

2009 EVENT REPORT

Event Report: Brod Purdy: Navigator, 1966 Porsche 912SWB Coupé, No. 319

This is becoming a very pleasant annual feature of classic car ownership, the annual Aviva / MSA Classic Tour.

And another excellent reason to drag the young lady out of the garage to enjoy reasonably quiet roads around the Cotswolds and Oxfordshire in very pleasant late September weather with very many like-minded enthusiasts.

After last year's second running of the modern era, we immediately booked our accommodation for this year's run, and kept our fingers crossed that the organizers would still use Cheltenham again. They did – and used the terrific Pittville Pump Rooms. So after a fairly early breakfast and a gentle drive up the M5 and A46 we found the start area much more easily than last year, probably to the grateful thanks of those not familiar with the one-way system around Cheltenham.

As last year, we headed towards the Prescott Hillclimb, but headed West to cross the M5 before turning North, then South to reach Prescott and a fairly gentle run up the hill – until that very sharp left hander that my wife just managed to make without hitting the wall. Unfortunately, I have to say that the roads were not as well chosen as last year's with too much urban driving.

Gaydon was reached by an almost direct route, via Alstone, Temple Guiting, Snowthorpe and Moreton in Marsh. The roads now began to be more interesting, although as the navigator, I saw little from the right hand seat! Too many trip resets! Gaydon was very empty when we arrived – but we were the first group to arrive – and we managed a quick coffee in the sunshine and the opportunity to chat with some of the 'Old Timers' that had arrived from Silverstone before they started their return routes.

And then the run to Upton House, a new venue for the Cheltenham starters, and the one stop where I knew I'd have difficulties leaving owing to its gardens, and a driver who runs a gardening maintenance business, and such was the case. After being given a 'blanket' to prevent oil drops marking the car park, we parked in front of the House and then had a wander around the lower rooms before sitting on the grass to eat our picnic. The gardens were extremely well laid out on a very steep hill and we managed to spot a few ideas that may take shape back in our own small garden in Lincolnshire.

The final run to Silverstone passed through country roads to the south of Banbury, thence to Middleton Cheney and on to the finish at the Home of British Motor Sport. After a different finishing route inside the grounds and a different yellow arch, we received our finishers' medal and card to allow us the drive two laps of the GP circuit. This is where we swapped drivers as Carolyn drove the laps last year; now it was my chance.

I'd had a fair amount of engine and suspension work done to the 912 over the past year so I was interested to see how the changes affected the handling. Suffice to say – I really enjoyed myself. In fact so much I was nearly forced into a third lap as another entrant blocked my exit into the final cones! I made it, though.

And then to the Paddock Café for a free hot drink, followed by the barbecue where we met up with a number of crews from previous Cape-to-Cape Tours – the next big event on our menu, next April.

Next year? Absolutely, but we're trying Dorking next year, and our accommodation is booked.

The MSA Classic

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THE MSA CLASSIC



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