

# Raiding New England

**Andrew Barnett**  
**(with a little help from Graham, Lou and Alastair)**

**M**y name is Andrew Barnett. I neither own a Frazer Nash, nor had ever driven one until a couple of weeks ago. That soon changed when I became the support van driver for the New England Raid. I was thrilled to get involved in such a significant Club event involving members from both the US and UK. From the start it was easy to see I was with a unique Club of people, out not only to love and restore their vehicles, but to enjoy them for the same reasons they were built: for fun, sport and adventure! Leading by example were Richard Parsons and our Captain Louise who drove trans-America from West Coast to East Coast before meeting up at the start of this Raid.

The first day's journey to pick up the cars from the port set the tone for the trip. The road signs were somewhat dubious and not to be trusted, so we needed to get out of Newark, New Jersey and head for the hills!

The first stop was a classic American diner to get us all in the raiding mood; then on to Lime Rock Park circuit in Connecticut. It was here that we were joined by US owners Ed and Sandy Osborn in their ex-Arline Needham 1933 TT Replica – just rebuilt after a 20 year rest. Frank and Janet Allocca were there too in their oh-so-lovely Le Mans Coupe while a surprise visitor was Bob Simmons in MV 3742, a Brooklands Double 12



6000 miles from San Francisco: Richard, Louise and PG near the last stages of their heroic American Odyssey. Photo– Jim Leggett



Outside an American diner, Brooke Saunders decides whether to add some chrome to his FN/BMW 319. Photo – Andy Barnett

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car with a later TT Replica body. I was told that the number plate, if not the car, had competed in the Alpine Trials! I think it's fairly safe to say that our visit to this historic race track hugely surpassed our expectations.

The circuit officials were extremely accommodating, so this was a chance to really blow out the cobwebs and get in a few good laps. Thanks to Graham Rankin this was my first drive in a Nash, although I did have to take the seat out and my shoes off to fit in!

From here we headed north into Vermont where the Fall colours in the foliage were really starting to change. Keen photographers on the Raid were blessed with beautiful backdrops and sunshine around every corner. Amazingly, this weather that

had me reaching for the suncream in October, held out for almost the entire two weeks. Given the open-top nature of most Nashes this was pure good luck.

The journey to Blueberry Hill in the Green Mountains took us via a detour to a Shaker village and up Mt. Equinox, a five-mile hill climb to the top of the Taconic mountain range. It was on this day that we also had our first taste of dirt roads, a feature that we would become very used to over the next few days. The loose gritty surface made for great fun with the playful nature of the chain-driven cars.

We now had a rest day at the Blueberry Hill Inn which gave a well-timed opportunity for some maintenance and fettling, Number one on the list



Lime Rock Circuit, (north west corner of Connecticut). Tim Jarrett driving TT 525 chasing Alistair Pugh (A2P2) in CXO 347, Richard Parsons PG 7028 and Alistair Pugh MV 3079. Alistair Pugh is known as A2P2 to distinguish him from Alistair with an "a" ! The circuit is owned by Skip Barber — former race-car driver who now runs a racing school. Photo – Graham Rankin

was Peter Allen's head gasket replacement, and re-checking Michael Parr's head bolts, causing grief only two days before. Most importantly this meant all the cars were ready for the following day, the driving tests. Three different tests were set up, a wiggle woggle, a regularity hill climb, and the classic blind navigation.

Just as the wiggle woggle competitors were starting to show some good runs, the inevitable happened. We had inadvertently set up the course in what was essentially the middle of a campsite. Unfortunately the campers didn't seem as enthusiastic about our sport as we were, so we were forced to pack up shop and move on. However, all was not lost as the hill climb turned out to be a great test at a perfect location. I'm not sure the regularity part lasted too long though! I was lucky enough to be loaned a ride from Richard Parsons, for which I am very grateful.

