# THETHREE CASTLES TRIAL

Be Po439

Heritage Trial is for cars that were made before 1952

or those who have never heard of the Three Castles Trial, it is a classic car event based in Llandudno, running through the ancient landscapes of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Clwyd in North West Wales during the first week of the summer. It is

during the first week of the summer. It is often thought of as a 'must do' in the calendar of classic rallies with a good mixture of regularities and tests run over three days in what must be the best scenery North Wales has to offer.

This year, it was a near podium position for the first time partnership of John Gearing & Steve Farmer in their newly prepared MGB GT V8. Both parties first entered the inaugural event in separate cars and this was a coming together after 15 years. John has a 1978 MGB which he occasionally uses for rallying but he has switched from driver to navigator in order to improve rankings. Steve Farmer first entered the event with an E Type Jaguar and then moved onto a Jaguar XK150 but it was too much of a heavy car for tests. Earlier in the year both John & Steve thought that a successful partnership could be formed if they had the right car. John introduced Steve to Ian Wallman, the Workshop Manager of MGOC and a story began that resulted in a rally prepared MGB GT V8.

The event is well organised and draws entrants from such far flung places as Europe, Canada and even America. John and Steve surprised themselves on the event by lying third after day two with a possible podium position. This was an amazing result out of a full entry of 66 starters and in a car that had only done 500 miles since leaving the MGOC workshop.

In a post-event analysis, both Steve and John agreed that it was nerves that possibly got the better of them. On the final day they lost 40 seconds after driver Steve slid over a stop astride line on gravel and then navigator John missed a crafty left turn to a control straight after a junction that was marked over the page on the route book. The truth is probably more associated with the 70th birthday bash that John held at The Empire Hotel which left little time to study the final day's route book before a 7.33am start the following day. However, all was not lost and John and Steve were winners of the Intermediate category, eventually slipping to 5th with only 10 seconds separating the 3rd, 4th and 5th placed cars. They have both remarked on what an enjoyable and competitive event it was.

Congratulations to the overall winners, Dermot Carnegie and Paul Bosdet from Ireland, in a Ford Escort. If this sounds like something you would like to take part in, the 2019 Three Castles Trial will run from the 4th–7th June 2019. Find out more at www.three-castles.co.uk ?

Steve and John's
Three Castles Trial
MGB GT V8 will be
displayed on the
MG Owners' Club
Stand at the
Lancaster
Insurance
Classic
Motor Show
(9th–11th
November)
in Hall 3.





### Is it a race?

The theme is 'relaxed competition'. Run under MSA regulations, this is a competitive classic rally, not a tour, but it's one that should be approached in the right spirit. The organisers are not trying to get crews lost, or to catch them out but they also don't want people speeding on the highway. Rather, they want this to be an event that is a celebration of the classic car: an ambassador for its sport that is encouraged and welcomed by the populations of the villages and hamlets it passes through.

### What cars are allowed to enter?

Any classic car of any make and model made before 31st December 1985 is now eligible for Three Castles events. There aren't any special modifications needed, though for ease in following the roadbook and particularly in doing regularity sections the organisers strongly recommend fitting a simple trip meter, such as an entry-level Brantz 2 or Brantz Retrotrip. These start from around £150.

## What about even earlier cars?

The roads that the trial uses are smooth and the organisers say they don't use unsurfaced test venues. If your car is an older or more precious model, and was made before 1952, or predates the advent of disc brakes, you should enter the Heritage Trial. This is also a competitive event, and running alongside the Classic Trial on the same dates. It is tailored to these earlier cars and provides a slightly less 'full on' experience, whilst still visiting the same venues and travelling the same route.

# What else can I do on the weekend?

You can have fun with your classic on around twenty special tests in which you drive against the clock (on private land). Run to a 30mph average, the twists and turns on these sections nonetheless provide plenty of fun for the crew, and again test teamwork as well as driving skill. But as with the evenings, it's really all about the people: every marshall and team member is out to make sure you have a good time, and you'll see happy, smiling faces wherever you go.