

Merry
Christmas

WEST END GARAGE
(BRUTON) LTD

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2013

As father used to say "The older you get the quicker the time flies"- I am blown if he wasn't right. This Summer has flown by, gratefully the kinder weather increased the pressure with no excuses to leave the garden untidy, many more social engagements plus a renewed enthusiasm for the truck and car runs. After the highly successful London-Brighton everything else couldn't quite, measure up. A fantastic invitation to take our 1943 Army truck to the London Guild Hall for the truck marking ceremony (*ancient practice of branding of a truck for a licence to trade in the city for a year carried out by the Mayor*) followed by a luncheon banquet. All a bit overwhelming for a country boy, but a lasting memory.

Sadly many of the truck runs we support seem to be dwindling in numbers; possibly the cost of fuel, possibly the owners getting older, possibly because of the now ridiculous cost of possessing an HGV licence, perhaps youngsters aren't interested in old trucks. We have recently experienced 2 cases recently where professional drivers could not drive vehicles as they had manual gearboxes and not automatic-how scary is that? Our colectic range of vehicles does create an interest with groups asking to visit (*must remember to put sign on gate not to feed the rare breeds within!*)

Have had two instances of late where by 2 young men have been working on our site and I go off boring them of how long we have dealt with their families etc only to realise I used to deal regularly with their GREAT GRANDFATHERS.....time to retire?!!

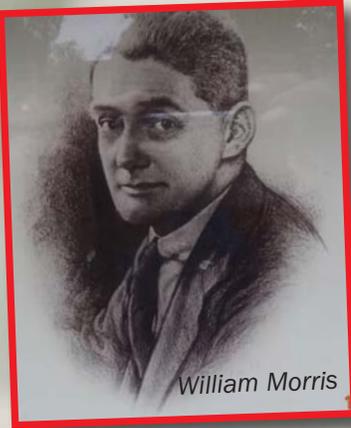
Actually we are a dying breed of motor engineers repairing all makes recent and old. Still having a body and paint shop, and not beholden to Insurance Companies. The ability to fabricate parts and get over many obstacles. If metals are concerned we are coded welders in aluminium, steel and stainless and on site we have a very talented chap making moulds for fibreglass and how useful that has proved. Large flour and cement tankers are probably the backbone with fuel tankers making a welcome appearance. Accident work on trucks makes life interesting and the ability to straighten chassis unusual. Gratefully most of our trucks do not have to go through the High Street and risk upsetting the residents, as the majority come off of the A303 and avoid the town. The poor old town has been inundated by traffic following the closure of the railway bridge at Castle Cary (*for a ridiculous amount of time*) - In Brunel's time the entire Great Western was converted from broad gauge to standard gauge from 5:00pm on a Friday night and completed by the Monday morning - just think about that and the planning; mind you they didn't have logistics and risk assessments to write up in these days-just all the staff rolled up their sleeves. But what an achievement and that after getting all the rolling stock from the entire network back to Swindon.



As we are on the railway topic the signal levers outside the signal box are not connected to the main line but it has been suggested that we connect them to gates and direct traffic into the garage!

Sadly the motor trade regularly receives bad press reports and in an effort to get to grips with this dilemma there has been several attempts to produce an Independent safe guard for customers. To





this end we have joined the "TRUST MY GARAGE" scheme. From the customers point of view it gives added protection and a guarantee to all the work we carry out.

Having touched on one of my hero's, Brunel, I decided to take my brother on a little birthday treat to visit the home of a man we both admired (*from all the stories our father used to regale*) and hold in the highest regard—Lord Nuffield or William Morris the founder of Morris cars and commercials, and latter day owner of Wolseley Riley, MG and eventually into the amalgamation of BMC (British Motor Corporation). What a man, revered by his workforce, he began by repairing and then making push bikes and then branched out into making motor cars ending up being one of the richest men on the planet

from a British industry that led the world. His life would make a worthy serial to rival Downton Abbey but on an Industrial footing. In his time he gave away £30M of his own money (*must be £700-£800 million in today's standards*). Morally upright he had no family and poured his money into hospitals and science from which we still benefit today. His home has been opened by the National Trust and shows a man of simple tastes but solid values. Sadly now his empire has gone other than the relatively small BMW Mini factory at Oxford but brother and I can remember a previous time when we used to accompany father in collecting the new cars from the factory ourselves and very proud to be the Morris dealers in Bruton.