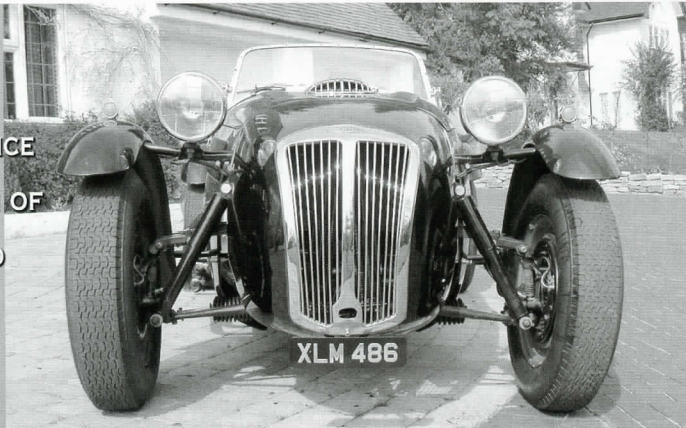
I seem to recall I was smiling so much my face hurt\*. And then to the blind driving which always makes for great spectating. It wasn't long before cars were slowly heading off towards the corn field rather than the cones, with navigators frantically pointing directions that the driver would never see. The owner and staff at the Inn clearly shared our sense of humour as the ride-on mower soon made an appearance round the course. That was followed by Alistair Pugh (A2P2) driving the van and trailer blindfold around the rather tightly spaced cones and then a lady, who just happened to be driving by on the dirt road past Blueberry Hill Inn stopped and asked 'Could she have a go?' Well of course she could!

The lack of a bar or music at this remote Inn was no deterrent to finishing off that day in high spirits. We devised our own evening's entertainment including musical, theatrical and informative contributions from many members.



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**RMIA**



Dawn patrol: Graham Rankin crests Mount Washington, 6288ft.

Photo – Andy Barnett

Day five was an early start for most teams. This was to be the longest distance to cover in a single day, 30% of which was on dirt roads, with an aim to match the 'bogey time' set by the lead car. The cold heavy morning mist once again cleared as the sun rose, adding to the enjoyment of more rural tracks and mountain roads. The appealing Hero's route, which I believe was taken by all, with the Nashman's route ignored, took us a mere 20km from the Canadian border before crossing over into New Hampshire. The scenic Kancamagus Highway showed us the Fall colours in all their glory on what is a largely unspoilt stretch of road before passing through a fabulous covered bridge into Jackson, our home for the next three nights.

The next day was an exciting prospect, with the chance to put the cars to the test on a steep 7.6 mile climb up Mt. Washington, to 6288ft, the highest peak in New England. This was a rare opportunity as the autoroute had been closed for

an hour, just for us. Not for the feint hearted, the climb has sheer drops on gravel corners, but is well worth it for the magnificent views. Somehow all the Nash ascents seemed to get timed! Richard Parsons in the trans-America car showed just how it should be done. This event took its toll on some cars though, James Trigwell having the misfortune of a failed fuel pump before even getting to the start and Jane Arnold-Foster's Anzani suffering with a bearing popped out onto the rear axle. Of course this merely gave the opportunity for like-minded people to scratch heads and conjure up a solution, aided by the very helpful handyman at the Eagle Mountain Hotel who gave us free rein over his workshop, perfect for the job.

As we moved into the second half of the trip, you could feel we were travelling from the beautiful scenery and country tracks of Vermont and New Hampshire, to the more historic towns and cities further south. The next stop for us was the

Colonial Inn at Concord Massachusetts, many of us soon finding a lovely local pub and live music to match. The following two days gave us a chance to explore the Boston area. A trio of former Harvard Business School alumni made a trip back for a short reunion and a photo shoot with their cars. This was followed by a visit to the Larz Anderson Museum, an amazing collection of some of the oldest, rarest racing and other cars in America, a perfect excursion for everyone on the Raid.

The final journey back though Massachusetts and into New York State took us, via an extended morning coffee in the garden of MG enthusiasts Peter and Rachel Ross (Peter is a member of the Club) to Historic Deerfield and Rhinebeck. This route had some great rolling Nash-friendly roads, though the leaves now starting to fall made for some slippery conditions on the corners of Mount Greylock, our third climb of the Raid. But the van and trailer also got to the mist-shrouded top!

A stop off at the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome and Museum was a wonderful way to top off the

day. This is a unique establishment where flying machines going back to the time of the Wright Brothers can be seen both as Museum pieces (in barn-find condition) and, in many cases, actually flying. The complex is very much akin to what grass airfields must have been like in Britain before the war – totally pastoral, understated and seemingly relaxed.

