

**The Magazine  
of the Fairford  
Classic Car  
Club**

**Fc3**

**The Family Friendly Classic Car Club**



**The New Club Shelter at Filkins 'Exposed'**



**Panoramic Hunters**

**Summer Edition  
August 2016**

# WHAT'S ON

A summary of motoring events with Club activities highlighted. Check the Club **Website** and **Newsletters** for details, changes and information. If you have a question about any event, please call the coordinator or Bunny Lees-Smith (01666) 577 275

FCCC	WHEN	WHAT	WHERE	WHO
	Thursday 18th August	Chairman's Run	Sezincote House Moreton-in-Marsh	Malcolm Cutler 01285 712173
	Wednesday 24th August	Aunt Sally run and event	Golden Ball, Lower Swell	David Chambers 01608 658603
	Saturday 3rd September	Oakridge Show	Oakridge	Mike Scott 01285 760315
	Sunday 4th September	Tetbury Car Show	Tetbury	Keith Handley 01285 658450
	Sunday 11th September	GWSR Railway Day	Toddington	Contact organisers direct
	Wednesday 14th September	Classic Lunch Run	TBA	Barry Cooper 01285 851821
	Saturday 17th September	Kempsford Village Fete	Kempsford	Malcolm Cutler 01285 712173
	Sunday 18th September	Sudeley Castle Classic Car Show	Sudeley Castle	Dave Chambers 01608 658603
	Monday 19th Sept	FCCC Committee Meeting	Crown of Crucis	Geoff Tebby 01453 883821
	Tuesday 27th Sept	Visit to Ironbridge Gorge Museum (coach trip)	Ironbridge, nr Birmingham	Bunny Lees-Smith 01666 577275
	Saturday 1st October	Autumn Castle Combe Classic Meeting	Castle Combe	Bunny Lees-Smith 01666 577275

# FAIRFORD CLASSIC CAR CLUB

*Member of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs*

**Summer 2016**



## SUMMARY FC3 FEATURES

- FCCC Mid-Wales Explorer
- Tales from the Canadian Prairies
- MGF Rattles
- Fairford's Petrol Stations
- Hayne's Motor Museum Visit
- A Day at the Races!
- A Tale of Cowley

## REGULARS

- What's On
- Editor's Welcome
- From the Chair

### Front Cover

Our new 'shelter at Filkins and Hunters in panoramic view

### Centrefold

Bunny's Chenard and Overland in Fairford being critically inspected by our old friend Robert Hayley.

### Back Cover

Berrington Hall is said to be haunted, but it was a shock to think that Mike Cox and Jackie Hinton were around in those days!

*FC3 is published by the Fairford Classic Car Club and is free to members.*

**Web:** [www.fairfordclassiccarclub.org.uk](http://www.fairfordclassiccarclub.org.uk)



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/fairfordclassics/sets>

Welcome to the Summer '16 edition of the FC3. The sun is shining as I write this but it has not always been the case this year (!), blighting some of our events. In particular our annual visit to Hunters, where we normally have glorious weather, ended up with us fleeing into their dining room after those sheltering under the metal framed gazebo decided that the lightning was getting too close!

We are now into a busy part of the year for club runs, shows etc. However, the past few months has seen a number of successful events including Churchill; St George's Day, Barry's regular monthly runs and supporting local fetes, such as Filkins, Southrop and the Fairford Festival Parade. Fun was also had at our annual Skittles event and our venture into the world of Croquet was a great success—more next year.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this edition of FC3—they are all true!

## FROM THE CHAIR

Malcolm Cutler



“Why didn’t you read the instructions first” – suggests your better half - I am sure you will all recognise that feeling of annoyance, but inner recognition, when trying to assemble the ‘easy build’ flat pack piece of furniture. What they fail to recognise is that this is a ‘man thing’ – how dare someone tell us how to do the job, especially as it would appear to be written by someone in ‘Chinglish’. We always know better, don’t we – but do we?

Last year, on returning from a run on my Sunbeam S8 motorbike I realised that there was a lot of vibration coming from the area of the frame where the engine resides. ‘So what’, you may say, it’s an English twin, they all vibrate. Ah, but this is a sophisticated



Sunbeam with rubber mounted engine, shaft drive etc. Anyway, once back in the shed a quick look showed that one of the front rubber ‘snubbers’ (vibration dampers to the uninitiated) had separated from its

adjusting platform and gone AWL along the road somewhere. No problem say’s I, a quick call to the masters of all Sunbeam spares, Stewart Eng, will easily source a spare ‘snubber’ (well two as I might as well replace both sides) and it will be back on the road in two ticks. The phone call went well, until just as I was going to put the phone down I heard the comment “you do realise that to replace the snubbers you have to take the engine out – but it is easy if you follow the 30+ point guide you can find in the ‘Sunbeam Owners Bedside Book”! (yes, that really is the title). This called for a read of said article and an inspection of the bike, followed by deep contemplation over a few beers. The result - yes you guessed it - “they must be joking, I know much better”. With a few nuts undone, application of a left handed screwdriver and Thor the hammer (yes I was an agricultural engineer), I can shortcut all that rubbish and replace them in no time.

