

A Newcomers' Guide to Historic Road Rallying

This Guide and accompanying notes are intended primarily for those considering taking part in the Great Western Vintage and Classic Rally (GWVCR) and who may not have tried this sort of event before. Much of the content will however also be relevant to other historic road rallies.

Historic Road Rallies are competitive events which make use of public roads for some sections and private land for others. They are run to a schedule which penalises early or late running, with the competitive element provided by two types of activity – Special Tests and Regularity Sections. Special Tests are held on private land and the aim is to complete the test correctly and as quickly as possible, whereas Regularity Sections are held on public roads where the aim is to keep as close as possible to a specific average speed which will always be below 30mph.

There are several clubs and companies in the UK which organise Historic Road Rallies. Three very active organisations are the Historic Rally Car Register (HRCR), the Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation (HERO) and the Vintage Sports Car Club (VSCC). These all have very useful guides on their web sites for beginners to the sport, as follows :

- HRCR – see under the “Get Started” menu at <https://www.hrcr.co.uk/>
- HERO – see under “Events – How to go Classic Rallying” at <https://heroevents.eu/how-to-classic-rally/>
- VSCC – see “Finding Your Way” at <https://www.vsccl.co.uk/vscclMedia/1946.pdf>

These guides are of course aimed at each organisation’s particular style of events, including ones which are more complex than the GWVCR. Newcomers are recommended to study those guides, but bear in mind that the GWVCR :

- Will not penalise or forbid the use of GPS apps on smartphones
- Will not use OS maps for navigation, so the associated paraphernalia, knowledge and experience are not necessary
- Will not use “white” or unsurfaced roads for Regularity Sections
- Will not use broken or loose surfaces such as grass, gravel, broken concrete, etc for Special Tests
- Will not require competitors to have Motorsport UK RS Interclub Licences

In the case of the GWVCR, cars of a type manufactured before 1/1/1982 will be eligible. The HRCR publishes guidance on car eligibility; see [HRCT – Historic Rally Car Technical Information; https://hrct.co.uk/](https://hrct.co.uk/). Historic cars eligible for the GWVCR will be in Category 1 (pre-1968, including vintage cars), Category 2 (1968-74) or Category 3 (1974-1981).

To help level the playing field for the GWVCR, entries will be grouped into classes according to the age, type and/or engine capacity of the car. They will be further classified according to the crew’s experience on recent road rallies – beginner, novice, expert or master.

On the GWVCR, each crew will be provided with a **Road Book**, defining :

- The non-competitive link routes to be followed between **Controls** and competitive sections
- Routes to be followed and speeds to be used for each **Regularity Section**
- Diagrams showing the route to be followed for each **Special Test**

All information required to complete the rally will be contained within the Road Book. There will be no need for OS maps, though crews might choose to have them available.

Each crew will be issued with a **Timecard**, which serves to record their progress, adherence to the route and performance.

Separate Newcomers Guides are produced to cover how the following will operate on the GWVCR (note that other rallies will differ in many respects) :

- Controls
- The Timecard
- Special Tests
- Regularity Sections
- Route Definition

ELIGIBILITY AND EQUIPMENT

Each member of the crew must have a competition licence issued by MSUK (or their national ASN if they live outside the UK). The minimum level of licence is the RS Clubman's licence, which is issued free by MSUK – see [RS Clubman | Motorsport UK](#).

Every competitor must also be a member of Bath Motor Club or one of the invited clubs which will be identified in the Supplementary Regulations. See [Join Us | Bath Motor Club](#).

Licences and club membership cards will be checked at Documentation before crews are issued with their roadbook and timecard.

Your car must be a model which was in production prior to 1st January 1982. If it has any modifications, those mods must have been available for that model prior to that date and the car could be considered to have a later production date.

