

RV8 on tour of Northern Spain in the Picos Mountains and the Pyrenees



The MOT on my MGRV8 was due to run out whilst we were away and although she had passed, the friendly examiner commented that the nearside rear brake reading was down. So I decided to take a look, only to find that there was a slight leak from the cylinder at the same time I thought I should examine the nearside only to discover that one half of that cylinder had seized. A quick call to Clive Wheatley and a set of cylinders appeared next day and with the help of my good friend John the job was all fixed very quickly. At the beginning of the year I had renewed all the fluids which included removing and cleaning the brake drums - at the same time I had fitted new seals to both master and slave cylinder. The A/C was also topped up ready for our tour of Northern Spain in the Picos Mountains and the Pyrenees.

This Classic Europe tour was arranged with www.classiccarjourneys.co.uk which is run by Steve McCullagh with whom we had been to India last year - the tour offered us a super route using easily read 'Tulips' with a total of 25 classic cars staying mainly at Paradors.

We enjoyed a very smooth crossing from Portsmouth to Bilbao disembarking at 0800hrs 36 hrs later - our first run was to Canges de Onis a journey of some 200



miles along fast coast roads but then I heard a ping and looking at the ammeter showed there was no charge - the fan belt had shredded !

We have previously been all over Europe in very old cars without a problem but this time I had to call upon the RAC on a wet Sunday lunchtime as I did not carry a spare belt. The breakdown truck arrived and although we were offered a hire car Steve very kindly stayed with us and took us to our first overnight stop whilst the breakdown driver assured that all would be well in the morning if we called him at 11:00hrs. True to his word our car was ready for collection the following morning - I have seen many other breakdown services in operation but you only get what you pay for. The RAC called us twice after we had collected the car to ensure all was well.



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For those of you that enjoy real driving, the Picos Mountains in Northern Spain offer some of the best driving roads in Europe and whilst we were only doing between 200 and 260 miles in a day, the mountain roads made it feel more. It is on those long pulls that the RV8 comes into it's own. I had mine chipped by RPI Engineering about 6 years ago and that has made such a difference - she pulls in top from 1,000rpm . I had a fast road spec TR3A for 15 years and was very disappointed with the performance from the 3.9 litre until the Optimax chip was fitted.

The oldest car on the run was a Healey Abbot with the 2½ litre Riley engine and running gear - she had a lovely note and persuaded me that I should fit a sports exhaust to complement the sound of the V8 There were four stopovers in the Paradors including Leon, Soria and Vielha - the V8 pulled us up to 7,000ft with no sign of overheating but power steering would be nice - must be getting old. Several of the party were pulled over in Spain for speeding, not forgetting a full inspection of the car, to be warned about tyres on the legal limit but the lads said the fines were worth the driving experience!

The Pyrenees are a bikers' paradise and we enjoyed runs alongside Honda and BMW - then into France to Perigueux in time for the circuit racing at Angoleme - our holiday finished with 3 days on Ile de Noirmoutier an island west of Nantes where salt is evaporated from the sea - you can cycle for miles along sandy paths by the sea - we needed a break after 1,500 miles of motoring.

With the fan belt incident a distant memory we had a 300 mile dash to Cherbourg to catch the SeaCat back to Portsmouth. My RV8 has A/C and I wouldn't be without this when the outside temperature climbs above 30C - she averaged over 28mpg, used no oil and ran like clockwork. Boot space is restricted but this has been resolved as I no longer carry a spare - I had my wheels 'Supersealed' with a gel some years ago - this is an American idea that farmers and the super cars use but has been slow to catch on due I expect to the £20 per wheel treatment, however, five years on mine has worked well in my Continental tyres.

My RV8 is in Nightfire Red – this model of MG is not normally seen in either Spain or France and draws considerable interest whenever we parked. She is ideally suited to this type of tour and I have promised myself that I should use her more.

Happy motoring in the RV8.
Peter Wallis – Nightfire Red 2178

