

Winter

WEST END GARAGE (BRUTON) LTD

NEWSLETTER 2018/19

GREETINGS from the cold side of town after such great summer sunshine bit of a shock to be plunged into the seasonal frosts. The pundits predict that with the huge abundance of berries we could be in for a 'bit of a blow' this winter – we shall see! Certainly the amount of blackberries our local birds consume seem to finish up all over my car. It was a bumper crop!

Mr Badger and his chums have again turned their attention to my garden and neigh on decimated a hockey pitch next door! I am told that 90% of our rabbits have gone to myxomatosis and that this time the disease has spread to the hare population – now that is tragic having seen several of them bounding across our fields this year. Must admit not to have witnessed confused and dazed rabbits sat in the middle of the road or looking very poorly at you and yet haven't seen many scampering around either.

Like yourself, no doubt have enjoyed the roasting hot days of summer, we have been making the most of the opportunities from 'The HGV Spring Road Run' around Somerset/ Dorset and Wiltshire with an increased fleet of 7 vehicles we made up a sizeable part of the entrants. Having the Mini Pick-up as a commercial does allow our younger element to participate and the Austin Champ giving



Malcolm Campbell's Bluebird K3 Rolls Royce V12

an opportunity to our mid-life drivers yet to master an HGV. Even the boat saw action at Henley and what a scorching weekend that was and everything from the Queens rowing barge – Gloriana to 3 Dunkirk 'little' ships, Gentlemen slipper launches, steam launches



Gloriana under full power

and even Malcolm Campbell's record breaking Bluebird K3 from 1937 with its V12 Rolls Royce engine producing 2500 h.p.



At last the Healey boat makes Henley



Please Ma'am can I have one?

sounded good but no clutch or gears – you start it and hang onto your hat so maybe Henley wasn't the best place to show it but it did sound magnificent.

Clocks changed and with it the weather – suddenly plunged into frosts and dark nights. Whilst not enjoying it much and not being able to go outside to play after work it is quite pleasant to come back to a warm house (what's warm 16-17° to one man is freezing to a woman) so as with all things in life it is a matter of degrees! Whatever, now chasing the clock as a deadline is fast approaching, ignore the toothache, pour out the brandy, music on and start scribbling!

More groups and individuals ask to come and visit the garage as it is different to most. Where else can you see car workshops often with several interesting classics in for repair? A bodyshop full of bent vehicles from fire engines, low bridge victims and bent chassis being straightened plus a paintshop. Commercial workshops, a toy shed and then into a signal box for coffee and a history lesson on 80+ years of the motor trade in Bruton? Majority of folk always like to see Her Majesty's big green vehicles, often interspersed with bright yellow RN and RAF, white ambulances, bomb disposal units plus regular silver NATO bombproof command cars.

Recent challenges are the rebuilding of Afghanistan's damaged cabs and refurbishing exceedingly large transfer gearboxes hence necessitating purchasing a rather resplendent 60 ton press. Tankers come and go with great rapidity, cement variety outweighing fuel



Emotive memories of First World War at The Great Dorset Steam Fair

duty brake roller tester. Remote operation is impressive but not without its teething troubles! I often hear Mothers voice ringing in my ears "The more you have the more there is to go wrong!" How true that is! Our modern electronics now far exceed any common sense and how often do you hear "the computer says.....?"

In this fantasy world of IT us oldies do have trouble keeping up and despair and frustration is often our daily companion!

Regularly customers ask what is the latest project? Striving to clear a backlog of challenges has been thwarted by trying to keep the existing vehicles

repaired. Keeping 70 – 80 year old vehicles on the road is a challenge and our loyal band of 'Old Duffers' regularly give up their Tuesdays to help out. "Tinkering Tuesday" is now the most important day of the week but never long enough to get everything done. Their knowledge and skills are being

rediscovered and honed by an endless need to repair and make items as parts become scarcer. One of the continuous problems is the basic nut and bolt problem; in days of yore we were confused with all different threads

from Whitworth to BSF, UNF (course and fine) etc etc.

Then over the years we turned to metric (well actually virtually everything

was made in Europe so I suppose it made sense). So the simple jobs become a challenge but bless them off they go to their Man Sheds and make the bolt/parts and back again to solve the problem. I often muse what will happen over the next 20 years when we have gone on?! I did have an insight when my eldest Grandson assembled his 3D printer

and makes up all sorts of clever models and look forward to the day when he will spin metal instead of plastic. Having been given some instruction on lathe work (unavailable at school despite available



Our guns at the ready!



On manoeuvres!

counterparts, but the world can turn on a sixpence and tomorrow all might be reversed.

Large refuse vehicles with their trailers swop one on one to change from their blue to their new bright green and this Mr Scathing has to admit they do look rather smart.

Buses, sorry coaches seem to get bigger with each passing year, their astronomic costs are apparent with their sumptuous appointment.

With HGV, coaches requiring regular 6 weekly brake testing we have bit the bullet and installed a heavy



Private Haines reporting for duty at Saunton Sands!

equipment) and during his brief summer break to Somerset he has taken to it with skill and enthusiasm thus proving that if only a) the older craftsmen could demonstrate their skills and b) the youngsters wanted to learn... THERE COULD BE HOPE!!

