

# KEMPSFORD

## CLASSIC CAR & MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Newsletter  
Spring 2010

We certainly paid the price for last year's Indian summer, and as much as last year's season ended late, this year's hasn't really got properly underway yet. And it's not only the late spring and cold wet weather that's keeping our classics off the roads, it's the state of the roads themselves. I shudder to think of the damage you could do by simply driving your old car, maybe with wire wheels, over our winter-damaged roads. We have to ensure our cars are roadworthy, but are the roads car-worthy?

Whatever the state of the roads there is still a lot to look forward to: Wheel Nuts, Drive It Day, Kemble are all early in the season. Who knows, we may even see Mike Couling's long awaited Treasure Hunt once the weather improves.

We have a club stand at Wheel Nuts again this year. This was a great event last year and I would highly recommend it. It's on Sunday 9 May and those wishing to travel in convoy should meet in the car park behind Greasy Joe's at 8.45.



Drive It Day is 25 April. It is always held on the nearest Sunday to 23 April, but this has nothing to do with that being St George's Day. In fact the date was chosen five years ago to commemorate the 64 cars that set off from London on 23 April 1900 on the first day of the Thousand Mile Trial. The Royal Oak at Bishopstone, a superb venue with a self-confessed classic car nut for a landlord, and with excellent food and beer, has once again indicated that they will be delighted to welcome all comers on the day. Would those interested in going in convoy please let Terry know. Nothing has yet been arranged but I imagine we will leave from Fairford.

Tony Alden has asked me to mention this year's Kemble Air Shows, of which there are now three. The Vintage Flying Weekend is 8-9 May. We went last year and it was well worth the trip. The Cotswold Air Show is on 19-20 June and there is a Battle of Britain Air Show in September. We can have a club site but we need to book individually. Anyone wishing to go to any of these events should see Tony who will provide the necessary form for you to register. The cost for each show is £10.

Terry has asked me to remind all members that this year's subs are now due. It is £10 again this year, which is great value!

### COVENTRY TRANSPORT MUSEUM

November, and the last event of the season was a coach trip to Coventry Transport Museum. This marvellous (and free) museum has been recently refurbished and houses a remarkable collection of vehicles of all types made in Coventry, once the centre of the British automotive industry. The list of manufactures represented reads like an A-to-Z of Midlands, and UK, motoring history.



The museum tells the story of 'horseless' road transport from the invention of the Hobby Horse in 1818 to the present day. It also tracks the history of the land speed record from 1898 to 1997 and includes a fascinating section dedicated to Project Thrust which culminated in Richard Noble reclaiming the record for Britain in 1983 driving (or should that be piloting?) Thrust 2 powered by two Rolls Royce Avon jet engines at an incredible 633.468 miles per hour.

There was plenty of more sedate motoring on show and most of us spent a nostalgic afternoon playing one of the favourite games of men of a certain age. It's called 'I had one of those' and is closely related to the very similar game called, 'my Dad had one of those.'



One car that I can definitely say none of our Dads had is this 1897 4hp Daimler Autocar. It cost £335 new. Comparing average earnings in 1897 with today this gives an equivalent 2010 price of £156,000, making it available only to the very well-off indeed. The promotional material of the time concentrated on the Autocar's superiority over the horse, needing no grooming, producing no manure heap, consuming only when working, never falling sick or running away, as well as being faster, more powerful and with unlimited stamina. This Daimler was different in many ways to the cars of today, and not just in style and appearance. For a start it has no spark plugs. It utilises a hot tube ignition system in which a tube protrudes from the cylinder head and is heated by a flame applied to the external end. This heats the tube and ignites the gasses in the cylinder. The car is also lacking an accelerator. The engine runs at a constant speed and is limited to 750 r.p.m. Gears are selected by turning handles on the

steering tiller. Since the four gears and the forward/reverse drive could be selected independently the vehicle had four forward and four reverse gears. The final part of the transmission was a chain drive to the rear wheels. Only the rear wheels had brakes, which clamped down onto the solid rubber tyres. Driving this car must have been a nightmare in the wet, especially at night as the lamps were powered by candles. I'm willing to bet that 19<sup>th</sup> century street lighting was pretty ineffective. The 400cc engine is said to have propelled this car at up to 20 m.p.h. although with such a large body and an engine speed lower than a modern tick-over I'm surprised the car was able to move at all!

