

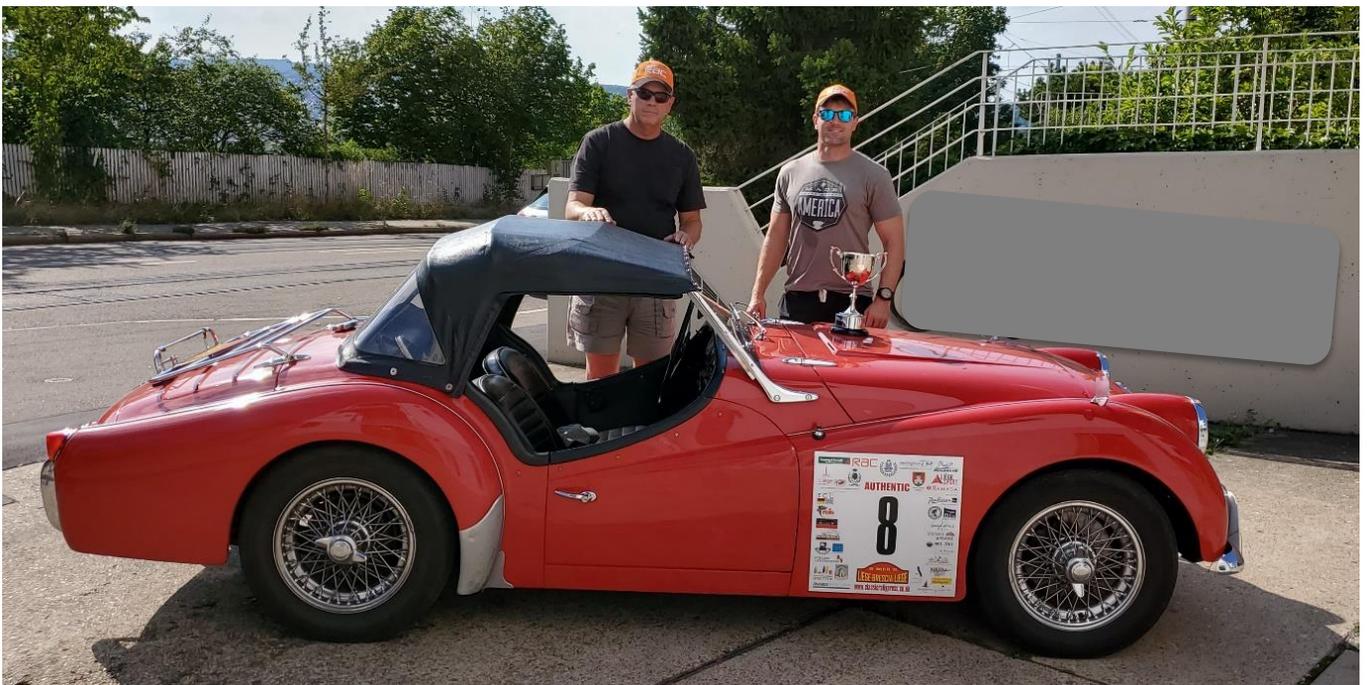


TR TIMES

Kansas City Triumphs Sports Car Club

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THE JEFFS VICTORIOUS AT LIEGE-BRESCIA-LIEGE RALLY



Special Edition Rally Coverage

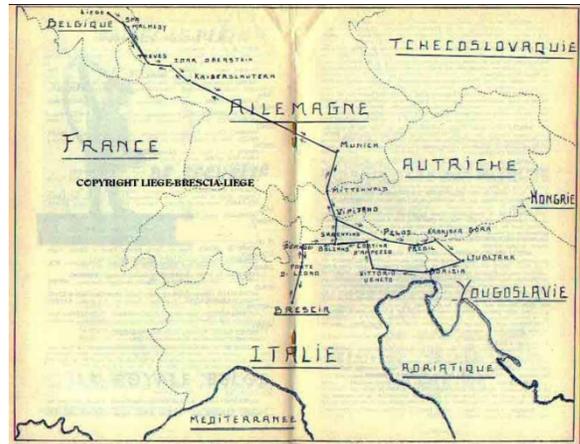
Member Jeff Givens and his son Jeffery (who came to be known as Team Jeffs) participated in an eleven day rally this past July that took them through Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Slovenia and back. The historic route retraced that of a 1958 rally through the spectacular mountain passes of the Ardennes and Dolomites. Father and son now chronicle this epic trip for our readers.

Liege Brescia Liege Rally 11-21 July 2019
A Triumph TR3a Journey!
By Jeff & son Jeffery Givens

July 11-21, 2019 held the third competitive LBL Rally since the original micro-car rally in 1958. This gentlemanly competition pitted 31 Triumph TR2-TR6 cars, including a rare TR-S clone, and teams against one another over 10 days through 5 countries and more than 2,400 miles of secondary European roads. My son, Jeffery, and I crewed car #8, my 1959 Signal Red Triumph TR3a; what follows is our account of the struggles and triumphs (pun intended) during Classic Rally Press's recreation of the iconic Liege Brescia Liege Rally. Classic Rally Press was able to maintain the very essence of the historic rally while keeping it light and enjoyable, but quite competitive.

To the right is a map from the 1958 LBL. Not many details were available, roads were not always paved, and signs may or may not be present. Truly a challenge!

For the 2019 LBL each rally team had three core components: the machine, driver, and navigator. The machine was the 1959 TR3a I had purchased in 1969. My son volunteered to navigate and quite conveniently lives in Germany while assigned as a US Army soldier. His home would serve as our staging point while his map reading and land navigation skills acquired through many years of Army service would help prevent us from becoming hopelessly lost. The LBL's 10 days would be the first time this combination of car, driver, and navigator would come together in a competition this complicated.



And so... The Journey Begins

The majority of the Rally Goers came from the United Kingdom, and so had a relatively short distance to drive to the start point in Liege. But --- for those US folks not quite so familiar with world geography, the two US competitors (from Oregon and Kansas) had to ship their cars across an ocean to get to a European port. So, our journey began considerably earlier and our start point was much farther away than our European competitors. Logistical and maintenance planning had to be at the very top of our "to do" list.

