

RALLYE DES CIMES

John Hilton

On the 4th and 5th September the 20th Rallye des Cimes took place. Held in S.W. France amongst the Pyrenees Atlantiques, this event marked the first competitive attempt by an AWDC team.

Our 'team' comprised Ernie Hamilton and his VW 1300 engined Haflinger, John Pugh and John Williams with an ARO 240 (Land Car), and John Mills and Patrick Alford with an 1800 VW engined buggy. Other members that turned up to spectate and assist were Chris Goddard, Barry Dixon, Paul Dollin and Co., Chris Nash, Dave and Melanie Simmonite, Tim Harber, Trevor and Jackie Skinner, Doreen Smith and Sally Ann Rowe.

There were five in my group including Ernie, as I towed his Haflinger down with my Range-Rover. We took a day and a half to reach Maule, stopping overnight just South of Poitiers on the way. We arrived at our Mauleon campsite mid-afternoon on the Wednesday preceding the rally weekend where we met the other AWDC competitors. The ARO had developed front diff' trouble on the way down and so removal of the diff to the workshop of a local garage had to be put under way quickly. By next morning at 10.00 the garage had made up two phosphor bronze bushes and pressed them in to replace the output shaft bearings which had collapsed. While this was going on, John Mills had gone off to buy some more tyres in Pau. After a shopping trip Ernie and I set off in the Haflinger to look at the classification stage six miles down the valley at Licq Atherey.

We started up the stage fairly cautiously using 2nd gear. We passed through a narrowish gateway, turned a left hairpin followed by a steep right hander. The track was rocky, fairly slippery and climbing steeply. We rapidly reached another sharp left, this time rutted, muddy and fairly steep. The track levelled, comparatively speaking that is, and hugged the mountainside with a wooded drop on one side. Soon the track turned right up a very steep rutted and muddy hairpin. Here we got stuck. Ernie backed off and tried again with the same result. We analysed the problem and found that the rear of the haflinger was 'high centered'. Ernie looked a bit pensive. We had completed

about 100 ft. of the classification stage and things were not going our way. I suggested that a 'wall of death' type drive up around the hairpin with a good run might be worth trying. Ernie backed off almost out of sight. Then, with foot flat on the floor, the Haflinger accelerated up the track towards the hairpin. The 'wall of death' sequence around the bend was most impressive, but the Haf was losing speed fast on the steep rutted climb above the bend and gradually started to drop back into the ruts. The Haf stopped, all wheels spinning, all diff locks engaged. More discussion, try 3rd I suggest. Ernie backs off and has another go. This time success. We feel slightly relieved, but before we reach the top after some 942 ft., we have been stuck a further five times on similar hairpins but used the same remedy. We deliberate. An immediate return to G.B. is considered, but we decided upon a further attempt at the classification stage after a look at Salhagagne, the remainder of Saturday's first stage. This is fairly straight-forward, rutted in places and climbs around and upward, seemingly forever, but no further problems arise. We head back 2,242 ft. down the mountain to attempt the classification stage again. This time Ernie drives like there's no tomorrow whenever the going looks tricky. The Autocavan 1300 buggy engine allows the use of 3rd all the way and we reach the top this time with only one stop. Ernie is happy. Without a passenger he is confident that he will complete the stage without incident.

Next I acted as a guide to John Mills and his buggy. Crashing noises from underneath told us that more ground clearance was desirable, but we completed the stage without incident. By now I was fairly familiar with the course and so made sure that the clog was kept down before the naughty bits.

The same procedure was repeated for the ARO with Johns Pugh and Williams.

Back at camp discussions started about what was needed next year, and that was before we had even started.

Friday came. Scrutineering at Mauleon - documents left at campsite - no chains - wrong

spelling of names on entry list nearly causes suicide (or was it murder?) until entry is sorted out. Fuel trouble on Haflinger. However, all survived somehow and headed for the afternoon classification stage. As it had rained during the night and water was running down the stage, chains were made compulsory. The order of departure on this stage was not important. Eighty two competitors were to attempt the climb and the best 70 would start the rally Saturday. Our competitors were in a nervous state, realising that they could be out before they started. One chap who befriended us and kept us informed was a resident of Mauleon. Dr. Ray Bunwaree, who studied in London for some years and spoke excellent English with an immaculate accent. The help he gave us throughout the event was absolutely invaluable, and the ARO would never have even started the event without the assistance he arranged at his father-in-law's garage in Mauleon.

