

# *Classic*

UPDATES & MONTE NEWS



# WELCOME



Wishing all our readers a Happy Christmas and all the very best for a Healthy and Peaceful 2026.

Hope you enjoy this Christmas Edition of Classic Updates and Monte News.

From Douglas and June.

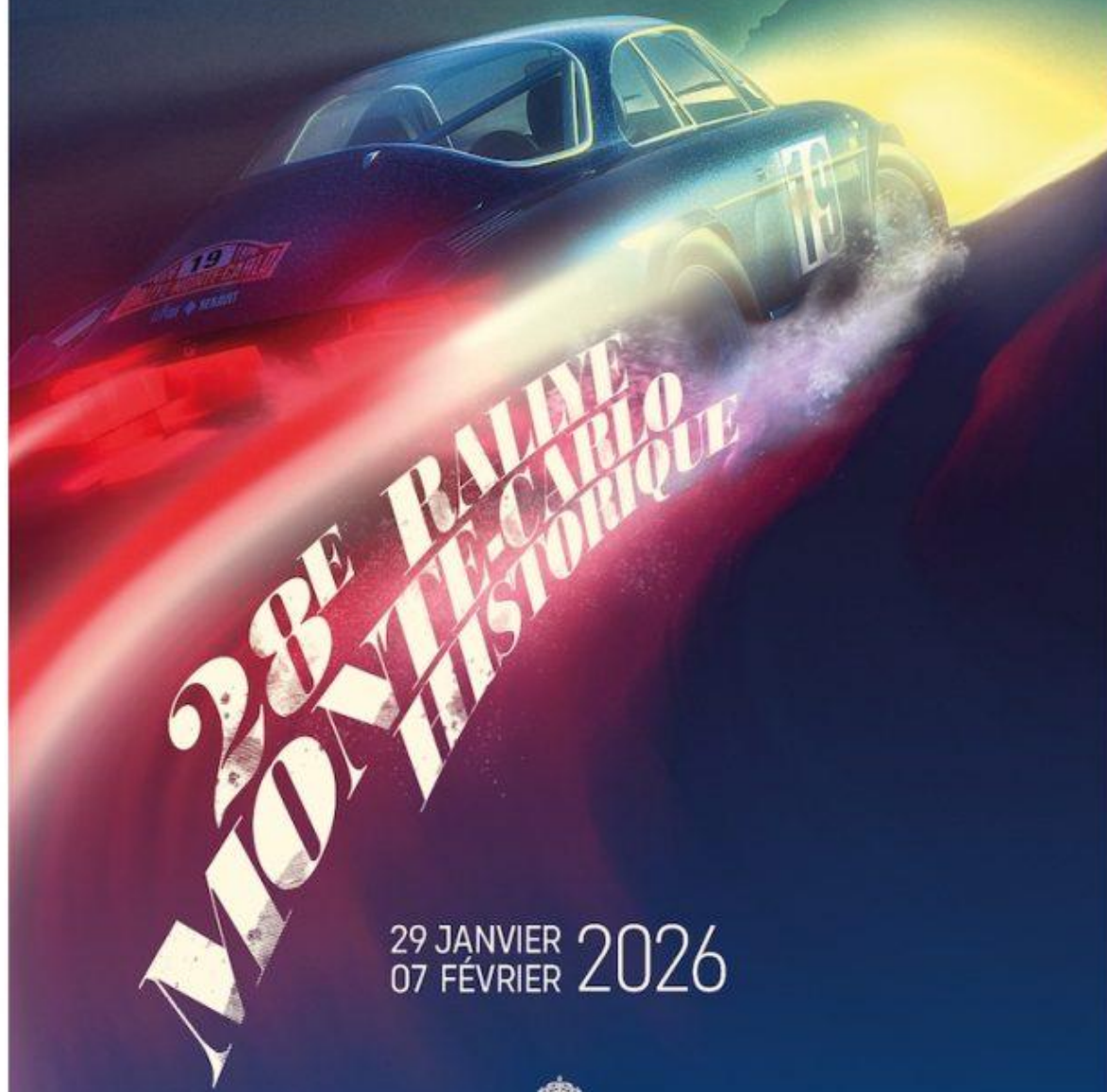


# STIRLING CASTLE MONTE PHOTOSHOOT

Andy Thomlinson







29 JANVIER  
07 FÉVRIER 2026



50<sup>e</sup> ANNIVERSAIRE DE LA VICTOIRE DE LA COUPE DES DAMES AU RALLYE MONTE-CARLO 1976 DE NICHÈLE MOUTON & FRANÇOISE CONCONI SUR ALPINE-RENAULT A110 1600SC



# **STIRLING CASTLE**

## **“MONTE FEST”**

**29 JANUARY 2026**



**FREE EVENT FOR ALL THE FAMILY**  
**BE PART OF THE FAMOUS MONTE CARLO RALLYE**

**LIVE MUSIC**  
**STREET FOOD**  
**RALLY CARS ARRIVE FROM 4.30PM**  
**FIRST RALLY CAR LEAVES AT 6.30**



## WHERE TO SEE THE CARS

### 29 January 2026

- John O Groats 8.30am
- Inverness Columba Hotel 11.00 am approx
- Glencoe Kingshouse Hotel 2.30pm approx
- Stirling Castle 4.30pm approx.

### 30 January 2026

- Jedburgh Abbey Car Park 10.00am approx
- Pierce Bridge George Hotel 12.00 approx
- York Castle 2.30pm approx.





# Marshalling the HERO-ERA LEJOG Reliability Trial 2025

David Alexander



The LEJOG Reliability Trial is like no other event you will marshal on other than maybe Peking to Paris. It's different to competing because the travel schedules between controls are always very tight with very little down time.

Matthew and I were joined by Ed Barber for the 2025 event which we joined to do Legs 4 and 5 after the overnight halt at Gretna. We had five controls over the next 24 hours covering a distance of 372 miles. Matthew and I shared the driving in his trusty BMW 320D. You won't believe the amount of kit that's required to do a LEJOG. Don't even think of starting unless your car has all season or winter tyres on all wheels. This year was looking to be very wet so two sets of waterproofs were essential.