Throughout the years, #8 and I have driven more than 390,000 miles across the United States and have fully experienced the "Triumphs and tribulations" that come with using small English sports cars as daily or weekly drivers for years and years. As age and wear began to catch up with the car, I decided to spend the money for a full mechanical restoration in 2016. Macy's Garage near Dayton, Ohio was selected to do the work for me, based on their reputation and expertise. Macy's performed a complete driveline restoration 28 months ago and since that time I have put over 32,000 miles on the odometer. Their rebuild/restoration turned my TR3 into a very dependable car; and so a European road trip and competitive

Rally is the perfect “test” for car and driver. For those technophiles that have an interest, Macy’s did perform a few modifications to my engine in the course of the rebuild. They installed the 87mm piston kit, bringing the engine to 2.2 liters, while maintaining 8.5 to 1 compression (lower octane fuels could be used). There are some who argue that the compression increased to 9.0 to 1 or greater with the 87mm pistons, and I suppose the “math” could fuel the speculation. But, since I usually run the car with high test no ethanol, I am not too concerned about the math. The heads had hardened valve seats installed, along with stellite tipped valves; no lead fuels could be used at higher RPM’s. The camshaft was reground to a Macy’s proprietary specification that allows a longer duration for better torque at 1200-4500 RPM’s. And finally, all moving and rotating components of the engine were very finely balanced to reduce vibration. This made for a smooth running engine with lots of torque to spare. Car #8 would need all of that in the LBL test to come!

Departing from Leavenworth, KS to the Port of Savannah, GA on 16 May, my TR3a and I took our time (13 days in total) to ensure we could enjoy the best Southern America had to offer. The first stop was Memphis, TN for beer & BBQ; then on to Birmingham, AL for Historic Sports Car racing at Barber Motorsports Speedway; Atlanta, GA for a much-needed beer and a steak with an Army buddy Al Nacke;

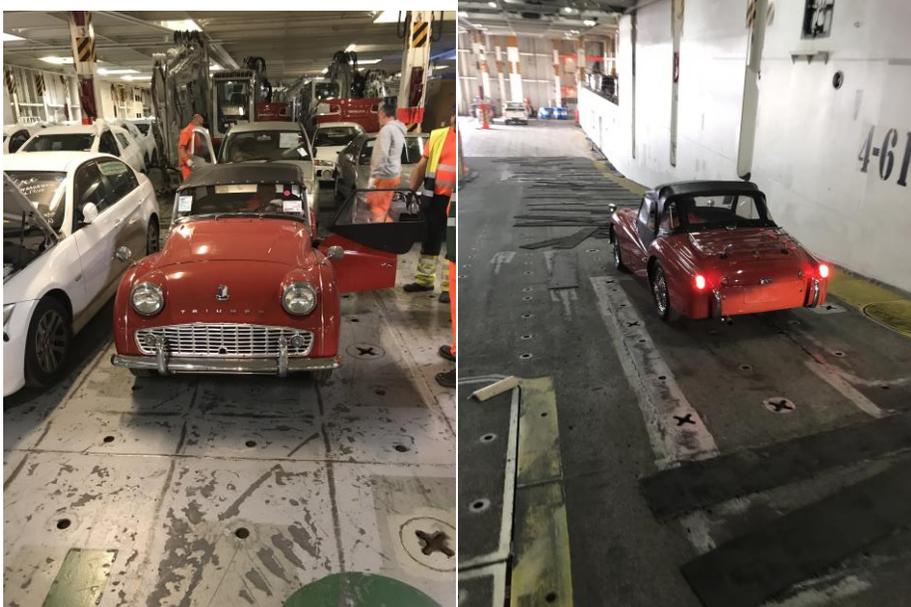


Dillard, GA for the five day and absolutely wonderful Triumph Register of America show (scenery with Joe Garcia and his white TR3 of the Georgia Triumph Association); Sparta, NC again for a much needed beer and steak with Army buddy’s Tom and Pam Metz at their awesome mountain home; Greensboro, NC for one final wheel balance and tuning with

Hendrix Wire Wheels; and finally arriving in Savannah, GA on 29 May. After several days of cleaning, prepping, and last minute maintenance I dropped the car off at the Port of Savannah on 31 May and flew home. From 16 May to 31 May the odometer logged 1580 fun filled and trouble free miles and yes... the weather was a bit WARM during those dates!



The car was loaded on board the Roll On Roll Off carrier Tijuca and tied down (see above picture) on 20 June and arrived at the Port of Zeebrugge, Belgium on 7 July. Picture getting ready to come off, and coming down the ramp of the ship at the Port (see below).



I will not bore you with the intricate details of the US & Belgium Export/Import Customs paperwork, freight forward paperwork, shipping line documents, insurance documents, paperwork to drive in Europe, Environmental Agency permissions, travel documentation, plane & train tickets, etc. BUT if any of these items were not in order, any one of them would have derailed the entire excursion. If you have an interest, I can provide infinite details off line. Suffice it to say----there was plenty to do, and RORO USA, DJ Powers Company, along with the shipping line Wallenius Wilhelmson did an absolutely wonderful job.

My journey continued on 29 June with my flight from Chicago to Stuttgart, Germany. The early departure gave me several days to get over jet lag, gather up the TR parts I had shipped, study the maps, and reacquaint myself with Europe. On 7 July, Jeffery and I took the "Schnell Zug" (fast train) to Brussels, rented a car, and drove towards the Port of Zeebrugge to pick up the third member of our team, car #8. After a restless night in the closest lodging, a youth hostel, and payment to the freight forwarder (who took care of all the import requirements), we arrived at the Port Authorities Office. Customers are never allowed into the Port itself, and so stevedores drive the car from the storage area to the acceptance area. After 30-minutes, I heard the throaty excited note of a TR engine rolling up to the guarded gate. Like the slow motion arrival of a superstar on the silver screen was a beautiful 1954 British Racing Green with Tan TR2 – NOT MY CAR!!!. Of course my car is a Signal Red 1959 TR3a with a Black interior. Great confusion and nervousness followed for the next 40 minutes or so. The ship Tijuca had picked up the TR2 in Seattle, WA and then made a number of stops before and after going through the Panama Canal, to finally pick my car up in Savannah, Georgia. The confusion was explained, and I contacted Mike & Francis Grace and told them that their TR2 had arrived, and my car was finally found. Almost 5000 cars were on the Tijuca when it arrived at the Port of Zeebrugge, along with two old Triumphs! See below.



