

Winter

WEST END GARAGE

(BRUTON) LTD

NEWSLETTER 2021/22

What a year that was! You all have your stories to tell. Somehow, we got through 2020. Nearly 2 years since covid hit us – where has that time gone, seems as though we just lost at least a year!

2021 has been another busy year for us...

I mentioned in the last newsletter that David Taylor helped to get us through the early days of lockdown. We worked well together, sharing the same business ethos, and who better to take over the car side of the business? David is a local lad with experience and liked by all. So finally, despite the best efforts of the legal profession to make life as difficult as possible, we exchanged in April 2021. Sharing the same offices and phone number and retaining existing staff enabled a smoother transition. Hopefully the experience for our customers was equally as seamless!

We then suffered a perfect storm as Raven, our receptionist and Sian our background H.R, typist, trouble shooter etc, both requested maternity leave (obviously something in the water). Just to complete the chaos, why not change our old computer system for a simpler system at the same time.... Well, if you are in over your head, it doesn't matter how deep!! – however a very painful exercise!



Healeys Drivers Club

On the up side, it would appear that our classic car owners (plus new ones) decided to get their cars out, having not used them for nearly 2 years and wishing their pride and joy back on the road again... So we have seen a huge variety of interesting vehicles.

Leaving a committed "Captain on the bridge", Dave is already appreciating that extra business needs more car parking! And more customers mean more challenges!

I profess to being a "computer luddite" but in this marvellous world of Zoom, I even gave a virtual tour/

talk to our local Jaguar Club and latterly a PowerPoint presentation on my amazing experiences in South Africa on the Sandstone Estate to our Commercial Preservation Club.

Off the wall projects we engaged with throughout covid, was to remind the older generation of a by-gone age... The provision of an AA box on the station approach took me by surprise as so very few

people of mid age had no idea what it was. Description outside was necessary to try to explain an age before mobile phones when a lonely box gave AA members shelter, telephone link and help from a smart and capable patrol man. His welcome civilised salute to every member on the road displaying an AA badge on the grille acknowledged your membership of the organisation.

Another was an "educational" statement for future generations (when we all drive electric cars!), as a memory to the internal combustion engine. This being two large marine pistons mounted on my gate posts! Sadly, few seem to recognise them for what they are – Favourite suggestions are search lights and Cybermen! Proof that I am officially living in the wrong age – move over grandad!

85 Years!



In Days of Yore



An Ode to Internal Combustion



Rejuvenated Fire Engine

Any avid readers will know that we survive on the adrenalin that projects provide us (and drive us mad). Amazingly these challenges keep coming. Varying from "straight forward" – "please find a

fire engine in good order", reorder it for a quiet life on a large recycling plant close to our capital. Looked good when purchased, not quite so good in the unattainable rear suspension department. Sleeves rolled up and make a new back end!



Peugeot Van

Old classic French vans seem to be all the rage. "A 1970 Peugeot van must be right up your street, having been a Peugeot dealer for 20 years – No problem! By the way it needs an engine, rust repairs and repaint". I just happen to know

for a car with the same engine in Hampshire, over to you Dave, just pop that in and over to the body shop! Not quite that easy!!

How about fabricating a curved engine decking (Including hatches and air intakes) for a wartime motor torpedo boat...? Lots of aluminium sheets, measurements and gentle bending and head scratching.



Torpedo deck



Lost in a Turbine Well

How about an 1890 turbine in a local water mill...? First dam up the outflow tunnel, pump furiously, paddle about in waders and then torrential rain so abandon ship until the river level drops. Eventually strip, back to base and a "spot" of welding and reverse the process. Test out at full throttle, - mission accomplished.

A giant muck spreader tanker filled our paint shop to its limits as it was suffering from flaking paint, it's now in its splendid new livery, and will hopefully stay on despite the well-known properties of its contents!



Man Size Wheel



Back to reality, find a 4 x 4 fuel tanker to work in a quarry. Replace all reels, pipework, add AdBlue tanks and hoses, fit new air driven hose reels. Better



Fuel tanker



Multi Delivery Fuel Tanker

overhaul the mechanics, paint it bright and light up like a Christmas tree. Aluminium, stainless – No Problem....!!



Bedford

Something a little easier, like a nice looking 1953 Bedford tipper, deal with the rust, overhaul engine/brakes/trims, oh and paint it. Should we have indicators? Don't forget real signwriting – no vinyls.

How about the remains of a 1943 AEC Matador Timber Tractor – A total strip and start again, a virtual nut and bolt restoration and a new cab please! Very much "Work in Progress"



Whats left of a Matador

A wartime Bofors gun, totally seized, now nearly ready to join the Bruton Expeditionary Forces Artillery Platoon.



Bofors Anti Aircraft

A highlight for the Duffers (our talented, retired mechanics, carpenters, electricians, painters who faithfully meet up on Tinkering Tuesdays). An invitation to visit our primary school with just two of our smaller wartime vehicles (complete with field gun and machine guns/rifles/hand grenades etc).

Interest in World War 2



Teachers on Parade



Modified Front End

Accidents happen to the best of us, but when our 1940's gun tractor is nudged off the road into a deep ditch (only to be stopped by a tree), you know you are going to have trouble, and trouble we did! But it's no use having a body shop unless you can sort things out and a write off's not an option – rebuild it!



Oh Bother!

Trips to Bristol, Cranmore Station, Weston Zoyland Airfield, Lyneham plus seaside at Milford on Sea, keep the Duffers occupied and the wheels turning. For how much longer Cop 26 will allow us to attend these functions, I know not, but to sit forlornly in a shed is no use to our heritage or to us!



