

**From New York to L.A.**  
**By Smokey & the Wild Goose**

**The 1982 cross America run by Jim Coray & Martin Wildgoose first published in Cats Whiskers Nos 18 & 20**

Well you guys, you finally did it. A visit to Ian Garrad's penthouse suite in the Marina yielded my copy of Cats Whiskers which Ray kindly had mailed to me. Having just read it, I feel totally motivated to sit here by the pool in 95 degrees of Fahrenheit heat and write you an article about our 3000 mile journey from New York to L.A. I guess you ought to play Patsy Gallant's record of that title whilst reading this.

Well how do I start? "3000 miles of ecstasy in two MK1 tigers?" or "How many breakdowns can two people survive in four days?" Maybe 'international co-operation was the only way we made it?' Perhaps 'Fun and laughs for six days by CB?' Even, 'You too could do it in 3 days given a lot of luck?'.

You read how the car drove to Liverpool in C.W. No. 15 just perfect. The next stage was for Jim Corey and me to fly to New York's Kennedy Airport. We departed Heathrow on April 4<sup>th</sup> and arrived at New York seven hours later. TWA did a fabulous job of feeding and entertaining us. Hugh Whittaker and wife Liza met us at the airport and we loaded our suitcases in his pickup truck and zoomed through the New York rush hour to Long Island and a Holiday Inn for our first night's stay. Sunday saw us buying our first legal CS rigs and playing with them, to get them ready for our installation in our cars when we collected them from Newark New Jersey docks on Monday. Hugh took us to stay with Lynn the fiancée of my ex-next-door neighbor on Sunday evening, and collected us on Monday at 11:00a.m. to go to Newark docks and collect our pride and joy.

We paid \$130 agents fees and \$160 customs duty and drove to the dock to collect the cars. You can imagine our dismay when they arrived. Neither car running, both with paint chips all over the place. Jim's car with a cracked right hand exhaust, having at some stage been rammed, and only starting with jump leads. Mine containing two inches of water in the cabins and four inches in the rear wheel arches, total refusal to start with a badly dented right hand door and broken right hand window. To cut a long story short, about two hour later, we got my car started by disconnecting the starter motor to solenoid load which had earthed to the exhaust manifold and left the docks very disappointed and still unable to buy any insurance because of our transient situation and lack of permanent address. Well we were on our way and as the minutes passed the tension grew less.

Hugh was leading us back to Long Island as we could stay the night, fix the cars and use his address to buy insurance. Apparently you have to have a permanent address in the state where you insure the car. Having just paid the toll onto the George Washington Bridge to cross the Hudson River to Manhattan, and in the fifth lane my car expired!! 6 p.m. rush hour, five lanes to cross, no engine and about 30 mph. I made it needless to say across to the hard shoulder. Jim

just behind me made it 500 yards further on and Hugh in front of me was swept onto the Bridge and off to Manhattan by the traffic.

Of course, once Jim stopped his car, it wouldn't start again so there we were, in a strange country in good old downtown New York with two exhausted cars. The local Sherriff's department soon arrived and pushed me off the bridge on to a (slip road) off ramp, and left us there. After a couple of minutes, a plan of action was formulated. The cars were locked! Big deal!! And we walked off the bridge down the 'on ramp' and went looking for a garage so we returned to the cars, started Jim's by bump starting it in reverse on the George Washington Bridge and then drove it off the bridge down the 'onramp' which by now was deserted.

We found a motel, who knew of no local garage, so after driving around for 30 minutes, eventually found a Texaco Service Station owned by Tom, whose tow truck was being used by his son and which contained his only tow rope. So back to the bridge we went and having removed my passengers 'Britax' seat harness and attached it to our two bumper bars we towed my car off the bridge down the 1 in 10 gradient for three miles to the Texaco station. The cars obviously so connected were only about 19" apart and quite a hairy drive resulted, naturally enough. Anyway, we made it to the garage and actually touched bumpers as we turned into the gas station forecourt (front lot).

Tom, the proprietor was obviously an enthusiast having a 'boast tailed' Renault on hoist hoist, undergoing a rebuild and he must have taken to our persevering spirit for he gave indoor shelter to my car overnight, recommended a local hotel and restaurant and bid us goodnight until tomorrow when we were invited to come back and repair the car anytime after 8 a.m. Hugh by now had still not reappeared so when we checked in to the hotel we called Hugh and he and Liza and son returned with all our bags and baggage. He had gone all the way over the bridge turned around and returned. By the time he had turned again to get back on our side of the bridge we had towed the cars away.

