

## Report on the V8 Yorkshire Tour 2008 – Al Barnett and Mike Taylor



The annual V8 Register weekend tours, usually held towards the end of September, have long been popular because of their relaxed atmosphere and the friendliness shown by all. Like MG Car Club's annual International MG Meetings at Silverstone, they attract members from all parts of the country and are a great chance to visit a, possibly, unfamiliar part of the country and enjoy what it has to offer in the company of old friends and fellow enthusiasts. This year the tour was based at the spa town of Ripon in Yorkshire. The weather was excellent for all four days, with the sun shining from Friday through to the end of the event at lunchtime on Monday.



Twenty-six cars took part with 13 GTV8s, 10 RV8s, 3 V8 Roadster conversions and a single MGC. The volunteer organisers this year were Robert and Stella Crowson assisted by their daughter Lauren. They had put together an interesting and innovative programme which was much appreciated by

everyone. We all stayed in the Ripon Spa Best Western Hotel, a comfortable traditional hotel, with magnificent grounds, friendly staff, good food and plenty of secure parking.

Most people had arrived by 5 o'clock on Friday, with several pleased to eventually find the hotel after experiencing extensive roadworks and diversions in the centre of the delightful cathedral city. Some, sensible or desperate resorted to getting a taxi to lead them in, "£5 well spent" said Mike Taylor!



*Stella Crowson greets Mike and Maria Taylor*



*Mike and Janice Sparks with their MGB GTV8 conversion*

On arrival we all received a goodies bag with the high quality of the items enclosed, including the surely unique 'V8 Register Strawberry Jam',



reflecting the high quality of the Sponsors: Coutts Bank and Mackenzies Yorkshire Smokehouse, the latter owned by our hosts Robert and Stella.

After dinner we had a visit from the Ripon Hornblower, clad in a smart grey coat trimmed in scarlet, he cut a fine figure. Apparently there is a tradition that the horn must be sounded on all four corners of the market square to 'Set the Watch' each evening and this has been going on, without interruption, since the ninth century. He was a good speaker and entertained us for twenty minutes with a sharp sense of humour and a no nonsense Yorkshire delivery.

Saturday morning was dry and bright with the sponge and Chamois brigade out early waving their traditional badges of office: the Halfords yellow folding bucket, an assortment of sponges and in Rob Lewis's case a very large dusting brush. That brush must work though as Rob and Denny's Oxford Blue car was as immaculate as ever.



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The first part of the day's programme was a visit to Newby Hall. A trip of just 9 miles with helpful Tulip map guidance provided. I am afraid the tulips didn't prevent several people becoming temporarily unsure of their position, including committee member Mike Russell who appeared in his rejuvenated MGBGTV8, arriving the wrong way up the one way exit route! We had a great morning at this fine country house with its lovely gardens, river trips and miniature railway.



*Parked up at Newby Hall in bright sunshine*



*York Minster on a busy Saturday*

We then set out to see some rather larger trains at the National Railway Museum in York. Several people took the opportunity to visit the Minster in York but found it difficult to see everything because the crowds were so dense on this rare sunny weekend.

Saturday night's dinner was a lively affair with the added bonus of Conjuror Mal Sanderson who visited every table and baffled us all with his card tricks and illusions.

Early risers on Sunday morning saw the odd sight of a pair of legs sticking out from under the rear of Clive Wheatley's black RV8. Further scrutiny showed the legs to be of average length and therefore clearly not Clive's. It turned out to be Andy Vine who had generously been fixing a bit of extra support to one of the many exhaust pipes that mark out Clive's car as something rather special. Sunday was the day for driving over the moors, firstly through lovely countryside to get to Embsay for a nostalgic steam train trip.



*David Allen's RV8 arriving at the Dales Railway*

Next we headed off for a 40 mile run across the moors, through picturesque villages and along narrow roads, with organizers Robert and Stella's RV8 in the lead, demonstrating the advantages of the Hoyle suspension system. The rest of us bounced along behind, trying to glance at the view, avoid the sheep and not run over too many ramblers. We all arrived safely at the next venue "Forbidden Corner" an eccentric place best described as a cross between Hampton Court Maze and the Ghost Train at an

old fashioned funfair. The underground bits were definitely not for the claustrophobic and it wasn't only children who were relieved to emerge into the daylight, still a not to be forgotten experience. After yet another excellent dinner that evening David Allen, representing all of us, made a short speech of thanks to Robert and Stella and presented them with a token of our appreciation.

Monday saw most of us heading north to the Black Sheep Brewery at Masham, although one or two members were delayed trying to find the famous Ripon pie shop. Asking for directions from the vegetarian hotel receptionist may not have been the cleverest move. The presentation at the brewery with its tales of family feuds and the little man triumphing over big business went down well and most of us bought some mementos and bottles in the shop.

So ended another successful V8 Autumn Tour. Successful because the scenery was delightful and the routes and activities so very well planned by the Crowson family. We parted at the brewery with everyone saying they had enjoyed their weekend enormously and were looking forward to the 2009 tour . . . . . where will it be?



*George Barnett's V8 Roadster with the RV8s of Al Barnett and Clive Wheatley about to set off for Ripon from Newcastle under Lyme. (Photos: Al Barnett)*