

## BEGINNER'S NOTES

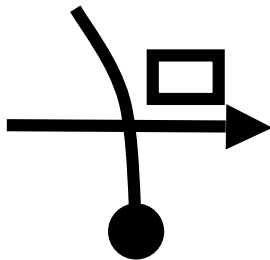
The Three Castles Welsh Classic Trial has been designed as an enjoyable event for people starting out in historic rallying. We want everyone to have a good time. Complete maps of the route will be up at Rally HQ at Imperial Hotel each day from Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. So there should be no mysteries.

You don't even need to use a map. We provide a Road Book that defines the whole route using Tulip Diagrams (see below). These are very easy to follow, and if desired you can also copy the route onto maps, in which case you'll want to bring Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger maps 114, 115, 116, 123, 124 & 125. Any extra maps will be notified in Final Instructions. All the roads we use are also on the Philips Navigator Wales large scale Atlas.

Here are a few points of general use and interest.

## SURVIVING AND ENJOYING REGULARITIES

Regularity Sections are a test of teamwork, not speed. From the Road Book we give you, you'll know where you have to be, and when, at all times. The Road Book shows places you need to pass and the time to be at each. You do well by reaching each point at the right time. You need a calm, methodical atmosphere in the car. You need to focus; not chat. You need a watch - an ordinary watch, or a stopwatch - digital with a big display helps. You need a distance display you can see - the odometer in your speedometer, or ideally a more accurate separate 'trip meter'. These can be bought for about £130, and fitted by a keen mechanic. If you're not sure which to buy, ask us.



So-called Tulip Diagrams give you route instructions. A "tulip" tells you where you are coming from with a blob and where to go to with an arrowhead...

...and gives other information too - this one says turn right at a crossroads before a building, for instance. As well as knowing what to look for, we also tell you how far away from the last diagram it is (in miles and in kilometres) and how far it is in total from the start of the "regularity".

On regularities there is a time at which you should be at each "tulip". That is given to you as the number of minutes and seconds after you left the start of the section. We also tell you the average speed you have to do to make the time. And good crews will be there on the second. How? They drive consistently and check how they are doing at every point.

At one or more points on a regularity shown in the roadbook - and you don't know which - we will be there. We'll have a red Control board, there'll be a white line drawn across the road, and we'll time you when you stop with your front wheels over it and rear wheels behind (this is called *stopping astride* a line). We write that time on a Time Card you carry in the car and download the time to a chip on the Time Card and once that's done, off you go, due at the next point at the time shown in the roadbook, now adjusted by how early or late you were at the point just visited. If you were 10 seconds early, you'll need to deduct 10 seconds from your next due time. If you were a minute late, you'll need to add a minute to it. And so on. All of this, in daylight at an average speed of less than 30mph - keep calm, and there's time to get it right.

The navigator knows what's coming, so tells the driver how far the next diagram ("three tenths of a mile"), what to do there ("turn right at crossroads"), what time due ("in thirty-six seconds"), what speed ("at 30mph"). Tips on what helps? Have the navigator give time checks en route e.g. "thirty seconds to go". Have the driver tell the navigator when a "tulip" object is reached on the road - above you might say "turning right now" and so on. As with any skill, few people are perfect first time - practice helps.

## INSURANCE

Everyone who starts a rally must be insured, by law. Normal road regulations apply at all times. If you have a policy that specifically excludes motor sport you will not be covered by it for even the road sections of the event. You should ask your broker to cover you, and some will for events of this kind. If your cover cannot be extended or you don't wish to change insurers you can opt instead for the third party rally insurance scheme, through brokers Lockton, which gives you Road Traffic Act third party cover for the event. You sign up for this and pay the premium (cash or cheque) on the day, at Documentation. Lockton have yet to set this for 2010 but it'll be about £65 a car, for the whole four days.

## OUR DRIVING TESTS

Our driving tests are on private land. They test your team's manoeuvring skill and ability to drive the right route - a car that is slower but neatly driven and accurately navigated will usually beat a faster car that goes wrong. The keys are going the right way, neatness and not wasting time. Your performance is measured against others in your class, so you don't compete with much faster cars. A typical driving test takes from under a minute to nearer five - they're not long, but offer a short, intense test of skill and judgment. Your insurance won't cover you for the tests, but you may not think that a big problem - speeds are usually not high and rather than an accident a mechanical failure, very occasionally, is the usual problem.

## PREPARING THE CAR

The Three Castles is a relatively gentle road rally, so there's no need to go overboard fitting up-rated suspension or sump guards to your treasured classic. Nonetheless, there are some things you can and should do to make sure that you have a trouble-free run. Our preparation experts say...

"Many classics lie idle during the winter, when potential problems like dirt in fuel can build up. Service the car. Change the oil and filter, and fit a new air cleaner filter. Check all the fluid levels. Grease all the grease nipples. Put in a fresh tank of fuel, use the car over a weekend if possible and make sure that it runs cleanly. Note any problems, then check in particular the tyres, wheel bearings, brakes, suspension, cooling system, electrics, fuel filter and fuel supply."

"If you need new tyres, new shock absorbers, brake pads or linings, get them fitted at this stage. Ordinary road tyres at manufacturer's recommended pressures are fine. Just make sure they have plenty of tread. Don't assume you now have a reliable car. Instead, give it another longish run. Often we find ourselves at the roadside fixing a car fresh from a winter rebuild with an unidentified problem still present."

"Next, two areas that often cause unnecessary trouble. An enthusiastic approach to driving tests can quickly expose a slipping clutch or worn drive-shaft coupling. A new clutch could well be worthwhile. Get those drive shaft couplings checked too. Some cars are prone to this kind of problem - hard driven Minis are famous for twisting drive shaft couplings and big Healeys can be hard on drive-shafts."

"How about the exhaust? It may be new, but country roads can cause bottoming. See if it can be raised to increase ground clearance. Wire on the exhaust rubbers so they can't pop off. Tighten everything up and turn the exhaust clamps to one side to reduce the chance that they'll catch. If your exhaust is low, consider welding a skid-plate to the front of the silencer."

That should get you to the start in good condition. After that, we'll try to be there to help if you hit trouble. If you are in any doubt as to what to do, call the Office and we'll put you in touch with a team member who can offer advice.

## NOT SURE OF SOMETHING?

For a copy of the MSA Blue Book as it relates to classic rally cars and rallying, or to request our FAQ sheet, which answers many problems, email us on [info@three-castles.co.uk](mailto:info@three-castles.co.uk)