



2009 Event Report

One of the features that makes the MSA Euroclassic unique is the amount of support provided on the run. The event is supported by a team of volunteer marshals who give up their free time to run the event for the benefit of the participants. This team is made up of experienced marshals from motor clubs around the country, including a doctor that gives up his free time to act as event Medic. Andy Pearce is one of the volunteer Marshals and wrote up the 2009 Euroclassic, from a marshal's point of view, for his local motor club in Plymouth.

My memories of the 2009 MSA Euroclassic by Andy Pearce - Volunteer Marshal

The first task on the Saturday before the event was how to get 4 cars from Vospers, to their rightful recipients. Luckily I had a trick up my sleeve, that being Dr Stuart Hateley. So we set off for Cornwall in a Mondeo 2.0 litre estate and an S Max automatic, some people get all the good cars!! After delivering these we then returned and picked up our 2.2 Mondeo Titanium X estates ha-ha.

Sunday dawned too early as normal, and off to the Novotel we trotted with everything for documentation. Here my erstwhile colleague John Cooper did the eligibility checking of the vehicles and Chris and I set about the documentation. At 14.00 we drew stumps as we had a ferry to catch, although we had managed to sign on 70 out of the 95 participants.

Once loaded onto the ferry, it was a case of eat, drink and sleep. The crossing thankfully was like a mill pond and we arrived in Santander on time. John and I were course closing from the boat to the halt at Vitoria Gasteiz some 70+ miles, here we met up with the others who had come on other ferries and driven across France and Spain.

Next it was onto the overnight halt at Pamplona, here Dr Stuart and his colleague Ian Howells learnt a valuable lesson from the local Pepe le Plod (police to you and me) one of the Porsches had broken down, so out came the tow-rope and off they went, only to find that the only towing allowed in Spain is by a suspended tow. The worrying thing for Stuart was when he got out the car both the police went for their guns, who said they are a bad judge of characters ha-ha.

On the Tuesday it was onto the checkpoint at Isaba just in the Spanish Pyrenees, the sad thing was, the quaint village had several roads closed around the important municipal building for security reasons, unfortunately terrorism doesn't have any boundaries. Once we finished it was then onto a beautiful mountain pass between Spain and France, which although was being resurfaced, Peter Wellington the event organiser had permission to drive over it, so there was no other traffic apart from construction workers, and the views were awesome.

Unfortunately as we were descending into France the worst moment of the event happened, on a hairpin bend a participant's car had lost all its brakes and had careered off the road. John and I were about 5 minutes behind totally unaware what was happening ahead. When we arrived at the bend I thought that it was either a good picnic or photograph area, until we were flagged down. Getting out of our car, we were still wondering what the commotion was about, then all of a sudden we saw a wheel of a car down the bank.

On closer inspection we saw that a participant had rolled over upside down into the trees about 10 feet down a ravine that was approximately 150 to 200 feet deep. The passenger was being extracted by other participants, so I jumped in to help. Looking inside the vehicle; the windscreen had come in, the roof had partially collapsed and the driver was trapped upside down. Thinking on what happened at training, my first thought was to make the scene as safe for me as I could, so I turned off the ignition, placed boards and clip boards over the glass, then dived in to help the driver, all the time with acrid smell of petrol around. With the assistance of the driver I finally managed to free him, and get him out of the vehicle and up the bank to safety. Apart from a bruised head and ego he was fine, and then whilst waiting for the police I was hit by a huge reality check! What was stopping the vehicle going over the edge? It's strange how your emotions then take on different aspect!! After about 2 hours the police had arrived and recovery of vehicle began, it transpired that there was a large boulder holding the vehicle in place, which was lucky. All I can say to you all is, next

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time you are at a motor event be thankful that you have a rescue unit and doctor there, 'cause without them its frightening, honest.

The rest of the day passed without incidents and we finished at Pau. On the Wednesday John and myself were assisting Stuart and Ian at the Nogaro circuit, here the doc got his second telling off, this time by the circuit manager for stapling signs to their wheelie bins! Once again we all made it safely to the end of the day at Bordeaux, parking in the centre of the town.

Thursday saw us heading further North towards the finish at Poitiers, on the way we went through Angouleme. Here they hold a classic race through the streets and while we were there they had just started to assemble the circuit. Now a council that sinks pads into the pavement to bolt the Armco onto, isn't bad in my books, but why oh why is it always on the continent!!

Friday the last day of the event, saw us leave Poitiers for several Chateaus, then onto the Le Mans Bugatti circuit. Fortunately I managed to get on the circuit in our car, but also in a Jaguar XK120. Seeing the iconic 'Dunlop Bridge' looming up, my mind wandered to all the great race drivers and movie stars who had also had this experience. The feeling was so great all the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end. Then it was onto Versailles for the finish.

The MSA Euroclassic

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