EUROPEAN BREAKDOWN

During our travels to South West France in April this year we unfortunately broke down. We always believe it won't happen but it did, unexpectedly in the middle of nowhere with poor phone reception.

Luckily I had checked the breakdown cover before leaving home and I took note of the European breakdown phone number, We were covered by the AA through Nationwide bank. On calling the AA they answered straight away and asked our location, they then sent a text as our reply would give our correct location for the recovery vehicle. All good so far, four hours later the recovery vehicle arrived. As expected there was a language barrier with the driver, Google Translate was a godsend. I collected all our belongs leaving only the V5 in the glove box as instructed by the AA and hid the Apple Air Tag from the key ring in the boot.

During the next 30 days, the stories from the AA were very different to the live Apple Air Tag, the car was taken to no less than four garages over 150 miles apart before the AA agreeing to repatriation back to the UK. The reason being they must carry out a full diagnostics to establish if the car can be repaired.

It's now day 30 and the car has arrived back into the UK to my chosen garage for repair.

I suggest any member travelling in Europe to consider the following in the unlikely event of breaking down.

* Input the European breakdown contact details into your phone
* Make sure the phone is always fully charged and carry a power back up
* Carry your driving licence, V5 and the service book stamped up to date
* Have a couple of different credit cards as guarantee for loan cars
* Pack refreshments even for short journeys, most importantly water
* Clothing for all extremes of weather
* Download Google Translate
* Don't wait for the breakdown company to call you, keep calling them for updates.
* If you have extended warranty have their details also establish who the invoice should be made out to.
* Keep a large bag in the vehicle for personal belongings.
* If your breakdown is through your bank, they will ask and insist for your account number and sort code.
* Fit a tracker or as I did apple air tag or similar
* Since the demise of Red Pennant, you now have to do all the chasing, no-one will be holding your hand.

Happy and safe travels David & Diane Cartwright