

One of the motor trade mysteries is how jobs / vehicles go in batches for absolutely no reason. One week we may have a run of clutches and another endless cambelts. One week the workshop is full of Land Rovers and the next you could be forgiven thinking you have slipped back in time, the workshop being full of 1960's motors. Just the other week we found ourselves with 4 Bentley's on the same day. Glad I am no longer a franchise holder it would be so boring !

I am pleased to meet so many new folk when I pass through our reception so forgive me for the questions you receive but it helps the memory to remember the occupants who used to live there in a previous life or an explanation of a new address I have never heard of.

A big thankyou for using us and I hope we have proven satisfactory to you. If not, I would like to hear about your experiences. It's a fast changing world and after 82 years we need to adapt and change in this brave new world. We are blessed with talented staff and when you look around our business everyone is amazed at our diversity. We do try (and usually succeed) but as you all know life changes

on a stroke. Only this morning we arrived at work with three tankers lined up to greet us and we had no idea that they were coming. Indeed one of the drivers did not know why it was there, where it had come from



Skipping to a new green future!

or even who owned it – just following orders. It adds to the days excitement, but miracles do take time.

This light night draws to a close; the bats are out: time to call it a day and get strength up for another exiting day tomorrow! If this tirade started off sounding more and more of a grump than a sensible letter, think who but UK PLC could put on a fantastic pageant like the royal wedding? Nobody in the whole wide world! Lovely bride, handsome groom and a seamless

execution of a complicated day with everything going to plan; The Lord supplied the sunshine and there was even an E-Type Jaguar (albeit electric).

Well if you have got this far; pour yourself a drink and probably an aspirin!

Cheers and thankyou for your custom and forbearance. Here's wishing you a lazy, crazy summer and lots of fun and frolic – how lucky are we ?

All the best.

Jordan. W. Fry



STAFF PROFILE: MEET SIMON KERLEY

Another all-round good egg. A multi-talented coded welder/fabricator, he can turn his hand to everything. When the chips are down, (it goes with being a good egg), Simon gets you out of the knot. Living in Bruton and cycling to work, he enjoys the life of a sea dog; gardening and kayaking in the summer, winter pursuits on the bike. But he tells me that his energy levels are so low after work that he often prefers sitting down. We really miss him when he is on holiday (I am sure he doesn't feel the same but is rather enjoying quality time with his wife.)

As King Solomon said 3000 Years Ago !

"So I commended the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat, 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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Summer WEST END GARAGE (BRUTON) LTD NEWSLETTER 2018

A seemingly endless grey winter finally bursts into summer and bypasses spring (or at least bypasses me!)

So where is the summer newsletter, I am quizzed? Sorry, got caught on the hop as holidaying at the wrong time. I should have bags of time on my hands as everyone tells me; I have retired but somehow it doesn't seem to work like that. There is this conspiracy theory that despite the promise of a paperless office someone, somewhere seems hell bent on making us so busy on this vast ocean called legislation. It is an iceberg just floating, waiting to hit us as we are not paying attention to where we are going. We are too busy trying to move all this paper. It drives me nuts! No matter how much paper I shift in a day there is even more tomorrow. This latest whizz idea of GDPR is causing me to despair with life itself. Not long ago we were happy to have our details printed in a phone directory inside a phone box – How life has changed. How much more it is going to with the likes of Alexa listening, monitoring our lives and even answering our questions? Big Brother is indeed watching and waiting.

I am told communication is everything nowadays but I fear we are sliding into a “communication overload”. How did we even manage without mobile phones? We used to send our mechanics out with a shilling (remember a shilling? 5p today) so they could ring us back from a phone box and if all else failed and the money ran out then reverse the charges! Perhaps if all these pesky, sales calls operated from a cold phone box it would not only slow them up but give us some peace.

Sorry if I'm off again and haven't even mentioned Brexit yet! – What negotiation? Seems all one way at the moment to me. I have suggested to a brilliant customer of ours (who knows all about driving a hard bargain) that he should join the government on a short contract as he would soon have the job sorted out one way or the other. I believe that as a nation we have just about managed to breed out all common sense from the majority of our population. By listening to the TV and the papers you have to agree that the inmates appear to have taken over the asylum!

However here we are on a beautiful Sunday morning. It cannot get better than this. “Oh to be in England now that summer's here!” How annoying that on the one day of the week when you can lie in, the old body clock bangs you wide awake and you lie there willing yourself back to sleep but the brain kicks in and that's it the day has started!