After a quick check of the car we headed off to find fuel, as the cars had to be shipped well below a quarter tank. The car was running beautifully until the first fuel-up, 95 octane at 10% ethanol was readily available so I filled up at a cost of \$54.00 – OUCH! While the car ran

well in the US on 91 & 93 octane with 10% ethanol, something was clearly different with the European fuel; the car lost considerable power, ran poorly, and had to be revved constantly to keep the plugs from fouling. The European TR guys later told me to only use the 98 octane with 5% ethanol or the 100 octane. The change in fuel worked perfect for my car after several more carburetor “flats to lean”, and of course the higher octane was EVEN MORE EXPENSIVE!!!!

After a night solving nearly all of the world’s problems over beers and steak with friends in Brussels, turning in the rental car, and performing the final packing of the TR we were on our way to Liege. It was exhilarating to know that the trip was about to begin, as the planning and preparation started more than 12 months ago. The Belgium autobahn system was nicely paved, no potholes, great signs, and a max speed of around 80 MPH: perfect conditions for my car. After crossing the Meuse River #8 arrived at the Ramada Plaza hotel near downtown Liege in the early afternoon on 10 July.



With lots of boat traffic, pedestrians, and bike traffic, it was a very busy place.

We drove through the tiny parking entrance to an expansive hotel parking area and courtyard. A beautiful place, just one of the many exquisite hotels that the Classic Rally Press put us in. Several Triumphs were already parked so we knew we were in the right place. As we parked, we saw a gentleman near the hotel’s lobby that seemed far too organized to be a fellow competitor. Malcolm McKay, the Rally Organizer and President of Classic Rally Press was greeting folks as they arrived and providing a quick breakdown of the next steps. After almost a year of emails back and forth, I finally met the man in charge. There was not much time for chitchat though, as the rally check-in had started: maps, schedules, instruction booklets, placards, and rules had to be picked up. The parking lot was bustling with competitors zip tying placards and using soapy mixtures to apply rally stickers; the stickers and placards were the final steps in the creation of Car #8, sometimes referred to as Team Jeffs.



My son and I met some of the Rally Goers, found a beer, and then got to work on our route planning for the first and second day. We turned an empty hotel conference room into our command post: maps, snacks, and good Belgium beer littered the tables while multicolored high lighters and pens outlined the 13 Passage

Control points, plotted detailed primary and alternate routes through Embourg, Beaufays, Louveigne, Spa, Malmedy, Ligneuville, St. Vith, Steinbeck, and many more. These 260 miles was to be our first day of the adventure! Dinner with all rally goers that evening was a great ice-breaking event. In honor of the original LBL Rally, Remo Di Cocco, a veteran of the 1958 LBL who drove a Fiat 500, welcomed the anxious competitors and gave us all a bit of advice; “pay close attention to detail, do not wreck your car, don’t go too fast, don’t go too slow, and have fun”!

Man, Machine, and the Open Road

--Rally Day one, July 12, arrived for me at 0600 hrs. I packed my gear, grabbed some coffee, and headed to the car to begin a morning maintenance ritual that positively helped us get through every day without major trouble. The ritual took me about an hour and by then; I was ready for breakfast or the drivers meeting (if held). Son Jeffery was already at breakfast busy downing coffee and some eggs. To prevent the maps from being sucked out of the topless TR, he constructed a makeshift map board from a clipboard, rubber bands, and tape. With the first day’s routes laid out in a well-organized fashion, we left before 0800 hrs towards the “Place Royale Fronts the Parc des Sept Heures”---the same start point used in the 1958 LBL Rally. 31 Triumphs lined the terrace of the Place Royale, each car’s revving akin to the growling and snarling of ancient caged beasts preparing for battle in the coliseum. At 0830 hrs., the veteran LBL Driver Remo Di Cocco dropped the green flag for the first car; the remaining 30 cars departed at two-minute intervals. 61 years after the original rally, man and machine were once again headed for the open road. Below is a picture of a few cars gathering at the start.



Getting out of Liege took longer than expected; small alleyways, morning traffic, endless stop lights, and roundabouts proved to be #8’s initial obstacles to find the lightly travelled secondary roads. Outside ambient air temps were predicted to be 100 degrees by early afternoon, extremely hot by European standards for sure. Our air conditioning system required the top down, maintaining 40 to 50 miles per hour, drinking lots of water, and occasionally “spilling water on our shirts”. It worked most of the time.

Each day of the competition had a similar structure; accuracy was the name of the game, missing any of the numerous standards meant penalty points. Therefore, the team with the fewest points at the end of the rally took home the trophy. The days began with a

common departure time from the night's hotel and had a "no later than" time to arrive at the next overnight location, teams received penalty points if they missed their time hack. Rally teams received a list of villages, towns, and cities that each day's route would take them through. All routes favored secondary roads and ranged between 250-350 miles per day; navigators plotted their routes on 1:150,000 and 1:200,000 maps, a similar scale to those used during the original 1958 Rally. To ensure competitors followed the prescribed rally's route, Passage Control Points (a.k.a. PC) were used to confirm the team's accuracy, every missed PC accrued penalty points at the end of each day. Navigators had photos of each PC and the rally teams' photo had to be exact. PC's were always on the right side of a main road; however, they could be as obvious as the town's cathedral or as abstruse as a street sign or bus stop. The main roads were not always easy to find and so detailed map planning had to be accurate. And, of course, at various times there would be the dreaded "UMLETUNG" (German for DETOUR) because of roadwork. Even if teams were allowed to use GPS navigation, it would never give them the correct route. Attention to detail was the name of the game at all times.

This picture was the first Passage Control point called PC01. We had to place our car in the same spot as this blue TR3, and take a picture of it. Final Control at the end of the day would compare our photo with PC01 and determine whether or not you had found the correct Passage Control point, and were in the correct spot. If not, a penalty would be assessed.



Day one ended at PC13, a Kartbahn (go-cart race track) in Liedolsheim, Germany. The check in window at Final Control was 1730-1900 hrs. If you checked in after 1900, you were assessed penalty points; if you took too long to find all of your Passage Control points

because of getting lost, broken down, or just plain dilly-dallying, penalties were assessed; if you required assistance from the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) mechanic team in any form, you can probably guess—penalty points. AND, just to make the first day a bit more entertaining, we had to cross the Rhine River on a



ferryboat in the middle of the route (the ferryboat had a schedule and could only accommodate about 10 cars at a time; what could go wrong?).

