

Hare & Hounds

Classic Vehicle Club



AUGUST 2023 | EDITION 379

IT'S THE BIG ONE!



The Hare & Hounds Classic Vehicle Club Show



Sunday 3rd September 2023

BROOKSIDE GARDEN CENTRE
LONDON ROAD, POYNTON, SK12 1BY



Open To Members & Non-Members
Requested Arrival Time By 10:00AM
Judging & Prize Awards As Follows: -

- Pre-War Cars (Winner & Runner Up)
- Car 1944 – 1959 (Winner & Runner Up)
- Car 1960 – 1975 (Winner & Runner Up)
- Car 1976 – 1990 (Winner & Runner Up)

- Car 1991 – Date (Winner & Runner Up)
- Commercial Vehicle (Winner & Runner Up)
- Motorbike (Winner & Runner Up)
- Brookside Garden Centre Trophy
- High Lane Garage Trophy
- Annual Shield

H&H CVC Ltd

 hhcvc.com

 hhcvc1991@gmail.com

The Club meets at the Conservative Club, High Lane
on the **THIRD** Wednesday of each month @ **8.15pm**

Annual Club Subscription - £20

Subscription Payments by Bank Transfer

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Or Contact Graham/Jean Knowles 0161 439 2106

Cheques Should be Made Payable to

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Upcoming Events...

August 2023

Sat 12th & Sun 13th August – Astle Park Traction Engine Rally (includes classic car, motorcycle & commercials displays) – Nr Chelford, SK11 9AD.

Weds 16th August – Club Night – A presentation by Dr Peter Sykes, a retired doctor/surgeon, who spent 40yrs working in NHS hospitals.

Sat 19th & Sun 20th August – The Passion for Power Car Show – Tatton Park, Nr Knutsford, Cheshire. There will be a Club stand at this show. Please contact Mike Coffey for details.

Sun 20th August – Manor Park (Glossop) Car Show – Manor Park Rd, Glossop, SK13 7SH. (£5 entry fee per car – all to charity) There will be a Club stand at this show. Please contact Mike Coffey for details.

Weds 23rd August – Club Evening Run. This will be the last evening run of the year. Route to be set by Mike Coffey.

Sat 26th August – Poynton Show – Poynton Show Ground, SK12 1BS. There will be a Club stand at this show. Please contact Mike Coffey for registration details.

September 2023

Sun 3rd September – Annual Club Show – Brookside Garden Centre, London Rd, Poynton, SK12 1BY. Open to members & non-members.

Weds 20th September – Club Night.

October 2023

Weds 18th October – Club Night.

November 2023

Weds 15th November – Club Night.

December 2023

No planned activities.

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Keith Yates

Firstly and after last month's grumpiness about unruly foliage (aka trifids), I'd like to reassure readers that this month's editorial will be a grumpy free zone. That said, I'd like to start with what is basically a "green" issue and one that I feel will have an increasingly frustrating impact on our classic car hobby.

Recently, Graham Knowles sent me an email drawing my attention to a Yahoo News item about the London & Surrey Mini Owner's Club. It seems that this club has been organizing/running the London to Brighton Mini Car Run for nearly four decades since it started back in 1986. It was run again in May of this year but that will almost certainly be the last time – it has been cancelled for 2024 et seq. The organising committee consider that escalating costs, Ultra Low Emissions Zones, "red tape", reduced parking on Brighton's Madeira Drive seafront and numerous other restrictions make putting on this event challenging, bordering on impossible. Some Mini owners, when asked at the May event, said that they had been taking part for over 20 years. How utterly small minded of the relevant authorities this is but one can quite easily see the potential impact on future classic car/vehicle events. I'd better not take

this any further as Mr Grumpy may make a return.

The Club Night BBQ was well attended and the burgers weren't bad either. A good selection of cars could be found in the car park and this included some "new" ones and some old favourites. Due to limited space, a selection of photographs from the evening will appear in next month's magazine.

The penultimate Evening Run (26th July) was unfortunately hit with the extremely poor weather that this, so called, summer is throwing at us. It rained and rained and then it did a bit more with an added side order of wind and cold! Anyway, several hardy souls turned out to tweak the nose of the weather gods and were rewarded with a drive through some glorious Cheshire countryside and views of some very expensive properties – very much Premier League footballer territory. The route had been set by Dad and daughter team, Rob Salter and Jane Harrop, and a very good one it was too. Oh, by the way, the Deanwater Hotel's menu is well worth checking out; good food, good service and a cosy, welcoming atmosphere.