Duffers Day Out

All the talk of electric vehicles exasperates me, as our leaders just haven't thought the whole project through - charging points, battery life, recycling of old batteries, residue values, let alone the original cost. There is a place for them, but I believe it will be a long time before they become everyday transport. To prove that we are not behind the curve, we are increasingly involved with the repair of electric buggies, carts etc. Watch this space....



Heavy Equipment Transporters

To customers who have struggled to get up our road for the sheer number of vehicles, I do apologize but it has been partially because of the fleet of exceedingly large MOD 120-ton tank transporters that were staying for repair/overhaul for just a few months but spent all summer with us. It may be my favourite truck but they do take up an awful lot of room.



Other MOD work not as plentiful as it used to be but as we continue to cut our armed forces, they obviously do not need so many vehicles. Pleased to receive a special, large, expensive 4 x 4 as a no-go vehicle. Apparently couldn't get it fixed between Cambridge and Bruton but now sorted and returned in a fighting condition.



Express Dairy Hand Cart - Never too late to save a 1920's milk hand cart, whilst not big, it took a lot of man hours and paint, but well worth it....

Big excitement in October as a loaded artic water tanker rolls up from Leeds and plonks itself

in the middle of the yard. Arrogantly, thinking it was there for us to repair, the driver was accosted, but was here to refuel a steam train on an excursion. Eventually establishing that the train was due west and not east we moved him to the other side of the tracks. This 12-carriage train stops in our station (and was double header, 61306 Mayflower and 45596 Bahamas), neither of which we have seen before - I reckon it's the first steamer to stop in Bruton since my teenage years. Pulling out sounded fantastic and recorded for posterity.



Water Stop at Bruton Central

Holidays in short supply this year but managed long weekends with the Healey Club hitting both South and North Devon in blazing sunshine. Also, brilliant weather (with hood down 24 hours for 3 days), on our annual tour with my son and heir taking the controls to explore Shropshire. My faithful steed for the last 46 years is still able to give enjoyment even to the younger generations.

The future? - A difficult winter, lots of new expenses coming our way. It will be *"backs against the wall; noses to the grindstone and shoulders to the wheel"*. Concerned that our country seems to have lost the work ethic - where are they all? Perhaps furlough spoilt the drive and initiative, either way heaven knows what will make us wake up and see the necessity and value of work. Vast increases in the cost of metals, wood, fuel and shortages of many parts are making life a greater challenge. We will probably crucify the UK by leading the climate change lifestyle as the bigger economies sit back and fiddle while Rome burns!

West End Garage has achieved 85 years of trading and with Dave leading the car side onwards and with the commercial and body side busy, we continue to face the future with a huge pool of talent with Martyn Willcox and Martin Tilly, leading the charge (fancy having two Martyns to confuse you!). We are *"poised like a coiled spring"* whatever your challenge for us.

Looking back over my last 57 years with the Company (and father before me), it has been a roller coaster, a lot of pain, some fun and a living, but the real value is the customers we have won and lost, the loyal staff - and hell we are still here! How can I begin to show my appreciation? - But a huge, heartfelt thanks - so many memories that I can bore my family for hours!!

I have been writing these missives for well over 40 years and went on to regularly do four a year and have gradually cut them back to twice and now once a year. With over 14,000 being delivered locally (perhaps?) the time has come to give you all a rest and sign off?

Please don't forget you only need one number 01749 813655 for all your car, classic, MOT, car and commercial body, and commercial mechanical. We exist just to see what tomorrow brings and to serve you our customers and community.

Happy Days and may God bless our futures together....

Do not say "why were the old days better than these", for it is not wise to ask such questions
Ecclesiastes 7:10

We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we would night, day, labouring, toiling so we would not be a burden to any of you. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule.

"If a man will not work, neither shall we eat" 2 Thessalonians 3:8

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper – perhaps??
Proverb 13.4

Scammers take note!!

The scoundrels' methods are wicked, he makes up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies even when the plea of the needy is just. But the noble man makes noble plans and by noble deeds he stands

Isaiah 32.7

Meet David Taylor

Born in Southampton, his father was a lecturer at the university. Moving to Bruton in around 1987 when David was five, and his father went to work at Westlands Helicopters. He and his family live in Bruton.

Engineering was always part of his family background, which lead to his interest in matters mechanical.

Studying business management and accountancy at Bournemouth University, enabled David to fit in mechanical training too. His first job in the motor industry was at the age of 15 as a Saturday boy working for Rob Mahoney, another local Brutonian.

David was keenly interested in classic cars and worked for over two years for Charles Ware Morris Minor Centre in Bristol, managing restoration and production. David's interest in classic cars has led him to be the proud owner of an MG Midget, a Morris 1000 pickup and other BMC models.

David joined West End Garage two years ago and managed the car workshop, then this year in April Gordon decided to take a step back from running the car side of West End Garage and David took the opportunity to own this part of the business, renaming the new business West End Garage Car and Light Commercial Ltd, dealing with cars, motorhomes and light commercial vehicles, from general servicing, MOT's, repairs. Maintenance of all cars, including classic models.

The future... recently employing new members of staff, with a new focus on electric cars as they will eventually be the future but enjoying the here and now keeping busy and enjoying something different every day.



I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to join West End Garage in January 2020, managing the car side of the business. After twelve months, a business opportunity was offered, and I was able to purchase the car side of the company. This transition was completed in April 2021 and since then we have enjoyed a very encouraging start with continued busy year.

I would like to thank Gordon for trusting me with his family legacy, something that is set to continue as it is still very much a family run business. I would also like to thank the staff, customers, old and new for their continued support and I look forward to meeting you all.

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. Whilst retirement beckons, I have yet to achieve this with the commercial side keeping us busy. We rise to many challenges that are thrown at us and we look forward to seeing you in the near future.

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

Jordan. W. Fry



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