Now, the next paragraph should outline the details of how I did shortcut the ‘experts’ instructions, but, yes, I would be lying through my teeth and the profanities uttered would not be suitable for this august journal! Let’s just say that by the time I got about a quarter of the way through the recommended action list, it became very obvious that I had to follow all instruc-

tions to the end if I was to be successful. Did I feel deflated, well to be honest yes, but it did help my inner consciousness that I managed to do the job without taking the engine fully out and it did allow me to check and adjust a number of other parts – and as I did it in the shed, someone else who shall remain nameless, did not know what was going on, so could not say “I told you so”!

Has this taught me a lesson? It should have because it's not the first time I have been 'hoisted on my own petard'. In the early '70's I bought a Honda S800 coupé for a song, because it had a misfire. Having stripped the carburettors (or so I thought), renewed ignition parts etc, it still misfired. By this time I was in direct phone contact with Honda UK (a small office in London in those days) and they advised taking the



head off to check valves etc, but this would mean taking the engine out (it was canted over by about 30° and with studs the head would foul the body on removal). This time, after a bit of thought, unbolting engine mounts and application of a jack and levers, I managed to get the head off in

situe – one up over Honda UK!. Check head, regrind valves etc and fit back on – result, it still misfired. Another phone call to Honda lead to them contacting Japan, with the message coming back to take out the



spring loaded needle valves above the floats and see if there were filters above them. Apparently they started to block up with the lower spec petrol in the UK, but they should have not been fitted to mine, as it was a later model. My immediate reaction was that I had already taken the four carbs apart, but reluctantly I thought the Japanese engineers might know more than I did (bighead), so off the carbs came again. The result, yes there were filters and on taking them out I removed about an inch of 'fluff' and dirt from each one!! Back on the road the misfire had gone, as had the Spitfires and Spridgets in my wake, and the needle roller bearing Honda engine sped up to its full 9,000 rpm!

So, I think I will in future stick to the instructions – but then again, age may still make me think I know better!

*Quote from 'better half' – “Men never learn, do they”!*

# MID WALES EXPLORER

13-18th June

Maureen and David Apperley

## Day 1

Our intrepid FCCC travellers met for coffee at the Aviator Cafe at Staverton Airport & after we were given our most comprehensive route guide we all set off. 1<sup>st</sup> stop



Berrington Hall, a National Trust property, where we had lunch & looked around the house and gardens. Then it was on the road again until we eventually spotted the Maesmawr Hall Hotel sign, most of us made it into the driveway without going too far i.e. going over the level crossing (500 yds. past the sign)!

## Day 2

We set off after breakfast to visit the Elan Valley Red Kite feeding station and then on to the Welsh Crystal Centre. Unfortunately a mile and a half along the road (over the level crossing) Rob and June's MGC decided it didn't fancy the impending rain clouds, and coasted to a halt on the

grass bank of the very twisty road (double continuous white lines ) with lorries hurtling round every corner. Mo and I pulled in behind the MGC and I was very glad that I had fitted hazard warning lights, not dazzling but a bit of rear end protection. Rob quickly produced a bright yellow towing strap which we fastened to both MG's but it was 4 miles until we found a truck stop cafe where we did a hasty 'u' turn and rejoined the main road without holding up the traffic. However, we did have to wave a couple of large lorries past to much enthusiastic trumpeting of their air horns. We got back to the Hotel and after checking numerous leads it seemed to have an ignition fault; so we went indoors for a coffee and the impending rain descended in torrents. The hotel made us sandwiches and as soon as the rain stopped Rob put the original contact points back, instead of the



Accuspark unit, and all ran sweetly!

## Day 3

Setting off in bright sunshine we had a lovely ride past Hafren Forrest of RAC rally fame and along twisting mountain roads to

arrive at the Corris Craft Centre, where we examined various craft shops and a new distillery making their own special gin,



which of course we only sampled in moderation (*Ed: well some did!*)! On the road again to our next stop, the small town of Tywyn, passing on our way wonderful mountain scenery including Cader Idris for which Mo and I have still got all the mountain climbing books but not the legs!! After a pleasant stroll along the sea front we made our way to the Talylyn Railway Station where we had lunch before boarding the narrow gauge train, 'Edward Thomas', for our joinery up into the hills and remains of old mines. This was a very attractive trip lasting an hour in each direction + 1/2 hr, with a whistle stop on the return trip. Then more interesting scenery on our way back to the hotel and another superb dinner with eight different vegetables.