I am way behind with this missive. All free time booked out best I get up and get on with it - “an hour in the morning is worth two in the afternoon”.

So, as ever life has marched on at an ever increasing speed and the tempo goes up a notch. On a recent Healey Club weekend we visited the fairground museum at Dingles in Devon. There, the old rides are repaired and preserved. Imagine the scene of all these mature sports car enthusiasts whizzing around in proper old dodgems, galloping carousels and ghost trains etc. Then the more foolhardy of us going on a rocket ship on a 45 degree roundabout (the middle goes one way as you go the other). Centrifugal forces throw the pivoting “car” outwards as the occupant is thrown inward. No chance of it stopping when the money runs out as a masochistic controller was going to give these old duffers the ride of their lives. Faster and faster seemingly forever. Through the grimacing and hanging on for dear life, it did give me a parallel thought that this is what life seems to be like at work!



Customer dared to complain!

Staggering out of this infernal machine, Planet Earth seemed a welcome stop.

Our instant society demands that we are locking ourselves into an ever increasing maelstrom of activity with every little chance of finding any peace. Anywhere. Do we really need 24 hour shopping, next day deliveries even on Sundays?

Living in the past can be most educational and fun such as attending “War in the Cotswolds”. We travelled by steam from Cheltenham race course to Broadway. The train was filled to capacity and there was standing room only for part of the journey. Special Branch were randomly checking our identity cards. A Spiv who could not produce his trades licence gets arrested by a bully policeman.



War in Cotswold. Spiv arrested!

Met up with Montgomery, Winston Churchill and King George VI, all incredible; looking and sounding authentic. Disembarking at each station on the way, Vera Lyns' were singing



RAF Operations Room.

squadrons. Once the phones rang, the room came alive, planes scrambled and you instinctively ducked as planes raced overhead on take off; such was the amazing sound system.

The planning of such an event must be horrendous but with so many of the public in period dress you really did feel you were back in the 40's and just how much our forefathers sacrificed and achieved = Deep respect!



Bentley boys hit the town!

We now have fantastic cars, far more reliable and even the small ones capable of 100 mph, yet we crawl around at 30 or 40 mph and maybe a quick burst to 50 only to get caught for speeding. We all notice the increase in traffic, waiting to pull out with a

continuous stream coming the

other way. Then we join them. Houses being built where ever you go but no more roads or infrastructure. Bruton is bad enough but a proposal for 15,000 (yes fifteen thousand) houses to be built 8 miles away at Sparkford, fills my heart with dread. We should just about shut down this end of Somerset. No hospital, no new roads, what about jobs? But another university. I will have to remember from my youth and the beauty that surrounded us with a grateful heart.

There are so many revival / nostalgia meetings that you could spend all summer living in the past! Not only are our cars passing the 50/60 year old mark but our trucks also. We did manage to put 7 trucks out for a spring run. Glorious sunshine, a gentle days motoring through the delights of Wiltshire. The Heavies were supplemented this year by the smallest of our commercial fleet – at last the Mini pick up made its debut. This restoration seems to have gone

on forever but has provoked interest from many customers continually asking of its progress. Well finally it is back on the road. For any new readers I sold this pick up from new to a lovely, but challenging customer (whose negotiation skills were far better than my own). Spending its life on an idyllic farm at Greenscombe, it never left Bruton air space. Languishing in a barn at the demise of its owners it finally came home to its BMC roots. With it came the provision that it should bear the name of its owner and is not to be resold on the open market. If you keep your eyes peeled you might spot it whizzing around.

I am afraid that unlike the TV programmes, restorations do take a long time to complete. The ever more difficult challenge is to source the necessary parts including fabrication and always, always the project is worse than imagined, added to which is trying to find the skills and knowledge (retirement robs us of the guys we so desperately need).

A long standing (long suffering!) customer, who was a good old Bruton boy who went to Sexey's school, later sought fame and fortune in the City. This lad never forgot his roots from the time he served on our forecourt in his school holidays. Can you remember when you were served with petrol, oil topped up and tyre pressures checked? The M.G bug bit him when he won a national competition acquiring an M.G Metro and an MG Maestro. When a Maestro Turbo rolled up at a nearby scrapyards (the kids were clearing out dad's house) he rescued it knowing only very few remained. In its day it was the fastest accelerating production car. As with such products it didn't look too bad, engine in pieces but everything in boxes,

the moth and rust seemed redeemable. Enter Doctor Case (stage left) who did his apprenticeship on such animals and couldn't wait to relive that acceleration so we were off ! The ravages of time not only affected the body but the fuel tank, fuel system and the early electronics. With Mr Withers' use of

the internet etc we completed the

challenge, now ready to remind the world of our once proud, British heritage in cars.

