



**How can it be another Christmas and year passed? All those plans and aspirations never quite materialize and yet how lucky are we? Not required to fight in Afghanistan, food on the table and a roof over our heads. As I keep telling all the staff “Another day in paradise!” Indeed listening to those desperate individuals in Calais determined to risk all to get to Britain they believe this to be Eutopia – perhaps more of us should value what we have. Maybe some of us might even have too many toys. My daughter thinks my epitaph will read “He with most toys wins!”**

Whilst my thought and appreciation of life persist a small fleet of World War II AEC Matadors went over to France on this year's 70 year celebrations of the D-Day landings. Despite high security and a very jumpy French police force we did bludge our way around the Normandy coast and villages, taking the smallest of lanes (and in one case) went down a footpath – A Brit on a mission is unstoppable! Thank heavens they didn't have Sat Nav 70 years ago as our leader (being technically minded) and relying on the satellites invariably had us trying to execute 27 point turns on housing estates!

Indignation burst forth whilst visiting Gold Beach - all cordoned off and nowhere to stop, so the pavement had to surface and then on walking to the beach everywhere were American trucks, DUWKS in the sea, Ambulances and hundreds of jeeps rushing about – ENOUGH MES AMI! Those barriers are going, this was the British beach and we are going on it. Driving up

and down that beach (with a vast display of poppies numbering the fallen on that day) was a humbling experience and brought home the loss and the cost of war. We were pleased to be able to fly the British flag in fact we often wondered if the British had anything to do with it as it almost appeared to be an entirely American operation! By the time we got to Pegasus Bridge we brought the largest Union Jack we could find and proudly flew it from our convoy. Our efforts appeared to be appreciated by the amount of waving, photographs and cheering.

Ours, being a gun tractor would have had a crew of 7 so plenty of seats in the rear and we were delighted that son and grandsons came with us to witness the occasion – one they will never forget and hopefully will tell others.

Being blocked in a tail back on a main road we wandered to the front of the queue to witness which



Head of State we were waiting for. Near the front was a coach of Highlanders and getting fed up offloaded and got all their band kit out there in the road with bag pipes and full ensemble enthusiastically giving it their all it was a lasting memory which totally baffled the French police who were helpless to do anything.

The only thing that ruined the experience was the engine crew on the ferry deciding to go on strike once we had all boarded!

Our journey back through Portsmouth, Southampton was ponderous but reflective on a trip of a lifetime.



What fantastic summer weather we have enjoyed (and still the grass grows) and lots of opportunities to take the old classics out for trips (Vehicles not folk!) Obviously retirement enables one to do all sorts

of exciting things (so I am told) The Annual Son and Father bonding weekend this year blasted the Healey to the Peaks of Derbyshire, the exploring of Buxton and to the AGM of the A1 Tornado steam Engine trust in Castlefield all crammed in with walks and enjoyable open air motoring.

**Must report;** on organising a little local motoring event recently it culminated in a visit to Haynes Motor museum at Sparkford was most impressive. After this £5m revamp there is so much to see I thoroughly recommend it.

With the opening of our new Art Gallery this year 50,000 people have come to Bruton between July and October. Quite amazing and the subject to much publicity one could be excused for thinking that (as I have always pronounced) Bruton is the centre of the universe! Certainly more is happening now than ever before in my lifetime.

Not wishing to be out done or being thought as sluggards if you haven't visited our station of late our new offices are reaching completion and will be fully operational before Christmas.

In replacing the porta cabins the new building is not only a tribute to the Mr Brunels design but a statement



to the future of the company – we intend to be here for a few years longer!

This project has been akin to a military operation! At the end of June “operation office” kicked in but in order to build our new ones the porta cabins had to be removed and repositioned far away and had to be up working for Monday morning – planning, that’s the key to it my boy!

Catina wire support posts had to be in position and a new site for the cabins cleared.

5:30 Friday night, phones, electric and water disconnected. Telephones and I.T systems removed.

8:30 Saturday Morning crane on site, stairs and 3 cabins removed. The pack shuffled as the last one needed to be the first in its new location. By lunch time cabins in the right place. Offices repositioned and kit back in rightful place.

Saturday PM catina wires stretched over the road, anchored and strained back to the cabins. New electric supply laid on.

Night shift of I.T etc worked on. Sunday all day reconnecting. Water laid on and connected. Old site all marked out by the builder for the footings etc. Everything up together by nightfall.

Early Monday morning, diggers arrive and excavate the footing and a last minute frantic clean up.

8:15am then Mrs Larcombe serenely arrives takes up her position in her office as if nothing had happened (except no trains rushing by and moved 90 yards towards Bristol) work commenced with no glitches – miracle or what?



barrel decides to spring a leak or valve gear breaks. Numerous complicated fuel tanker often graces us with its presence of late.

Our body shop has been particularly active with car/ van damage and panels for a whole range from tractors, combines, trucks and then squeeze in a few re-spray's again from fork lifts, to tankers and anything else that moves. Considering how insurance companies are making it neigh on impossible (for customers to take vehicles to anywhere but their designated body shops) It's all a bit of a miracle. Our original team of Nick, Gary and helpers work very well together.