#### Day 4

Today we went out along the Upper Wye Valley and close to the source of the River Wye on the south side of Mount Plynlimon, whilst on the other side of the moun-

tain, about 2½ miles away, was the source of the River Severn flowing down through Hafren Forest. After a spectacular drive with proper bends and lovely smooth tarmac (oops, forgot we weren't competing) we arrived in Aberystwyth where we stopped in the Park and Ride and paid our £1-40 which included a return ticket into town/sea front. We walked along the sea front and found a pavement cafe where we had a snack in the sun and then explored the various parts of the town before meeting back up at the Park and Ride. Next stop was Devils Bridge where we parked up and walked down to see the River Mynach drop 90 mtrs into the River Rheidol causing a great turbulence and lots



of noise. The bridge itself is made up of 3 bridges over each other and is quite spectacular, although tall trees and shrubs prevent a good view. There is a path down but with many slippery steps and as it was starting to rain, we headed back to our cars and set out for Silver Mountain. When we arrived we all sat and had refreshments and a scary girl guide (period make up) told us the history of the mine. Then another guide (without scary make up) took 5 of us

on our journey through the mine. While she was conscious of Health and Safety we were given hard hats but not head lamps as she said people tended not to return them! It was very enlightening and convinced us all that the best place to acquire silver was



from a High Street jeweller! Then back to the hotel for another slap up dinner.

#### Day 5

Our last full day in Wales and we started with another well planned & glorious route to Powis Castle,

for 400 years the home of the Herbert family including Clive of India, who amassed a huge fortune in India and managed to bring it all back to England/Wales, much of it exhibited in the castle. The rooms are all lavishly decorated and you can feel the grandeur in which this family lived, although they had many turbulent times. Powis Castle was left to the National Trust by the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Powis in 1952. We had lunch there and while some of our group visited the Coed-y-Dinas garden centre, we carried on to Lake Vyrnwy and the mountain road round to the Dam and a very narrow and at times exposed road which we thoroughly enjoyed as the sun was out and hoods were down. We stopped in Bala in the largest and

most deserted car park in town and wandered down the High St. and found a cafe with coffee and ice creams - petrol is still served across the pavement in the main street! We then left Bala and drove alongside the lake on very good 'A' roads back to the hotel. That evening Jill made a presentation to Margaret & Geoff thanking them for such good planning & a most enjoyable trip.

#### Day 6

The route home was very enjoyable through Rhayader and round Leominster and towards Hereford (names we can spell and pronounce again) until we got to Oak-



church Garden Centre where we all met up for lunch before going our separate ways home. Martin and Jenny had a pit stop at Oakchurch to tighten their front suspension and Mo and I arrived at Tesco Cirencester with a flat battery. Oh how everyone likes to push start an old car!!

# Churchill Show—The Story

David Chambers



The 14<sup>th</sup> Churchill Vintage & Classic Car Show was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The show is held every two years on the large village green with the imposing All Saints' Church as a backdrop. The original Car Show, described as "A Cavalcade of Cars", was held in 1988 as part of a village event to raise funds for the restoration of the church and attracted the grand total of 38 cars. This first show was held shortly after the formation of the FCCC when I read an article in a paper about this "new" club being formed and being desperate to find an easy route into gathering a collection of interesting vehicles, I applied to join. Needless to say the majority of cars shown at that first show were from the club - a young Barry Cooper wearing a baseball



cap turned up and was clearly in charge

with some lofty guy in tow who reckoned he had helped form the said organisation, but never seemed to have a car. Allegedly

it was in bits in his garage – this proved to be the case for some time *(Ed: I admit it all!)*

For a long period I was referred to as an "Ordinary Member" by the lofty one and it took years for me to be elevated & recognised as someone of relative use & asked to join the committee *(Committee: the effect is still being felt!)*.

The Churchill Event proved so popular that a committee was formed to organise future shows. The show has grown to such an extent that the fund raising element is now targeted to include and support, charities outside the village, although we also continue to support local needs as well. Such is the extent of the popularity of the show that we had over 570 entrants in 2016 and approx. 4,000 members of the public attending. We now have a mailing list of over 1,500 prospective entrants who are contacted months prior to the show but entries to the show have to be limited to maintain the relaxed village atmosphere. However, the format stays the same. A Jazz Band plays during the day; there are attractions and stalls. Breakfasts, lunches & teas are available and real ale can be enjoyed at the bar. The public can also relax in the Chequers pub opposite the green where excellent food is also

served.

This year everyone was thrilled, especially Barry, when we had a display given by a Mk 16 Spitfire with an American built Merlin Engine [so he informed us afterwards] which gave three passes and saluted the show by dipping its wings.

The church was open with a themed floral display, this time titled "All Creatures Great & Small" and the Heritage Centre Museum opened as an additional attraction. Revenue is generated from the admission fee and vehicle entries, plus rental from stallholders and money spent by the public. To date we have raised nearly £175,000!

Needless to say FCCC members have their own special display area allocated in the same pole position on the field each year. This makes it easier for 'well trained' members to find the location on the day and to stay on long after the proceedings have finished.

*Ed: Long may the show continue and all our thanks and respect, go to David, Carol and all the other volunteers who work so hard to organise such a successful event.*

**FUTURE EVENT**  
**CASTLE COMBE**  
1st October      Bunny Lees-Smith

The Fairford Classic Car Club are going in 'style' again this year. We have booked a stand area and members will be able to exhibit their cars as in previous years. Angela Suckling has kindly agreed to organise another of her great buffet lunches and

drinks. If you have not been before this is quite something, just ask those that were there last year.