Other delights include rebuilding a lightweight Land Rover to be ready for a proud dad to take his daughter to her



Mini reborn!



MG Maestro Turbo burns rubber again!

Healey gathering at Dawlish.



wedding. Even that project threw up more problems than you could shake a stick at.

It sounds as if our lives are just one good rattling Randy after another, but most of all the fun is curtailed to weekends so work has to be squeezed in between. There I've mentioned that word WORK.



For the first time for many years work died in January, or more to the point never got going. A worrying time but a time for strong nerves! The strength in our company is our variety and should the car side die, the bodyshop and commercial are usually busy and visa versa. As our staff are flexible they can invariably swing between the workshops but in January it all died. It would appear the UK retail industry suffered the same fate. February onwards all bounced back. Now with the holiday season upon us we shall need all hands to the pump to keep the ship afloat.



There is a genuine concern with every business that the whole nation seems short of staff. We have become too reliant on foreign workers for our haulage, fruit picking, farming and particularly the hotel trades and the NHS. Still no one can answer my question as to where all our youngsters are? Any answers on a post card please.

As you are probably aware our MOT legislation has changed from the end of May. Some items have been dropped but more have been added. Items of major concern, that I envisage, are that just about

any dashboard lights causing a malfunction will fail as will any fluid leak contaminating the environment. Higher standards of braking systems and mini defects listed on the certificate will need early rectification.

Auto electronics are the bane of our lives and we have taken a long hard look at this problem and have decided that we will make a blanket charge to diagnose the problem area and then separately price the cost of the repair. Often the costs shock us, let alone the customer, as the fault can take many hours to locate, often being buried in a wiring loom or an obscure sensor.

Manufacturers are quite heartless when it comes to their often absolutely ridiculous prices. More and more vehicles will be scrapped as the cost of the repair exceeds its value. The customer needs to appreciate the complexity of the problem and we would like you to talk directly to the technician to get the full story.

Life seems to have got much busier with the bus industry over the last year due to our new technician Phil, who has



Suspended animation?

a passion for these 6-wheelers, that are so different from their truck counterparts. Having a very low body, our wheel-free lifts have come into their own. Eye watering expensive, it is another world. I admire the continental co-drivers who sleep in the coffin sized slot behind the front entrance steps. I think claustrophobia would have me screaming to get out!

M.O.D work has been noticeable by its absence probably because all funds are needed to finance a new aircraft carrier. I doubt West

Ends' bills would amount to much against that budget. Tankers have been more dominant and demanding. Petrol tankers as you can imagine are expensive to repair, however, the majority of our work are powder tanks and as such are defined as pressure vessels and subject to stringent regulations, and insurance inspection, before, during and upon competition and thus the final bill can only be imagined!

A nasty little accident with a tanker colliding with a steel stanchion of a building caught its nose necessitating a three dimensional repair. Cut a hole and then obtain correct grade of aluminium to cut it, bend it, roll it, tack it and weld it. Then add 38,000 litres of water and pressurise it to 2 bar (30 lbs in old money) drain it, and top up the Brue, and finally dry it out.

Talk about "never miss the water till the well runs dry". This bleary soul staggered into the bathroom and turns on the tap ... nothing. Assuming a leak, I check the house then into the road, but no signs of a leak. I knock on the door of the all knowing neighbour, to be informed of a major leak and that all of Bruton are out of water. It took all day to repair but makes you appreciate what we take for granted. Just pleased we are not living in Cape Town, - mind you we could be like them with a massive increase in population and no more reservoirs!



Hey diddle diddle, there's a hole in the middle!

Paintwork abounds; as one of the country's largest waste management companies decided to change its colour scheme from blue to a bright green. A very commendable decision! HGV painting has always been fraught as there is always something that goes AWOL. Modern plastics often seem to object to being painted and decide to fall off when pressure washed. Car painting is an art form and matching modern, wonderful colours and pearlescent finishes present their own challenges - but you know how we love a challenge!