Alastair had been looking forward to that particular day more than any other in view of his close association during his very eventful life with all things flying. It was a bitter disappointment for him (although he would never have shown it) when the weather on the day was wet and all air activity had to be cancelled. This was particularly bad luck since we had experienced magnificent unbroken blue skies virtually for the whole of the rest of the Raid.

However, towards the end of the afternoon things started to dry out and Alistair Junior (A2P2) had the totally brilliant idea of speaking to Bill King, the owner of the beautiful Tiger Moth which was sitting idly by on the grass landing strip .He



All together now! New England's green and pleasant land: Rhinebeck Old Aerodrome, New York State.

Photo – Jim Leggett

A Brace of Blackburns AMD 582 and  
BMC 450 at the top of the Gross  
Glockner Pass.  
Photo – Jenny John



Mike & Kay Sythes chasing Beetle up the Brevic Pass. Photo – Nimmy Mellor





Tim Jarrett seeks ftd on the regularity hill - but can he stop?

Photo – Andy Barnett

Jane AF and Annabel realise why they came to New England in the Fall.

Photo – Andy Barnett







A lifetime in a picture - Alastair with Tiger Moth and TT Rep.

Photo – Jim Leggett

quickly explained the situation, whereupon Bill agreed that he would phone his son who currently flies the plane to see if it might be possible to take Alastair aloft. Dave very quickly agreed and said he would be there in 15 minutes. In the meantime, the bush telegraph allowed everyone there to know what was about to happen, without the inclusion of Alastair, of course. It was then surreptitiously contrived that Alastair would bring MV 3079 to be parked next to the Tiger Moth to be photographed. The next thing he knew was that he was being asked whether he would like to go flying. Well... 'Is the Pope Catholic'?! The moment between the question and answer is the definition of a split second!

A glorious 20 minutes or so then ensued which encompassed take-off, circuits, stall turns, low passes and other stomach-churning manoeuvres which was wonderful for the Nash crowd to behold. A superb landing to great applause found the honoured guest flyer dismounting his steed with the biggest smile any of us has ever seen together with the comment "MARVELLOUS!!"

Alastair confirmed that he had not been up in a Tiger Moth since the 1940s.

This was a most moving and memorable occasion and particularly appropriate as a very small gift of thanks for the man who had just spent (together with Lou, Frank and John) two and a half years of intensive hard work organising this Raid for the benefit of others. The whole event was really beyond words.

The Beekman Arms in Rhinebeck, the "Oldest Inn in America", was to host our final celebratory dinner. It was a feast of great food with fantastic entertainment as competition results were announced and heartfelt words were given by many.

After experiencing this trip I can now see why these events are called Raids. The true spirit of vintage motoring is being kept alive, as it should be, in stylishly challenging vehicles causing amusement and havoc at every opportunity along the way!

\* Andy's time on the regularity test was 7 seconds faster than anyone else – A. Pugh

## Post Card from the Colonies

### Sandy and Ed Osbourne

It seems that HRH decided to settle the score by sending a mob of *chain gangers* over here. it was called The Raid to New England. But the translation for a *chain ganger* in the Colonies is a group of people in prison striped suites shackled at the ankles digging ditches alongside the roads!

More fun than a barrel of monkeys... a gaggle of Frazer Nashes with their associated people. What could be more inviting that long, winding, tree lined roads with the fabulous changing colors of October, mountains to climb – Mt Equinox, Mt Washington and Mt Greylock – friendly people, sensational weather, gracious hotels, interesting history, good food, music, drink

and entertainment. The group is creative and collaborative at problem solving mechanical issues and just as creative at exploring new territory. Ever resourceful at creating entertainment, blind racing, hill climbs, road rallies. Only the Nash group embraces it all, never dull, never boring. Always something to enjoy and laugh about, there is something for everyone.

After a 24 year hiatus, our last raid was 1989 (raising kids and working on various restoration projects), it was great to be back to the Raid experience with AHX495 finally back on the road and running better than ever, even if we did cut it close with last minute repairs. But isn't that typical of a Nash. It was about new experiences. A Raid to New England? How could we not do it with just getting the car on the road and no plane fare

Sandy Osbourne is confident that when she is blindfold she can drive faster from the right hand seat in Arline Needham's Alpine car.  
Photo – Andy Barnett



or roro ship to meet unlike other participants. The other new experience was starting a blog, that was a trip as well, turned out to be a very good way to share with family and friends.