The classification stage, 942 ft. in 1.7 Km, took all afternoon. There were many delays due to

stuck and broken down vehicles. The course car was a SWB Toyota fitted with 750 x 16 Transport Titans and chains on all around. This machine was hauling the casualties up to the finish line. Most impressive! A standard Land-Rover would not have even looked at that task.

As the results started to come in, the fastest time was set up by Gretha in an Alpha engined Jeep in 3' 46" 8, and second was last year's winner Pachiaudi in his Porche buggy with a time of 3' 56" 0. As each of our competitors departed, we held our breath until their return.

Pierre Fougerousse was 16th in his new Toyota which was sporting double top leaves as its only extra. His time was 4' 15" 6. A series III LR driven by Moureu returned 5' 05" 4 and was placed 38th.

The AWDC team did not complete the stage without incident. The ARO punctured its fuel tank and put us through a most hair raising time whilst trying to change it. The 19½



"Our team" testing Ernies suspension.

gallons of petrol contained therein did not help matters any. Anyhow, John Pugh's time was 5' 51" 6, placing him 49th. John and Patrick's buggy got stuck on one hairpin, but he rapidly backed off and had another try. His time was 7' 35" 1 and his placing 59th. One spot behind was Ernie with a time of 7' 45" 3. His journey had been slowed by falling over on one hairpin and a puncture. As time passed it was revealed that all vehicles reaching the top would qualify. Only 68 of the 82 starters had actually achieved this. One chap breathing more easily was Burgana whose Landrover (Series III with Range-Rover engine and transmission) had broken down half way up and blocked the stage for nearly an hour while he repaired it. His time was 1 hr. 00' 25" 9, and must rate as one of the slowest successful classification times on record. However, he went on to finish the rally in 30th place so the lesson is obvious.

Saturday morning competitors assemble at day-break in the Parc Ferme. The ARO completes Salhagagne, 2,240 ft. in 5 Km, the first part of

which was the Friday classification stage. Haflinger also OK, but has to restart because of blocked stage near start. Buggy is out. The chains came off and took the brake lines as well.

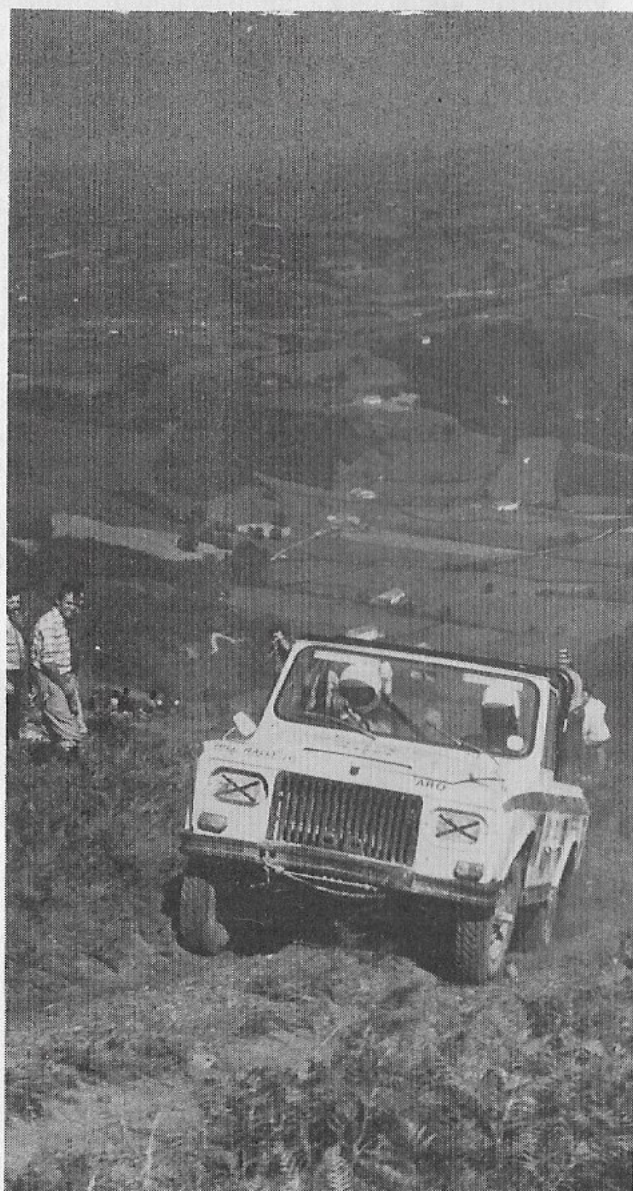
The second stage, Orgambidesca, 1,364 ft. in 2.5 Km, starts in a valley and a stream bed has to be negotiated. Competitors describe the course climbing up rock steps of anything up to 3 ft. in height. The only method appearing to be hurling the vehicle at the rocks and hoping it scrambles up. The Haflinger high centres at one point, but is helped by spectators.

