

KEMPSFORD

CLASSIC CAR & MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Newsletter
Spring 2009

Welcome back! It's spring again and time to get back on the road. Time to get our cars and bikes started again after the winter lay-up: a simple turn of the key for some, and a weekend's work for others. But whatever trials and challenges we have to overcome we all know it's going to be worth it for another season of classic motoring. Country lore says this summer will be a stunner (or is that just wishful thinking?). We certainly deserve some decent motoring!

It's unfortunate that two of the early season's favourite events have been scheduled for the same day. Wheel Nuts Motor Show at St Rose's School in Stroud and Drive It Day will both take place on Sunday 26th April. The FBHVC will again be organising a meet at the Royal Oak in Bishopstone and have invited the press and TV along. Both events were a great success last year: some very interesting and unusual vehicles turned-up on a bitterly cold day at the Royal Oak. At Wheel Nuts Janet and Dave Lucas won the prize for the best sports car in the show with their 1976 signal red TR6 and very kindly escorted me home in my stricken MG. I'll try to complete the whole day on all four cylinders this year! We plan to go to Wheel Nuts in convoy again this year and will be meeting in the car park at the rear of Greasy Joe's, Cirencester at 9.00. Here is a selection of pictures from last year's events.



Something else to look forward to is Mike & Terry's Great Treasure Hunt. Word has it that Mike Couling has been tramping the country lanes through the long winter nights, scribbling down clues by lantern light and with fingers numbed by cold. All that is now required is for him and Terry to write these up: a process that is likely to involve the consumption of a certain amount of beer. The date has yet to be decided, so keep your diaries clear.



Still a long way off, but worth planning for is the Fairford Traction Engine Rally. The dates are 22nd and 23rd August and Terry has booking forms for those who wish to attend.

It's time too to thoroughly check your tyres. Remember that wear and damage are not the only dangers. The synthetic rubber tyres are made of a compound that is prone to oxidation and this causes the compound to become harder and less flexible. The deterioration starts from day one but will not cause a problem for several years. Usually they wear out first, but with the low annual mileages of classic cars this may not be the case. A well maintained tyre should be good for 10 years. However, if the car is left standing for months on end the tyre wall can stiffen. When the tyre is used this will cause the

compound to heat-up more than normal and can result in overheating. When the temperature reaches a critical level the molecular structure of the compound starts to change making it increasingly less flexible. At this point the tyre starts to break up, causing a blow-out.

Another thing to check before it's too late is your drivers licence. Many people are unaware that their photo card driving licence, unlike their old paper one, automatically expires after 10 years and has to be renewed - even though drivers are licensed to drive until the age of 70. The first of these licences were issued in July

1988 and have now expired. Official DVLA figures reveal that while 16,136 expired last summer, so far only 11,566 drivers have renewed, leaving 4,570 outstanding. Another 300,000 photo card licences will expire this year and it seems likely that thousands more drivers in breach of the law and at risk of a fine.



At the heart of the confusion is the small print on the tiny credit card size photo licence. Just below the driver name on the front of the photo card licence is a series of dates and details - each one numbered. Number 4b features a date in tiny writing. This date's significance is only explained if you turn over the card and read the key on the back, which states that '4b', means 'licence valid to'. Even more confusingly, an adjacent table on the rear of the card sets out how long the driver is registered to hold a licence - that is until his or her 70th birthday. Motorists who fail to renew their licences in time are allowed to continue driving. But the DVLA says they could be charged with 'failing to surrender their licence', an offence

for which you may be fined up to £1,000. You have been warned!

CLUB MEMBERSHIP AND INSURANCE

Many of you will know that we have applied to Aston Scott, the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs' (FBHVC) insurance brokers for Public Liability Insurance. Full details will be provided when we have the cover in place but essentially it includes £5,000,000 of public liability; £250,000 of libel and slander (presumably in case I get carried away in the Newsletter!); £750 for club property. This is a standard package offered to clubs affiliated to the FBHVC and is great value at just £99.75 for up to 50 members

We need to get our membership list on to a proper footing, not least for insurance purposes and Tony Alden has manfully volunteered to take this on. With this newsletter you will find a membership form. If you have not already done so would you please complete this and send it as soon as possible to Tony at the address printed on the form. Please note that you may not be covered by the club's insurance until you return the form.



This seems as good a time and place as any to remind you that this year's membership fee is now due. It is £10 for the whole year and that includes the public liability insurance, so it's still excellent value. Please pay Tony Alden, who has also taken on the role of Treasurer

PETROL PRICES

The lowest price locally for unleaded is again the Shell station on the Fairford to Lechlade road at the Whelford turning, where it is 89.9p per litre. This is up only 1p following the 2p rise in duty last week. The second lowest price is 91.9p at the Calcot OTR Esso station on the A419 at Cricklade. Interesting to note that a year ago it was 113.9p

OBITUARY: RON COWLEY

Members will be saddened to learn of the death in March of Ron Cowley. Ron had been suffering from cancer for some time. Terry Chesterman represented the Club at Ron's funeral last Friday. Ron was one of the early members of the club, joining along with his brother George in 1998. At that time he had a MGB GT, a green rubber bumper model which was unusual for having alloy wheels. This was succeeded by a Blue Rover P6, and then last year by a P4. Steve Wilson featured Ron's P6 in Classic Car Mart magazine.

I am sure you would all wish to join me in giving our sincere condolences to Ron's wife, Dulcie, and to his brother George.



MOTOR TRADE MEMORIES BY DAVE HITCHINGS (We all do silly things sometimes).