With eight races the fabulous cars speak for themselves, with a mixture of the very ancient vintage sports cars to sixties single seaters. The 'Big Healeys' will be as competitive as ever plus the crowd-pleasing 500cc Formula 3s. Add in pre-66 Jaguars, historic saloons, a huge grid of 1950s sports cars for the Inter-marque race and demonstrations of historic Grand Prix cars and you have a full afternoon.

***"2015 Club event of the season .... the fourth Castle Combe Autumn Classic. Unusual demos and displays, relaxed ambience, excellent racing and near-capacity audience - this wonderful family day out gets better and better."***  
**Marcus Pye, Autosport**

This time the Club will buy the tickets so as to ensure that we all get the proper discount and to ease the organisation of the lunches.

Tickets via the Club will include the lunch, a free programme and entry for the display car  
Adult £15 per person + £10 for lunch  
Senior Citizen £10 per person + £10 for lunch

If you are planning to take children under 16 please have a word with Bunny. Please note that we can only take 25 cars (50 people) so do get your request and cheque in promptly. It is not likely that we will be able to process requests after the first week in September

Please send your cheque, payable to FCCC, to Mrs Jill Cutler, 28 Courtbrook, Fairford, Glos, GL7 4BE.

# The Little Great White Shall Rise from the Ashes



Eight months ago Pam and I were enjoying an afternoon drive on a sunny, Autumn day thinking we had perhaps a month to go before putting the **Little Great White** away



for the winter. We were stationary, the last in the queue in a turn lane; almost home. WHAM ! Slammed at 60 kph from behind by a huge SUV and driven into the car in front.

The MG was carted off to a yard and Pam and I were carted off to hospital in an ambulance. The silly sheila said the "*sun was in her eyes*" but I reckon she was texting while trying to apply her makeup. The car was an insurance write-off and after Pam and I recovered, the New Year started with a very unpleasant battle with the insurance company. They wanted to scrap the car but there was no way he was going to suffer such a fate. They eventually paid up (not as much as they should have!) and I set about making a plan to rebuild the car.

There are several parts to what I am calling the **Phoenix Phase**. The first big effort was to gather the major bits that would be needed early in the rebuild - body panels. Almost all of this good British tin has, indirectly, come from British Motor Heritage though I did get two NOS right side wings from a bloke in San José very cheaply (he never went through with his project). He sent them to Detroit in the belly of a Greyhound bus (\$84) and I nipped over the border to collect them. A bit more poking around the Net, mostly on a website - **The MG Experience** where I found a bloke in Michigan who was parting out a 1966 MGB. Again, quick run across the border (before there is a wall) and grabbed an alloy bonnet and a boot lid. New from



somebody like Moss, these two items would have cost me fifteen times as much!



I spent a lot of time researching where and to whom I could go for help. In Oz or the UK, I knew exactly where I could turn to but over here, classic cars are more of the *57 Chevy* variety. I was very concerned about finding the expertise and the repair parts I would need. After some discussion with mates in the **British**



**Sports Car Club of London**, I took the car to Dave Westman's shop for a straighten. While the shop's bread & butter is repairing dings in soccer-mom wagons, Dave has a real liking for the older cars and showed genuine interest in the MGB. He particularly enjoyed the car's history. (*He was working on a Porsche 944 when I took the car in*). LGW returned home last week, nice and straight and I started into the next phase - tearing it down to the bare shell.

There have been some most fortunate events along the way so far. My efforts in the **MG Experience** and the local Club got me in contact with Peter Plouf here in London. Pete's hobby is restoring our kind of classic cars. He has rebuilt six



MGBs. He is just finishing a **Volvo 1800ES** in which he has put a Buick V8. He has a superbly equipped shop in his back yard where he and I will spend the next three months welding the new panels on and getting the body shell back to where it needs to be. You will be hearing more about Peter in the months to come. Another piece of good fortune is my new neighbour. Pam and I bought a house here and

moved in three weeks ago. Tony next door has a Fiat 124 and this week, rolled a Ferrari Spider into his garage that he will start working on. My neighbour is not only "one of us", he owns two covered car trailers and has kindly offered to cart LGW around when and wherever he needs to go. Tony is in the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame and runs a business making the fibreglass shells for race cars. This Saturday Tony and I will head to an auction for a shift.



My close friend from Oz, John Harriott (whom a few of you have met) was in London (the Colonial one) for business a fortnight ago. He made a point of arriving early so he and I could get stuck into the tear down. Marvellous weekend we had! Thanks to John's help (*and an engine hoist borrowed from a mate in the Club*) we made great progress. Suitably fuelled of course! The garage is now full of plastic boxes filled with MG bits and pieces, carefully labelled and stacked on the shelving next to the blue bin for the empty tinnies!

The car is now down to the bare shell. Today Tony and I will take it over to Pete's in one of the luxurious trailers. Then the fun begins. Its starting to feel good about really getting into the project. After the tin bashing, it will be off for a serious bead blasting and then a full-on paint job, inside and out. Davo will spend the coming winter putting it all back together. I shall keep you informed of the progress.