Stage 3, Occabe, 1,430 ft in 3.5 Km, climbed out of a high valley up a steeply wooded track around the interminable hairpins. The track then levelled out before it turned sharply for another steep climb to the summit. The Haflinger had trouble as it hit the mudfield at the bottom of the steep climb with insufficient speed. It dug in and the engine stalled. Worse to come, the self-starter would not work. Ernie started to dig out the back of the Haf' with his



The 6th placed Willys of Jean Boutet

John Pugh and John Williams on their way to 20th place.



bare hands. As the Haf' slipped backwards he jumped aboard. This happened again before he got up enough speed to clear the mud.

On the way to the fourth stage, competitors had to cross a boggy mountain ridge. Ernie bogged again. After a while a couple of motorcycle ouriders guiding a buggy came up behind him. Since he was occupying the only route at that point, they were obliged to get him moving. He then returned the compliment by towing the buggy through. Then he followed the buggy as the m/c's guided them through the

best route.

Next stage, Arrodooy, 1,070 ft in 2.5 Km, lay just to the north of St. Jean Pied-de-Port, with Jara, 1,750 ft in 2.8 Km, just to the west. Just for those of you not familiar with this event, the stages in many cases actually finish right on the top of the mountain, and the views from the summits are fantastic. Jara has a metalled road leading up to a radio mast which the spectators use for access. If you go next year make sure you drive right to the top, words cannot describe the sensation experienced upon the arrival at the summit. The final Saturday stages were Parguietakoa, 1,140 ft in 2 Km, and Baygoura, 1,300 ft in 2 Km. Following Baygoura was a particularly long (23 Km) liaison section which contained some pretty tough off-roading.

Sunday came, too soon unfortunately, and crews who had not read their instructions properly were still in bed when the competitors' convoy left for Bidarray where an hour's servicing was to be allowed. The ARO got going and hammered off after the rally. The Haflinger was not so fortunate. Fifty yards from the Parc Ferme the wheels suddenly locked up. Frantic attempts with a rope and Paul Dollin's Landrover failed to alter the situation. Engine seizure was diagnosed. Later it was revealed that one of the starter lugs had dropped into the bellhousing and jammed the flywheel.

The ARO was still in though, and kept going steadily through the Sunday stages, Chanco 910 ft in 1.8 Km, Gakoeta 845 ft in 3.5 Km, and finally to La Rhune 1,200 ft in 1.4 Km. For those that like statistics, a total vertical distance on stages of 3 miles was driven by each successful competitor.

When the results were published, it was revealed that there were only 31 finishers, and that AWDC member Pierre Fougrouse had finished 4th with another class win (and 5000F), making this result another landmark in his incredible rally career of 45 rallies entered and 43 rallies finished.

John Pugh and John Williams finished in a very creditable 20th position, especially in view of the condition of the vehicle when it arrived at Mauleon. Yves Pachiaudi again won the event (for the fourth time) with a total stage time of less than 1 hour.

Our congratulations go to Dominique Fougrouse who finished 19th in a Willy's Jeep, and who very deservedly captured the Ladies prize.



The winning buggy of Yves Pachiaudi.