When we visit England a mental shift is necessary to remember to drive on the left side of the road no matter what car one is driving. When we are surrounded by British people and their lovely accents, and our Frazer Nash with the right hand drive, the brain begins too think 'ah..we are in England' right? No, remember where you are and that you need to remember which side of the road is the correct one to be driving on in NEW England. More than once we pulled out onto the road and were reminded which side of the road was the correct side in NEW England.

Another source of amazement for Ed and I was the fact that speed limit signs seem to have no impact on people that drive Frazer Nashes in America. And they get away with it. (*They don't apply to us do they? Ed.*) We don't know anyone who was stopped by the local constabulary for any reason whatsoever. Well, Alistair Pugh did get arrested by the Bolton, MA police while having morning coffee at the home of Peter and Rachel Ross. We had a good excuse as our speedometer had packed up on the first day but it was obvious that with no traffic and an open road the limit for Frazer Nash drivers is however gracefully you can take the curve. It is always so amusing to follow another Nash and observe reactions of bystanders either in modern cars or on the side of the road.... 'whoa... what was that car that just went by?'... 'too late... you missed it.' It feels so good to be back in a Nash.

We are so pleased to have participated in this 2013 Raid to New England to meet former acquaintances again and to make new friends; to climb mountains we have not climbed before. 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost was such an appropriate poem which was added to the Raid Book. So *a propos* especially when lost or temporarily misplaced resulting from a wrong turn. The Raid organizers, Bunting, Pugh, Sheard and Allocca, did such a super job of the recce and

the route. There were so many highlights... what a delight to see Alastair Pugh enjoy his ride in the biplane and in turn to give a ride to the pilot in his Nash at The Rhinebeck Aerodrome, our visit to Ben and Jerry's in Waterbury, VT for ice cream... the hilarious entertainment after dinner, the regularity hill climb and watching the van WITH trailer doing the blind race at the Blueberry Hill Inn in Vermont, the final dinner at The Beekman Arms in Rhinebeck, New York with fabulous fillet mignon and chocolate volcano cake. And 'Honey Buns', the rabbit, our travelling companion survived with only a bit of Frazer Nash grease on her nose.

## **Graham and the Rankets - 2013 Tour of America.**

### **Tim Jarrett**

Although the trip was billed as the Frazer Nash Raid to New England it was in fact the little publicised US break through tour for Graham and the Rankets. The tour was almost called to an early halt when the ukulele and accordion were pulled out of hand luggage by Heathrow security, however once they realised the stars they were dealing with, the tour was allowed on the plane.

First gig was opportune busking at Newark airport where a group of people on an old chain drive car tour soon gathered round and were too polite to complain. Now established as THE upcoming act, the Rankets were soon booked for support and headline acts at Blueberry Hill where a selection of rather rude bawdy 17th century folk songs were performed.

After playing to capacity audiences, a secret gig was planned for Concord where a bottle of whisky was liberated from the hotel bar right in front of the local sheriff. Loud bawdy folk songs were heard from hotel rooms until the early hours before the band walked the endless corridors, searching hopelessly for the hotel rooms, singing and fighting with ice cube machines on the way. Again, not one complaint was heard all night, so once more Graham and The Rankets had gone down to (rave?) reviews.

In the town's music joints the band was to be found appreciating the 'talent' and is pleased to report that the locals have indeed heard of the Alps.

Back on the road, the tour continued in to Boston where street pianos were used to drown out the local buskers to great effect. Again the lack of complaints boosted spirits and the band played on in its attempt to reclaim the colony behind our anthem.

The last gig was scheduled for the Beekman Arms where a high class celebratory dinner had been

planned to conclude the Rankets' highly successful tour. A new set list had been hastily rehearsed and was delivered to the lucky ticket holders.

Finally back at the airport waiting to board the plane the Rankets Trio was heard to silence the boarding lounge with a rendition of "There Once Was Three Travellers Travellers Three"

The band would like to thank Booking Manager Alastair Pugh, US Tour Manager Frank Alloca, Roady Manager John Sheard, Creative Director Louise Bunting, and all the fans who crossed the Atlantic to attend our gigs.



A 2013 British Rebellion? Graham Rankin and Tim Jarrett, two of the Rankettes, play God Save the Queen opposite the exact location of the Boston Tea Party