### **“EVERYTHING COMES TO HE WHO WAITS”**

So I was once told. Many years ago at the start of my apprenticeship Father introduced me to the sales department and as a local customer (Vera Collins from Greenscombe) wished to buy a Mini Pickup. Being a busy lady (then the bursar at Sexeys) the only convenient time was of an evening. “Wet-behind-the- ears” yours truly eagerly went armed with all the literature necessary to conclude a successful deal. A dark, wet winters evening was pushed to one side as I was ushered into the sitting room with a blazing fire – a very cosy scenario. “Have a sherry” says Vera, as the evening progressed discussing everything from family, farming and Bruton it seemed to impossible to talk about the benefits of a Mini Pickup – all the while the room got hotter, the sherry bottle emptier and eventually (with a head not wanting to concentrate too hard) I managed to keep the conversation on track– long enough to try to conclude a deal (the thought of failing was inconceivable facing Father as a failure!) We did get the order signed, but on Vera’s terms not mine and when I got home Father just smiled “You will learn son” and I did!

The point of the story – the pickup was for her sister Florrie. Florrie died some years ago the pickup was put away in a barn but not quite forgotten. Sadly Vera also died a couple of years ago and now the estate has been sold off.

I always asked if I could buy the pickup back and finally through the family I am now the proud owner (having paid a lot more than Vera did when it was new!) Conditions apply not to sell it on and to name it after Florrie – so you see “Everything comes to he who waits!”

Thanks to everyone for making it happen, particularly Harry Mills for working all the hours.

### **DO YOU EVER DO ANY WORK?**

Well that’s a million dollar conundrum. Yes we do; and have enjoyed another varied and busy year “Living on the edge” Even I am often left in wonderment! Indeed the vagaries of the motor trade continue to fluctuate from feast to famine almost overnight – it could give you sleepless nights, but mercifully the unexpected regularly happens from the phone exploding and ringing off the hook to trucks from all points of the compass just arrive no prior warning – “here I am fix me!”

To the green Bruton group I apologise for the horror I see on some people’s faces when some maximum weight artic wanders down through the high street, but your poison is our meat – my only assurance is that no truck driver wants to drive through Bruton high street in fact some will not so we have to fetch! Thank heavens you don’t see what comes in from the A303!

Her Majesty has been gracious enough to allow us to refurbish more of her trucks back from their battering in Afghanistan – space and time is likely to become highly sort after commodity in the coming weeks – where would we be without a challenge life would be so dull!

Often if the car side is quiet the trucks are busy and visa versa. With capable and versatile staff one can help the other and so it seems to work. Cement and powder tankers keep rolling in, as their pressurized



## WHAT'S TO DO WITH IT –

### WATCH FUTURE NEWSLETTER!

As you are probably aware living in my cocoon I seem to come across many like-minded folk. Buying a treat for No.1 son to further his flying experiences we head off one early Saturday morning to local aerodrome at Henstridge to take to the skies in a Tiger Moth – what an experience with him looking like Biggles (complete with goggles and flying jacket) – a beautiful October morning to fly over to Bruton and to shoot up his cousin in Evercreech. For the spectators left on the ground time to be able to tour the hanger and inspect the other 2 air worthy moths and 2 more in build – a squadron of 5 all in one place, imagine them all taking off at once, what a sight that would be.



Immediately the mind wanders to another customer/friend who makes the most beautiful, much desired flutes for a living but for fun loves to express his mechanical genius and so makes a scale rotary engine as used in WWI fighter plane. When someone can actually make everything from the moulds and casting the aluminium cylinders to the bearings, pistons, rings, magneto and even the spark plugs and get it to work then that is a real engineer from another planet! In addition to having “done previous” by building the most magnificent steam engine to pull us all around on his railway – sorry getting carried away!!

### AN UPLIFTING THOUGHT?

How on earth do you begin to get your head around planning to land a space craft on a comet? – That's like trying to chase a rainbow! 10 years to get there (obviously space highways are more reliable than the A303) what brain these guys must have, I wonder did they use a slide rule?!

I was allowed to have my 2 grandsons (aged 10 and 12) company for a week in the summer on the strict understanding from their mother that there would be no repeat of the previous years (underage drinking, late nights and general slack Grand parenting!) With one in the workshop and the other in the office they made a good team. (A demonstration of another expensive bit of diagnostic kit was evaluated by them and others with a thoughtful conclusion that we should buy it) Upon returning to my office I found I had been usurped or was it a coup, sadly home and holidays beckoned and I had lost my confidantes (at least no warning letter received this time!)

A new year awaits and new opportunities abound. Sincere thank you for your custom and forbearance over the last year and we look forward to serving you even better in our future.

**Cheers!**

*Jordan. W. Fry*

### Thought for life?

*“The race is not to the swift  
Or the battle to the strong  
Nor does food come to the wise  
Or wealth to the brilliant  
Or favour to the learned  
but time and chance happen to us all  
- Ecclesiastes 9.11*

*Finally a thought for the election?*

*For lack of guidance a nation falls  
But many advisers make victory sure!!*

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