Some of you may remember Grove Garage. The Rootes dealership that was situated at the east end of the market place in Cirencester. An old colleague who worked there told me the following true story. He had a call from a lady who had locked herself out of her car. She asked if they could deal with it while she went shopping. The mechanic went to the car and duly set about trying to open the driver's door. Whilst in the process, the lady returned to the car, opened the rear door put her shopping on the back seat, closed the door and inquired, "How are we getting on"!!!

Whilst working at the Citroen dealership in Cheltenham. I had a call from a lady who was going into the town to do some shopping. She had been out to start the car but had to go back in doors for some reason. When she returned to the car it was still running but locked with the spare key inside!!!



I worked at Auto Garage, the main Citroen dealer on the Cheltenham Road, for many years. One day we had an irate customer with a Citroen GS, complaining that his brakes were not working properly and not stopping the car. After discussing it with him he suggested that he should take the car down the road and demonstrate the fault. He was rather an erratic driver and at 30 mph stated he was about to brake. Down went the foot on the pedal and the wheels locked with loud screeching from the tyres. There, he said the car is not stopping! We were still sliding with the wheels locked!

On another occasion, a regular customer phoned to inquire if we had collected his car (a Citroen Ami 8 Estate) as it was not on the drive. The car was not booked in for any work so we of course replied no. A little later the customer phoned again stating. "We have found the car. Please could you come and collect it." The car had rolled off the drive across the lawn to a steep bank that dropped down to another lawn and it was upside down wedged between the bank and the shed!!

I came across this poem in a Motoring Magazine in the early days of my apprenticeship.



The Garage Man.

The man stood at the golden gate,
His face was worn and old.
He meekly asked the man of fate,
Admission to the fold.

What did you do St Peter asked,
To seek admission here.
I was a garage man back on earth,
For many many a year.

The gate swung smartly open,
As St Peter rang the bell.
Come inside and grab a harp,
You've had your share of hell.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Pictured opposite is part of our contingent at what we think was the 2005 Fairford Church Fete. As if you needed telling, the happy looking individuals are Martin, Maureen, Terry, Brenda, Jenny and Mike

WHERE HAVE ALL THE WESTIES GONE?

Well, a lot of them went banger racing along with and their sister cars the Wolseley 6/99 and 6/110. Pictured here is Terry's just recognisable Wolseley 6/99 racing at Stanlake, near Oxford, with Richard Blackwell at the wheel.

Contrary to appearances, the biggest problem was not impact from other vehicles (those big Farinas could soak it up) but dust. It found its way into the cylinders and ground away at the rings and bores, and even air filters didn't stop it.



A certain amount of preparation was required before you could take one of these cars banger racing. All the glass was removed and a roll cage fitted. The differential was removed and the gears welded-up which made steering difficult: not so much limited-slip as no-slip. The front shock absorbers were chained down, which must have made for interesting handling. Overheating was a problem so an old lorry radiator was fitted where the back window had been and a big electric fan added, but even then the radiator still boiled.

So, now we know why the cars didn't survive, but it's still a bit of a mystery how the drivers *did* survive.

INCENTIVES TO SCRAP OLD CARS (FROM THE FBHVC NEWSLETTER)

At the end of 2008 the motoring and national press were full of stories about the scrapping of older vehicles. FBHVC is strongly committed to preserving the right to continue to use our classic vehicles on the road as freely as modern vehicles may be. We deliberately do not get involved with any matters concerning more recent vehicles, because this would tend to dilute our efforts and our influence. We are able to negotiate concessions from various requirements, particularly nowadays environmental requirements, on the basis that there are limited numbers of classic vehicles, and they cover only a low mileage. A corollary to there

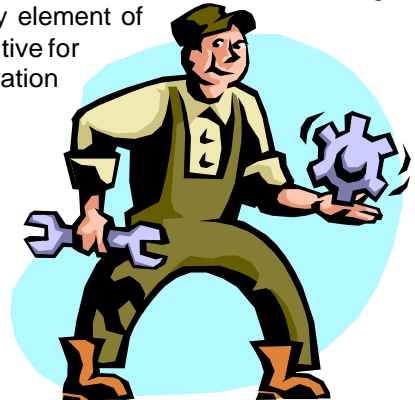


being limited numbers of historic vehicles is that the vast majority of mass market cars are scrapped, perhaps to be re-cycled, when their economic life as everyday vehicles is ended, with only a limited number being kept by enthusiasts to become classic cars, preserved examples of our motoring heritage. Specialist cars, produced in small number, are always much more likely to survive.

A House of Commons select committee has proposed a cash incentive for scrapping old cars on environmental grounds. This has been supported by the RAC Foundation suggesting an incentive to scrap cars that are 17/18 years old, the last not fitted with catalytic converters.

This is intended to speed up the cycle of use

and disposal. FBHVC does not object principle. We do wish to see a reasonable number of cars surviving to become the classics of the future, and would be strongly opposed to any element of compulsion. We should also object to any more widespread incentive for vehicles 25 years old or older, and the scrapping of potential restoration projects or sources of spares.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- April 26th Wheel Nuts Motor Show, St Rose's School, Stroud. See Newsletter
- April 26th Drive It Day. Countrywide. FBHVC event at the Royal Oak, Bishopstone, all day
- May 9-10th Kemble Airfield Great Vintage Day
- June 6th Southrop Village Fete
- June 14th Filkins Car Show. Call 01367 840195 for details
- June 20-21 Kemble Air Day, Kemble Airfield
- August 20-23rd Fairfield Traction Engine Rally



CONTACT:

If you have any stories, photos or information you think ought to be included in the next Newsletter, or would like to comment on anything in this edition, please contact me, Alistair Kennedy, as follows:

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