We arrived at PC13, made Final Control on time, and had found all of our PCs. No penalties were assessed! After Final Control we got into a small line of Triumphs waiting our turn to go around the racetrack. In addition to the daily navigation and driving difficulties, the rally included three timed closed-circuit challenges. These time trials would prove to be the

primary means of separating the most capable rally teams. Our category of car (the authentic class) had a single-lap bogey time of 76.3 seconds (or about 50 kilometers per hour). Teams received two penalty points for each second they were early or late against the bogey time. Since the track was built for go-karts, there were lots of tight left and right hand turns. Coupled with the fresh rain, which would turn to hail later, the Kartbahn course proved a real challenge after nearly 13 hours of driving. Our (Team Jeffs) "precision" track timing utilized the "stopwatch/yelling/pointing" methodology, which of course was at odds with the electronically precise track-timing system on the racetrack. We came in at 87.3 seconds against our bogey time of 76.3, or 11 seconds late; car #8 received a whopping 22 penalty points!!! A sad ending to the long and exhausting first rally day. We finally got to the Radisson Blu hotel in Karlsruhe at 2100 hours (9:00 PM) to regroup, finalize the next day's routes, and feel sorry for ourselves over a cold beer.

--Rally Day two, July 13, began at 0600 hrs. with car maintenance, navigation planning for PC14-PC26, and breakfast. As we entered the breakfast area Malcolm was handing out the Rally Day one results sheets. And to our surprise, Team Jeffs was tied for 6th place in the authentic category! The racetrack results, Passage Control point accuracy, Final Control check-in time, and maintenance issues had added a good number of penalty points to the competitive field bringing our standing up. This placement was less about the rally prowess of Team Jeffs and more about how rough day one was for everyone... That being said, the day just dawned a little better for Team Jeff's #8!!



We left Karlsruhe at 0800 hours, driving through southern Germany and the mountains of Austria, only to end the 12-hour day at the magnificent Grand Hotel in Misurina, Italy. We found all Passage Control points, made Final Control at the perfect time, and were assessed NO Penalties. Rally Day two had put almost 300 miles on the car, up and

down countless Small Mountain passes, in and out of small to medium mountain towns, villages, and lake resorts. The power from the 100-octane fuel made all the difference at altitude, and allowed for a "sporty" 5,850-foot climb to the Grand Hotel. The fuel and several more "flats to lean" on the carbs while advancing the timing by four degrees made it all possible. Dinner started at 2130 hours and we were met by six members of the Italian TR Register who had driven their cars to the Hotel. It was truly a Grand Hotel and gathering. The below pictures show us taking the first turns into Misurina on the left, and leaving Misurina on the right.



--Rally Day three, July 14, began at 0600 hours with sore hands, legs, and feet just from the constant, gripping, turning, braking, and shifting. We were very glad that the roads we traveled were paved and in good repair, unlike during the 1958 LBL Rally. Imagine adding 1000 plus miles of gravel/dirt roads to the above physical challenge, as they did in 1958. Those guys and gals were superstars!

After breakfast, Jeffery and I got the Rally Day two results/standings from Malcolm. To our surprise, we were tied for fourth place! This was going to be a real battle if Team Jeffs was going to make a podium finish. Although it was our first time teaming up, my son was doing a brilliant job laying out the routes and I was somehow able to keep the car running well.

The day's start time was a bit later than the usual, 0800 hours, because we lined up all the cars, including the Italian TR Register folks, for a group photo. By the time we all started leaving, it was 0900 hours and we had nine PC points to find with four long and steep passes to get over before Final Control at 1930 hours in Preseren Square in Ljubljana, (pronounced LOOBY YAANA) Slovenia. The scenery was spectacular during the drive though the Passio Di Mauria [4258 ft.]; Passo Di Nevea [3904 ft.]; Passo Del Predil [3797 ft.] and the Passo Della Moistrocca, also known as The Vrsic [528]5 ft. but each pass proved to be a true challenge in my TR3a. There were easily 60 to 70 180-degree hairpin turns for each of these passes; they offered a similar number of turns on the way down. All were steep and many were completely blind turns, needless to say, we were both a little on edge while navigating #8 through these switchbacks! A sample of the scenery along one of the many passes is shown below. These scenes were so common as to be normal after awhile. Notice the fine looking guard rails!!



#8's transmission is not synchronized in first or reverse gears, so going through the hairpin turns at the proper speed to maintain second gear was imperative. The technique I honed during the first day of steep passes went like this: I would come out of a hairpin turn in second gear at 1500 to 1800 RPM's and then shift to second overdrive at or above 3000 RPM's, this effectively dropped the RPM's to about 2500. When the engine hit 3000 RPM's, I would then shift out of overdrive and into third, which dropped the RPM's to 2500 again just as the engine would get to 3000 RPM's, the next hairpin turn arrived! This meant I quickly down shifted and kept the RPM's at 3000 while #8 continued to climb. As we got closer to the next hairpin, I shifted back into second gear and went into the hairpin at 3000 RPM's, and came out of the turn between 1500-1800 RPM's. Any lower than 1500 RPM's and I would have to stop the car completely and shift into first gear (first gear is not synchronized). So with 60 or so hairpin turns and three to five upshifts and three to five downshifts per turn that is 420 to 560 stick shift changes per pass—just going up the hill!! The 60-70 hairpins would take almost 30 minutes of climbing to reach the top, and yes, I had to turn the heater on about halfway up to keep the engine cool. In addition, the thinner air had a tremendous effect on fuel economy, engine power, and cooling. Upon reaching the top of the pass, we would stop, pop the hood, and give car and driver a 15 to 20 minute well deserved break. Going up and down these four mountain passes caused me to shift the transmission and overdrive around 4000 times, pushing in and letting out the clutch 8000 or so times, all while turning the steering from wheel lock to wheel lock (with no power steering of course) almost 600 times at low speeds. By the end of the day, I felt like I had wrestled a gorilla!

Going down the passes was a bit easier; I used a combination of gearing and brakes to keep the car at a reasonable speed. The hairpins were still a challenge because if another car, bus, or truck was coming up the pass you had to slam on the brakes at the last second and move into the much tighter radius of the turn. TR2's & TR3's do not have a tight turning radius, so extreme care had to be taken. It took lots of concentration, footwork, and quick reaction time. Still, down hill was easier on the car, not so much on the driver.

So where were we? Ah yes, enroute to Preseren Square, Ljubljana (LOOBY YAANA) Slovenia and Final Control Rally Day three. The scenery continued to stay absolutely gorgeous all the



way into town. We were one of the first cars to arrive and we all quickly caravanned into the downtown square to

show off the elegantly brutish beauty of these cars for a couple hours, all while hot oil and other fluids leaked onto the beautiful cobblestone square. Several hundred, if not several thousand, passersby looked at our cars, had beers with the crews, and took pictures. We celebrated our arrival with a liter of ice cold 8% Slovenian beer, it was wonderful!