The detailed Control Information Sheets arrived by email about a week before the event. HERO control location is very detailed

using What3Words and Whole Circle Coordinates to program the Sat Nav and a section of OS Map. It's important to plot the locations as soon as you get them and compare the points with the map extract.

Our first control was TP4/1G near Lockerbie at 0829, that's point G on the first Regularity. It was the start of a long day. Our control was positioned at the end of a hedge. Hidden in plain sight. Heavy rain showers made stopping at the board a challenge for many crews. The field was already down to 46 cars from the original 60 that left Lands End.

The photographs are largely taken on the first control because after that all the rest were in darkness and actually it takes all your concentration to run the control.



The Second control TP4/4C was a 90-mile trip to near Stirling. We had time for a quick coffee as the Clock car was scheduled for 15.26. Most of the local dog walkers seemed to drive up and down this lane when we got there although it was getting dark for the first car. It's important to eat when you can, so we had a



meal in Stirling before heading to our next control near Fort William. 45 cars made our control.

In theory we had about five hours to travel the 106 miles. We planned on using the A84 and A85 to Crianlarich then the A82 across Rannoch Moor and through Glen Coe to Fort William. However we didn't expect to sit at Lochearnhead on the A84 for 45 minutes where they were doing road works and operating a convoy every hour. We finally arrived at 23.00hrs.

Time for an hours rest before the clock car for arrived just after midnight. TP5/1A is the first control after the Fort William Rest Halt. Despite 43 cars leaving the MTC 10 miles away, only 42 made it to us. The last car, according to the Closing Car, had turned the wrong way out of the hotel.

