



WEST END GARAGE
(BRUTON) LTD

NEWSLETTER 2014



“The only way to travel”, says son to his father. So here we are on a steam excursion to Stratford upon Avon, enjoying silver service for dinner on Premier Dining. No mamby pamby eight car Intercity or four car Virgin outfit. Twelve loaded coaches rattling at a good speed with smoke billowing across the fields brings the romance back to travel.

What is a better way to spend your time between meals than looking out at our lovely countryside, watching the smoke and hearing the beat of the steam as we positively roar and glide along effortlessly (I'm sure we were above the 75mph max we are supposed to adhere to!), and then on come the brakes and another station to stop at, the platforms were never long enough for these trains. Then what exhilaration when we fly through Swindon non-stop! The downside – water stops and being a hindrance to the rest of the travelling public – ensures the journey times are long winded but, hey, it's a day out and an adventure! As I said: “No other way to travel Dad!”

Got grumpy from Swindon onwards with very few animals in the fields, just hundreds of horses. I keep saying it, but we will need this land for food, but as yet no Government minister has worked out that all these solar farms might give us electric but at what cost of food production? Just in case you think Hinckley Point is being built; the French have gone home and we are waiting for the Chinese to come up with the finance – why don't we just get on and build it ourselves?!



Spent a long weekend in North Wales at Easter, primarily to inspect the burgeoning girth of daughter expecting her first in July. Surprised at the sunshine driving up and then disappointed by the rain and eventually driving with the hood down on the way back to Somerset. The mountains and scenery looked fantastic, despite so many folk over spilling outside the pubs and restaurants, and then all these fit types walking, cycling and running (jealous!)

Ten years I've been prating about on my home railway, trying to crack the vagaries of steam power, so there comes a time in the life of every patient man when he just can't accept failure anymore; so if I can't have an engine that will steam sensibly then I won't have steam at all and be like network Rail and convert to diesel or electric power! Just one last try!

I did promise that in the last tirade that this missive would contain a nautical flavour, or if it had proved a disaster you wouldn't hear any more about it! Well, whilst it's not got to be an unmitigated disaster, the project didn't go quite according to plan. Basically, for some completely irrational reason, one acquired a Healey Boat. Being one of only 25 made in Bridport, I was anxious to refurbish it and then trailer it to Perranporth for Donald Healey's son, Bic (who was the driving force behind the marine operation). Although being a very spritely and switched on 84 year old, he unfortunately suffered a fall at the end of last year and sadly died in April. So my thought of getting my boat to have the provenance agreed by the Master has had to be abandoned. With innumerable challenges ranging from dials, switches, looms, windscreens, etc., etc.; it will be a while yet before boat meets water – will it float? Let you know in the future editions!

Number one son works at the forefront of Science with research into immunology, so whilst carrying out a DNA check on himself he rings his father to ask "How come I have genes that are more common to Africa than England in my blood?" Try explaining that! As the family's roots are from Bristol the thoughts of slavery pops into one's mind.....so an opportunity to visit the Gambia to sort the job out arose, and off we went!

I am so pleased to report that in visiting Alex Haley's ancestors original village our local guide told us, "not to beat ourselves up over slavery as we were enslaved long before the Europeans arrived and don't forget it was our Chiefs who sold us into slavery; besides it was the British who abolished it so don't feel too bad about it". I immediately invited him to come to Bristol and talk to our Council who couldn't even face calling a new complex 'Merchants Quay' as it had connotations to trading and slavery! I still

don't know where the genes come from but relationships are forever diversifying so this story will continue beyond my lifetime (and it was nothing to do with me guv – honest!)

Reported on an early morning trip to Arundel in Sussex last time - well the upshot of that trip was to design and fabricate an elaborate mobile platform to enable villagers to safely empty their rubbish into the large skips left in varying villages on a short stay. This

magnificent structure, which folds up for travelling, would have been absolutely ideal for one of the marvellous staircases on the Morecombe and Wise show. The moral of the story; if you have any challenges you would like to chew over you know the number to ring!



It's now the time of year to fire up the classic cars and trucks. We have completed the first trip in our Commercials; being a 140 mile jaunt over Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset, all safely home but this time we swapped drivers around the route which gave another perspective/dimension to the tour. For the first time we have had a request for our Foden Tipper to be used for a hearse, I know if we give the two-stroke engine some beans it will help the poor fellow to take a new song to the angels!