**Dave Barton**

**7 July 2016**

**London, Canada**





8am - 4pm

Toilets



DS 9636



## MGF—A RATTLING GOOD YARN

Nigel Godwin

You may have heard of the old adage that Land Rover owners will happily pay £10 to save a fiver! Well I was about to unwittingly transfer that adage to MG owners as well. Those of you who know me will be aware I like to have a project to get me through the winter months. Three years ago it was rebuilding a hydrostatic gearbox for a ride on mower, which I can happily report is still in use today, two years ago it was repairing a fleet of Crypton engine diagnostic machines and last August bank holiday I made a bid on EBay for a 1997 MGF advertised as



spares or repair due to a 'tapping noise' from the engine. Now, my son has the same model and I have been maintaining that for the past 7 years, so the noise would surely just be a simple problem with the hydraulic lifters

that would easily be sorted out with a tin of hydraulic lifter cleaner and an oil change. I went ahead and bid £329.99.

I won the bid and duly borrowed a trailer from a fellow FCCC member and drove up the Fosse Way to collect my winter project. The car looked great, nice and clean, full set of history from the day it was registered, MOT to July 2016, good tyres and a fairly recent new hood. It started fine, a bit of a top end rattle, but nothing that prevented it from driving up onto the trailer. Whilst chatting to the owner he said the top end had been rebuilt after a catastrophic cam belt failure that took out the valves, but all had been rebuilt and there was a spare belt and camshaft drive gear in the boot should I need it. Oh and by the way, did I know the short cut when changing the timing belt was to remove the crank gear as its really quite loose. Thinking nothing of his comments I shook his hand and handed over £330.

That was the start of the steady emptying of my wallet and I am sure many of you will have experience of similar projects as I outline how my project has played, or should that be paid out thus far.

I got the car home and decided the first strategy should be to put some engine

flush (£4) through the system and change the oil and filter (£13+£3) in case the previous owner had put the wrong oil in. Wrong, that made no difference. Next step was to consult Google. MGF Variable Valve Control (VVC) engines it seems are particularly prone to 'top end rattle' which makes them sound like a diesel. I must have been maintaining my son's VVC well because his sounds really sweet. How could I get my new project to be as quiet as my son's MGF? This would become my obsessive mission for the win-



ter and beyond.

The cure most often suggested was usually an engine flush (been there, done that, got the oily T shirt), replace the hydraulic lifters or in extreme cases the VVC mechanics themselves which is no exaggeration in saying these are built to Swiss watch standards of tolerance.

Fate then took me down another path. I was in the local scrapyards for some reason I cannot even recall now and there

was an MGF that had just been towed in. I asked if it was a VVC and if so what was the cost of the complete rear half of the car? £175 they said and yes, it's a VVC, but there were no keys to start the engine. I found an old utility bill in the boot and wrote down the details. My plan was to contact the owner at the address in Cirencester and ask if the engine was a runner. I located the house and popped a note through the door with my mobile number. Later that day I received a text saying the owner had moved out a long time ago and the car was left for the house owner to dispose of and he knew nothing about its history.

The next day I arrived at the scrapyard with my trailer and using a fork lift truck I removed the engine, gearbox and subframe with all the electronics.

Right I thought, now I have a complete engine I can tear into my project and start changing the top end to cure my rattle. A quick read of the manual indicated I would need some VVC gaskets (£14) and a bottle of Loctite 574 (£11) to reseal the cam bearing carrier. These were duly ordered from EBay.

Tools in hand I started to prepare the engine to be locked in safe mode for working on the head and removal of timing belts. Access is restricted when working on an MGF, but when the bolts are tightened up stupidly tight it makes it ten times worse if you can't get a good purchase on the spanners. After much swearing and bloodied knuckles I managed to lock the engine and remove the timing belt and associated drive gears. On stripping down my project further I found a few horrors that I decided must be contributing towards the rattle. (1) The cam bearing ladder had a sheared off bolt that should be holding down the journal that seemed to be generating the noise. The bolt head was held in place by a blob of sealant to cover the crime! And (2) the cam drive gear was not the right one for a VVC engine. The one fitted was for a normal 16V engine, but the VVC revs to 7500rpm and needs a drive gear with harmonic damper to stop the exhaust cam thrashing to bits at high revs. Luckily I recalled what the seller had said that I had a spare one in the boot! I wondered why it was never fitted in the first place.

I set about the rebuild and sorted out the sheared off journal bolt, changed the drive gear and refitted the timing belts. Feeling confident I started the engine and guess what, no change!

OK I thought. Now I need to start changing parts with my donor engine. The engine was re-locked in safe mode, belts and gears removed once more and the cam carrier fully removed. Could it be the hydraulic lifters themselves? After all, several people on Google had said it fixed their problem. Well if I was going to go to the trouble of removing the cam carrier I might as well buy a new set of lifters 'just to eliminate them' so a new set was ordered (£60).

I stripped down the scrap yard donor engine to get access to the camshafts



and VVC mechanics and found a new set of horrors. This engine could not possibly have revved to 7500 rpm because someone had sawn off at least an inch of the actuation shaft! Feeling annoyed with myself for buying an engine that I did not listen to I soldiered on and swapped over one of the VVC units and camshaft from the

donor to the project car and rebuilt the top end once more. I refitted the timing gears and belts, removed the engine lock, which fits where the starter motor normally sits and started the car once more. No change, still the top end clattered away.