By now it was 9.30 p.m. so Hugh and family departed and we went for sustenance at the recommended restaurant. A converted riverboat on the Hudson with a view over the downtown Manhattan night time skyline, a beautiful view. Our hotel room had the same nice view so we were well pleased and had a good night's sleep.

Next morning we woke for an early start, had a quick breakfast, checked out of the hotel, and planned our first day's journey into the U.S.A.

First things first providence thought Jim's car wouldn't start, or bump start, so we walked to Tom's garage about a two mile walk, with our tool boxes. Tom was out, so the guys in the garage cleared the one hoist (hydraulic ramp) and pushed behind the 'booker' headers, which involved disconnecting the exhaust system and using a six foot crow bar. The starter tested out okay but the battery wouldn't take any charge so a new battery was ordered and a starter solenoid H.T. lead. The starter was re-installed and we then sent the breakdown truck to start Jim's car and washed my car whilst we waited for parts. Jim returned and charged his battery

washed his car and then my parts arrived and were fitted. By 3 p.m. we were back on the road and feeling much better. Tom's total bill for battery, HI lead, storage time, battery charges, was only \$80 - so we left feeling we had made a friend with the man and his cigar from the Bronx.

Three insurance companies had been recommended to us, so we got to work on insuring the cars and fitting our C.B. rigs. By 7 p.m. all had been accomplished and we checked into Birmingham Hotel in Riverside for one more night. After all that was our permanent residence as far as our insurers were concerned. Another meal at the Birmingham Riverboat Restaurant then off to bed for an early start.

Well we started off early at 8 a.m. Union Jack's a blazon on our CB antenna (aerials). - those only lasted ten minutes. Our first stop was a Radio Shack for a new CB mike as mine didn't function. That was our second breakdown, as my car wouldn't start once it had stopped. I tried bump starting backwards, down the footpath and that didn't work so suspecting a faulty connection from the H.T. lead to the starter motor I groveled under the car, and tried to improve the connection. That didn't work and we were now into our second day and only five miles into our 3000! Tempers were getting frayed so Jim dragged my off for luncheon. When we returned the blessed car started first time - we decided to keep running as long as possible to get some miles covered before our next stop, so off we went.

Picking up the old 'Route 66', trail of the 'Cannon Ball Rally' just a year previously. Stopping only for gas and food we found that the cars were now both starting fine, but we were both still somewhat paranoid. You can imagine how we felt when 7 p.m. came and it was time to switch on headlights. As soon as mine went on I showed a massive battery discharge on the voltmeter

Obviously no charge from the alternator! So on to the next hotel sign and off the freeway, for the night. Running for that period on parking lights only, we certainly took some abuse on the CB rigs. The Americans are very safety and law conscious. So here we are in Newburg Penn, 170, just off the freeway in a small motel in a town of a population of about 75 with two motels one restaurant (of sorts) and would you believe one garage run by one Fritz who starts tomorrow morning at 7.30 am and we are the grand total of 200 miles and two days into our 3000 miles with another exhausted Tiger. Oh! I omitted to tell you that we had a deadline arrival time in Los Angeles of Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April for a welcome house party by Ian and Laura Garrad and only 10 days to go. I did quickly calculate that at our current progress we would make L.A. by the 8<sup>th</sup> of May! Well at least I had been able to drive all the way so far with the roof down, and I guess by May it will be even warmer I TE HE !!

Well next morning at 7.30 a.m. promptly, I drove to Fritz's garage 'Johnnies Service Station'. He was eating breakfast in the restaurant of 'Johnnies Restaurant and Motel' so I dragged him out from his breakfast and got to work on my car. We pulled out the alternator and tore it down. After an hour of failing to repair it, Jim and I went off to a breakers yard to find another one. A Plymouth Cricket (Chrysler Avenger) looked right but with a slightly lower output so that was purchased for \$30. The cast iron mounting bracket I had snapped during the course of the multiple rebuilds of the original alternator and the guys at Swopes Auto Wreckers,

recommended a local welding company, housed in a local barn on a farm who could weld anything, Jim hurtled back to Fritz's garage for the broken bracket and returned post-haste. So off we went, used replacement alternator and bits in hand, We found the welders, a family of Amish boys who I can best liken to Quakers or early Pilgrims, wearing blue pants (trousers) and suspenders (braces) and top hats, using horses for transport and agricultural power and smelling similar to their beasts of burden and using small horse and buggies to transport their families. My God we felt like the original pilgrims travelling West with the Goldrush! However these good peoples did a superb job welding my alternator bracket and we returned to the garage to refit all the bits. Having had free run of Fritz garage all morning, and loan of his car (Chevy Vega) for my errands, I was delighted when he apologized for having to charge me and give me a bill for \$10.60. We ate luncheon, gassed up and headed West with roofs up for our first rainy day.

