

In the last issue of Freewheel Gus Ellis reported about his long weekend with Rover-friends at the NTPR-gathering in early June. Here is a short description of our much longer weekend from the same event.

We, that is Anita and Björn Gunnarsson in a Triumph TR6, Tomas Börjesson in a Rover 75, from 1999, Anders Arnholm and Linda Normark in a Rover 620 from 1999 and Ingrid and myself in a Rover 216 Cab from 1994.

We all sailed from Gothenburg on June 2nd and came to Danish Frederikshavn after a long breakfast onboard the ferry. Before we had come out of Frederikshavn for the 300 km run down to Esbjerg, we had lost two cars! Soon we found each others again, continued this rather boring run, and arrived at the DFDS ferry in Esbjerg in due time.

The crossing of the North Sea was OK, food and drinks OK and on the morning of Sunday June 3rd we entered UK soil in Harwich. Need I say that we lost one car just as we leaved the enclosed ferry-terminal? We decided to hold on to the main route all the way down to River Thames. We also decided that south of River Thames all main roads were banned! We wanted to see the beautiful British countryside and the small towns and villages. And you guessed right - two cars got lost as soon as we left the main route.

Anyway, finally we were all gathered at the hotel in Tonbridge and had a nice meal there.

On Monday June 4th the crew of the Rover 620 made a detour to Basingstoke. The three other cars headed south on the smallest roads shown on the map. First stop in Brighton to see the beach and the Pier and then off to Littlehampton to visit one of very few British owned car manufacturers - Dutton! As you certainly know they build amphibie-cars and produce up to 15 cars per year. True the Dutton cars are based on Suzukis, but so what!

From Dutton to Goodwood. We went for the racetrack and ended up at the Rolls Royce HQ! But we finally found the racetrack too.

We ended up at a small hotel in Landford in the outskirts of New Forest and completed the day with a delicious Indian dinner.

Tuesday June 5th. Tomas left us immediately for Beaulieu the three other cars headed for New Forest, were some of us took a walk along a trail while others headed for a beer. But the pub was not open and the golf club did not allow people in jeans, so no beer!

The final goal this day was Cheddar, for the cheese and the Gorge. As three of the cars entered the Gorge from the top we met the fourth (Beaulieu-)car!

We had a nice evening at the Fish'n'Chips restaurant at the main street, but we got rather worried when we were told that they were not allowed to serve beer! But we were allowed to buy beer at the pub across the street and bring into the restaurant! Anything like that is strictly prohibited back home in Gothenburg.

On Wednesday June 6th, The Swedish National Holiday, we got plenty of opportunities to see all kinds of excellent British sceneries. We started the day with a visit to the cheese factory in Cheddar, headed off to see the Roman baths in Bath - to find a place to park the car in that town is more difficult then finding solutions to Ian's treasure hunt!

After the bath and lunch, we headed towards Avebury with the huge Stone Circle and Silbury with the Hill. En route we saw quite a few white horses too. We ended up at the School House Hotel at Hook Street in Wotton Bassett, a remarkable hotel run by a Dutch man.

Thursday June 7th. This was another day of detours! Tomas drove off to Bristol too see SS Great Britain and the Suspension Bridge. We almost lost him there! Anders and Linda went off to try to find a Dive Center. They found nothing! The Gunnarssons and Arnholms Sr as usual used the smallest roads shown on the map. First stop by the Severn Bridge and a second stop in Llandridnod Wells. Finally we all gathered at our hotel in Rhayader, but this evening we could not agree on which of the restaurants to have dinner at!

On Friday June 8th all four cars drove off together - and kept together all day - on the nice Welsh roads. We made several stops during the day. For Icecream and petrol, for shopping, and for coffee at Horseshow pass. When we arrived in New Brighton there were many Rovers at the parking place and quite a few Rover-friends having beer in the garden. So we quickly got our rooms and headed for the beer - Hi Gus! It was really nice to see all these Rover-friends again. Many of them we have seen at previous NTPR-rallies and many of them have visited us in Gothenburgh during our event British Car Week.

After a good nights sleep Saturday June 9th was the day for the "Grand" NTPR-Rally! This year the rally lasted the full day. During the rally we saw the old prison in Ruthin, the 50:ies Museum in Denbigh, had lunch in an old mill, and I'm sure Ian lead us on the very, very smallest roads through this beautiful part of Wales! This year it was not difficult to follow the roadboak all the way from start to goal, even though we managed to miss a few turns. Otherwise Ian is known to make tricky roadbooks, for the NTPR-rally that is! Most of his tricks were used for the questions instead! Back at the hotel we all had a beer or two or maybe three to get over it all, while waiting for the Grand dinner and prizegiving ceremony. At the dinnertable I met Marauder-driving Nick Long for the first time. Nic and I had a mail-conversation about Marauders several years ago, but we had never met until now. Unfortunately I was a bit nervous during the dinner. I always am before addressing such a large group of people. After the dinner I was supposed to deliver special Viking prizes. I could not concentrate on talking to Nic during the dinner. I apologize Nic!