OK I thought, time for a break and a review of where I was and what my options were. Could it be the actual head was damaged and the noise was deeper down in the engine? Maybe a valve seat or valve stem. I had a spare head on the donor engine and providing there were no more horrors to be found I could fit the entire head from the donor engine on the project car. After all, what was the chance that both engines were noisy on the top end?

'Off with their heads' could be heard all across Meysey Hampton as I set about the work with new enthusiasm. A new head gasket set and bolts would be needed so I opted for the newer MLS type and ordered a set from EBay (£49). The donor head looked good, but if I had come this far I might as well get it skimmed and have the valves and seats cleaned up (£55) plus I might as well fit the new hydraulic lifters I had just bought. I required a special valve compression

tool suitable for Rover K series engines to remove the valves so one was ordered from EBay (£28). The gaskets arrived and unfortunately they were damaged in transit so replacements were ordered.

The engine was re-assembled, the timing belts re fitted and the engine lock removed once more. Now there was no chance of a rattle as everything on the top end had been changed. Wrong again!

OK, maybe it's the VVC units and both engines had noisy mechanisms. A quick search showed these were expensive at £630 each and I needed two! Some more searching and I located an MGF specialist that had purchased all the MG-Rover stock from the original manufacturer and he would offer me two new units for £300 a pair. Bargain I thought, so I ordered them and treated myself to an early Christmas present.

Off came the cam carrier once more and on went the new VVC units. I was getting good at this and I could strip down the MGF and rebuild it in just over a day. The next day I started the engine and guess what, **no change**.

**To be continued**

## THE HISTORY OF FAIRFORD'S PETROL STATIONS

David Perry—Fairford Parish News

Apart from the demise of several local pubs, another liquid outlet has affected our changing lifestyle even more severely. Fairford in the 1930's had six petrol retailers and despite the demand going



up tenfold, we now have to travel nearly half way to Lechlade to 'fill up'!

On the west side of the village there was Townsend, right next door to Busby's, occupying the site of the long gone coach builders. Arthur Goodman and Stan Bartlett were the mainstay of Townsend's, under owner Frank Townsend. The boss was very inventive and could make trailers and even a horse box. I remember going with my father to collect a brand new Ford on Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 1938. The registration number WV3570 is still the only one I remember! No doubt if I had been older the £100 handed over may have registered as well!!

Over the bridge, on the corner of the al-

ley next door to the Bull Hotel, there was Bob Stevens. His mainstay was cycle repairs, also selling new bikes. Bob was previously a blacksmith, located at 'Gearings' opposite Eastbourne Terrace, London St. I have a postcard of Bob in uniform during WW1 but there is no indication of his regiment.

At the bike shop it was well known that the cycle you took in for repair may never be reunited with its owner! Frustratingly slow service meant that owners gave up hope and there was an adjacent room of rusting and dirty bikes, open to view, which gave testimony to this. The petrol was served with an arm that swung out over the pavement. Terrifyingly, the storage tank was under the shop floor and when supplies came in the pipes draped over the pavement, causing some congestion to pedestrians and mothers with prams. Bob continued to chain smoke



during this operation.

His wife was a dumpy little lady with a fascinating red pimple on her cheek. She observed the shop trade

from her lounge which had a partly glazed door and would emerge when required, or when Bob was doing a taxi run. A splendid

car – indeed most cars were splendid to our young eyes.

Now to London St where Bert Ashton cycle shop (now part of Londis) was located. A recess in the wall remains where the petrol pump was situated. His counter was piled high with bits of bikes until, what appeared to be an annual clear out, trans-



formed the shop back to normality and the process of accumulation would start all over again! The petrol would be served

from an arm that swung out over the pavement and the tanks were again under the shop floor. Like Bob Stevens, Bert also chain smoked!!

Mrs Aton was a seamstress doing ‘in house sewing and repairs’. Unlike Harris Tweed, woven in the Scottish Highlands and Islands where the cloth gave off a gentle aroma of peat smoke from the ever present peat fires and became a feature of the cloth, Mrs Aston’s sewing had a whiff of Woodbines and her nicotined upper lip gave the game away! Interestingly they had a cigarette machine on the outside

wall of the premises dispensing a pack of 5 Woodbines in a paper packet for two pence. Many of us had our first drag there before coughing and spluttering our way back home! Their son Stanley, who waited with me at the same school bus stop, always had his satchel bulging with books and his apparent academic nature was downgraded to being a ‘swot’.

The final petrol station was located on the A417, at the turning to Hatherop and was run by Cyril Lees. His abode, adjacent to the garage, was a static caravan – he later built a house on the site.

#### JEAN FRUIN

It is with great sadness we have to report that Jean Fruin recently died after a long battle with cancer. We first met John and Jean, in their Bentley Special when the club went to Jersey’s 100th anniversary of motoring in 1999. They soon decided that we were having much greater fun than the Bentley Club so joined the FCCC, even though they lived in Hillingdon, nr London. They regularly came to our events and on our annual ‘week away’ trips. It is now 10 years since John died, but Jean maintained her membership of the FCCC and came to events, often staying with Mike & Jan Cox. Dave and Maureen Apperley represented the club at Jean’s funeral and in the address it was noted how John and Jean enjoyed their trips with the FCCC.