RESULTS

Posn.	No/Class	Driver	Vehicle	Penalties		
				Hrs.	Mins.	Secs.
1	2D	Yves Pachiaudi	Pachiaudi	0	58	30.7
2	8B	J. P. Kurrer	Hotchkiss	1	1	47.1
3	23B	A. Barbe	Willys	1	3	35.9
4	16A	P. Fougereuse	Toyota	1	4	36.2
5	19B	G. Debussy	Willys	1	5	57.3
6	18B	Jean Boutet	Willys	1	6	56.2
7	42D	J. Porter	Apal	1	9	12.2
8	21D	P. Zankroli	Apal Mexican	1	10	11.2
9	14D	J. J. Petit	Apal	1	11	58.7
10	10D	Maurin Gerard	Cam	1	12	40.1
11	28D	Robert Belier	Apal	1	13	00.4
12	24D	R. Baboulin	Bab	1	14	29.1
13	8A	Didier Moureu	Rover	1	15	3.6
14	36D	J. C. Hourdebaigt	VW	1	16	41.9
15	53B	Jackie Hass	Renault Sinpar	1	19	24.7
16	41A	G. De Trogef	Willys	1	22	51.3
17	40A	Guy Jaffre	Willys	1	22	54.3
18	32D	Herve Cotel	Bubus Cross	1	24	19.5
19	43A	D. Fougereuse	Willys	1	27	28.8
20	49A	John Pugh	A.R.O.	1	30	3.1
21	34A	B. Portier	Willys	1	30	20.3
22	47B	J. Gaitte	Willys	1	32	22.1

DRIVER REPORT

John Pugh

The rally started for myself and John Williams by driving from Mid Wales to Peterborough on August Bank Holiday Monday with no canopy, in the pouring rain. On arrival at Peterborough we were fitted up with a canopy and spares for the rally and we set off to Dover to catch the ferry at 3 a.m. Tuesday morning and arrived in Calais at 7 a.m. After a 4 hour delay at customs and 40 francs deposit on spares, we began the 700 mile trek to rally headquarters, where we arrived mid-day on Wednesday. With only 3 hours sleep from Monday to Wednesday, we both felt very tired and in need of a good rest.

After last minute preparations to the ARO we were then shown the qualifying section by John Hilton. Friday saw scrutineering and the qualifying run for the rally, which ended in a split petrol tank and a number of 49 for the rally.

We set about changing the tank outside the front door of a farmhouse - where we had been instructed to do so - with help from Paul Dollin who, along with myself, was soaked with 5 gallons of petrol from the 20 gallon tank.

Saturday morning was an early start with a complaint of 'butterflies' from which I have never suffered, and a repeat of the qualifying stage, followed by an even rougher stage. Towards the end of it, we noticed something like a large eagle's nest in the trees, but as we passed we could see it was a beach buggy which had bounced, crew intact, straight off the rocks. As the day went on the rally seemed to be getting harder with each stage, with vehicles littered all over the course and long waits at the beginning of stages, these being caused by vehicles unable to climb the steep parts even with chains - which we did not have - but with our freshly cut tyres we did not find them too difficult.

The departures from some of the stages were more dangerous and frightening than the actual stages, with John Williams walking in front of the ARO making sure the wheels did not slip off the track. Some of the brows and bends were so sharp that all I could see was thin air, and with 2,000' sheer drop you could not afford to put a wheel wrong. Other than that,

Saturday did not have too many problems and ended some 50 miles nearer the Spanish border. The results were published within the hour and we were positioned 28th overall, with which we were quite pleased. We then settled down to a well-deserved steak followed by a large quantity of wine and found ourselves sharing a tent with Paul Dollin and family.

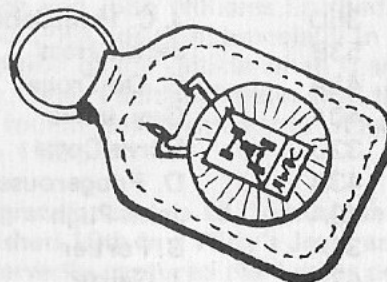
Sunday morning started very hectically, and we arrived at the Parc Ferme to find the ARO the only vehicle left and a French man shouting wildly at us. Luckily there was a long drive out and we arrived at the time control with only 5 minutes to spare.

The first stage was a long hill climb which was very slippery with dew still on the ground, and stages continued to get rougher and the weather hotter. The lunch stop saw a very well-prepared meal and still more wine, and the rally continued with more time controls on tracks and white roads, the last stage near the Spanish border comprising a long climb with massive boulders. The departure from this stage was the mother and father of them all where we had to descend a steep gully into a river bed full of great slabs of rock.

On the run into the finish, a Jeep overtook us and rolled, and a Volkswagen decided to give us a glancing blow and wrote itself off.

However, the Rallye des Cimes was the best organised event I have entered in 10 years of rallying, with ambulances, helicopters and police giving full support to all competitors.

Anyone thinking of competing in this rally should consider it a worthwhile event, providing they have the vehicle to stand up to the test.



LISTE DES ENGAGES

(numéros provisoires de départ à l'épreuve test).

