That was strange.... had we missed something again? Later on we understood that in French, access to the test circuit does not mean the same as driving around the circuit? A bit disappointed we drove back to the event grounds, queuing up in a traffic jam of Tractions. There, choosing the correct lane (registered/not registered) to enter the grounds made the difference between waiting a few minutes or an hour (it's probably the French way of doing things?). We parked the car neatly in the designated row that was arranged by the year dates. There we started admiring the enormous amount of Tractions already there, and the number was growing rapidly as more cars entered the parking area. All the types in all sorts of condition, cars that had never been touched (only the test of time) to immaculate restored cars and the strangest bodyworks. Over the weekend we heard numbers ranging over 900 cars and 10,000 visitors! The event grounds were setup spaciouly to the right of the old chateau ruins. There was the marketplace with a large number of exhibitors for new and old parts, books, models, clothing, art, and loads of good advice. The central area in front was space for Tractions and had a very nice display of an old garage interior, office and workshop. "Rally" Tractions that have taken part in long distance events were grouped together. And the adventure stories of the owners told with passion.

To the left and near the "Petit Chateau" there were stands from the sponsors and food and drink stalls. The Petit Chateau had a theater showing the long hidden movie "Autopolis", an amazing documentary showing the whole process of the building a Traction. Well worthwhile to watch and see the enormous Citroën campus in Paris with rows of huge machines producing the parts for the cars from raw materials and assembled into the end product.

Next door to the theater there was a photo gallery and many Traction posters and memorabilia like prototype scale models. Not forgetting the souvenir shop. The courtyard was the scene for the various Traction types. We admired the beautiful speeches were given, amongst them a grandchild of André Citroën, André Saint telling about his grandfather. The afternoon passed quite quickly and the queue for 6:30 dinner formed in front of the dinner tent. And grew, and grew, and grew. Eventually the tent opened and slowly people entered, (very slowly). Being about halfway up the line we took about an hour to get in... but the dinner was good, including starter, main course, dessert, cheese, wine and water. That's when Paul de Felice approached me to write this article, that's already getting longer than I thought! After a long, very satisfying day, we decide to wait just a little longer to see the fireworks show that would start at 9:45 pm, but didn't start until about a half hour later, due to delayed dinner. But it was worth the wait, a spectacular show of combined fireworks, lasers, light, and sound.

Day 2: Starting the morning onsite we arrived to see the formation of the ladies' drive "Rallye des Birettes" with some of the teams dressed up as witches with decorated cars. After some final damage inspections and strict instructions from the male owners (!) the keys were handed over to wives, girlfriends or daughters, and off they went, and having a great time judging from the laughter coming from the passing cars! In the meantime the men had time to talk "Traction" arguing details but also learning from each other. During the day many of the cars would leave the event for the tourist rally or to do some sightseeing or one of the other activities in the area.

The main event in afternoon was the Concours d'élégance with a lineup of about 20 cars.

A big round of applause for Wiljan and Lisette Cats, for winning first prize with their Roadster. When the event closed the TOC members gathered at Le Collectionneur Gourmand, a restaurant in Verneuil-sur-Avre where they catered for two services. We were seated at a table and sat between Robin & Sue Dyke and Mick & Moira Holmes, we were the rookies between the longtime members! Hearing the wonderful

stories of the trips that Mick and Moira have made with their Traction, and finding out how Mick got his Traction's rear fender "scratched"...

On the other side sitting next to me I was hearing facts about Traction from Robin, but also funny stories about emailing cats? And about bells!

Between the two sessions we all gathered in the garden in front of the restaurant to give a VERY BIG THANK YOU TO WALTER AND NOËLLA!

They have organized an unforgettable event for the TOC! They took care of everything! Registering us, booking 9 perfect B&B's to stay, wonderful food to eat, and the opportunity for the TOC members to meet each other and for us to have made new friends.

Monday Morning, and it's time to drive home again. As some went to continue the trip to the next destination in France we headed home to the Netherlands, again passing many Traction on the way.

Feeling tired, but very satisfied, and taking home a lot of good memories.

Edwin Veltman

For La Ferté Vidame photos go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nkec8hs>