

# Winter

**WEST END GARAGE**  
(BRUTON) LTD

**NEWSLETTER**  
**2016/17**



Some of the staff on the 'Stairway to Heaven'?

**After the episode we had with the last newsletter that was not delivered (for a host of reasons that no one can answer with literally hundreds coming back from the Post Office) I came to the conclusion that either a vast proportion of the population are on the move or our system is hopeless. So the thought that, "it's never worth it" took over, plus the fact that many of you missed our invitation to our 80th Party - No not my 80th but the company's. (I have only managed to work for the company for 50 of them!)**

For those of you who missed it, it was a great occasion – we were blessed with a lovely warm and bright evening. Our last minute shunting and cleaning by all paid dividends and the old place looked its best. It was appreciated, by the number of compliments we received, and over 200 folk looked in. The Ox Roast proved popular with most going back for seconds! Customers even came from Norfolk,



Gloucester, Reading and all points of the compass. Many old vehicles (including our own) plus a Model 'A' Ford Pickup complementing a 1930 Morris Commercial Pick Up (that ticked over like a Rolls Royce).

Father's first profit/ loss/ balance sheet of 1937 had been unearthed in the attic. Sobering reading with a loss in the first year of £500 being transformed to a £100 profit by 1940 – an achievement considering very few staff and a war on! Original ledgers in beautiful writing listed names of old families, farmers and schools.

One does wonder where all the years have gone and I am regularly accused of living in the past but actually I quite enjoy the nostalgia of the time before electronics took over from common sense in our vehicles but guess I better get

to live with it. A customer recently related to me how a "newish" top of the range motor went into "limp mode" caused by its electronic control unit failing – the cost of a new unit £12,000 (mind you the car did cost £50,000) but all the same how can you possibly explain that to a customer (only glad I didn't sell it to him!)

I feel we have been blessed with decent weather this summer, whilst not many balmy summer evenings sat outside enjoying a glass or two, it has been relatively dry – a good barometer in the number of jobs we can do outside and the autumn has given us some stunningly beautiful days. None more so than cruising on the Trent and Mersey canal with magnificent colours in the trees and the leaves falling like enormous snowflakes and then the ageless necessity of kicking your way through mounds of dry leaves. It was sadly last trip as the boat is being sold upon return, so that's the end of an era and I shall have to find some other past time to bore you with. As holidays are the only time I get to read I enjoyed the biography of Fred Dibner and was interested to read that it had taken him 27 years to build/ rebuild his traction engine only to find out that it didn't go at all well and he was naturally so disappointed he felt that he wanted to sell it – well I know that feeling – We held a charity summer lunch at home with the trains running. Apart from the rain to dampen ones spirits the steamer decided, after a while, not to pump any more water, and



It did work once!

a steamer without water is a bomb so that was the end of that little exercise!

If you want major transformation, rebuild a 1959 speed boat (remember the saga- well it did work on the Thames at 6mph) fettle it, test it out on lakes (miles from home as none locally) and when all is ready trailer it to Lake Windermere for the 3 day classic Boat Rally. All the family were involved and were camping on lakeside and 15 minutes into the rally it packs up – all that water and it overheats!! Half a day messing about and then I gave up “Twer enough to make a person swear!!” Lovely weather, fantastic venue swamped in nostalgia with the steam boats and even a 1907 little petrol job. Over 30 boats in all. The only saving grace was that most had trouble of one sort or another and one lady, on being towed back by the Ranger said “that’s the 3rd boat that’s broken down on me today”. Some compensation was winning Best Restored Boat but I shall have to go back next year to prove that it works!

What a clubhouse full of Cambell’s achievements, photographs of Seagrove as well talk about hallowed halls of fame and now restricted to only 10mph with Rangers and speed cameras! Perhaps they ought to try out the new speed bumps we have in Bruton!

Now I am into the fun programme best I finish off including a long weekend trip to Holland to the “Healey Museum”. A private enthusiast who built a museum to have his cars and collection and then the family offered him Donald’s Healeys trophies and cabinet, Geoff’s drawing desk (full of drawings) etc, etc. Thinking a couple of hours would see it through 6, wasn’t enough. Then an invitation to his Disney Fairy Castle that he built and lives in! So healthy to find out other likeminded folk!! All Mad!

The crossing from Harwich to the Hook was like a mill pond and the motors enjoyed the decent roads in Holland. Apart from me breaking down going up the A34 (and robbing Son’s Sprite at Abingdon for a coil) all went like clockwork.

The end of season October “Exmoor Run” is an excellent rally from Buckfastleigh Station, across Dartmoor and Exmoor and was this year blessed by a gorgeous sunny day – England looked at its best and the unused roads a delight to explore. With Son taking control of the Big Healey with one grandson and his wife taking James in

the Sprite left me with my Bentley replica but to make life more interesting we left the day before (Saturday) and toured down Dorset and followed the coast around to Torquay. Took all day but was most interesting.

I’ve dealt with Cars, Boats and now for Trains.

I took the the family and Cornish cousins from Swindon to Crewe by diesel and then hitched up to Royal Scot (not Flying Scot) to steam to Hollyhead. It was a beautiful day and stunning scenery, to be met by minor grandson and family for a spot of sightseeing and then the 7 course silver service dinner on the way home. A late night by the time we got back to Somerset.