GROUPE A - Classe I

7 - Dominique FOUGEROUSE

RENAULT

CLASSE 2

8 - Pierre FOUGEROUSE
23 - Guy JAFFRE
24 - Gaëtan de TROGOFF
25 - Bernard PORTIER
26 - Ludovic LE MASSON
27 - Marc NAVAILLES
30 - Christian MARIN
38 - Alain SAINT PE
45 - Gérard SUINOT
63 - Gérard DUVERT
73 - Marcellin DIARTE
84 - John PUGH

TOYOTA
HOTCHKISS
HOTCHKISS
HOTCHKISS
HOTCHKISS
LAND ROVER
WILLYS
WILLYS
WILLYS
HOTCHKISS
WILLYS
ARO LANDCAR

CLASSE 3

75 - Georges BERGEROT

HOTCHKISS

GROUPE B - CLASSE 4

4 - Joseph LAFARGUE
11 - José Luis GARCIA
16 - Jacques GAITTE
33 - Lucien COLLET
34 - Alfred BARBE
39 - Jacques GRETHA
41 - Georges DEBUSSY
48 - Pierre COUILLET
49 - Michel ODINET
58 - André TERREN
61 - Ernest STEINBERG
76 - Jackie HASS
81 - Ernest HAMILTON

ISTE Orig.
GARCIA BMW
WILLYS
RENAULT
WILLYS
Jeep ALFA
Jeep WILLYS
RENAULT SINPAR
LOHR
WILLYS
RENAULT
ACL SINPAR
STEYR PUCH

CLASSE 5

18 - Jean Louis BURGANA
42 - Jean BOUTET
51 - Roger MUFFAT
56 - Pierre Léon SAINT JEAN
64 - Robert LEGRAND
70 - Joseph ETCHECOPAR
78 - Jean Pierre KURRER

LAND ROVER
WILLYS
WILLYS
WILLYS
A.C.L.
WILLYS Proto
HOTCHKISS

GROUPE C - CLASSE 7

6 - EQUIZA Jean
Julien VILLERUEVE
Gil ARNAULT
Claude COUCHOT
Patrick COURET
Philippe BEGUERIE
Alain SCUBIRCU

VW
VW SOVRA
W Bab BUGGY
Buggy VW
Buggy IM
Bab Buggy
VW SOVRA

GROUPE C - CLASSE 8

2 - René BABOULIN Bab BUGGY
37 - Jean Louis FIGUREAU BABOULIN
53 - FRANCO NEGRO
71 - John ALFRED VW

GROUPE D - CLASSE 9

5 - Georges BONNAL SCRAP

GROUPE D - CLASSE 10

1 - Michel AGUERRE MONTCORGE
3 - Patrick ZANIROLI APAL MEXICAN
9 - François BERNAB Buggy
10 - Jean PERISSE PERISSE Proto
12 - Jean BERGES BUGGY
17 - Michel LOUSTAU Bab BUGGY
20 - Michel BOURDEAU BAB BUGGY
21 - Michel VEILLARD BUGGY
28 - Robert BELIER APAL
29 - Yves PACHIAUDI PACHIAUDI
31 - Bernard GROSPILLEY PACHIAUDI
32 - Jean HOURDEBAIGT CAMY VW
36 - Jean AGUERRE VW Proto
35 - Bernard ARRIETA VW
40 - Jean MALONIE APAL TOD
43 - Roger CHAZALON VW
44 - Jean Bernard BONN EU MONTCORGE
46 - Jacques PETIT JEAN APAL
47 - Edmond PERY APAL
50 - Claude FLAMERY CAM PUNCH
52 - Gérard STOECKLI APAL
54 - Jean Pierre DAVID BUFFALO
59 - Hervé COTEL BUBUS CROSS
60 - Jean Max CONVERT PACHIAUDI
57 - Jacques PORTER APAL
55 - Pierre ETCHEVERRIA VW
65 - Gérard MAURIN CAM
66 - Pierre BONNIN VW
67 - DOLLIAC Jacques BUGGY
68 - Jacques DUMONT BAB VW
72 - Pierre PAGANI STRAKIT
74 - Albert MULLER BUGGY ALFA
77 - Bernard ESCANDE VW
80 - Robert ALVAREZ BUGGY PAM
82 - Robert LARRE IM
83 - André MATTHEY APAL MEXICAN
85 - Jacques HUREL IM
86 - Jean Pierre BELLANGER BABOULIN
87 - Hubert PATRICOT Buggy