Sorry I got a bit carried away there!

Now I'm really warming up to one of my many topics and that of the remarkable skills some folk have and how excited I can get (*yes you can get excited even at my age!*) Anyone who can acquire a sheet of steel or copper plate and turn it into a full working model of steam loco, or stationary engine get my vote. One friend has made a scale working model of an aircraft radial engine and 5 or 6 guys run the



steam engines they have made on garden railways during the Summer.... their talent leaves me in wonderment! A quick trip to Cornwall to see an old friend, who is in the throes of making a full size fairground organ complete with conductor waving his arms and turning his head plus all the details and that after individually making all of the 300 pipes and tuning them and if that wasn't enough he is planning to make another 300 to give extra depth and quality of sound and he has made some of the parchment music sheets to operate it all AND this is a hobby carried out after work!

A personal tour around a family owned quarry in Devon blows your mind with the size, investment, number of trucks and plant plus the ancillary operations from producing lime to decorative paving slabs and even some polished marble. The millions of pounds involved and reinvested is very heartening, in this day in age.

Nearer home this Summer saw the unveiling of a huge biogas plant at Wyke Farms. Being privileged to be shown around this is truly a green operation using 160 tons of pig, cow slurry and dairy washings a day into sustainable energy, at least enough for their own use (*and not a wind turbine or solar panel in sight*). I did ask if I could run an extension cable over the hill to keep the lights on in my cold, dark house. (*But am still waiting permission!*)



A benign hope to help out a customer with some of the vehicles required on the Hinkley Point project were dashed on the very day the Government announced they might finally proceed, by the 150 year company being put into receivership by an unhelpful bank. Another 250 jobs and a good firm gone. Seems to be the way of business at the moment.





My holidays always seem to give folk a chance to comment on their regular occurrence. It is trying to experience the RDP to retirement. Well how about Burton on Trent as a destination? Actually very enjoyable if you go by canal! Once the brewery centre of the country, it has managed to have an appeal to the American Coors company (*why don't any British companies buy our industries?*) Lost my Cadbury's chocolate to America, Branston pickle to the Chinese, Jaguar, Landrover, British steel to India, car industry-to the Japanese. The list is endless and depressing however back to Burton on Trent the Bass museum is fantastic and well worth a visit even if you aren't a beer drinker.

Despite all the continuing housing programme it is still possible to enjoy some unspoilt countryside even in the Midlands-whether it will still be there for my Grandchildren I am not so sure, particularly with our open door policy to the rest of the world! Getting a bit political now-it's an age thing! I feel a rant coming on.

Back to the holiday season; a long weekend in the Isle of Man with family trying to showing them what life was like in Britain a long time ago-low crime (*didn't see a single policeman.*) main line steam train from one end of the island to the other and original electric trams running from side to side plus optional branch line up a mountain. If that wasn't enough excitement go and see the world's largest water wheel in action. A totally different pace of life; weather could have been better but being sat in between Ireland and Wales I suppose rain is always on the menu!



Last newsletter showed a picture of a couple of major damaged massive trucks and I promised an update this time. After much fun and frolic they are completed and returned to literally fight another day. How about this for an attempt of a press release?

**WEST END GARAGE, BRUTON
completes first of a major regeneration of
Oshkosh Heavy Equipment Transporter**

This massive American machine has a road and cross country capability, being an 8 x 8 tractor unit, (8 wheel constant drive) and a 7 axle trailer carrying a Challenger 2 battle tank with a gross weight of 118 tons. A very sophisticated truck, able to change its tyre pressures at the press of a button, from tarmac to sand, whilst on the move. Hydraulic motors (the size of a small car engine) power the massive winches, steering mechanisms etc.

