

## **Peking to Paris 2019.**

### **Day 13. Novokuznetsk - Novosibirsk 530km**

This morning's departure from Retropark was every bit as good as last night's welcome. We had speeches, singers, a brass band and a troupe of dancers to send us on our way. Days in Russia can be long and a performance like this can really lift the crew's spirits. There were plenty of Time Controls spread across the day as well and, over the course of the 530km route, they gave the rally many opportunities to take a break, stretch their legs and tuck into one or two of the famous and usually delicious piroshkis on sale in the cafes and fuel stations.

There was lots of great quality tarmac today which was necessary to get the distance covered but, there was also around 150km of gravel backroads for us to enjoy as well.

Right from the breakfast table, everyone was keen to get to Novosibirsk, there's a lot to be done and the word is that the freight companies, couriers and shippers have had the best week in three years.

Lars and Annette Rolner had been in Novosibirsk for two days already but as soon as their Porsche was fixed, they were keen not to incur any more penalties, so they made the trek back down rally route to rejoin us this morning and then they began the drive all over again.

Later in the day, we saw Colin Smith and Hernan Zanghellin's Hudson Terraplane, stricken with a set of broken springs. There was little else to be done but call a truck to bring them into the night halt for repair. In 2016 this same car and crew spent some enforced time in Novosibirsk, so it's likely that they know a good workshop.

Marc Buchanan and Ralf Weiss's Ford Mustang broke a water pump housing in the forest, so they'll be kept busy tomorrow as well.

Since UlaanBataar there have been some rough roads and some tough days but this evening, when we sat down to dinner in the well-appointed Marriot Hotel, these hardships and difficulties became badges of honour and some of the stories we heard were indeed incredible.

Matteo and Roberto Crippa for example, whose Alfa Romeo Spider was pulled from its watery resting place by the Nomads crew, has finally realised that it's not a Schwimmwagen and is drying out in the Siberian sunshine. The signs are good, and we expect to see them back on the road after the rest day.

Manuel Dubs and Robi Huber had managed to repair their suspension after it collapsed on the road to Undurkhangai only to have the entire wheel and hub break free and for it then to roll into a river - lost forever. Tomorrow a new one is being delivered and they're planning to be back on the road as per the schedule.

Since we last saw Jeff Urbina and Chris Pike, they endured a seven-day layover in UlaanBataar waiting for parts which were fitted today in a little over one hour. Now they and their team mates, Time Eades and Jim McLaren (whose BelAir suffered a major oil leak), are determined to make the most of the rest of the rally.

Rene Brinkerhoff is looking forward to having her Timecard stamped once again. Francis Tuthill, enjoying an unplanned city break, has managed to put the Porsche's engine back together so that the Valkyrie can ride again.

The two Mercedes of Andreas Pohl, Roberts Peil, Rainer Wolf and Hans Geist are having new rear axles fitted tomorrow. The Pohl / Peil axle has already failed and there's an alarming amount of movement in that of the Wolf / Geist car.

Novosibirsk is a very cosmopolitan city, there are Porsche dealers, Mercedes dealers and even Volvo dealers but sadly there's nothing for Pullman steam cars or Mototri Contal, so the factories had to send their own technicians out to provide some much needed service.

Finally, we're pleased to report that the sweep crew of Andy Inskip and Nikolai Ishkov along their band of border crossing latecomers, had made good time since crossing from Mongolia and were waiting for us in the Marriot carpark.

The butterflies took a hammering again today but the insect world bit back in spectacular fashion leading some of our Russian hosts to distribute cans of tick repellent to the marshal crews hunkered down under their mesh headsets.

Tonight, there was plenty of activity in the bar but tomorrow we expect the focus to turn towards the carpark.

Syd Stelvio