Another rant over! Back to projects. A customer viewed online several vehicles being sold off that had laid lost to the world in a nuclear bunker complex. His interest was in an Austin Gipsy 4x4 (Imagine a Land Rover type vehicle) and he bought it blind and his first viewing was when it arrived with us on a transporter. His countenance was a treat to behold (you know how we chaps of a certain age can regress to our childhood) and his smile was at least ½ way down his back!

This vehicle had lain since 1965 doing nothing much having covered 1300 miles and came complete with trailer and pump hoses etc. No rust. Seized brake cylinders and all the usual issues notwithstanding this is a most interesting vehicle – AND NO ITS NOT MINE!

We have enough on our plates to do to rebuild our old ERF tractor unit with a now rare 8 cylinder Gardner engine and a once marine generator 12 cylinder Foden 2 stroke diesel. If we get to finish them you will be the first to know all about it in graphic detail!

Down to business, despite the gloom and fear over Brexit we are being positive by increasing our staff from an apprentice, to workshop and office hoping to face the new world head on! In an increasing complicated and frustrating world we acknowledge a growth in electric vehicles and technology although it might be quite a while before this end of Somerset is ready to charge up your electric dream! With the ownership of vehicles (being with leasing companies rather than ownership) we believe there will be a place for a garage with the right aptitude and an attitude that cares for its customers. We are well aware that we can fall short sometimes but must not be defeated. Britain has changed beyond recognition in my time and with businesses such as the Chapel, Hauser & Wirth Gallery (and the soon to be opened) Emily Estates complex even greater changes are on the

way. Sadly I know more folk in the cemetery than I do in the High Street but it is a brave new world out there. Doctor Case is relieved of his 'surgery' one day a week to go out to meet and make new customers – maybe you have been one of his victims? His

overriding experience is that the majority of the population do not know of our existence so we obviously need to be more proactive in our advertising. To this end PLEASE come and see us; we will not bite, nor will we pounce on you and try to sell you something but we would like to show you around. Indeed I show at least one customer around per day and that's just me. Barrie and Martyn do the same. You don't have to use

us; you may not even like us but at least it will be an informed decision. Remember Bruton Station we are virtually platform 3!

Often receiving calls to go to Reception I was surprised to see all the staff assembled and even more bowled over to receive the most brilliant of gifts. A beautifully laser carved wooden (our very own) Matador truck. For once I was lost for words but eternally grateful for such a thoughtful gift.

If proof were ever needed that the world has gone mad a customer rang me with the opening phrase "Is it me?" – and I know another gem of a story is about to be unleashed!

Well; his pick-up was subject to a recall and was subsequently examined and found to have some corrosion in one cross member.

Now he is informed that his vehicle will be shipped back to Spain and he will be loaned another vehicle for 12 weeks whilst his is away.

Surely there is someone in the UK that could do that job in a day he wailed; but obviously not. Wish the manufacture would ring me. I can sympathise as I have quoted for several repairs to various tankers only for them to be sent back to France, Denmark etc.

On a

more positive note, I was fortunate to be asked to go to the new Aerospace building at Filton. The last flying Concorde's home was impressive and pleased that



Survivor of the cold war sees the light of day.



Sun shining on us in the emerald isle





Imagine this flying overhead at 60 feet!

the poor old thing has been saved from the ravages of the elements. George 'Jonnie' Johnson (the last of the Dam Buster crew) gave a spirited talk on his exploits on that incredible night. Having been questioned several times in peace time was it ever worth it having lost 8 planes and 50 crew – to which he replied "Were you in the war?" "Were you there?" Then shut up. Yes, it was worth it. "We were asked to do a job and we did it." The training was incredible, flying a plane of that size at 60ft beggar's belief and even practising flying under power lines. Proof that if there was ever any doubt they were an amazing generation.

This waffling must come to an end, time and space demand that I stop and concentrate on the real message –

THOUGHT FOR BREXIT...

He makes nations great and destroys them,
He enlarges Nations and disperses them.
He devoids the leaders of the earth of their reason,
He sends them wandering through the trackless wastes,
They grope in darkness with no light
He makes them stagger like drunkards!

JOB 12:33

Wishing you the happiest of Christmases and a fun filled New Year. No matter about the uncertainties of Brexit and countless other concerns. Britain is still the best of countries in which to live and how blessed are we to be fed and doctored and despite the sad tales of the homeless the vast majority of us will enjoy time together over Christmas being spoilt rotten!

We need more of the Victorian spirit and think more of ourselves and our abilities.

To our wonderful customers a big "thank you" for being so thoroughly nice and supportive.

We look forward to the New Year and all the challenges that you might give us!

Remember the only number to ring is **01749 813655** – Santa and his little helpers are on his way!!

Jordan. W. Fry

STAFF PROFILE: MEET STEVE CASE



Often referred to as Doctor Case for his wisdom and skill! A good old country boy. Steve came from Shepton Mallet and did his apprenticeship with my big brother at Creech Motors, Evercreech

where he stayed until its closure 20 years ago. A brief spell in sales on the road and we were able to entice him to Bruton where he has held our car workshop together for the last 15 years. Keen on his shooting and gun dogs his relaxed manner makes it easy to make friends and share all your motoring problems! If you have a classic motor then it's a classic mechanic you need – look no further!

Whatever your hand finds to do,

Do it with all your might

Ecclesiastes 9:10

WINTER HEALTH CHECK FOR YOUR CAR

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Antifreeze ✓

Battery Test ✓

FREE

(new tyres and antifreeze extra)

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