--Rally Day four was a day off to catch up on sleep, do some maintenance, continue refining routes, and sightseeing. We visited the local castle, a restaurant in the old part of town, a canvas repair shop (I tore my tonneau cover), another restaurant, and then had a restful evening of maintenance and navigation planning. Ljubljana was truly a delightful city; the Slovenians we met were wonderfully accommodating and mostly spoke English, thankfully minimizing our need for "pointy-talky" to find beer and food! The below picture is our departure in a group from Ljubljana. What a great city and country!



Andy English and John Smallwood's powder blue TR3 trying desperately to pass the mighty car #8 on a steep incline below! And in the right hand picture #8 is at "full chat" going into a tight turn on the Gavia.



Halfway Now... No Turning Back!

--Rally Day five, July 16, began at the usual time for us, 0600 hours. We had a bit more maintenance, more navigation planning, and then breakfast. Malcolm passed out the Rally Day three results and we were still tied for fourth place, albeit not a podium slot but still in the competition! We left the Grand Hotel Union Business Ljubljana at 0800 hours with a raspy TR3a exhaust note bouncing off of every building we passed on our way out of town, between the exhaust note and signal red paint, #8 got plenty of attention. We quickly got on the road we needed and found our first PC just outside of Vrhnika. We continued through a variety of towns and villages; Idrja, Kalce, Col, Predmeja, Lokve, Tmovo, Podsabotin, Gonjace, and too many more to list. In total we found PC35-PC45, went through three steep passes, and had 10 kilometers of gravel/dirt road that was part of the original 1958 LBL. My son Jeffery took this wonderful picture (below) of the 1954 TR2 (Serial #: TS11) owned and crewed by Vincent Paccellieri and his son Arthur, as it was moving through the dirt/gravel section at speed. That little car with its rear wheel pants and the headlights on, coming out of the dust, was truly a majestic camera capture.



We finally ended the day at 1800 hours near the top of the Passo Di Costalunga, Italy; the Final Control was at the

Al Piccolo Hotel. This was the only night the Rally Goers had to stay in two separate hotels, as the larger hotels were not available. Final Control opened at 1800 hours and closed at 1900 hours, any time after and penalties were assessed. Attention to detail in navigation before, during, and after each Passage Control point; good car maintenance, before, during, and after all parts; along with a bit of good luck carried the day with the reward of zero penalty points. We had another perfect day with no penalties!

--Rally Day six, July 17 started at our usual time of 0600 hours; the maintenance, navigation, packing, and breakfast all went much quicker and happened more efficiently as our process

codified. Malcolm passed out the Rally Day five results (Day four was our day off) and we were now in a firm fourth place. The guys we were tied with dropped to eighth place.

We were off at 0800 hours headed to Brescia, Italy. Team Jeffs only had thirteen PC points to find, two mountain passes to get up and over, many towns to get through, and a Final Control time hack of 1900 hours. This Final Control was different than the rest; if we got into the outskirts of Brescia before 1800 hours then we would have a police escort all the way through town and to the Final Control at Piazza Mercato (the same thing that was done for the 1958 LBL). This was an incredible opportunity that we did not want to miss, so the pressure was on!



After finding PC 47 we headed up the Passo Dello Stelvio [9045 ft.] and like a military battle drill, I went right back into 2nd, 2nd OD, 3rd, 3rd OD for almost 45 minutes while fighting through significant traffic! After a well-deserved break at the top, it was back down the other side. Just two PCs later we started up the Passo Di Gavia [8597 ft.]! Thankfully, the Gavia was a far less traveled pass than the Stelvio. The Gavia is not as popular as the other passes because the road is extremely narrow, just wide enough for a TR3a and a motorcycle to pass; numerous completely blind curves; and no guard rails! What the Italians



considered to be guardrails were just small flat upright stones (8"x 10") and spaced a few feet apart, really they just marked the point where you would drive off the cliff! If you went off the side of the road it was truly a long way down and extremely steep. The tiny rock markers would not even provide enough warning to slam on the brakes... you would just leave skid marks as you and your car took flight! We kept the GoPro running and the phone recording our voices and faces as our very own "black box," hoping that if we accidentally tested the glide ratio of car #8, someone would eventually know what happened should the car ever be discovered. The Gavia had the potential to be a treacherous road during daylight hours, thankfully we did not do it at night.

While we reveled for making it through the Gavia unscathed, disaster struck while driving through Ponte Di Legno, Italy. We thought we missed a turn and quickly pulled into the entrance of a parking garage to turn around. The entrance had a metal grate that dropped 8 inches or so and was difficult to see from the road. We pulled into the entrance a little too quickly and the car briefly bottomed out... and



the edge of the grate ripped the complete exhaust system out from underneath the car! The whole thing was lying in the street, oil covered, smoking, and looking generally pitiful laying in the street. The exhaust hangers were ripped in half and the main u-clamp destroyed. Penalty points are assessed if you get assistance from the Royal Automobile Club mechanics, penalty points are assessed for being late, and penalty points are assessed for missing PC points. Basically, we were mentally preparing ourselves to earn copious penalty points! What to do? The only thing to do -- self-recover. While waiting for the offending exhaust system to cool, we jacked the car up (using the standard TR3 jack through the floorboard), laid out the tools and repair parts kit, and went to work. I had not brought any exhaust hangers so we were in a bind. Luckily, one of our kind competitors stopped by and offered us some much needed radiator clamps, clearly anyone who ever said Brits and Americans couldn't be friends after 1776 were wrong—I am pretty sure I still owe them a bottle of whiskey!.



Finally, the exhaust system cooled enough to pick it up and we shoved it into the main exhaust pipe under the transmission. Through a complex engineering process, which involved a large rock and my BRAND NEW lead wire wheel hammer, we were able to beat the exhaust system into submission. Once the beating commenced, the rear pipe got close enough to the rear frame tube (under

the spare tire) and we used the radiator hose clamps to hold it firmly. A couple firm kicks proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the exhaust system was ready to “do its duty” to the end! We lowered the car, put the tools and parts back, attempted to clean up, declared it hopeless, and motored on. We had lost more than an hour and a half during this crisis. We still had five Passage Control points to find and over 120 miles left to drive, up and down numerous small passes, with numerous towns and villages to get through and traffic roundabouts everywhere. The prospect of a podium finish was teetering in the distance and we had to step up our game.