Sunday June 10th was another of those sunny and nice days. Ian took us to a gocart-racing-track. Very interesting indeed! I've not drivven a gocart the last 20 years, so it was really a new experience. Of course I did not make to the final run! But others did and one was Nic Long. I don't know if it his long training in the Marauder, but he did win the whole race. Congratulations Nic! After this adventure we went off for a tour in one of the sightseeing boats on River Dee. This is really more of my cup of tea then gocart! There was lunch onboard too! Very nice. Before we returned for the NTPR-hotel we strolled along in Chester. Up on the old wall, down on the narrow streets. To the old Roman theatre. And into quite a few shops. In the evening there was another Grand dinner with all those Rover-friends that did not have to leave for home during the day.

Monday June 11th was a day of departure. Everybody left the NTPR-hotel fairly early and so did we. We had no real plans for the week, except that we had to be on the ferry on Friday afternoon. So we started the morning studying the maps, and finally decided to start our trip eastwards towards Peak District without any fixed destination. En route we found the Jodrell Bank observatory. Very interesting and nice lunch too. We stoped in Buxton to see the tourist office to get some tips on B&B:s in the area. They recommended one in town which was very nice, and we had dinner at a pub in the vicinity. In the open air! Excellent!

On Tuesday June 12th we started out for sightseeing in Peak District and Sherwood Forest. Anders wanted to see Mam Tor and guided us on small roads. We are not sure we got there, but he treated us to a nice cup of coffee, excellent vies from Surprise View as well as long and winding roads. We got to Sherwood Forest far too late and had to find a B&B for the night. We found Beck's i Moorehouse and had dinner at the pub in Laxton.

Finally the Sherwood Forest! On Wednesday June 13th we made it. The Sherwood Forest is one of those places you just have to see. We parked by the Visitor center and decided that the Major Oak would be our destination. There are two paths to it and they have exactly the same length. Guess if any of our four car crews arrived at the same time! You are exactly right - the four crews all

arrived at different times!

But honestly, there were a lot of things to see during the walks.

From here our group of four cars was divided into two groups. A senior group and a junior group. The juniors drove off to see Nottingham Castle, I think they got lost. I'm not sure they saw the castle! The senior group drove well east of Nottingham and ended up at the Eglantine Winery in Costock. We tasted all the wines they had, and you may guess how many extra kilos one of the cars had after that! This is a question in the same division as Ian's questions during the treasure hunt. The answer is: Many!

This was also the day of rain showers. When the senior group now headed southwards on those beautiful small roads we passed through a couple of rather enoying heavy rain showers. Didn't matter too much until we found ourselves behind one of those farmers in a tractor! These small, narrow and winding roads does not give many opportunities for overtaking. So we got pretty wet!

We ended up in Market Harborough. Found a pub with plenty of rooms for guests, booked four of them and in the end the junior section of the group showed up after seeing Newcastle, Coventry and only God knows what! We discussed all that over a beer in the garden, but, as you know, beer has a habit of drowning memory . . .

Beware. The rain-season has started! There was a soft rain in the morning of Thursday June 14th. Nevertheless, before all the others woke up I walked the short distance to the end station of the Market Harborough branch of Union Canal and got some photos there.

And once again, this small group of four cars from Sweden was divided in two: seniors and juniors!

The juniors went off to Northampton for shopping, and Milton Keynes to see Betchley Park and maybe some other things they won't tell us about.

The seniors went off to nearby Foxton to see the flight of ten locks there, as well as the remnants of the world's first inclined plane for boats. By now the rain had stopped so we could spend a couple of hours there, enjoying the show when several boats passed through the locks, as well as icecream and coffee. Of course we saw the inclined plane too! An engineering masterpiece!

From here we continued to Cambridge. Stopped in Stilton for lunch. In Cambridge we wanted to stroll around and see things in this old town but the rain kept pouring all the time so what we saw was the mathematical bridge. From a distance only. We were not allowed to enter the University area for a closer look!

At the end of the day we found a pub in St. Neots. An odd pub for youngsters I guess. But they had rooms for us all, so let's say it was a new experience! Excellent dinner at an Indian restaurant around the corner!

Friday June 15th was our last day in UK. We all wanted to see Colchester, but the youngsters are rather heavyfooted on the gaspedal so we let them leave early and drive away. Halfway between St. Neots and Colchester the seniors passed the juniors. They had stopped for a break. The spirit stove was boiling water for coffee. But we continued. And soon we enjoyed a beer at the oldest hotel in UK instead! Colchester is a rather nice old town to stroll around in, but we had to leave for the ferry in Harwich and could not fully enjoy it.

Saturday June 16th. Well. What would you say about driving 300 km in pouring rain? We did not like either!

We got on the ferry for Gothenburg and we all got safely home. Without any major breakdowns and troubles.

So why do we bother to cross the North Sea to visit UK and the NTPR? Many of you have been to Sweden and know that we have nice small roads, beautiful countryside, small towns and villages.

But we don't have Ian Glass and we don't have Not The Portmaddog Rally! So Watch out - we might come back some day!

Bo Arnholm

