

Newsletter

REMEMBER WHEN



Member of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs



Just in case you thought that we had forgotten you during this traumatic time - here are a few photos to remind you of the good times and hopefully looking forward to better times to come



See a message from our chairman on page three
All photos courtesy of Keith Handley

A comic take on the effects of the Corona virus from the antipodes Courtesy of John Airey

It is with great sadness that I have to mention the loss of a few local businesses as a result of COVID-19. A local bra manufacturer has gone bust, a submarine company has gone under, a manufacturer of food blenders has gone into liquidation, a dog kennel has had to call in the retrievers and a company supplying paper for origami enthusiasts has folded. The local strip club has gone tits up, Interflora is pruning its business and Dyno-rod has gone down the drain. The saddest one though is the ice cream van man found dead covered in nuts and raspberry sauce. He couldn't take it anymore and topped himself.

PROJECT'S DARK BACKSTORY

Cirencester-based Thornley Kelham has begun a full nut-and-bolt rebuild of an Alfa Romeo 6C-1750 SS once owned by Benito Mussolini.

The firm has tracked down confirmation that the car was delivered to *Il Duce* on 13 January 1930, and unearthed archive images from the following year that show the dictator behind the wheel for a section of the inaugural Radio Auto-Raduno cross-country rally.

The historic documents show that this particular 6C, sold by Alfa Romeo as a rolling chassis, originally featured bodywork from legendary coachbuilder Stabilimenti Farina, but was later stripped down, reshaped and lightened for racing in Eritrea, where hillclimb and street-circuit competitions were commonplace.

Recently discovered in the USA, the car is almost unrecognisable today, wearing few authentic body panels and a non-original front grille, but Thornley Kelham will use the surviving chassis, rear axle and gearbox as the basis for a recreation of the 6C's 1930 form.



To all FCCC members:

Last night I had a dream – well, you have to do something whilst ‘locked down’ – that I was sitting outside a pub drinking a nice cool beer (yes, Mr Barton we do have cold beer in the ‘home country’), discussing loose big-ends with FCCC friends and then driving off in a haze of oil smoke and burbling exhaust i.e. the Jag front oil seal is still leaking and I must tighten up the exhaust clamp. All very lovely but I was rudely woken by Jill to say I had been snoring again and to get up and make a cup of tea and remind her which part of the garden we would be visiting today! Bleary eyed I obeyed (what else?) but then caught the beginning of the news and heard that Boris, that shaggy blond fella, had in fact decreed that as from July 4th we would all be able to return to normal life, sup our pints and dance merrily. Hurrah, ecstasy, until I picked up the paper and started to read the small print as to what we should and should not do and realised that it was all a bit like an insurance document i.e. all good news until you got around to reading the small print!

So where does that now lead us as a club and you, dear members? Quite frankly I am not sure (hands up who does), but maybe there is some light appearing at the end of the tunnel. Sadly we have, like all clubs, had to cancel all our planned events since March, including our week away in Devon/Somerset and our visit to the Isle of Man in September. Fortunately the hotels and in particular Scenic Car Tours, have been very accommodating and either we have had our bookings cancelled at no cost or we rolled them over to next year – as in the case of the Isle of Man. However, we can at least now take our cars and bikes out for a run without fear of being reported for having too much fun. Likewise we will soon be able to arrange to meet in very small numbers and maybe even in a pub (if we can pre-book a seat that is) and some can even get their hair cut – which doesn’t bother me! However, I fully understand that many of us and/or our partners, must still have to stay in exile for a while longer and most of us, being 70+, be aware of social distancing and keep away from crowds.

It has been fantastic how club members have kept in touch via the phone, e-mail and video over the past three months. Modern communication technology has helped greatly but there is nothing like personal contact, a fact which I hope some younger people, who seem to spend most of their time on the phone, will now begin to appreciate. But we now need to start being able to meet up again, otherwise the result could be worse than the pandemic itself, let alone the economic destruction we will suffer.

I fear that for some time to come we will not be attending shows, race meeting etc nor be able to arrange visits to restorers and other venues but, be assured that as soon as we are, we will organising visits to such events and companies. One event we would like to hold, as soon as is allowable, is for us to arrange a private meet with the cars e.g. in a designated field (we have one in mind), where we can park the cars, probably in a circle at a ‘socially responsible’ distance’ and weather permitting, put out our individual chairs and tables, sup tea/coffee or something stronger and converse and walk around, again at a safe distance. We are keeping a close eye on advice from the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) but if any of you receive any relevant news on when/how we can restart club get together from other larger, one make, classic car clubs, then please let us know. Also if any of you have ideas on events we can safely hold in the future, please get in touch.

Finally, our best wishes to all members and their families from the FCCC committee and we hope that you have kept sane and well over the past months and that we will soon ‘be able to meet again’.

All best wishes.

Malcolm Cutler