Things were hotting up for our travel schedule as our next control was TP5/3E at 0529 near Dornoch 107 miles away. We were expecting to get there about 30 minute before the Clock Car which isn't much margin on a 2hr 45min trip.

Matthew drove the first half up along Loch Ness before I took over through Inverness and up to the Control. We were pretty tired, so goodness knows what the crews were feeling. They were driving mainly single track roads while we were using the A roads which at least had a line down the middle.

TP5/3E was down a single-track road with only one decision junction for crews. We heard at least two make the wrong decision so we only got 36 cars.

Our final control was TP5/6A about a mile off the A9 south of Wick. 42 miles and only 38 minutes was always going to be tight and in theory we would be 6 minutes before the first car. The plan or hope was that a reduced number of cars running late would make it possible. The Clock Car was waiting for us, but we were in front of the rally again. Obviously, some crews were cutting or missing sections and we actually got 39 cars.

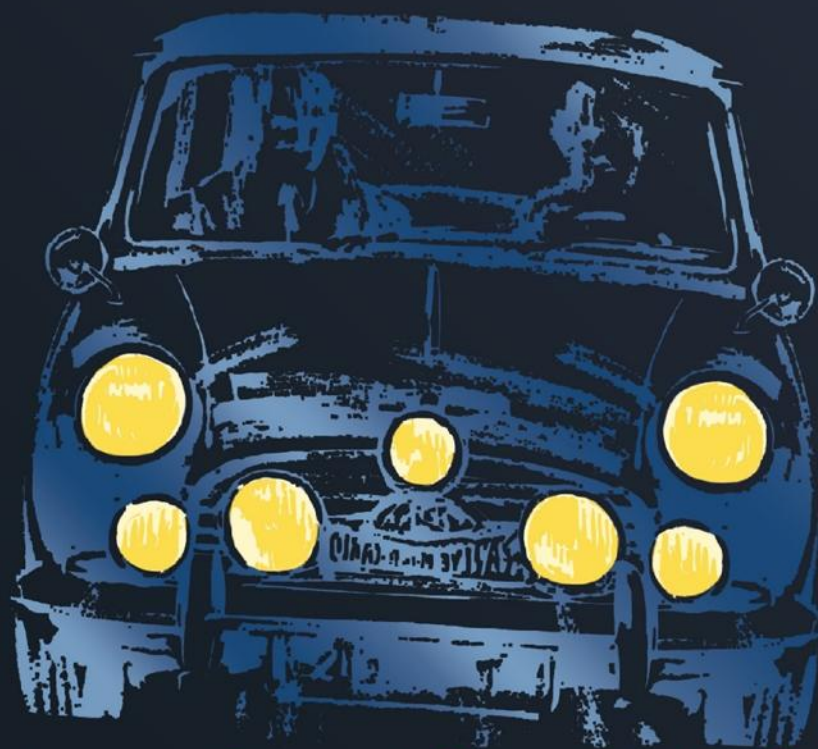
We closed at about 0930 and started the long 370mile trek home. Our plan was to get some breakfast but the 90 miles to Inverness along the A9 seemed to be a café desert so we finally got lunch in Inverness. We stopped every hour or so to swop drivers as the road was busy and we were tired, but a good meal soon perks you up and we made good progress finally getting home at 1900hrs.

This is the third time we've marshalled on the LEJOG. It's quite an adventure. This year was the toughest because of the distances we had to go to get in front of the event. Having two drivers and a comfortable quiet car certainly makes it possible and a totally different challenge to competing. Fortunately for us there was no snow and we didn't get too wet.

Would we do it again. Of course it's a heck of a challenge but the competitors make it all worth doing. Over such a long event when you see the competitors so many times it's like seeing a mate come down the road. It could be the relief that they have found you in the middle of nowhere, but every single one arrives with a smile.