The alternator lasted ten minutes then blew up! Undaunted we continued, slowly draining my battery and running parking lights in the rain with windscreen wipers used intermittently in the torrential rain to save electricity. Temperatures were now in the mid fifties, cold, windy and driving rain. My drivers' window is broken so my right arm and shoulder is soaking and the rain is dripping onto my lap and onto my fabric seat. The car has not been driven in the rain since its rebuild, so leaks in the door seals and windshield (windscreen) create a steady river on the bare metal floor and since the heater controls don't work inside the car its beginning to get pretty chilly! Windscreen wipers in Tigers are never very efficient so I can hardly see where I'm going and the car is aquaplaning like mad every time an 18 wheeler goes by. The road is concrete and winding two lane carriageway and I'm shitting a brick!

3000 miles in an ex works car rebuilt primarily for racing – I begin to think I'm missing something upstairs!

By dark, we had reached Eagle Lake just outside Columbus and I'm discharging 15 amps so Jim and I pulled off at a Truck Stop and checked into a motel. Having eaten supper we check the cars and find Jim's exhaust is now cracked most of the way round, just in front of his muffler (silencer box) so we enquire and find a 24 hour service station (nothing is ever impossible in the States regardless of the time). The service station (Auto Wreckers) jack up the car, remove the rear right hand wheel and weld up the pipe. Meantime, my battery is charged and Jim's wheel replaced and the car lowered. We pay the \$13.00 fee and depart Just down the road the local Sheriff stops me for driving on parking lights, so I apologise in my best English, get off Scott free and race back to the motel on dipped head lights

Friday morning we rise at 6.30 am breakfast 7 at a.m. and gas up by 7.30 a.m. Americans rise early and the roads are already busy. Our plan is to use as much daylight as possible so my battery is not too badly discharged, so I fill up my works tank with 33 gallons of US gas and plan on making 600 miles with only one food stop. It didn't quite work out like that our route took us to the edge of Columbus (170) where we made our first navigational error, finishing in downtown Columbus rush hour, doing a 'U' turn and getting back on the freeways. Then on Route 1270 looking for route 170 we got lost again and used our CB to get directions from the

Truckers. Our cars certainly inspired plenty of conversation on the air. The only trouble was that we couldn't understand a lot of the CB slang.

You should hear these guys, its worse than cockney 'rhyming slang' and 'back slang' combined. However when you're stuck they do try and get you sorted out. 'Many thanks, Truckers all'. The only stops we made all day were for Jim's gas stops, when I would keep running and two food stops when we would bump start my car to save the battery. By 5 p.m. we had reached the St. Louis great arch over the Mississippi. St. Louis is notorious for its humidity and today was no exception. They were currently enjoying an unusual spring heat wave. And so was I. Engine temperature was up over 100 degrees centigrade and oil pressure was down to 35 lbs. per square inch and as the traffic became denser on the city outer ring route so my temperature got higher and higher and oil pressure got lower

We were still on the 170 and approaching our turn for the 1270 when the Piltdown Man (handle for J.C.) called up to the Flying Goose 'something's rattling'. Glancing in the mirror just briefly, then suddenly my CB blares 'I'VE GONE, I'VE GONE' and as I search the rear view mirror I spot a bouncing wheel. Tires screech as the rush hour traffic takes avoiding action and one small black sports car slides from lane four across lane three, then two, then one and onto the hard shoulder, grinding to a halt on its chassis. I stopped within 200 yards and call back to see what happened. No response. Then Jim gets out of his car and walks around scratching his head. I peel myself out of the bucket seat and run up the road across an off – ramp and back to Jim.

It was soon clear that the mechanic had over tightened the wheel nuts and all four had sheared off. The car unfortunately slid along on the anti-tramp bar mounting avoiding body damage. The wheel had cleared the body before it touched anything and miraculously Jim cleared the freeway before anyone touched him!

The only thing that wasn't apparent was the location of the loose wheel! After 20 minutes searching and convince it had been stolen a gentleman in a neighbourhood house shouted to Jim he 'saw something flying in that direction' and there in the top branches of a Hawthorne tree was Jim's wheel and tyre still intact and not bent or damaged. A very friendly highway patrolman called for a breakdown truck and Jim's car was towed off to a local garage, and we followed in ERW 729C. The garage where the DRP 546C was towed was nearby and the driver bought an ice cream for us from a passing vendor and we sat and chewed-the-fat for an hour after the car was unloaded. Leaving my batter for an overnight charge, we drove to a local Holiday Inn and checked in for the night. That night we called Ian Garrad to let him know here we were.

