

AVIVA Classic Run "The Closing Story"

Since joining the club a few years ago the only "job" I have undertaken is that of a marshal. In that time I have grown use to standing out on old WW2 airfields with the wind blowing and the rain falling sideways, slowly getting colder and colder, thinking I must be mad to do this, but still turning up for the next event. Therefore when out of the blue I was contacted by Nobby and Dinga with the chance to try some thing different, I jumped at it. Apparently the AVIVA classic car run needed a couple of people to drive the course closing car. Great I thought, a nice drive out into the countryside and being inside a car I will stay warm and dry - so I volunteered my services straight away.

It wasn't till after I had put the phone down that I started to think - Dinga said we would be given a "road book". Not knowing what a "road book" was (all I had done in the past was move cones around the airfields, a job after some of the "drivers" have gone past our point, I am now very good at) so I had to phone him straight back? Do you know what a "road book" is I asked. His answer back was a little too quick "No I do not but I am going to borrow one and try to follow it some time next weekend". This put my mind at rest.

Within two minutes, I was back on the phone - how are you going to drive and read the book??? Easy said Dinga I will drive and my wife will read the road book and tell me where to go. That statement didn't help me one bit. That's OK for your driving but not your road book reading??? We will be OK replies Dinga, full of confidence.

That's how on Sunday we arrived at the start of the AVIVA classic car run, at the back of Norwich City football ground. After helping out with the start and deciding which car we liked the best. (*mine was the 6 litre Mercedes, the size of a small house*) the last car had gone, and it was our turn.

Much to my surprise Dinga had this road book reading down to a fine art - I was very impressed; we made the first checkpoint (Swaffham wind turbine and eco centre) easily. Unbeknown to me was the extras we would be doing around the route, as in removing all the arrows and other signs, and at each check point picking up all the paper work, stamps etc.

As my son Joshua was along for the ride we decided to make good use of him, giving Josh my penknife to cut the cable tie at the first arrow was in hind sight not a good idea, one cut finger later, we had changed it, so Joshua will only take the stapled arrows and Dinga the cable tied arrows. That also caused a problem when Joshua was trying to place an arrow over his seat into the boot it caught the top of his seat and the staples stabbed him in the forehead - no lasting damage only to his pride which was dented a little.

In no time we arrived at the second check point Newmarket Stud Farm, (*very strange people manning it, but nice and friendly.*) As course closing car I had expected to be last at each check point, so I was very surprised when a classic car turned up after us, as by this time we had a boot full of arrows?

After a quick sandwich it was off to the third check point Lower Stondon car museum, an interesting place but needed a longer visit. By this time the plan of staying dry, because I was inside a car had not worked. It was too hot and the sun was shining down - so hot we had to partake in an ice-cream each before we left.

Leaving the last check point it was off to the finish. Up to now Dinga had not put a foot wrong, but on this last section we had a couple of near misses. The first being told to keep left at the same time his hand was waving around in front of my eyes pointing right, apparently that was the next turn we had to take! The second when navigating do not answer your mobile phone and lose your place in the road book - *this happened twice!* The first instance I had to do a u-turn, then the right place in the book was found, back around we went as we were on the right road, the second was at a T junction, "turn left" came the call closely followed by, "no right, I think", after stopping in the middle of the junction pointing straight ahead into a field, the correct place on the page was found and right is was.

Up to the last section I had a very good idea of which direction we where travelling in, and where the nearest town was (*years of driving Lorries around the UK helped with that*) but on the last section something weird happened - I lost my sense of direction totally, for all my brain could work out we where going around in circles. It was fitting that towards the end we had caught up with a convoy of cars and followed them into Silverstone race track,

Dinga Joshua and myself had a great day out, it was a total but very pleasant change to what we are used to, a job we would quite happily do again.

The only small down point was the end at Silverstone where we could not see any of the cars going around the race track as there was no access (*or we couldn't find any*) to any of the stands, and after a very long day it would have been nice to sit down and watch all the old cars driving around.

David Baxter