Through a combination of good route selection, driving slightly above the posted speed limit where it was safe, passing early and often, and a touch of luck we made it to Final Control with seven minutes to spare! We were the last in line for the Police escort but we made it. Like a presidential motorcade, the TRs raced through the congested streets of Brescia as if we owned the place. We arrived at the Piazza Mercato and stayed for about an hour, posing for photos and chatting with the locals. After thanking the Italian Police Officers, we drove a

short distance through town to the Villa Fenaroli Palace Hotel. The beautiful and historic hotel had wonderful rooms and was a welcomed site after a harrowing day. Dinner and drinks started at 2045 hours and did not end until 2245 hours. After a little celebrating and finalizing the next day's routes, we literally fell into our beds!



So You're Saying There's a Chance

--Rally Day seven, July 18, concerned over our makeshift exhaust repair, I performed a bit more maintenance than usual before breakfast since we narrowly avoided disaster the day prior. Malcolm stopped by and handed out the Rally Day six results, we were now tied for third place. What a welcome sight after the previous day's excitement—finally on the podium.

We had a later start on Day seven as the first Passage Control point was located at the Circuito Di Franciacorta, also known as the Brescia road racing circuit, it opened at 1000 hours. We arrived exactly on time, got in line, got our instructions and strapped the electronic timing unit to car #8. This track challenge was much different than the Kartbahn: we get five laps around the track; the first lap was practice; the second lap established the car's bogey time; the third and fourth laps had to hit the bogey time or the team received penalty points, one for each second over or under the bogey; and the fifth lap got the car back to the pit area entrance immediately before the timing light. Five cars in our same class were on the track with us, all starting at 15-second intervals, it was a big track so we were never that close to one other. As this was a real racetrack, there was the possibility to really open the car up, two straightaways, multiple S curves, and a few tight corners made for an excellent challenge. Since a podium finish was on the line, we decided to strategize a bit, instead of trying to hit the fastest speed #8 could handle, we would drive a little slower and maintain a consistent RPM. During the first lap, we tested and identified a gear the car could stay in throughout the lap and targeted an RPM, 2800 RPM in 2nd overdrive. It took all my willpower and considerable yelling from my navigator to not utterly smash the pedal to the floor around the track, after our terrible first track performance, Team Jeffs had something to prove. We established our bogey time, at 3 minutes, 7 seconds, 38 tenths to go one lap around the track, it was about a minute slower than the average team. However, most of the serious competitors in this rally had specialized rally timers in their cars that would give precise real-time feedback as the driver was working the track. Car #8 had only my son's stopwatch! Lap two was 4 seconds early and lap three was 2 seconds late, which only added 6 total penalty points. Not bad at all considering lap five was almost a disaster, I accidentally passed the pit entrance and almost crossed the timing light. Crossing that marker would have started our sixth lap and would have given us an unhealthy number of penalty points! With my son yelling to turn around, I cleared from the rear, stood on the brakes and slid into a perfect U turn, all while the Italian flagman was going absolutely crazy!!! We were able to

drive the 80 feet into the pit entrance. We were on pins and needles for the rest of the day since this track maneuver was highly illegal and would have likely cost us considerable penalty points.

Shortly thereafter, we found our main road out of Brescia and the route that would lead to our eight PC points, back up and over the Passo Di Stelvio [9045 ft.] and the Passo Di Gavia [8597 ft.] before stopping at the beautiful Hotel Marlena in Merano, Italy at 1750 hours. We



had a great trip and arrived almost 40 minutes before Final Control opened, plenty of time for some ice-cold Italian beers while looking over the stunning vineyard that covered valley almost 500 feet below us. Rally Goers slowly trickled in over the next couple of hours and we all had a few more “adult beverages,” told a few more wild stories of challenges overcome throughout the

day, and enjoyed the evening meal. I cannot say enough good things about our competitors; we truly had a great group and enjoyed visiting with them all. It was good-natured competition all round and a spirit of helpful assistance was present in every Team.

--Rally Day eight, July 19, began at the usual time, 0600 hours of course. Malcolm passed out the Rally Day seven results and #8 was tied for 2nd place. Our plan to maintain a constant RPM worked really well and miraculously we were not penalized for our dodgy track maneuver into the pits the day prior, no one mentioned a thing so we did not ask. Today we had 15 PC points to find and would pass through the absolutely beautiful Passo Di Pennes, climbing 7267 feet while traversing nearly 20 kilometers of ascent and 24 kilometers of decent, with grades being up to 13%! The road was narrow and crooked but the corners were quite gentle and wide for the most part. I was able to stay between 75-85 miles per hour at 3200-3700 RPM's, in and out of 3rd OD, 4th, and 4th OD. #8 was easily able to pass three other TR3's on that road. My Macy's Garage engine build performed extremely well, even at altitude!

The TRS and car #8 both heading towards the same Passage Control Point in the below picture, what could go wrong???



After crossing the Passo Di Pennes, we crossed the Brenner Pass through the very long tunnel from Austria to Germany. The main navigation routes took us through Innsbruck, Garmisch, Zirl, Seefeld-in-Tirol, Scharnitz, Mittenwald, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Oberau, and many more. Our Final Control was the Hotel Marina in Bernried, Germany. The day's route took us directly through the village of Rot and home to our wonderful German friends, Tina and Moritz Krohne. As we raced through the town, they met us waving a big American flag and handing us a large bag of German chocolates! We had only moments to spare since it was late in the day and the Final Control check-in was 1900 hours. Thankfully there was time to catch up later, since Tina and Moritz would join us for dinner at the Hotel Marina. They arrived at the hotel much quicker than we could since they had no Passage Control points, could take the autobahn, and their twin turbocharged diesel Audi V8 SUV had a smooth ride while cruising at 150 miles per hour.

Dinner and drinks with life long friends and new friends, all while overlooking the picturesque Lake Stanberger with its sailboats "dashing about" and perfect weather; it was an incredible place to end Rally Day eight! It turned into a late night.

--Rally Day nine, July 20, 0600 hours arrived way too soon considering the late evening that we had. Rally results from day eight were passed out and we are still tied for 2nd place! Long days and late evenings are part of the challenge that Malcolm and his Classic Rally Press put into the competitive mix... or at least that's what we were telling ourselves. All Rally Teams were noting increased numbers of Passage Control points, the shorter window for Final Control, and the longer routes. Penalty points were starting to add up.