Here's another car I bet you never had. Only 300 of these Triumph Italias were made from 1959 to 1962. The one in the picture is one of the last made and is one of only 15 remaining in existence. Designed by Michelotti the Italia was launched at the 1958 Turin Motor show and subsequently manufactured in Italy by Vignale using TR3 engines and running gear (for a different take on the TR3 see Roy's Restoration, below)



## A MYSTERY MISFIRE, BY BILL TUDOR

After completing a ground-up re-build on a MG TF, including engine and electrics, the car ran quite well and I covered some 800 miles without a problem. Then the troubles started!

The initial indication was an occasional misfire, especially when hot or in slow-moving traffic. I thought the mixture might have been a little on the rich side and dismissed it as 'a job to be seen to sometime.' Slowly but surely the misfire became gradually worse and more frequent. I adjusted the carbs to what I thought was about the right mixture, but to no avail. It was apparent that it wasn't going to go away.

Came the day of reckoning when the car failed completely: I was in the countryside when the engine just died. I managed to get a tow home behind a friend of mine in his XK120. Then the fun started! I changed the coil, the condenser, the base plate, the distributor cap, the plugs, the points and the HT leads. Bear in mind that only the coil and the condenser were *not* new. I kept trying to start the engine but gave up and settled for trying for a spark at the plug. At every stage we had a spark at the points on the primary circuit but nothing reached the plugs. I checked the carbon pickup in the cap and eventually we had a spark where required. By now the plugs and bores were very wet with petrol and it was late in the evening so I decided to leave it till the next day.

## The Original TF Midget



The following morning I used jump leads to start the car and away we went – for half a mile, then another tow home behind my friend's XK120.

There was only one item in the whole of the ignition system that had not been changed - the rotor arm, and that was new. Well, what can go wrong with a rotor arm? I had carefully inspected it and, after all, it had only been run for 800 miles or so. I replaced with the one I had long since discarded. The engine fired up immediately and ran sweetly. I put back the new rotor arm and the engine was dead again. So I'll be running with the old rotor arm and discarding the new one. I still can't see anything wrong with that rotor arm, despite the fact that I know it doesn't work?

Have any of you experts out there heard of such a case before? The lesson is simple: don't assume, check everything and change the easy bits first. Secondly, if you must have a tow, try to choose another classic!

## 86 NOT OUT

May White is 86; her son Bernard a mere 65, and between them they run the garage in Back Lane, Ramsbury where they you will find the oldest petrol pumps still in use. The pumps date from the opening of the garage in the 1950's by May's husband Jim 'Fishy' White. He was so called because he used to sell and deliver fresh fish when the family ran the grocers shop in the High Street. Not surprisingly the pumps still dispense petrol in gallons and the family have had to fight off EU bureaucrats to enable them to continue to do so.

But the pumps are not the only classic interest. Inside and out the garage is stuffed with motoring memorabilia, auto jumble, classic vehicles and



spares. Jim White's interest in classic cars started with an Austin Atlantic. His sons and daughters inherited his interest in classics and his love for Austin Atlantics. At one point the family owned no less than 30 of them!

In a recent interview with the Gazette and Herald Bernard White said, "We used to get the pumps filled once every few months but now it's getting less and less. We have about ten customers a week. Some are just passing by but others are regulars because they like using the pumps." Well, who can blame them? It's just the place to fill up your classic.

### ROY'S RESTORATION

You won't need to be reminded that Roy is restoring his 1958 Triumph TR3A. Over the last year he and his band of helpers have been busy. The crew are: Terry Chesterman who according to Roy is the Mastermind; Bill Tudor who did much of the dismantling and re-building; Tony Alden who stripped the engine and has been working on the carburettors and distributor (I hope Bill reminded him to keep the old rotor arm!). First the body had to come off, followed by everything else attached to the chassis. Of course, time and corrosion had wrought their work and, as is so often the case the simple matter of undoing a few nuts and bolts turned into something of a struggle involving a lot of heaving, wrenching and skinning of



knuckles. But off it all came, and off went the chassis to Birmingham to be chemically stripped by specialists. It was only after this had been done that it was apparent that the chassis itself was beyond repair or restoration.



