

## **Peking to Paris 2019.**

### **Ulaan Bataar rest day.**

The first rest day of every Peking to Paris rally is a watershed moment. There's still a lot of nervous energy around which is lucky, because after four days on the road there's a lot to be done. There's the more leisurely breakfast, the laundry, the all important car maintenance and, if there's time, a bit of sight seeing and some cultural highlights. These last two activities are what most people look forward to although Margo O'Brien and George Cohelo returned slightly disappointed after visiting the 'famous' Beatles monument.

Down in the car park and in various garages dotted around town therefore was where the real action was happening. As usual the Mercedes garage was busy and they gave over valuable space in their well equipped workshop to the rally for the day.

Doug and Mike McWilliams were making a new exhaust mounting bracket for their 1958 Bentley. They'd been having way too much fun over the last few days and whilst 'gently in the Bentley' is a good rule to live by, these guys seem to know what they're doing so can press on a bit when required and they are delighted with the way that the "colonial spec" suspension soaks it all up.

Ludovic Bois was somewhat downcast, his Peugeot has mysterious and intermittent alternator and electrical issues, "with mechanical issues you can see them and repair them, with electrics - it could be anything and it's so frustrating". After finishing on the podium in 2016, Ludovic wants to get this problem sorted as soon as possible so that he can climb another step.

Keith Ashworth was looking at his plugs along with the sweep, Jack Amies. There's too much soot on them for his liking and thinks it's down to low quality fuel. In this part of the world that's a real issue and a distinct possibility.

Jim Gately admitted that he was "paying the price of the fun he was having yesterday" and was trying to repair his steering knuckle. Annoyingly he has half a dozen of them lying around the workshop shop at home.

Scott and Chance Perekli were simply checking and cleaning their Ford, there's nothing wrong with it and they're having a great time. They decided to enter the rally after seeing us pull into Place Vendome in 2016 and, as if by magic, three years later they're in the thick of it in UlaanBataar.

Shivinder Sikand got up early and made his way into the auto market and bought two bearings. After the half shaft failure his ex Philip Young Peugeot suffered just before the first camp, he thinks that this might be the best \$8.00 he's spent.

Tim Eades went off to a welding shop to have his sump repaired, a small crack was leaving an oil slick down the road which meant that yesterday the big Chevy limped home at the back of the pack followed by the sweeps, Alan Page and Dave Alcock.

By the time the evening came around, most of the crews were sorted out and their cars were clean and fit for battle once again. There was a sense of quiet satisfaction around the rally, helped no doubt by the cocktail reception which was laid on for us on the 23rd floor of the hotel. From the panoramic windows we could see the way that this modern city in an ancient land was taking shape and it was breathtaking.

Finally, we're very glad to report that Johan Gitsels and Walter Op' t Roodt are back with us after their trip to hospital last night following their little *mishap* yesterday. Whilst they're both in great spirits the car is not so good and is being shipped straight home. There's a broken arm and a torn ear between them but this morning they were laughing and joking and hoping to see us in Paris. They'll be more than welcome.

Tomorrow the traditional restart is from Sukhbataar Square when the fun really begins.

Syd Stelvio.