We left the Hotel Marina at 0800 hours to find 11 PC points. Two of the PC points were auto museums and one was the Lichtenstein Castle. No penalty points would be assessed for missing Final Control time today, as we were allowed to take our time going through the



museums and castle. Along the day's route, we also found an early medieval wooden castle, complete with professional reenactors who lived there for days and weeks at a time. All were interesting and we spent about 2.5 hours going through each one before departing. Final Control was on the Marktplatz in the town of Bretten, Germany.

The mayor of the town allowed us to park right on the pedestrian only Marktplatz to display the cars and provided overnight security guards to watch over the cars. The TRs drew quite a crowd as we arrived and parked, around 300 people were under small beer tents watching us arrive, looking at our cars, and coming up to chat about the cars and rally. Even when a light rain came, nobody cared, everyone just continued drinking and enjoying themselves. Oh I forgot, the beer was cold and really really good after a full day of rallying and being a tourist!

--Rally Day ten, July 21, the last full day of the rally and the final track day. Malcolm passed out the day nine results and we were still tied for 2nd place. As we prepped #8 to leave, we saw the powder blue TR3a of Andy English and John Smallwood up on jack stands, parts strewn about, tools everywhere, and the front wheels off. Andy and John have been in 1st place since day one of the rally; even though their rear brakes went out on the Passo Di Pennes and now their front brakes were gone. I think Andy is giving us the "we are number one finger", and John is under the hood!



The car was a former racecar and has two separate master cylinders so the front and rear brake bias can be adjusted while on the racetrack. Andy is also the journalist who wrote the wonderful LBL Rally article for the London Telegraph Auto section. We wished them good luck and left Bretten towards the Kartbahn in Liedolsheim, they had a lot of work to do before they could get on the road to meet the 1030 hours Kartbahn track hard time, it was 0830 hours.

We arrived at the track without any problems and got in the line. This was the same track we drove Rally Day one and accumulated a whopping 22 penalty points for our poor efforts. Simply put, the Kartbahn track was Team Jeff's' nemesis! We were much better prepared this time, planning every scenario, how we would take each turn and straightaway, and how to time each corner. Although the mechanics of this event were similar to the original run, as the track master gave us the track briefing, he completely shattered our plan--this time we ran in the opposite direction of the first time, 10 days ago. After quickly composing ourselves, we adjusted our plan of attack, which was hardly better than the "stopwatch/yelling/pointing" system we had previously used. Our bogey time for the lap was 84.08 seconds, a 45 kilometers per hour average. As I pulled #8 onto the track, Jeffery hung himself almost out the door to watch the front tire make contact with the timing light and hit start on the stopwatch. The entire lap consisted of my navigator yelling GO, NO NO SLOW DOWN, Now speed back up, slower, NO I MEAN SLOWER, BRAKE, okay go faster, GO FASTER, A LOT FASTER... we quickly and easily reverted back to the "stopwatch/yelling/pointing" methodology. Visual evidence of "minor" cockpit confusion while on the track is shown below.



However, unlike the first time, the past nine days of experience carried us through and we hit the finish line at 84.07 second--a perfect time with ZERO penalty points! We were elated and concerned since we needed another perfect day, no pressure.

The last Rally Day was to be a very long. 13 PC points, the ferry crossing, and an 1830 hours Final Control mark at the Abbe de Stavelot near the Spa Francorchamps Formula One racetrack in Belgium. We passed through and crossed the Rhine River, Leimersheim, Kurhadt, Hordt, Offenback, Landau, Annweiler, Samstall, Eschkopf, Kaiserslautern, Lauterecken, Nahbollenbach, Idar-Oberstein, and what felt like a hundred more as we found each passage control point. The dreaded UMLETUNGS were prevalent and multiple

deviations from our original route were necessary. Many of these required us to double back to find the Passage Control points and the clock was ticking!!

The Triumph gods were with us on the final day, we entered the town of Stavelot almost 30 minutes before Final Control opened at the Abbe de Stavelot. Not only were we the only Rally Goer in the courtyard, there were no rally officials... we immediately began to question if it was the right place. We pulled maps out, reviewed all routes, and reread all rally instructions. Just as a slight panic started to seep in, we heard the undeniable note of a TR pulling into the Abbe. Almost immediately after #6 arrived, the rally official's bright orange Lotus Elise pulled in. Relief set in as we cracked open our warm and slightly shook up victory beer that had been in the trunk since Day zero. We were early!

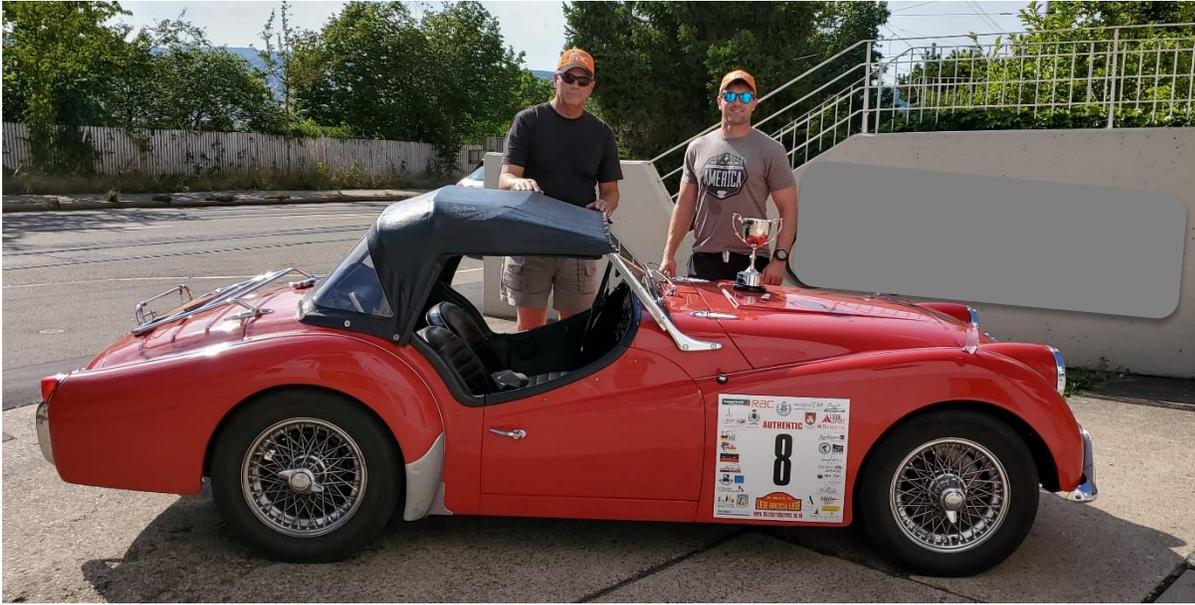
Lining up at the Abby, the last minute of the last hour of the last day!



