

Winter

NEWSLETTER 2020

**WEST END GARAGE**  
(BRUTON) LTD



***How on earth will history write about the devastation that Covid-19 has caused. Will we ever be able to pay back the mind numbing amounts of money we have borrowed and printed?***

What will our grandchildren ever think of us lumbering them with a lifetime of debt?

Hey Ho; as I try to explain to my staff – one day at a time – can't worry about tomorrow, let's get through and make the best of today. Reminds me I was handed this well-known quip only yesterday

*"Today is the tomorrow, we worried about yesterday and all is well"*

I had the pleasure of spending a long journey in the company of an 88 year old ex merchant navy engineer with a passion of a hobby being a horologist. My goodness, what a positive chap he is – I wish I could bottle his enthusiasm and zest for life. It felt like a tonic (obviously with copious amounts of gin!). I then came home and listened to the television news and realised just how manic depressive our media has become. For goodness sake, we have enjoyed an amazing spring and summer in the most beautiful country, a once in a lifetime

opportunity to review our life and its value, and been paid to save us from ruin and yet everyone seems to moan – what more do we want?

Some of us appreciate that we are blessed to live where we do but it takes strangers to reinforce our fortune. I can remember being ragged mercilessly at school about Bruton being a backwater, going nowhere and depressing to drive through and now constantly regarded as one of the desirable places to live. Actually most of these accolades drive me mad as often written by folk with tinted glasses just passing through, commenting and moving on to new pastures.

Certainly it has become increasingly difficult to park in the high street and the volume of traffic has increased dramatically. Gone are all the Morris Minors, followed by a plethora of Peugeots and now a high street full of 4X4's, interspersed by the odd Aston, Bentley and Porsche.

Having lived through the losses of industry in the 1960's gone are the bacon factory, Provender, and Saw mills, several builders and not one but 2 stations. (How lucky are we to retain our little stations but with 26 stopping trains – well we did before Covid!)

With 4 surviving schools, one has to admire the tenacity and skills necessary to keep them in the forefront of education. How fortuitous that Kings had their 500 year celebrations in 2019, not 2020!

Money will be very tight, if not non-existent and if we value our communities with will have to roll up our sleeves and do more ourselves to protect that we appreciate.

Please Mr. BBC, be more positive if only to stop grumpy old men, like me, shouting at you and in total frustration and hitting the off button.



*"My How You Have Grown Dear!" (Original Mini to latest!)*



*WW2 Russian T34  
Everyone needs one of these for Christmas shopping?*

I wonder how many lives have been touched and minds improved by the marvelous gardens at The Newt, I swear some locals all but live up there judging by their continuous visits. Well it is certainly an uplifting place, thank you.

The constantly full car park at the Gallery continues to bring so many appreciative folk from far away places that we are indeed fortunate to be so favoured.

These dark nights and damp days will challenge us to stretch our minds not to just flop in front of the TV and this Christmas will undoubtedly be different and will need a different (and maybe welcomed) approach.

Apologies if this sounds more of a political bulletin on behalf of the "Gordon Fry Party" (membership stands at one saddo!).

With so many companies reeling in this strange climate I am asked daily how we are coping.

Working to the end of March, our work fell off a cliff, the phone stopped ringing and no one or anything came our way. So being very grateful to the furlough scheme, all stayed at home.

Having the phones with me I felt like a lonely captain on his ship with all hands gone in the lifeboat and no power, just drifting helplessly towards the rocks and considering the age old tradition of going down with his ship!

Never been so grateful for the odd phone calls for punctures etc. Checking emails and ringing any customers who might be working gradually life returned and thanks to Dave after 3 weeks we managed to start pulling staff back in and before long all returned to active duty partly owing to the welcome continuous flow of MOTs.

Miracles do happen and I experienced another at this time, as expecting zero cash flow, outstanding monies flowed in, in a most amazing manner. Thank you, all you wonderful customers, you saved our bacon!

Never before has the garage shut since 1936, even Mr Hitler and the war years didn't stop us. So a unique chapter in the company annuals.

We encountered a 'perfect storm' of instantly losing all the coach work as no schools/holidays etc. The new contract on April 1st of the large aged recycling fleet being replaced with new trucks and the MOD suffered their own form of Covid, so no work in that direction either. This scenario of devastation on our commercial mechanical front will take a while to restore but thankfully our bodyshop has kept remarkably busy both with car work and plethora of tanker work.

Working from day to day is nerve wracking and gives no quarter to any complacency but I am so grateful for what we have.

The car side has never been busier, in part to the increase in catching up with the MOT backlog and with Dave Taylor at the helm, it is rewarding to have a local clever 'lad' to restore the business. With Raven's smile in Reception, they form an excellent team!

Ever the indomitable 'Duffers' (our team of retirees who dutifully roll up on 'Tinkering Tuesdays' to keep our old fleet of trucks roadworthy) were thwarted being of that "difficult age" and had to isolate. The frustration felt was palatable and the trucks suffer with not running with oil seals drying out etc.

