

Washington DC British Reliability Run



One of two Healeys in the event, the 1956 Austin-Healey 100M driven by John Solit and Chris Agrawal.

Ralf Berthiez
Potomac Falls, Virginia
Capital Area Austin-Healey Club

The first annual “DC British Reliability Run” took place on October 13-15th. This drive is based on the same format as the original American British Reliability Run based in Philadelphia. Similar runs now take place in Colorado, New Hampshire, and now just outside of Washington, DC.

This is a 750-mile charity tour driven over a three-day period. The goal of the reliability run is to raise funds for “Our Military Kids.” The charity’s mission is to raise money to support activities for children with parents wounded in action. The money raised supports tutoring programs, and extracurricular activities that nurture and sustain children while a parent is serving our country in a dangerous location or recovering from their injuries. The organizing program is paid directly from the foundation. The object of the tour is for a two-person team to raise money for the charity, the team that raises the most money wins the rally. Through an online website, or by writing a check, an individual can give a team of their choice a tax deductible donation of any amount.

The DC Reliability Run was headquartered just outside Washington, DC, in Sterling, Virginia

at the Hyatt Pace Hotel. A very reasonable \$99 per night group rate was seen. The tour was run in a cloverleaf format, always returning to the same place every night. Emergency towing was provided by Tom of T. and T. Towing, and emergency repair was offered by Saman of Great Falls Exxon and Gassman Automotive Services. Just in case a British car was not so reliable and could not be repaired on the spot, two cars of shame were also provided: a Mazda Miata and Volvo sedan. Both cars ended up being placed in service.

The first day of driving was run within the state of Maryland and just touching Pennsylvania. The second day was in West Virginia and the third in the Virginia horse and wine country.

Friday’s run started with a morning drivers’ meeting held in the hotel parking lot by the chairman of the event, Jeff Olson. We were to run the route at our own pace. Map books for the navigators were handed out, and rally decals and team names were affixed to the participating cars. Goodie bags were also enjoyed, plus a British Reliability ball cap for

both driver and navigator were worn. The first day’s drive was comprised of approximately 230 miles, traveling across the Potomac River and north of Frederick, driving on all-paved small B and C roads through the Maryland countryside and into southern Pennsylvania.

Lunch was a tasty buffet at the Carriage House Restaurant in Emmitsburg, Maryland. After lunch, cars departed onto more delightful country roads through the Catoctin Mountains and Gambrill Park, and just skirting Camp David (the Presidential retreat). The tail end of the day’s run traveled through Sharpsburg and Harpers Ferry. Returning to Virginia



The other Healey in the event, a 1960 3000 series BN7 driven by Dominick Infante and James Tate, a new acquisition.



Reliability Run cars at Berkley Springs, West Virginia.

we went back to our rooms to get ready for an evening with friends. Friday night was a free night where the drivers and navigators were on their own for dinner. Several of us ventured to a wonderful restaurant in Leesburg called the



Event cars in West Virginia.

French Hound for a delightful evening with wonderful food. Others stayed at more local restaurants of their choice.

Saturday's drive was the longest, traveling west into West Virginia crossing the Cacapon River and even further west. The driving roads were the best of the weekend, traveling through the mountains into Paw Paw and then Berkley Springs. Lunch was at the prestigious Country Inn of Berkley Springs where we all enjoyed an especially great buffet of beef, chicken or fish. The usual trimmings were present followed by cobbler and ice cream. After lunch we filled our fuel tanks and departed. Traveling through more mountain passes, some teams enjoyed the tour, others drove a bit more spirited, and a great drive was enjoyed by all. Driving back through Shepherdstown and then into Virginia the drive was long but glorious. Dinner was across from the hotel at the Bungalow Lakehouse where another fantastic dinner was enjoyed. Spirited conversation and libations ensued.



The father and son team of Chuck and Christopher Wray.

Sunday morning came early. We had to start in time to make the farewell brunch on schedule. The day's drive was a short 150 miles, but an exquisite drive heading west and then south through Middleburg, Flint Hill and Washington, Virginia.



The finale at impressive Creighton Farms Country Club in Virginia.

Pretty, swooping country back roads were enjoyed and the colorful fall leaves were robust with color. The finale brunch was held at the club house of Creighton Farms Golf Club. Another fabulous brunch with awards was enjoyed. The event raised just over \$55,000 for charity. The winning team, "Right Hand Menace," a right-hand-drive 1968 Jaguar E-Type driven by Al Hazard and Serge Khoury, raised around \$6,500.

It was a great three-day drive enjoyed by 29 teams including two Austin-Healeys, an Alvis, two Bentleys, an MG, a Rolls Royce, an AC Greyhound, a Sunbeam Tiger, a Rover, a few Triumphs and a lot of Jaguars. A similar reliability run will take place again in October 2018. The event will be limited to the first 50 cars registered. It promises to be lots of fun and will be even better than the first year.

Please see event details at www.dcbritishreliability.org, mark your calendars for 2018 and sign up early. The event will benefit the same charity, www.ourmilitarykids.org. **HM**



The event winners, Al Hazard and Serge Khoury in a 1968 Jaguar E-Type, seen here at Berkley Springs, West Virginia.



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