As more Triumphs pulled in, the Rally Goers organized a quick tour inside the Spa Circuit Museum. We were free to drive on to Liege, and the Rally's official start point on 11 July, the Ramada Plaza Hotel. Since the Rally was over, we took the most expeditious route possible, the highway! With five TRs in convoy, we were not only a sight but also a sound to behold as we roared down the autobahn. Even while cruising at 85mph, it took 30 minutes to get to the hotel. After check in, we cleaned up, found where they were hiding the cold beer, and waited for the Prize-giving dinner at 2100 hours.

As we all sat down at the Prize-giving dinner, various short speeches were made, accolades were tossed about, and friends spoke of what the future could be. It was quite enjoyable! And then a hush fell over the room as Malcolm stepped to the front to start the Prize-giving announcements. Various multi team trophies were handed out and others recognized for their determination to stay the course, despite severe mechanical difficulties, and remain with the group.

Car #11, the powder blue 1960 TR3a driven by Andy English with navigator John Smallwood took 1st place with 22 total penalty points over the ten days.



Car #8, the signal red 1959 TR3a driven by myself and navigator son Jeffery took 2nd place with 28 penalty points (see picture above).

Car #7, the apple green 1957 TR3a Triumph Works car, driven by Iain Paul and navigator James Butler took 3rd place with 32 penalty points.

What a great ending to the ten-day 2,400 mile LBL for Team Jeffs!!! Within a short time after the Prize-giving dinner, a few more ice cold Belgium beers and great camaraderie; we went to our rooms for the evening.

We did not have to wake up at 0600 hrs. on 22 July, but slept in for about 30 or so extra minutes. Went to breakfast, saw other Rally goers, said our goodbyes, packed the car, and got in the line up of Triumphs gathering in the parking lot (see below). It was quite a sight to see as the cars headed in all directions out of the city towards, England, France, Spain, and parts of Belgium. We of course headed towards Stuttgart, Germany and my son's apartment. The trip was about 340 kilometers and was uneventful and relaxed except for the "screaming at 150 mph BMW's, Mercedes, & VW station wagons on the German autobahn"! They are fast, and with just a few Audi's, Porsches, and Ferrari's tossed in for good measure, it added to the overall "view". The little red #8 TR3 got plenty of attention and thumbs up though.



I spent the next 7 days decompressing and preparing the car to drive back to the Port of Zeebrugge, Belgium. The bags were packed, the car loaded again, and I headed out of Stuttgart, Germany on the A8 autobahn towards Belgium.

I arrived in Bastogne, Belgium early evening and checked into a local motel, then took in several tours of the local battlefields. The WWII saga of the Battle of the Bulge took place all around this area. Over one million allied soldiers, including 500,000 US, fought in this battle. The US military had more than 75,000 casualties, 19,000 dead, and approximately 23,000 still missing even after all these years. It was a desperate battle, and I felt humbled to be able to visit for the short time I had.

The next morning the sky was clear, the roads were practically car less, and I continued to head east towards the Port. I stayed the night at an Air B&B just outside of Brussels as the Port was only two hours away and there were more reasonable accommodations near Brussels.

It was an uneventful trip to the Port of Zeebrugge the next morning as I dropped car #8 off with the Wallenius Wilhelmson shipping staff. My ship, the vessel carrier Themis, was not due in to Port for seven more days, but rolling stock had to be repositioned 3 to 8 days prior. I took a taxi to the local train station, arrived in Stuttgart early evening, spent the last night, and flew back to Kansas the next day. 3 weeks later, and after a few delays, car #8 was delivered to the Port of Brunswick, Georgia. The delay was due to another vessels carrier, the Golden Ray, having capsized, and caught on fire in the Brunswick channel with 4,200 brand new Mercedes SUV's on board. Thankfully, my ship, the Themis was not involved.

I put car #8 in my trailer, and headed back to Kansas in a rainstorm. It was meant to be!

I really do have to thank an entire host of people and companies who helped to make this trip a reality. My wonderful wife Micki has put up with more than her fair share of my antics in my old TR3a. Thank you Honey!! And son, Jeffery, as my navigator, taking his vacation days to come with me and making the LBL a success for Team Jeffs.

I am in quite a few Triumph clubs and everyone involved in each one of those organizations has helped in some form or fashion to help get this done. They are as follows:

The Kansas City Triumphs Sports Car Club
The Vintage Triumph Register
The Triumph Register of America
The Georgia Triumph Association

I cannot say enough good things about Macy's Garage in Dayton Ohio, and Mark and Tonda Macy. What an outstanding group of folks along with their extremely talented work force. There is no chance that my car could have done as well as it did on the LBL without Macy's expertise and attention to detail.

Macy's Garage, and my own personal maintenance program are backed up by an extremely vigorous parts supplier program in the form of the following:

The Roadster Factory, Armagh, Pennsylvania
Moss Motors, Goleta, California
Moss Motors, Europe
Victoria British Parts, Lenexa, Kansas
Jesse Prathers Motor Sports, Topeka, Kansas
Prathers Racing, Topeka, Kansas
Hendrix Wire Wheel, Greensboro, North Carolina

Without those parts suppliers, our hobby is "dead on arrival"! So, shop early and often!!

And of course I must thank Malcolm McKay and his company, Classic Rally Press in the United Kingdom. What an outstanding job he and his company did to organize and execute this challenging LBL Rally. And, they have already organized another Triumph Rally in the Pyrenees' for 2021. Find his website and signed up!

And then there are the sponsors who supported us mightily during the LBL:

The Royal Automobile Club—did an awesome job with their direct support maintenance and parts supply
Revington TR, United Kingdom—a fantastic parts supplier
The TR Register, United Kingdom—an outstanding Triumph Club
The London Telegraph, United Kingdom—a well done blog about our travels
Merz & Pabst Automobile Repair and Service (Lotus/Morgan)—a support team in Germany
Wallenius Wilhelmson shipping lines, Norway—they shipped my car-outstanding job
RORO USA, New Jersey—the shipping coordinator
Virginia Higgins of DJ Powers & Company, Brunswick, Georgia—an outstanding job with their freight forwarding skills

And finally---we have reached the end!!!