

The Rally of the Tests Goes Global!

Ten years ago in deepest darkest Oxfordshire, the idea to recreate the golden age of British rallying, (the nineteen fifties), by running an event in the style of the RAC Rally of Great Britain of that period, was conceived. Popularly known in its day as the "Rally of the Tests" the concept was to follow in the wheel tracks of the early events in the cars that could have competed at that time. To give an authentic feel to the rally, auxiliary distance measuring devices were not permitted and the crew were positively encouraged to wear period clothing. A team of elderly motor sport mystics, some of whom had retained at least a few of their faculties, was assembled; long discarded motoring magazines recovered from their dusty attic store; oil stained history books scrutinized and ancient memory banks scoured for long forgotten rallying stories.



So it came to pass that in December 2001 almost a hundred vehicles assembled in Blackpool for the first reincarnation of an event that has gone on to build up an enviable reputation in the world of Historic Rallying. Over the following nine years, The Rally of the Tests has travelled the length and breadth of the Great Britain seeking out classic test venues, driving the most scenic routes, tackling the more challenging roads and returning to many of the halts, start and finish points regularly visited in the Fifties.

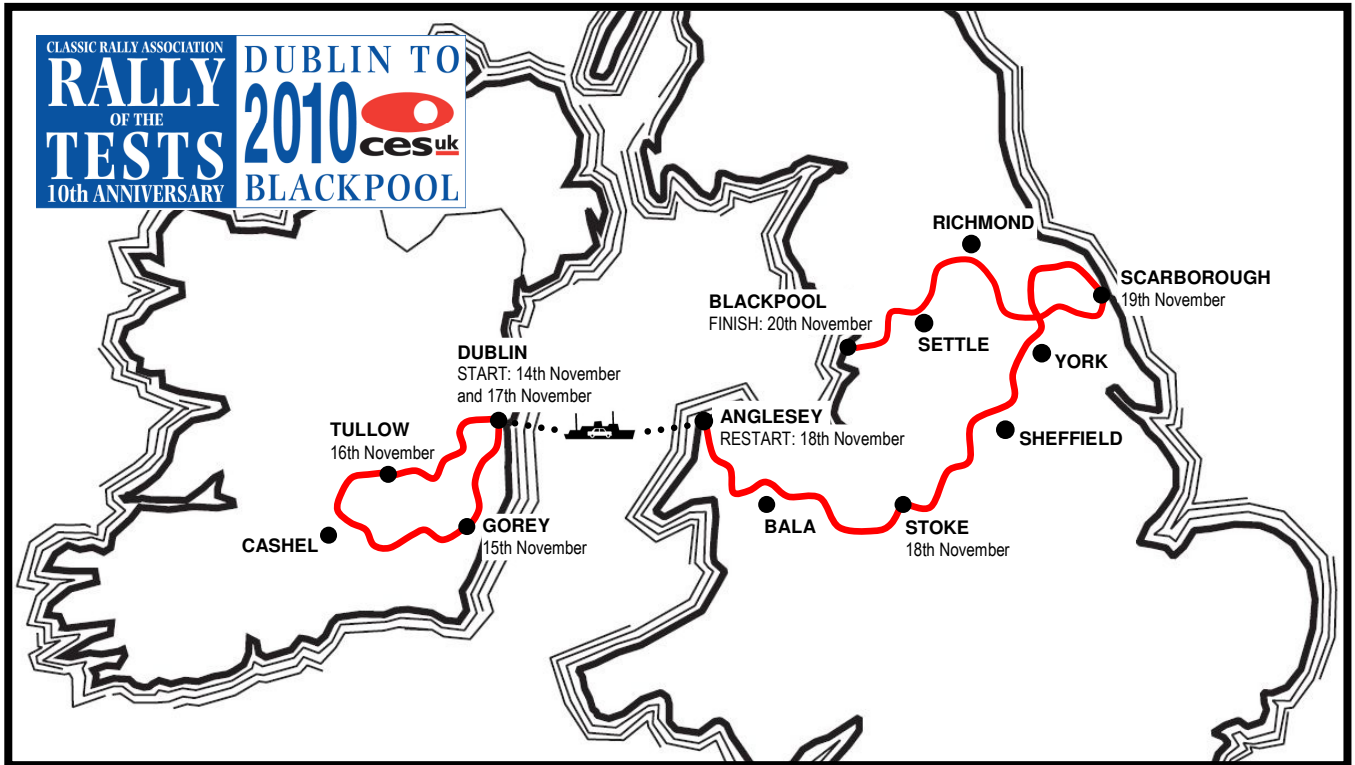
Whilst staying true to the original ideal of an event in the "spirit and style of the era" the rally has been kept fresh and relevant by introducing new exciting sites and relaxing some of the more restrictive regulations. For example, although the overall winner of the rally must drive a model of car first manufactured prior to 1963, as the rally is now a qualifying round of the "FIA Regularity Rally Championship" classes for cars manufactured prior to 1981 are included, auxiliary distance measuring devices are allowed and the dress code now permits cravats!