Further excitement is planned for June 6th, which for our older readers will know it is D-Day. So we leave Bruton in convoy to make a landing at Caen in time to meet up with HM Queen and Mr Obama. Thoughts of purchasing and towing a 25 pounder gun have been thwarted, probably just as well as we wouldn't want to be accused of liberating France from the EU! More details on the Operation next time...

Work Situation

Many of you know by now that Charlie is also off to liberate the rest of Europe. I imagine she may finish up in the EU parliament and bossing them about – could be a great improvement! A difficult position to fill after eight years of loyal service, but we are training a very capable young lady called Natasha. I am sure that between Natasha and Tony you will still receive an excellent service.

Tony has been very active on the car sales front, and it is a blessing to me to be able to hand over any leads or enquiries over to him as he appears to be far more successful than I ever was at locating the right car for you. Judging by the complimentary emails I get, I should have done it years ago.

Our belonging to 'Trust My Garage Scheme' offers new safeguards for our customers and will benefit us with new ideas and some collective bargaining power which we haven't yet hitherto enjoyed.

Pleased to report a hectic body shop, helped by a small measure of the giant hailstone damage and also a general uplift in work on buses, coaches and general accident damage (not that I wish anyone to have an accident you understand!).

Our workshops have enjoyed an almost 'tanker infestation' with the yard overflowing with flour, cement, wood and paper pellets bulk tankers. Always a pleasure just to see them rolling up unannounced and forming an orderly queue on our approach road. West End weekend maintenance has grown in numbers and popularity, and whilst our MOD work has slowed up, we still retained a regular link and work from the 'biggest of green' machines visiting – long may it continue!

Apologies in advance for extra chaos on our site as building work for our new office kicks off soon, but because of the mayhem it is scheduled to cause, we hope to complete in three months; now that's a challenge that any of you involved in building works will confirm! Please follow the signs!

As many of you know, Bruton is the place to visit, and being a Brutonian I feel that after living here all my life, 'now is its time'. A visit of 120 'Savages' from Bristol in early May (mainly retired gentlefolk made up of professionals, artists, rambles, twitters, musicians and even a motoring chapter – 'the Oily Feathers') They descended on Bruton to play music in the church and Kings School, to look around our garage and old vehicles, to walk our footpaths and watch our birds, and to feed at our pubs. Good news all round. The Healey Car Club intend to visit us on June 1st to look at the classics at the garage and lunch in Bruton, and all this before the International Art Gallery opens in July – watch this space, I shall endeavour to keep you in the loop!





Apprentices

How time flies, it seems not long ago we agonised over whether to take on any apprentices and now one has completed his and has become a valuable member of the company. His young brain is better wired for our computer age and he has proved himself to be an excellent example by being chosen by the college as being the best in his year – well done Clayton.

Being concerned over our staff's age profile, we needed a young brain on the truck side as well – enter Ryan. I keep reminding him what a lucky chap he is to be able to experience such a huge range of vehicles to work on; from blown up tanks transporters from Afghanistan to modern hi-tech trucks, cranes and forklifts, plus everything in between. Congratulations Ryan, we look forward to the future with confidence.

Being a 'grumpy', I haven't had a great deal of fortune in employing youngsters, but to get two together I consider myself and the company well blessed.

Being inspired by the youth we arranged to open up three businesses on the estate. With our two lads, four more at Longpre Furniture and four lovelies at Godminster they took the lead and talked the visitors through their job roles. An excellent evening and much appreciated by the now better educated and inspired visitors.

I would also like to share a little bit of history with you, and this is no exception, so in reading a book on holiday I came across the following; In February 1859 (before my time), 600 men and 70 horses (besides stone masons and quarrymen) worked on the new railway from Glastonbury to Bruton. Work was held up by unfavourable weather throughout the spring and continued through the autumn with unusual amounts of rain, followed by a severe Winter. Extra work constructing the spur at Wyke Champflower (to join the two railways to the main line) meant the railway did not reach Cole (for Bruton) until February 1861. The original plan to bring the railway up beside the river to the West End was changed in favour to continue the line onward to Wincanton and beyond.

Bet we couldn't do that now with all our heavy equipment and technology!!

Time to get this lot over to the publisher, so let's hope for those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer, barbeques and endless lawn mowing!

Have lots of fun, but don't forget about us – we will miss you all. Cheers!

Yours

Jordan. W. Fry

Something to ponder on:

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper

Proverbs 13:4

... Perhaps?!



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