These vehicles are owned by Fastrax and operated by FTX,Logistics from their base in Bulford, under a 20 year MOD contract.

Operating in Afghanistan, as head of convoy, these were the first to run over IED's with devastating effect.

Thankfully no soldier has been lost in these vehicles. Indeed one of the drivers (paying a visit to Bruton) spoke of his first hand experience of the shock and

force that blows the wheels and hubs off, bends an axle like a corkscrew and twists the chassis in several dimensions and yet he spoke lightly of his ordeal.

These mangled trucks were shipped back to the UK for repair, with two destined for Bruton.

This was the ultimate challenge to involve the entire Company, from the estimating to the mammoth parts inventory, the specialist mechanics/technicians/electricians, to straightening the chassis with our 100 ton jig, the fabricators making/repairing many parts and finally the paintshop giving the finishing touch. In between, the stripping and overhauling of all axles, suspension and steering.

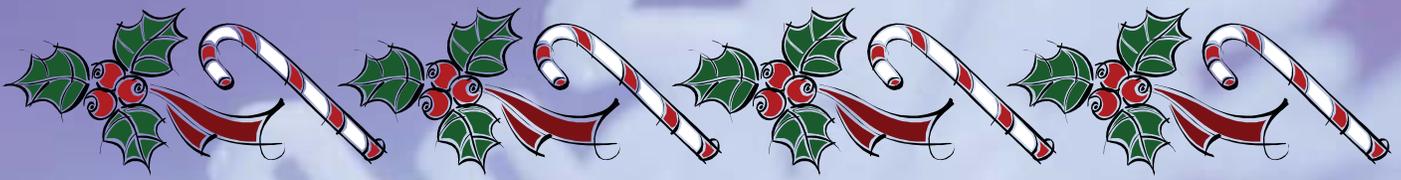
Everyone concerned can take great pride in their achievement and to see them loaded, running up the A303 is a reward in itself.

Just imagine what we might be able to do for you!!!

FOR THE TECHNICAL:

- Engine : 18 Litre Caterpillar 780-bhp
- Gearbox : Alison, automatic 7-speed
- Steering : Separate 3 boxes
: Rear axle steer
- Winches : 2 @ 25 tons each x 2 = 100 tons total pull
- Top Speed: 50 m.p.h.
- Cab Seating: 6 people





To give you a taster for the next episode the subject matter will be of an unusual nature being nautical, so hopefully if madness and money last you will get a full report or if project fails a news black out will follow. Down to business this year you again have been kind to us by keeping us busy in all departments. This last months have seen a dearth of projects to get excited about and work in general being spasmodic going from totally manic to working normal hours.

The bright spot has been an increase in car sales keeping young Tony (*well anyone my junior has to be young*) well occupied and putting his mind to the job has found some ideal vehicles for customers and making the world go round.

So from servicing, MOT, tyres & bodywork please give "Fry a try". Requests such as "Meet me at 8:00am in a recycling centre in Arundel" still represents a much needed challenge to get out of bed! It's the difficult, nasty jobs that are our forte. Goodness knows what the future holds but "Ever forward Mon Ami's" England expects its hard workers, to do our best as ever.

It only leaves me to wish you a relaxing care free Christmas and a fun filled and power packed, opportunity led NEW YEAR to you, yours and family and friends.

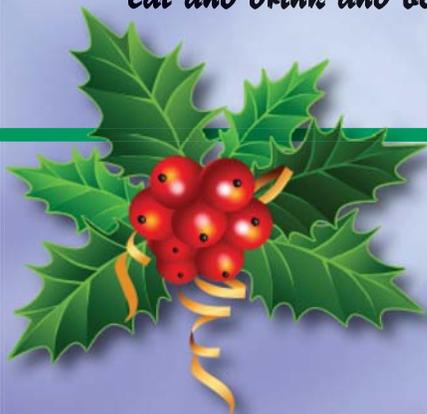
Yours



THOUGHT FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

"So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun"

Ecclesiastes 8:15



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