Not having a chassis can be a bit of a set-back for a restoration project but Roy was not dismayed and promptly set about finding a replacement. This came in the form of an American import which was duly sent of to be stripped and powder coated.

Stripping the engine revealed permanently seized pistons which were clearly going to need specialist attention. TR Bitz was chosen and off the engine went to their workshop in Warrington to be rebuilt under the expert eye of John Sykes. They will fit new cylinder liners and oversize pistons which will increase the cubic capacity from 1950cc to 2200cc. At the same time they will lighten the crank shaft and flywheel by three pounds and balance the whole assembly including the clutch. At some point in the past a TR2 head had been fitted and this will be replaced with the correct head developed to stage 2 and adapted for unleaded fuel. The result should be a real improvement on the performance of the original car and much more suitable for modern traffic conditions (if not the road surfaces!)

With the chassis back home again the process of re-building began. For this Roy had made a stand which supports the chassis at a convenient working height. Many of the components had to be replaced including ball joints, springs, shock absorbers, brake discs and callipers. The new springs put up a heck of a fight, defying all attempts to fit them with any measure of safety until John Titcombe made a compressor which did the trick. The pictures above shows the chassis and body pretty much as they are now, and the one on the right is how it looked before they started

The next step is to paint the interior and replace the body. Fortunately about 90% of the bodywork can be re-used in spite of the best endeavours of the tin moth. The front of the body will be the first to be replaced followed by the floor pans and inner sills, which locate on lugs on the chassis.



Then follows the A posts and doors, the rear body and the outer sills. Simple!

Well, there's still a lot to do, but Roy and his helpers have show that they are equal to the challenge and real progress has been made. We look forward to the next episode

### Quick Quiz

Here is a short quiz to see if you've been paying attention. Answers at the bottom of the page. No peeking!

- 1 What do the letters FF stand for in Jenson Interceptor FF?
- 2 Which manufacturer had the first UK factory specifically built for making motor cars?
- 3 Who held the World Land Speed Record for 17 years?
- 4 What were manufactured by Riley, Humber, Hillman and rover before they started making cars?
- 5 How much, in Italian Lire, did the Triumph Italia shown above cost when new?
- 6 What was the speed limit when the Daimler shown above was produced?
- 7 What do the initials MG stand for?
- 8 Who claimed in their adverts to make 'the best motorcycles in the World'?
- 9 What does the name Vespa mean?
- 10 In which year was the 70m.p.h. speed limit introduced?



### PETROL PRICES

The lowest price locally for unleaded is the Calcot OTR Esso station on the A419 northbound at Cricklade, and it's 117.9p. This is a whopping 18p (20%) increase on this time last year, when it was only 89.9p A gallon of petrol is now £5.30! A bit of a change from four shillings and sixpence.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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|--------------------------|---|
| April 25 <sup>th</sup>   | Drive It Day. The Royal Oak at Bishopstone. All day event.                  |
| May 9 <sup>th</sup>      | Wheel Nuts 2010 at St Rose's School in Stroud. Meet at Greasy Joe's at 8.45 |
| May 8-9 <sup>th</sup>    | Kemble Vintage Flying Weekend. See Tony Alden for entry forms.              |
| June 19-20 <sup>th</sup> | Cotswold Air Show (Kemble). Tony Alden has the entry forms                  |
| Aug 21-22 <sup>nd</sup>  | Fairford Steam Rally. Terry has forms.                                      |
| Sept 18-19 <sup>th</sup> | Battle of Britain Air Show (Kemble) See Tony Alden for entry forms.         |



### CONTACT:

If you have any stories, photos or information you think ought to be included in the next Newsletter, or would like to comment on anything in this edition, please contact me, Alistair Kennedy, on 01285 810440 or email: [Alistair.Kennedy@cadillacplastic.co.uk](mailto:Alistair.Kennedy@cadillacplastic.co.uk) If you're going to send me text or photos, could I please, if possible, have them electronically, by email or on a CD.

Answers: 1 Ferguson Formula; 2 Daimler; 3 John Cobb from 1939 to 1963; 4 Bicycles; 5 2.5million Lire; 6 14m.p.h; 7 Morris Garages; 8 Norton (I hope you weren't fooled by the picture of a BSA); 9 It is Italian for wasp; 10 1965