On many historic rallies, smartphones and GPS devices are prohibited. That is not the case for the GWVCR as we are keen to encourage people with eligible cars to participate without having to procure and fit specialist trip meters, rally clocks, etc. In fact, smartphones are required to access the event noticeboard during the event, while GPS devices are allowed to help with navigation. Be aware, however, that GPS will typically not be as accurate as the calibrated trip meters which many competitors will be using. In general, GPS-measured distances read, if anything, less than accurately calibrated trip meters so for example junctions might seem to arise a little late. The event will be designed so that accuracy will not be essential for navigation though it could be critical for optimal performance on regularities. In other words, you should not get lost due to using GPS. The other thing to bear in mind with GPS is that it will not compensate for retracing your route if you should for example miss a turning and need to backtrack.

The sport's governing body is Motorsport UK (MSUK) who will have approved the event. Relevant police forces will have been notified of the event and the organising club will have carried out PR, notifying householders along the route of the rally's expected timings. MSUK's regulations are specified in their Yearbook (aka the Blue Book) – see <https://www.motorsportuk.org/resource-centre/#yearbook>, sections J and R in particular. Amongst other things they specify that cars competing on historic rallies must:

- Meet normal safety standards
- Carry a spill kit (to cater for leakage of fluids from the car) – see sections R19.8.1 and J5.20.13
- Have a secondary spring for closing the throttle – J5.4.2
- Have yellow tape around the battery earth lead – J5.14.5
- Not exceed noise limits – J5.18.1

It is recommended that cars carry a window hammer/seat belt cutter, groundsheet, fire extinguisher and first aid kit.

Note that on-board cameras are strictly forbidden for events taking place on public roads (see J5.21.9 & R7.2.9).

Technical regulations for historic road rallies are defined in R18. Please check this thoroughly to avoid the disappointment of having your entry refused by the scrutineer just before the start of the event. If in any doubt, ask the organisers as soon as possible.

There is no exemption from normal rules of the road for this rally. In fact, the organisers require that all crews are particularly careful to ensure that the event causes no issues for other road users, farmers, businesses or people who live along or near the route, thus ensuring that we will be welcome to run the event again in the future. On many narrow roads as will be used on the GWVCR, it is frequently quicker for a competitor to give way, reversing into a gateway for example, than to dispute right of way with a member of the public. As the event runs during daytime on a summer Sunday, it is to be expected that walkers, cyclists and horse-riders will also be using country roads. Competing cars will have rally plates which identify the organising club, event name and competitor number. The organisers and MSUK will be particularly concerned about any behaviour which could bring motorsport into disrepute.

RALLY TIMESCALE

Subject to approval by Motorsport UK, Bath Motor Club will, around the beginning of June or earlier, issue Supplementary Regulations (SRs) for the GWVCR and invite entrants to apply for a place on the event. Entries will close towards the end of July. Keep an eye on <https://www.bathmotorclub.co.uk/club-events/rallys/> and/or the club's Facebook page to make sure you do not miss the opportunity to participate. The Supplementary Regulations take precedence over anything stated in this Newcomers' Guide, on the club's website, social media or elsewhere.

Successful applicants will be notified promptly and Final Instructions issued about a week before the event. The Finals clarify, supplement and supersede the SRs as necessary. There may be a need for Bulletins to cover any last-minute changes (for example to the route, or the class structure).

On the day of the rally, crews will need to present their car for noise check and scrutineering at a location to be notified. Depending on demand, noise check and scrutineering might be available the day before. That needs to have been completed before "Documentation", when Roadbooks and Timecards are issued to crews.

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Shortly before the first car is due to start, there will be a briefing which all competitors are required to attend. Amongst other things, the briefing will show the various types of control boards used for Time Controls, Tests, PCs, RCs, etc.. Cars will be flagged away from the start control at one-minute intervals; please take care to form an orderly queue to start in the right order.

Exact timings for the Sunday will be determined when entries have closed. Preliminary expectations are that scrutineering and noise check will take place from 07:00-09:30, with a Competitors Briefing at 10:00 prior to the first car starting at 10:31 and followed in competitor number order at one minute intervals.

We look forward to seeing you in August 2025 !