To ensure Fry Minor experiences steam power, a trip to North Wales was arranged to Bala Lake to ride on the narrow gauge railway. He is bonkers on his early book about “Alice” the steam train from Bethesda slate quarries. Said Engine is now in the careful ownership of a Mr Julian Birley who insisted that any self-respecting 2 ½ year old should be on the foot plate – I don’t think he will ever forget it!



Proud customer and son on a Royal visit

Back to fun and games nearer home. In the last newsletter I gave a report on “The Gun” – Well things have moved on for instance I now have a gun licence (although the police were a little taken aback when I showed them my gun!) Our aim (bit of a pun) was to take it to the military gathering at Weymouth. Thoughts of taking gun and lorry together on a low loader were soon abandoned so gun went on its own with truck following. Unloading gun outside Sainsburys in Weymouth proved to be a major challenge for the two operatives. Firstly the wheelbase is slightly wider than the trailer, so no room for error, also wet floor boards made things slide about! We did achieve our objective and to be part of the 70 plus strong amarda



More practice needed?

trundling along the sea front was very impressive not just Jeeps, etc but half tracks and 2 Sherman tanks! A very good outing albeit exhausting and we now know why originally it had a crew of 9.

Yeovilton Air Day was much easier, just tow it to Yeovilton. A few issues about security but we were in and thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. It is not all fun everyday (mainly weekends). Sometimes we do some work – but before we get down to it I must report on the rebuilding of a Mk2 Jaguar (such as Inspector Morse's). Well, thanks to many bodies in all aspects of the firm (but particularly the lion's share of the work was done by Tony Bolton). Now finished, it looks stunning, the leather interior brings back Nostalgia with a capital "N". Being an import from California, all I want for Christmas is a number plate and then we are off! This feels like the writings of an AGM reporting "Minutes of the last" – The 1929 MG Racing 'C' type was successfully repainted and rebuilt and made it to Buckingham Palace although the Queen didn't drive it around the block, the Duke of Gloucester officiating instead. The "saint " type Volvo made it back to Ireland and the owner was pleased so that was another tick in the box. A couple more projects await for us to get started on them for the winter months.



Remember the Saint?

## WORK – my boy and be sharp about it!

This summer has proved to be a very difficult one and whilst everyone is entitled to holidays (particularly the boss) somehow we really struggled to keep up, in fact sometimes we seem to be going backwards. This was exasperated by my opening my big mouth in

the last newsletter saying how thrilled I was with my apprentices – only for 2 of them (having finished their apprenticeships) to leave in the same month. Being good at their jobs they were sorely missed just at the start of the holiday season. The poor long suffering members of staff have been sorely tried to keep up with the work. Add to this pot an unprecedented amount of MOD work and life becomes a balancing act BUT Fear Not we are back on track and ready for anything.



Heart transplants - our speciality!



One challenge was a particularly large boat trailer for the SBS a clever bit of kit but I would have loved to have seen the boat!

Trucks and tankers from Afghanistan, Warminster and Colchester all help to feed into the mix and we still enjoy the challenges of the work for the Tank Transport Squadron.

It has been particularly pleasing to have many new car customers and forgive me if I pounce on you and ask where you live etc as I am genuinely interested with so many new folk in the area.

The Hauser and Wirth gallery brought 150,000 folk to Bruton last year so that must go some way to account for the busier roads and High Street etc, let alone all the articles I see in the weekend papers. "This is the place to live"- I have been saying that for years but no paper bothered to report me!!!

This Referendum! Now there's an interesting subject even more so after the event, than before! What's to be done? Confidence is what all the markets seek so I think we should just get our heads down and keep going. In my naïve little world I have this longing that maybe one day we might own something and even start making a few things. I couldn't believe, on my canal trip, to pass through an enormous (ICI) chemical factory but now it belongs to TATA. I knew they owned the steel industry but unaware they have our chemicals as well. I even read British Gas (or whatever name they are known by) want to sell off our pipelines to a foreign investor – Where are the English investors? Sorry, not good for the heart rate all this ranting - count to 10.

2017 promises to be a year of change. Already in the UK and America "the peasants have been revolting" and with elections in France and Germany we can expect some fireworks.



Memories of the 30's?

Who say's nothing is **free** in this life?

- We offer you
- **free** advice on any motoring issues
  - **free** air (not taxed yet!)
  - **free** coffee and biscuits
  - a **cheery** reception and smile
  - **free** estimates

Please feel **"free"** to drop in and talk to us, we would love to see you. Don't forget we are open Saturday!

**A Huge Big Thankyou to all who have used us during this past year. We trust we have managed to offer a good service to most of you and if we have failed we am sorry, we promise to try harder next year! In the meantime a Happy Christmas and a prosperous and Healthy New Year to you one & all.**

*Jordan. W. Fry*

Thoughts for Christmas & New Year: So many people get so uptight and have such short fuses – I saw this from an unknown wise poet. Thought this might help.

*"A careless word may kindle strife; a cruel word may wreck a life.*

*A bitter word may hate instil; a brutal word may strike and kill.*

*A gracious word may smooth the way; a joyous word may light the day.*

*A timely word may lessen stress; a loving word may heal and bless."*



Thought he was doing an estimate on a horse-box?



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