Arrochar Alps Col de  
**RUISG**  
Ecosse Rally Drivers Club

## A Road Book Rookie Peter Mullen.

Having not seriously followed a road map since I sat in the front seat of my Dad's Mk2 Cortina as he towed a Sprite Alpine caravan to Devon for the school summer holiday in 1976, I can safely say that that the invitation to navigate for Ken Brown in an MGB GT on the Arrochar Alps road trip was met with a certain degree of nervousness in case I let him down! Thankfully these concerns were, on the whole, unfounded and I had a most enjoyable day in his company and that of everyone else.



The journey from Balerno to the starting point in Strathblane was spent familiarising myself with the Brantz International 2 'S' Pro electronic rally meter which I believe Ken had recently fitted to the car, along with new tyres. Alongside this we had two Garmin sat nav's to provide additional information and

hopefully corroborate what the rally meter was telling us (or not telling us as the case may be). It soon became apparent that the rally meter was running away with itself when compared to the distances shown on the sat nav and so some sort of recalibration was going to be necessary. By the time we got to the Kirkhouse Inn for the start of the event the default calibration value had gone from '452' to '460' and the margin of error had dropped from 5% to about 2.5% (which still places you 2.5 miles away from where you want to be after just 100 miles!!). However, since the meter was still showing greater values (longer distances) than both the Garmin and the TULIP map, it did mean that we were left anticipating the trigger points before we actually came across them (as opposed to going past them because the meter was reading too low). A useful exercise which highlights the need to check your calibration after changing your wheels or tyres!





Having never seen a TULIP map before I did look at it beforehand (alongside a roadmap) and soon realised that the well thought out route was going to involve a

somewhat convoluted journey over about two and a half hours. The outward journey was in daylight under poor weather conditions whilst the return trip would also be under darkness. By way of confession, since 'Glen Fruin' and 'Glen Douglas' were names given to steam locomotives of the old North British Railway (a particular interest of mine), I had driven most of roads before, but as a 'Sunday Driver'!

After coffee and a bacon roll at the Kirkhouse Inn, the driver's briefing was held before all eleven cars left at one-minute intervals. As well as my TULIP map I had also been issued with a quiz form which was to be completed throughout the first leg of the journey. Given that some of the questions / answers were to be found at the same time as I was looking for a TULIP point, I suspect the quiz master had certain sadistic tendencies (as well as a red TR6).

As we got on the road, I found the TULIP maps very well researched and well presented, with everything clearly laid out in a logical manner so that the information could be quickly extracted whilst in the car. The tulip arrows (symbols) were intrinsically easy to interpret, but at the same time could convey additional information such as the angle of the road junction. My only (very) minor frustration was that the distances shown on the Garmin and the TULIP map (particularly the intermediate distance values) differed slightly from what I was seeing in front of me on the meter, with the discrepancies getting bigger as the

distances got longer. Further optimisation of the calibration process will of course resolve this issue. With only a few exceptions I was getting the hang of resetting the meter at each TULIP point.



The first 20 miles of the journey were generally uneventful until we left the B832 onto the unclassified road travelling west through Glen Fruin. After about 1 mile we were brought to a halt by a very large puddle about 100 yards in length and covering the entire width of the road. After the TR6 in front tentatively made its way through the somewhat deep puddle, we cautiously followed before soon coming across a second puddle (although



not quite so big). Once out of Glen Fruin, the route took us through Garelochhead and then south to Kilgreggan before spinning round and heading back up the coast to then turn east through Glen Douglas with time for a photo stop. The final seven miles saw us into Arrochar where we had a most enjoyable pub lunch and a blether in The Village Inn. Prizes were also given out for the quiz before we set off in the dark for the return journey.