(To be continued)

Martin Wildgoose 1982

[unedited original copy]

## JOHN DAY VISITS MARTIN WILDGOOSE & ERW 729C IN THE USA

John Day talks about how he met up with Martin Wildgoose and several Tiger nuts in California and an old Tiger of his – ERW 729C. In 1982 Martin took this Tiger to and drove it across America to meet the Garrad's. He has recently completed the restoration of this ex-works rally recce Tiger. In fact there are many 'STOC names' in the story of ERW 729C and the tale of the epic drive of '82 with Jim Coray in his Tiger. Thanks go to Darrell Mountjoy too for making re-introductions and taking some fine photos.

### **Darrell first.**

I wanted to send these few pics to you. Look familiar? A few CAT members went to Martin Wildgoose's home recently to meet up with British STOC member and friend of Martin's, John Day. John came over to the States recently and was reunited with Martin and ERW 729C's keeper when these two as young men lived in England. 729C remains fit as can be seen when both gentlemen took her out for a spin around some of the back roads of Southern California. DM.

[Picture]

### **I'll let John pick off the story.**

My first meeting with the car was at an early Northampton STOC bash that must have been 1976. The owner took me for a ride, and when warmed up he let it go, and when he had not changed into 2<sup>nd</sup> by the time we were doing 70mph I thought 'I must have this car'..... so I did a deal, there and then I think, with my first early Tiger (B9470007), a GT with a T10 box, 7416 KV, (development Tiger) and a few hundred quid. In those days you drove through central London to get to the Midlands, and that works Rally car was loud inside!

When I exchanged it for the MkII with Martin, I again drove through London, when the Old Crocks Run was happening, which made me late so I did London to Leeds in 2 hours. I remember Sheffield went past showing 140 on the clock. Solid clutch pedal when I arrived, I think the fluid was a little warm, but it was OK when cooled down. Sorry to sound like an old buffer but I have looked out some pictures to take to LA and you start to remember things. Like Harrington from the local paper for £765. Yours in the past, John.

As Martin recounts below (with Editor up dates) ERW 729C had an interesting history before it left Blighty to the U.S.A.

B9472967 HRO FE was completed by Jensen Motors on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1965 and first registered in 1<sup>st</sup> April 1965 with Humber motors as the first owner. It was despatched to the Competition Dept where it was stripped seam welded and built up to full rally specification in compliance with the F.I.A. / R.A.C. Form of Recognition No 176 from July 1964. This was a more relaxed spec than those that followed later in 1965 and 1966.

It is known that the car was used by Tiny Lewis and Barry Hughes to recce the '65 Alpine Rally after which it became Marcus Chambers personal transport and was used for pace notes making and serve support on many rallies, including the '65 RAC Rally (M. Chambers + D. Hughes and the '66 Monte Carlo (M. Chambers + Gerry Sloniger). Whilst still in the factory's hands the car

was lent to a couple of racers in May 1965 to run in the longest motor race in Britain since the 1930's – *Guards 1000-mile* n in two le halves on different days at Brands Hatch.

Whilst Bernard Unett (with discreet factory Backing) had got in first with a couple of good results during April in the Autosport Championship driving the ex Le Mans No 9 machine; the Guards 1000 – mile event was an all together quite a different and demanding affair. P. Brown & M. Nunn achieved 6<sup>th</sup> o/a at the finish. Arguably the earliest decent British race track result for the marque! (Ed)

As Martin recalls in Cats Whiskers 9. “It would appear the car was fitted with a Ford Advance Vehicles (260) engine, with Shelby balanced crankshaft, con rods, solid lifters, 4 bbl Holley, heavy duty clutch, gearbox oil cooler, engine oil cooler, heavy duty oil pump, LSD, enlarged radiator (no overflow tank), eight leaf rear springs and a 26 gallon flat fuel tank to keep the back end on the ground! The engine is very free running and will rev to 6500 rpm, giving it 70mph in 1<sup>st</sup>.

The factory sold ERW 729C to Keith Ballisat (Le Mans 1964 driver of No 8 and Shell Competitions Manager) at 20000 miles in 1966 who added 14,000 before selling it to then and now STOC member Graham Osmond. Graham ran the car from 1967 to 1973 before reluctantly selling it to a David Campbell – Allester but after six months the burble of another Tiger convinced Graham the love affair was not over and Allesters fiancée persuaded him to sell back the Tiger to Graham but 5 months later the affair was curtailed and the car sold.”

[4 Pictures]

In 1982 Martin with STOC friend Jim Coray took a trip to the USA with their respective Tigers. The first part of that tale is reproduced over the next few pages. Ed.

[2 Pictures]

[unedited original copy]







