



The distinctive burble of massed V8 engines was heard to descend on England's third smallest city, Ripon, on Monday 16th June as the V8 Register began its four day tour in the Yorkshire Wolds and Dales. The base was the Ripon Inn, an elegant Edwardian building built in 1906 and recently subject of a multi-million pound refurbishment completed in October 2023. The Inn, located in the centre of Ripon set in five acres of parkland gardens, was within easy walking distance of the cathedral and other attractions. Richard Jenner reports the V8 Register members and their guests enormously enjoyed the four day programme of routes and visits in the North Yorkshire Wolds and Dales and the entertaining evenings at the hotel.



A distinctive feature of the hotel grounds was a full scale (24 foot long) Churchill tank constructed on a wooden frame covered in knitted wool – 2300 balls of the stuff! It took 75 000 'people' hours to complete and is part of the Ripon Community Poppy Project commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2. Those with cylinder envy should note the Churchill used a flat 12 engine.

### Monday Evening

Following pre-dinner drinks on the terrace and a buffet meal, Tony Smith formally welcomed everyone to the tour and then Ian Lindley, responsible for the routes, gave a resume of what to expect. Club Chairman and V8 owner, Lorraine Noble-Thompson followed with a presentation of a Marque of Friendship Award to long-term MG enthusiast and club volunteer, Peter Ellis, also recognizing the support given by Jean.



Peter Ellis and Lorraine Noble-Thompson

A sizeable group then walked to the town square to witness the Ripon Hornblower 'Setting the Watch' by blowing a horn at the four corners of the Obelisk starting at 9 pm. This unbroken ceremony dates back to 866! Prior to 1604, the hornblower was The Wakeman responsible for crime prevention. In 1604 this responsibility passed to the first Mayor and he instigated the Hornblower who, in addition to setting the watch, also had to attend the Mayor and blow the horn again 3 times to confirm the watch had been set. 'Our' hornblower was Wayne and he gave an amusing talk after the ceremony before reporting to the steps of the Town Hall to 'attend the Mayor'.





Wayne

### Tour routes on the first day and dinner

Tuesday morning was fine and dry and saw participants setting off eastwards for the Wolds. The route was split in to 2 parts, the first being 37.50 miles to Ampleforth Abbey, and the second being 62.10 miles back to the Inn.

We saw the White Horse (Britain's largest in surface area), climbed the 1 in 4 (25%) road up Sutton Bank and most of us then stopped at Rievaulx Abbey, a massive set of ruins of a Cistercian Monastery founded in 1132.



Lunch was at Ampleforth Abbey, home to a community of Benedictine monks and a famous school set in 1200 acres. The visitors' centre was full of oak furniture carved by Robert 'mouseman' Thompson who had made his name carving furniture for the Abbey Church, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (who also designed the original red telephone box).



Tony Smith at Ampleforth with Lorraine's BGT V8 in the foreground.





The Abbey Church



RV8 on the convoluted Ampleforth drive with ferocious speed bumps! – money spinner for the swear box

After lunch, we headed back towards Ripon passing Castle Howard along a magnificent avenue of several miles. Some of us stopped at the Yorkshire Lavender Centre and then again at the City of Troy Maze – the smallest surviving turf maze in Europe.



City of Troy Turf Maze

Back at the hotel, dinner was again a convivial event and was followed by a quiz devised by Peter Ellis which involved identifying 26 partial logos – each logo represented a letter in the alphabet – an essential clue that my team failed to notice! The 'Yellowbellies' (from the next shire to the south) were the winners with a score of 24.

### **Tours on the second day and dinner**

Wednesday morning continued the trend of ever warmer and sunnier weather, hats and sunblock the order of the day for those in open tops. This was to be a long day in the Dales split in to 3 sections (with an option to do a 'shorten course') totalling 139 miles. The contrast between the leafy hedgerows of the Wolds and the dry stone walls of the Dales was most marked as we headed west.

We entered Nidderdale and passed the Stump Cross Cavern and Dibbles Bridge (the River Dibb is one of England's shortest – most un-Yorkshire like!). We went into a busy Grassington (Darrowby in "All Creatures Great and Small") and drove up past Malham Cove.





Malham Cove taken by Lorraine navigating an RV8

The recommended lunch stop was Tennants Auctioneers in Leyburn where we had a revolving table for 12 reserved. Tennants is a massive purpose built stone building and the largest sales room in Europe (back to proper Yorkshire here then). There was a nice TD on display on the way in (part of an auction in July). I managed a few MG pictures in the car park.



Following lunch we drove through an active firing range (!) and then on to Buttertubs Pass (named after the deep potholes farmers on the way to market used to keep their butter cool – fortunately not too many potholes in the road but there was a wonky cattlegrid). This leg finished in Wensleydale where everyone practised their Gromit.

The last leg back to Ripon involved a lot of ice cream parlours, the Aysgarth Falls and some breweries. The ice cream parlours won (it was very warm).

Our last dinner was again convivial. Ian Lindley set an all things Yorkshire quiz, won by a team too large to identify individually. The Best Car Competition was won by Victor & Lesley Smith with their factory spec BGT V8 with the runner-up being Peter & Jean Ellis in an MG3 hybrid. The Breakdown Prize was awarded to Mike & Catherine Howlett – not for breaking down but for removing the rear wheels to adjust the damper settings on the Hoyle rear suspension on their BGT V8. Angus Munro was awarded the Special Prize, for being special. I was honoured to receive the Furthest Travelled Prize (I recorded 1138 miles door-to-door) although mention should be given to John & Rita Henke who had hotfooted it up from the Le Mans 24 hour event.

### Farewell on Thursday

After breakfast, most of us took an easy 49.5 mile route to a pre-booked lunch and farewell at The Motorist on the airfield at Sherburn. The Motorist was a new one on me and is a very smart purpose built workshop/café/shop/meeting venue with lots of parking.

These are some photos from Lorraine:



The tour was planned and arranged by Tony Smith and Ian Lindley assisted by Victor Smith and Lorraine Noble- Thompson. This report on the tour has been contributed by Richard Jenner (driving the Midget 1500).