So eventually something had to give – as with every show/trip canceled from Liberating Gurnsey, the A-Z run to Weymouth D-Day...





Duffers tea-break on the high plains



A Bentley Boys 1932, back from Australia and in for a tune-up

Isolating in the cabs, a private run to Salisbury, checking out the workshops and artillery at Larkhill revived the love of the open road (even at 30mph!!)

Another weekend run across Salisbury plain in torrential rain led to the convoy leaders soaked map disintegrating and with it the platoon nearly going around in circles, but all returned safely to a BBQ in Bruton.

Determined not to let the summer pass without more memories, the undaunted Bruton Expeditionary Force wound its way by a circuitous route to the Devrills and took the extensive internal track from one end of Pertwood Farm to the other. Extensive downland appeared in between the lashing gale force rain (we are British and never let a drop of rain stop us!). Apart from loss of wipers on one truck the operation was successful. Sheltering in a top barn, the incumbent, a massive Russian T34 tank was fired up, its V12 diesel drowning out any conversation. Leading the attack, the rest followed supporting our new allies. Once top gear engaged, the rest of the platoon enjoyed the race across the downs (OK unashamed boys toys – no age limit!)

Foreign holidays banned so a weekend trip to New Forest was most enjoyable and interesting as was another visit to the National Motor Museum. With few punters it gave more time to enjoy the exhibits. The old garage lifted from Wedmore was particularly nostalgic being so akin to our old garage in the High Street (where the museum abides next to The Chapel). I was transported back to an age before electronics took over our lives and reasoning! Even the Top Gear display was well presented and still so amusing that you find yourself laughing out loud.

To walk to Bucklers Hard and imagine Nelson's ships being built and the stories behind the families and the inherent skills necessary, made you proud to be British.

The beauty of the river, creeks and woodlands were spectacular in early Autumn.

The fun quota doesn't stop as No.1 son whisked me away to Hendon (in the Healey 3000) to educate his father at the RAF museum. What a display; just to have a Lancaster and a Vulcan in the same hall plus others takes your breath away. To me, a unique display of WW2 German planes was fascinating. A most worthwhile day out and amazingly FOC.

To be taken the next day on a tour on the bye roads of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Gloucester and the Cotswolds opened my eyes to so many 200 plus year old villages, totally unspoilt and without the massive housing developments, we seem to be suffering from in this part of the country. Lovely farmland and rolling dales and everything in between – guaranteed to lift the spirits. Even a coffee at the control tower at Greenham Common an interesting experience (was Europe's longest runway – all dug up and now reverted back to a common).

Finally a rush up to North Wales (before lockdown) to visit 'marooned' daughter and family and unbelievably sunshine there and back. Again some dramatic and beautiful countryside.

So if you hadn't realised, I am on a high and over awed by what is around us, not only around our parish on our numerous foot paths but good old U.K.

Finishing where I started from one day at a time so cannot possibly contemplate what Christmas and the New Year will be like so onward and upward. We need to take inspiration from our forbearers, they had 6 years of war to contend with; rationing, bombing, tragic losses of both loved ones and homes, so what an earth do we have to moan about?



Is it a donkey? Nope, we have an axle and gearbox from a tractor in for painting!

Having cut my teeth and sharpened up my knowledge in the selling of my first electric car, you could always give one to your loved one for Christmas (never thought I would ever sell an electric car!).

For any readers who do not know where we are, just find Bruton Station 'wonderland' and see how many bizarre items surround our site (job for the young family members).

Many folk have appreciated our FREE advice and estimates. In this day and age (particularly if you are new to the area) it can be daunting to know where to turn for impartial, professional advice in times of motoring crisis. We will guarantee you time and an honest opinion on your car mechanics or body dilemmas. "We are only here to serve" (Can you remember when our councilors and civil servants signed off their letters with that statement?)

**Remember the only number to ring is 01749 813655.**

*It only remains on behalf of all of us to give you our customers, our grateful thanks for your custom, ongoing support and just for being so jolly nice. The only reason we stay in business is to see what's going to hit us next! In these challenging times, we really would appreciate any the support from the community that is possible to muster. If you've used us in the past and you left unsatisfied, then perhaps you might visit again to see how much we've changed.*

If you are new to the area – then look no further! We are multi-talented, with body shop/paint shop and commercial workshops with full welding facilities and a full MOT station. We rise to many challenges that are thrown at us and we intend to be open as usual for as long as we are able.

*Jordan. W. Fry*

## Thoughts to Ponder?

*There is surely a future for you*

*And your hope will not be cut off*

PROVERBS 23.18

*Even to your old age and grey hair*

*I am he who will sustain you*

*I have made you and I will carry you*

*I will sustain you and I will rescue you*

ISAIAH 46.14

## For those irresponsible in lockdown..?

*Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint  
But bless is he who keeps the law*

PROVERBS 29.18)



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