To celebrate a decade of this unique event, the Classic Rally Association will break with tradition by running a fabulous "anniversary" week-long Rally of the Tests, starting in Dublin and finishing in Blackpool (full route details can be found on the back of this page). There will also be a shorter 3-day mainland only event starting from Anglesey and joining in with the second half of the main event.



With only 60 entries being accepted for the main week-long event starting in Ireland, there is likely to be a large demand for entries so prospective competitors are encouraged to contact the Rally Office on + 44 1633 263366 (or email mail@classicrally.org.uk) as soon as possible to secure their place on this special event. Regular event updates will be available on the CRA website: www.classicrally.org.uk.

The 10th Rally of the Tests - Route Outline



With most mainland UK and European crews expected to arrive on the afternoon ferry from Holyhead to Dublin Port, our Emerald Isle adventure begins on the evening of **Sunday 14th November** with a couple of Prologue tests in the grounds of our start venue - The Citywest Hotel, followed by the Welcome Dinner. Over the following three days of competition, a circular route explores the glorious countryside of Counties Wicklow, Carlow and Kildare with overnight halts in the pretty towns of Gorey and Tullow. There will be four or five regularities each day interspersed with great "drivers" tests in the grounds of castles and country houses as well as traditional Irish farmyard autotests and a visit to the home of motorsport in Ireland, Mondello Park. On **Wednesday afternoon**, the rally returns to Dublin and the final night in Ireland will culminate with a typical "Hooley" and that very special atmosphere associated with Irish hospitality should provide a memorable conclusion to our "Global Excursion".

The **Thursday** morning ferry will take crews across to Holyhead to restart the second half of the rally. At this point, the main event will be joined by competitors unable to commit to the full week for the "Home Run" section. This separate event of typical nonstop ROTT action will cross North Wales and Northern England on the classic roads and tracks which are so much a part of rally folklore. Once again we will include a combination of new and familiar venues to provide the usual high standard of competition.

Our afternoon commences with three tests on Anglesey before the route takes the competition back to the mainland and into the dramatic beauty of the Snowdonia National Park. We continue through the Cambrian Mountains before leaving the Principality to cross into Shropshire. A brief flirtation with Cheshire and the final test of the day is the prelude to the evening Time Control section and our overnight halt in Stoke on Trent.

On **Friday** we head generally north through charming Cheshire and then east into the spectacular Peak District. England's largest county (Yorkshire) beckons and the remainder of the day and indeed the morning of the following day are spent in the land of the Tykes. This county has a little of everything and perhaps reflects the tough no nonsense character of its inhabitants. From craggy millstone grit rock outcrops and twisty narrow lanes, wide open moorland with the fast undulating roads of "Heartbeat" country with its honey coloured cottages to the lush green valleys of the "Dales". The overnight halt will once again be the very pretty seaside town of Scarborough where we have been made so welcome on our two previous visits.

We pass across the Pennine Hills into Lancashire to head for our final destination on **Saturday afternoon** on the famous Middle Walk on Blackpool Promenade. The wheel has turned full circle and we have returned to where the journey began ten years ago for this current series of events and where six decades ago the golden age was created by the competitors of the day. Perhaps The Rally of the Tests has come home!

Blackpool is a brash, breezy, bright sort of place with no pretensions. It does not try to be something other than that - "exactly what is says on the tin", a place for fun. There is little doubt that the 10th Rally of the Tests will like its predecessors provide plenty of that. Hopefully you will be able to join in!