

The Norwich Union MSA Classic 12th October 2008

Peter and Stephen (aka Lewis) Wallis MGC VTE 567H No 770

The weather during the previous week had not been brilliant and the day started in fog for all of us. Paul and Michelle Butler had intended staying overnight before their start in Bath, but circumstances in the end meant a 6:00am start from home and a 100 mile drive to Bath even before they had started. Meanwhile son Stephen and I left home at 7:45 for our start at Wollaton Hall, Nottingham.

We got to Wollaton at 8:25, 35 minutes before our start time which should have been ample time, but it then took 30 minutes to crawl up to the eligibility check as many participants had not filled in their forms and there was just one queue! We had Rob and son, Simon for company though and left about 15 minutes late with Rob hunched over his bonnet fixing his brake light switch. Meanwhile Chris and Lesley and Richard and Susy had caught up and left just ahead of us.

Steve took the first stint to Snibston Colliery museum and the weather improved very quickly and he was soon into the groove gaining mud down the lanes while pushing the C along.

A short stop for coffee and facilities at Snibston and a chance to say hello to Tony and Elaine Merrygold in a S2 E-Type who I knew from past MSA Euroclassics. Already the variety of cars was evident as we had followed a replica VW engined Porsche from 1972 and there were lots of lovely old Alvis and Bentleys in the car park. We managed to park all 4 SMGEC cars together and an 'official photographer' even took a picture of the engine bay of the C. I then took the wheel for the short run to the MIRA test track on the A5 where both Steve and I had a nice bit of fun on the inner test area. No running round the bowl though which was being used by Aston Martin.

A quick snack and more caffeine then Steve drove on to Broughton Castle near Banbury. Here we stopped for picnic just as Paul & Michelle were leaving. They had already visited Prescott Hill climb and were off to Gaydon. Meanwhile Roger & Maureen and Charles had visited the Mill Meece pumping station near Eccleshall and had also been to MIRA and were now en route for Stanford Hall.

At Broughton Castle we met a couple of the RAC mechanics who were supporting the event. In all there were at least 12 fully equipped vans on the routes and by all accounts they had a busy day, but not with any SMGEC members! Then I drove the last stint to Silverstone, constantly looking at the fuel gauge, the C is not very economical and even less so when Steve is in the driving seat! Thankfully it was only 11 miles until we and lots of other anxious drivers found a friendly Esso service area.

A quick refill and cold drink, then on to the finish with 2 laps of Silverstone F1 circuit. No overtaking allowed, well sort of. But thundering under Bridge and into Brooklands, I had to brake hard to get into the exit queue! A driver change in the pits and Steve was off having a nice little dice with a DB6, accelerating out of Abbey towards Bridge I saw the yellow lights flashing on the bridge and his queue started before Brooklands, A bit of creative thought needed for next year.

Back in the Paddock all SMGEC drivers / navigators got together for the picture.



The SMGEC Team at the finish.

Will we be back next year – you bet!!!

Peter and Stephen (aka Lewis) Wallis
Car Number 770 Nottingham start - MGC VTE 567H