## A VISIT TO HAYNES MOTOR MUSEUM Bunny Lees-Smith

Many of you will know that the Haynes collection had been reopened this year after a vast rebuild and re-layout of the exhibition. I took the opportunity to re-visit to see what had been done and I must say that I was more than impressed by what I saw.

This year a group of us determined that we would make it our business to see what had been going on in the motoring museum world and have made visits to several well known exhibitions. To be fair what we have seen so far has been designed for the general public and with an emphasis on things which might interest children. This is typified by The National Motor Museum at Beaulieu and to some extent, at Gaydon. I am ignoring perhaps some of the smaller collections such as at Cotswold Museum at Bourton on the Water which does merit praise because it is much more intimate and does contain



in its collection a great deal of memorabilia and as well as a number of cars.

What I have to say is that Haynes have a collection which is not defined by geographic area or country of origin but is a carefully chosen offering of class auto-

mobiles. There are now well over 400 of them beautifully prepared and displayed, accessible although you are asked not to touch. All of them identified with a small write up on the history of manufacture and the car itself. A small criticism is that



there is perhaps insufficient technical data available on many of the exhibits, but this will only disappoint an in-depth enthusiast.

The museum is split up into several specialist collections, the biggest of which must be the 'Red' collection which is of course the sports cars of this world including more than a sprinkling of a certain Italian manufacture. Another collection is that of classic British cars, those we all have had at one time or another, good or bad.

Motorcycles are not missed out and among them we find all the well known British makes and sidecars. With these is what must be a unique collection of 'Speedway' bikes dating back to the 20s.

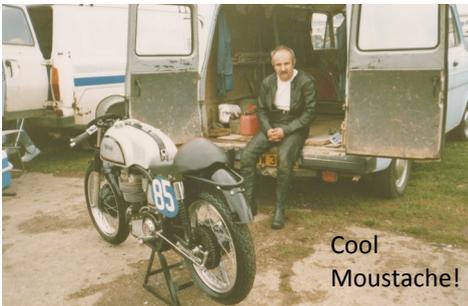
I urge you to go yourself to see what is there, you will not be disappointed. As a whole it is much superior in presentation and quality to Gaydon despite their new layout there. Give yourself plenty of time as it is huge compared with other museums and I can recommend the café food. It is about 70 miles of easy roads from Fairford.

## A DAY AT THE RACES

### Rob Bevan

Zub-zub-zub its 5.30am on the M42 and I'm off to Mallory Park with my old mate Sonny Cleaver. In the back of the transit is his BSA Gold Star racer that he has loaned me; my Norton having blown up at Castle Coombe the week before.

Zub-zub-zub the noise is getting louder I look at Sonny he looks at me, the noise seems to be coming from the back of the van, suddenly there is an almighty thump, the back of the van leaps in the air and we cruise to a halt on the hard shoulder. Surely the diff



has expired. At this point we are passed by our own spare wheel rolling down the motorway, it had removed itself from the carrier, dug into the road, shoved the van in the air, then followed us. After a string of expletives (Sonny was a builder but I was more than a little shocked!) he sprinted down the motorway, retrieved said spare wheel and in the back of the van it went.

When the laughter had subsided we proceeded at a leisurely pace, only to be passed a few miles on by a Peugeot 205 jet car! Yes, a 205 with flames stretching 10 feet from the rear, surely a prototype and it was travelling at a fair old lick but it suddenly veered to the left, then back to the right, completing a 360 degree loop backwards into the Armco, spreading debris all over the motorway.

As we cruised to a halt the doors flew open and out tumbled half a dozen spotty youths all holding their heads. Were they in shock/hungover or just stoned, we'll never know for we made our way around the wreckage and did a sharp exit just making it to the meeting. However, I only did just a few laps before being black flagged (no comment), so put the bike back in the van and drove home, still chuckling about our day at the races.

The next weekend another 5am start and we're off to Brands Hatch with the rebuilt Manx. After scrutineering we were informed that the meeting had been abandoned, the track was flooded and there was no electricity to work the pumps. At this point I am seriously considering my future as a classic racer - happy days!

Following Brexit the English football team now feel that they were misled about the consequences of letting goals in. They didn't think it would actually mean the other team would win!

# A TALE OF COWLEY

Mike Cox

Looking back through the Feb edition of FC3 and reading all the wonderful comments to Don Hayter, it reminded me of my one and only visit to the MG plant at Abingdon. At the time I was employed at the Cowley Assembly Plant as a Project Engineer i.e. general dogs body, within the Production Engineering Dept, providing everything needed to produce cars, from typewriters to the installation of a new paint plant. I can't remember the date of the following tale, nor who owned the Cowley Assembly Plant, be it Leyland or Rover. All I know is that the company was



ing machine back to Cowley. I was told that, as usual, there were very little funds available and it had to be done on the 'cheap, cheap'.