With the aid of a torch I did not find the map reading itself any more difficult in the dark, but identifying the junctions and way points along the road was much harder and so we overshot two tulip points, both of which were my fault but easily remedied by my more than competent driver (why would anybody want to go down the Red Road anyway?). Despite remembering about the huge puddle at the far end of Glen Fruin, it did catch us out on the way back with the result that we hit it like a brick wall at about 30mph and came to a very sudden stop in about 8" of water, at which point the engine stalled. Thankfully, Ken managed to get it started first time (after a few choice words any Balfour Beatty man would have been proud of!). However, another problem soon manifested itself in the form of a loud noise which didn't appear to be related to engine speed or road speed, but which was quite concerning. Since we were not able to stop safely, we agreed to keep going until a suitable place could be found, by which time the noise stopped on its own. The rest of the journey home went smoothly until we reached Dumbarton and turned into the MacDonalds car park, when the loud noise returned. On opening the bonnet, it was evident that the cooling fan in front of the radiator had slipped on its housing (probably when it was hit by a wall of water) and so the plastic blade was rubbing against the fins of the radiator (hence the noise). Fortunately neither the radiator nor the fan were damaged and a temporary repair could be carried out for the journey home.

I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience and would like to thank Ken for the invitation, as well everybody involved in designing the route, making up the maps and sorting out the logistics of the day. I wish you all well as you set off on the Real McKoy (aka the Monte).

## ARROCHAR ALPS IN AN MG RV8 RICHARD JENNER



Tony Smith and I are entered for the Monte Carlo Classique so the Arrochar Alps and Col de Ruisg events were an excellent chance to see how Tony's RV8 might fare as our previous ERDC events had been in one of our Midgets or Tony's MGTF. The RV8 had been accepted for the Classique as an MGB derivative. Tony's RV8 is a pre-production car (built to test the production process) and one of only 2 surviving examples (the other is in the Netherlands). It differs from the production models in one important way in that it has hydraulic power steering fitted by a specialist for MG Rover utilizing an Escort rack – Tony has the bill; it was over £2000 and added too much to an already expensive car that was costing over £25000 in 1993! I had expected to be navigating for both events, but Tony asked me to drive the first one so what follows is partly about driving the RV8 and partly about the events.

This was my first proper drive of an RV8 and we could have picked an easier day – rain, drizzle, mist, standing water and 2



axle deep 'puddles'. On the other hand, it was the work-up we needed. I was very conscious that the RV8 was a B derivative. The interior has the same dimensions but even less room due to some very well-padded seats and a large central console – you certainly can't 'get your elbows out'. The steering wheel is off-set to the left, the gear change has a long throw (but is very positive) and the handbrake sticks-up a lot even when off as there is no room for it between the seat base and the console. The minor controls are quite modern though and the intermittent wiper was a real bonus. The exhaust note from the 3.9 litre V8 is totally infectious and the torque is prodigious – I had to resist the temptation to change down all the time and even the first righthand hairpin in Glen Douglas could be taken comfortably in 3<sup>rd</sup> with just a change to 2<sup>nd</sup> for the next left hander. The steering has great feel (but a very poor lock) and it was easy to place the car although the rudimentary suspension gives a jiggling ride and 60 mph feels quite fast even if the engine is only turning over at 2000 rpm. We managed to wade through the 2 deep 'puddles' in Glen Fruin and I was reminded of my Land-Rover off roading days (Has anyone done the Monte in an old L- R?). Anyway, we arrived in one piece at Arrochar and Tony only suggested that I slowed down once!

We swopped for the night section (and avoided Glen Fruin – probably wisely) and I tested out my LED clip on map reading light (thumbs up) and the RV8's headlights (thumbs down). Tony is having LED driving lights fitted for the Monte wired to the main beam and will have the headlight bulbs upgraded at the same time and also have the lights reset. It was a chance to play with the new SatNav too and we found a light setting that worked for us both. So both events were a lot of fun and useful preparation. Packing will be the next challenge, the boot is full of the spare and the spares!



SIGNING ON AND COLLECTION OF PLATES AND GOODY BAG



DRIVER'S BRIEFING FROM KEN BROWN



BILL AND VAL POLLOCK FIRST CAR OFF



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