



WEST END GARAGE
(BRUTON) LTD



JUBILEE SUMMER 2012 NEWSLETTER

I don't know if the Chinese Proverb "May you live in interesting times" is a blessing or a curse. Life certainly is a roller coaster of challenges, frustrations and fun filled days! The pace doesn't let up and I am genuinely pleased it doesn't.

With the economic world appearing to approach melt down and no one appearing to want to grasp the nettle of living beyond our means, we bumble on directionless, lacking any vision, whether it's our future supply of electric, or third runways, or which way is up?

A couple of encouraging small articles I read were one of the near completion of Europe's largest container port built in the Thames Estuary, and the other most unusual – the efforts of William Hague to bring orders to Britain has so far achieved £6 billion worth of trade – well done that man; we need more like him.

Whilst we abandoned the Royal Yacht and all the trade it used to bring to the UK, I was pleased to see that at least we have afforded a very smart Royal Train (probably built in Italy) but at least befits our Monarch. Sadly whilst it passed through Bruton Central TWICE, no arrangements had been made to stop off and have a coffee and a chocolate biscuit – perhaps next time!?

Well that's got the World situation out of the way, now down to the grass roots. Whilst we have been celebrating the Queens magnificent reign, we have also been celebrating our 75th Anniversary of West End Garage. The focal point was taking over the Chinese Restaurant, (site of the original garage) for a Saturday evening and invited family, 'old' suppliers, corporate customers etc. for supper with a 1930's themed evening. Everyone dressed for the occasion, and they were treated to a power point presentation of a condensed version of the motor trade in Bruton!!

We have been challenged on all fronts this year, from the ongoing fight in the car workshop to keep up with the vagaries of all the ever increasing mass of electronics that are fitted to modern motors, to the paint shop. Throw in a few trucks (which we decided 5 years ago not to continue painting) plus the car/van accident side. Result = busy bunnies.

An interesting aside is the amount of tractor/combine panels we paint. Dents etcetera on the modern equipment costing from £70 – 250k is not acceptable, so must be right on delivery, and we are pleased to oblige. Other repainting (from the ground up) of Classic Triumph GT6, Porsche, and the under skin of a Healey.



Party animals!



How are you going to see out of the back window?

Talking of which, probably a good place to mention our endorsement of classic vehicle repairs (mainly aiming at the damaged classic, rather than the total rebuild). This we successfully launched at the Classic Car show at the Bath & West recently. A lot of interest was shown and enthused the trusty staff manning the stand.

The commercial side has seen a welcome return to the use of our chassis and cab jigs. In this throw away age, and the worry by Insurance Engineers of 'undisclosed damage' many repairable trucks are scrapped, but we are seeing some return to sanity. If the customer cannot afford to lose his vehicle, we agree to a fixed cost, and in many cases by the sparing use of second hand parts we can effectively save the vehicle.

Tankers seem to fill our workshop, not only in numbers, but size; cement, flour, general food and fuel tankers are all welcomed, and strangely seem to arrive sensibly and not all at once. Whilst very expensive to obtain, our coded welding operatives are put to good use on the pressure vessels and insurance inspected barrels.

BARNEY

Meet Barney



A great place to work, never time to get bored!

I did mention previously that we took on an Apprentice, who I am pleased to say is turning out to be a real attribute for the future. To help our boring adverts, we have resurrected a young cartoon mechanic – meet Barney (son of Wilf for those of you with long memories). Hopefully his helpful tips will be of benefit to all.

AEC CENTENARY

As I hope you know by now, all our staff enjoy a challenge, indeed not only does it focus the mind, but instils a 'can-do' attitude (which seems sadly lacking in so many aspects of life). To this end a couple of years ago we acquired a 1943 AEC Matador gun tractor – well half of one any rate! We had had a target to work to, as in May this year was the Celebration of 100 years of AEC with a gathering in Newark. This we had to be at. With the infamous 1952 'Apollo' belonging to Wincanton in our stable, alongside co-worker Dennis's 1966 AEC refuelling bowser, we decided to represent the Bruton contingent - and with 2 others from Gillingham and Sturminster we had a convoy! With one on a low-loader the remainder drove the 200 miles slowly and faultlessly up the Fosse. What a fantastic show, 500 trucks, 250 AEC's included buses – and the well loved Routemaster. As soon as we arrived, photographers wanted a photograph session with Dennis "refuelling" a Vulcan- how could one refuse such an offer!

Vehicles from before the 1st World War to today's. Great weather. A road run of 60 miles up there through RAF Scampton (The Dam Busters base) and then the long slog back on the Monday. Well done one and all. My admiration to friend Angus from Norfolk, all that way in the Matador and no power steering, crash box and 30 mph flat out!