I arrived in Abingdon and got my first sight of the car wash machine which, I was told, swallowed filthy cars at one end and produced a shiny, waxed and polished car, including wheels and underside, at the other end – it was enormous, very second hand and appeared to have had plenty of use! It appeared that engineers from Longbridge in Birmingham (the Austin Plant) had, in the days of more cash, gone over to Italy on an 'all-expenses paid jolly', spent thousands buying the car wash and had it delivered to Abingdon! They then got the 'thing' erected and running, said good-bye and left the MG engineers to iron out any snags and get it running properly. I had to do the same at Cowley, but was again reminded that there was very little in the kitty to do it!

Anyway, I called in a few favours and got a small engineering company to dismantle it into large pieces and persuaded our own transport department to haul the 'beast' to Cowley, as and when they could spare a lorry. I must add that production of MGs at Abingdon had by then finished and the



very short of funds and was being bailed out by the Government.

Anyway, I walked into the office early one morning, which was a big mistake as the Engineering Manager was waiting for someone to appear and as I was first in that morning, it was me he collared! He told me to get my butt over to Abingdon, meet up with one of the MG engineers and organise the movement of a car wash-

factory was being closed down. We had very little information nor working drawing on the machine as these were apparently thrown away when they started to clear the site ready for demolition. So I gave firm instructions to the foreman that all removable items were to be marked and listed, cables tied on every connector, wrapped up and labelled. The first problem (one of many) came when I found out the next day that the foreman was just about the only one with any knowledge of the English language!! So it turned out that the labelling was written in some unreadable scribble – another job to sort



out when it got back to Cowley.

Following many days of awful weather, transport not turning up when wanted and the language problem, the greatest unknown was where to put it when it started to arrive in Cowley. Nobody, from the directors down, had given any thought to this 'small' problem, so it all ended up being unloaded in an empty space between two very large buildings, one of them containing the Mechanical and Electrical maintenance workshops. They must

have thought this was 'Manna from Heaven' because they, like all the other departments, were struggling to keep things running on very limited funds.

Slowly, mostly at night, vital components, motors etc. disappeared and nobody cared. Management were happy because in most cases production of cars continued and maintenance were happy because they could repair things. Cables blew in the wind and the whole lot was slowly reduced to a pile of unwanted scrap. Of course in the eyes of the boss this was all my fault and over the following days this all provided a source of much amusement to the other engineers in my department and kept them going in funny jokes for ages!

What was left of the car washer remained, as far as I know, in many bits uncovered and left out in all weathers. I, by this time, had become involved in another disastrous project, probably given to me as some sort of punishment.

It was about this time, maybe a few months later, that I got to hear that Austin Rover, as I believe it was then called, wanted to make 1,500 technical staff redundant. I therefore quickly got over to the Personnel Department and got my name on the list - I think I was the 2<sup>nd</sup> person to apply! So, in June 1987, I left the mad house with no regrets at all. As far as I know the remains of the washer were still there when the Cowley Assembly Plant was demolished to make way for an industrial estate.

The following are some important points raised in the two latest FBHVC Newsletters (Issue 3 & 4, 2016). The Newsletters also include some interesting motoring based articles—please go to [www.fbhvc.co.uk](http://www.fbhvc.co.uk) for more info.

**Registration Matters** — it is evident that the FBHVC are at the ‘end of their tether’ in trying to understand why the DVLA are rejecting some vehicle registrations on the basis that the body was not original or consistent with the original body. FBHVC has pointed out to the DVLA that the Ministry of Transport’s handbook (Para 303 (2)) states that *‘the most reasonable assumption is that the chassis constitutes the vehicle .....’*, but (Para 303 (5)) also makes the clear distinction of *‘not in the case with a monocoque bodyshell’*. Discussions continue!

**Correct V5C and Vehicle Enquiry System**—no progress regarding vehicles where the DVLA database and V5C have incorrectly shown the ‘Make’ or ‘Model’. This makes searches difficult. So why is it not correct and even if a change is subsequently made it has to be done manually and even then only the ‘Make’ can be changed. FBHVC say *‘we will continue to energetically batter our heads against a difficult wall’!*

**Low Emission Zones**—FIVA (Europe) are pressing for EU guidance to include an explicit recommendation that historic vehicles be exempted from Low Emission Zones.

**Chromium trioxide**—FIVA are working with chromium trioxide producers to allow its use (for chrome plating) to continue to be used for ‘legacy parts’ (including in historic vehicles) or which are used in very small volumes.

**UK/EU Referendum**—the latest FBHVC Newsletter has an update on the referendum and how it could effect our hobby/industry. It is basically seen as too soon to call — so keep calm!

**Emission Defeat Devices**—Three new emission defeat devices have been found after investigations in Germany, France and the UK into the VW emissions scandal:

‘Thermal Window’ device—switches off pollution control technology in low temperatures,

‘Hot Start’ cheat—allows higher emissions after warm engine restart (EU tests for cold starts)

‘Exhaust treatment’ device switches off two mins after test has finished!

*Ed: at least I don’t think we will have any problems like these with our classics!.*



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The Martians  
have landed!  
All will be  
explained in  
the next FC3  
edition of  
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