

Peking to Paris 2019

Day 16. Irtysh Hotel - Nur Sultan 565km

Today, our first full day in Kazakhstan, we enjoyed another mile munching marathon as we made the long cross-country drive to the capital city, Nur Sultan.

After the deluge of yesterday we were all pleased to see that as far as the weather was concerned normal service had been resumed with full sun and a blue sky for pretty much all of the day but even over breakfast, the problems which the muddy conditions had caused were still in evidence.

Alan and Steve Maden's Rolls Royce Silver Shadow for example had seen its exhaust ripped off at the manifold and the big old beast had limped in on only three of its eight cylinders. Consequently, the bleary-eyed crew had managed only three hours sleep after a lengthy session in a workshop and were looking forward to taking things a bit easier today.

Over the course of the 565km route we got to enjoy the best of the new roads alongside the worst of the old potholes, and there were also three excellent off-road sections through typically low, flat and grassy hills. And, at every section there were excited rally fans, policemen and local media in attendance.

Some had even brought their classic vehicles along to add a bit of extra interest to proceedings.

Although a long day, it wasn't too taxing for the cars and most crews made it in without incident but in the car park Keith Weed and Richard Holmes were burning the midnight oil and cramming in mouthfuls of food whenever they could this evening. They were busy repairing the half shaft from their Pontiac Coupe which had shed a wheel on one of the freeway sections.

Similarly, Paul Hickman and Bas Gross were also busy fitting a head gasket to their Bristol which had blown only an hour outside of the night halt and as Paul remarked "it's not a big job but it's an hour less in the bar".

John Crighton was toying with the idea of looking at the starter motor in his MG which has an intermittent fault but, as he's parked on a slope this evening, he could well leave it another day.

Kazakhstan is a beautiful country and they've made us very welcome. We're looking forward to seeing more of it tomorrow.

Syd Stelvio.