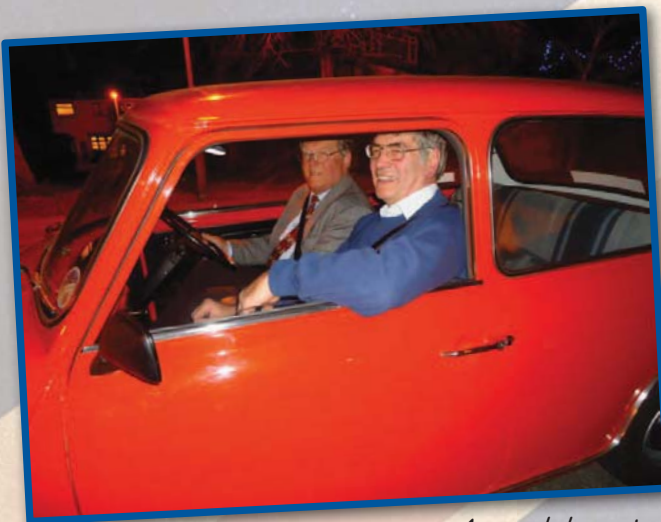


A GRAND DAY OUT

Life does offer lighter moments for those of us living in the past. As No.1 Son gave Brother and myself an invitation to look around the BMW Mini factory in Oxford. As we were visitors to the original Mini factory and the sprawling huge Morris factory in our youth it was an opportunity not to be missed. To make it more of an occasion we dug out the old family retained Mini - dusted it off, MOT'd it, and decided to arrive in style.

Memory plays tricks on your mind; there didn't seem as much room inside (nothing to do with the portly chap behind the wheel!) The high noise levels, slower speeds, and not even a 5th gear was a bit of a shock. However, our laughter at seeing ourselves as 2 sad old men squeezed into this little motor drowned out the engine noise! Arriving in style, I made big brother at least drive back to the A34 after which he couldn't be prised away from the wheel as we rocketed down the A303 - reliving what a marvellous little car this was in the 60's. We were given an exclusive tour by an "apprentice" older than ourselves, so we immediately really hit it off reliving memories of a manufacturer's bygone age.

The new factory is most impressive - shocked to see the lack of British staff - continuing my ongoing quest - what does everybody do? The investment, cleanliness and productivity cannot be commended highly enough. As Wallace would say, "A grand day out".



A grand day out

Not losing all connections with the Army, we have been busy (usually at short notice) with some heavy work on my favourite HET's (heavy equipment transporters) - tank transporters to you and me! Like so many jobs, when they hit they take over your life, and then gone over the horizon, and nothing heard for a while (and then hopefully back again). Tank testing on the 'little brother' (well not that much smaller, just 6 x 6 instead of 8 x 8) has been busy as well as the odd one damaged in action.

I think the moral of the story from which ever way you come from we are delighted to see you - LITTLE OR LARGE!

WHAT CAN IT BE?

So back to base - In the last newsletter I promised to tell you what the building at the bottom of the Station Road was to be. As progress hasn't been as fast as I would have liked I am asking for an extension to the announcement.

Suggestions have ranged from Social housing to a home for the bewildered! I think Fry's Folly gets it at this stage, as its all pay out and no foreseeable pay back!



What can it be?

The dynamics of Bruton seem to be changing a pace. The schools have always been a major employer and the house prices have reflected the desire to get ones children in the catchment area. With so many farms sold off, the private buyers and holiday homes have brought many new faces and ideas to the old place.

Plans are well advanced to be a major ART centre so that will bring a new dynamic to the town. With full credit for the resurgence of the Packhorse Fair and the number of opportunities of restaurants, we could become the areas 'Eat Out Centre' as well. Being a 'Mr Blobby' already, I shall have to exercise huge will power not to just drift from one to the other. If, like my accountant, you are constantly told 'Mr Fry is out with clients' you will know I have cracked or failed and gluttony has won!!

Recently published figures show a very positive growth in passenger numbers using our station. With free parking it has become noticeably much busier in the few years we have based on 'Platform 3!' Of course with the increasing advantage of us servicing your car whilst you whizz to London!

On reflection; with the Jubilee over, whilst disappointed with the weather (as much as we all would love blazing sunshine), the rain somehow made us all the more determined not to be downhearted. Our local picnic being threatened by continuing rain adopted the stiff upper lip – 'sod it we are going for it'. And when it rained out came the umbrellas, but by the end of the afternoon we had all enjoyed it the memorable occasion!

To the countless throng lining the Thames showed the Bulldog spirit so there is still hope for our Country.

After the last newsletter, we rushed out to buy enough stamps to cover this one, but is it ever worth the 10/- (50p) investment? Not sure what to do, whilst several folk asked to be emailed, a much greater number pointed out that (like myself) if it came by email would possibly think "I'll come back to that" but with time pressing will probably never be seen. So any input from yourselves would be appreciated.

Please don't forget us, anything from MOT's, repairs, tyres or paintwork.

- Call in - if only for a social visit or advice from Martyn, Charlie or Carol
- The coffee is great and you would aid my cholesterol if you help me consume the chocolate biscuits!

Here's to a great late summer after the wettest drought on record! Keep smiling (and people will wonder what you are up to!)

As ever, thank you for your custom and forbearance – you make our life such fun!

Jordan. W. Fry

I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone

may eat, drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil. - This is a gift from God

Ecclesiastes 3:12

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