

Peking to Paris 2019.

Day 26. St Petersburg. Rest day

On the outskirts of St Petersburg we enjoyed the final rest day of the rally and made the best of the last chance for some sustained repair work.

The European legs of the rally are just around the corner and no-one wants anything to get in their way of making it into Paris.

As usual the garages and workshops in the area were kept busy, but there was just enough happening in the hotel carpark to keep us entertained.

Keith Weed and Richard Holmes had another day of changing their spark plugs and refilling their oil. They're getting through as much as 12 litres per day now and they stop to check and refill after every 70km.

Salvation for them is just round the corner though. A new engine is arriving into Finland tomorrow and, having looked at the route book, the ferry timetable and the schedule the crew reckon that they'll be starting the job at about 4.00pm and be finished just before the next MTC.

They've been running a 3 cylinder car since the engine block cracked way back in China and whilst they did roll the Pontiac in Mongolia, the bodywork damage hasn't held them up at all, they even had new glazing fitted in Novosibirsk and managed a bit of panel beating as well.

Marco Halter and Claudia Engelhardt, winners of the Road to Saigon rally, but here on their first Peking to Paris, were busy cleaning their Mitsubishi Lancer. Wiping down the dashboard, cleaning the windows and sponging the seatbelts. The car's been very well built and, along with some skilful driving they've arrived here without too much incident. Marco's hoping that this run of good fortune continues till Place Vendome.

Mark Trowbridge was fiddling with the carbs on his Volvo P1800s. Lately he's felt that the car has been a bit underpowered and he suspects that it has been sucking oil from the crankcase and today he set about getting the problem sorted.

Jamie Turner had a bigger problem on his hands last night, but by mid-morning today he'd got everything sorted.

His Morris Minor needed a new differential but, thanks to the power of social media it was delivered to him thanks to a kindly Russian tourist who was returning home after a break in the UK and, tomorrow he'll see that the round of drinks he had to buy at 5.00am was money well spent.

Syd Stelvio