I read the other day that a woman who had entered a raffle, without realizing that she had done,

won a Jaguar that had previously been owned by Queen Elizabeth. It seems that a £20 donation to Comic Relief 2023 also included entry into a draw. The car in point is a 2009 Jaguar X-Type estate 3.0 litre with circa 80,000 miles on the clock. It had been donated by Chris Evans who had originally bought it for £43,000. It is now being sold again, at auction, with the auctioneer saying that "it's a car for a serious collector or royalist". I know that the Jaguar X-Type has always been known, by so called Jaguar enthusiasts, as a common Ford Mondeo with a sharp suit on but, to me at least, it's still a very good looking car and, when you look at its lines and styling, very much a true Jaguar.

Thomas Wardle has come up with a really good story again. This time it's about Ben; not the rat that Michael Jackson warbled about but a 1947 Morris van. I hope that you all thoroughly enjoy it and, if you have a vehicle with a similarly interesting story, perhaps it will inspire more of you to come forward and let us all know about it via these pages.

Time for me to say goodbye until next month. Let us hope that the horrible weather improves for the annual Club Show (Sunday 3rd September) and, as always, David and I hope that you all enjoy this August issue and that you also enjoy lots of trouble free 'classic' motoring.

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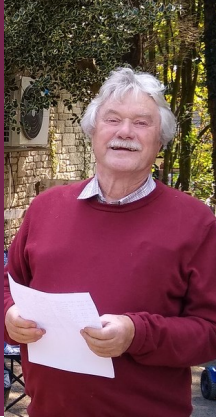
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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



HALL OF FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS

2012 - Chris Parr
2014 - Bob Plant
2015 - Ray Etchells
2016 - Fred Dean
2020 - David Bowden
2022 - Jane Harrop

And so, it's that time again when I write my monthly ramblings.

One thing I used to enjoy was driving my car, in the dark warm evenings and with the roof down. Not so this year! It has been very much "roof on", either because of the rain or the cold. I have recently been in contact with friends on the Greek island of Kefalonia. There have been outbreaks of fire in the area where we stay but all is OK, any fires have been put out and the island is still good for holiday-makers.

The front cover picture on this issue shows Neville and Pauline Oliver, in their MGA, at the start of the Peaks & Dales Run at Marple. They are being flagged off by Christine, with her dog Jessie, at the beginning of the event. Our charity for this year, in case you missed it, is Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Christine will be joining us for our annual show at Brookside Garden Centre and will collect the Club's donation on behalf of the charity. We had a good turnout for this year's run, this despite a num-

ber of subtle changes that included only one route for the participants to take.

At long last the manufacturers of electric powered cars are waking up to reality. I read that the storage capacity of the batteries is being increased so that one can travel over 150 miles or so, using wipers, heated seats, lights etc. As I have said recently, the emphasis seems to have been on top speed and acceleration and not on run capacity. A friend of mine, a British Airways Captain who lives in Marple but works from Gatwick Airport, has an electric powered car (a Mercedes) but it has such a small driving range that he uses his wife's diesel-powered car to make the journey. When he did use the electric car it didn't have the capacity to make the trip uncharged and there weren't enough charging points enroute. Again, I make the observation that my daughter, who lives in a terraced house, could not have an electric car due to the problems involved with having a charging cable across the footpath to the

vehicle. On that subject, on a recent trip to the Park and Ride bus stop in Hazel Grove, I noticed parking spaces for electric vehicles but no charging unit, it wasn't there, just a hole in the tarmac where it had once been. I've talked to several club members about electric vehicles and they all seem to be of the same opinion.

The July Club Night BBQ was well attended. Thanks to all of you that came but the car park could have seen more classics. You will be pleased to learn that we made a whole one pound profit so maybe, for 2024, the burger price will have to increase nominally. Liz, the Conservative Club Secretary, thought that the burgers were excellent! For the August Club Night we have a visit from the retired Doctor who gave us an excellent presentation last year with Jean

Knowles as his sidekick or should I say Dummy.

More than a few shows are in the pipeline, as I'm sure you're aware. Two just to mention. The first is the Poynton Show, on August Bank Holiday Saturday, where we will have a stand, a display in the parade ring and a presentation trophy to the best in show vehicle. No need to book, just turn up and go to the allocated area by 09:30. The second is our annual Club Show, at Brookside Garden Centre, on September 3rd from 09:30. Again, just turn up with your classic. Trophies, as always, will be given out for various vehicle groups, the Chairman's cup and the Club Shield. We will have a new award for 2023, the Dave Bowden award in his memory.

And so its goodnight from me.

Steve Diwall

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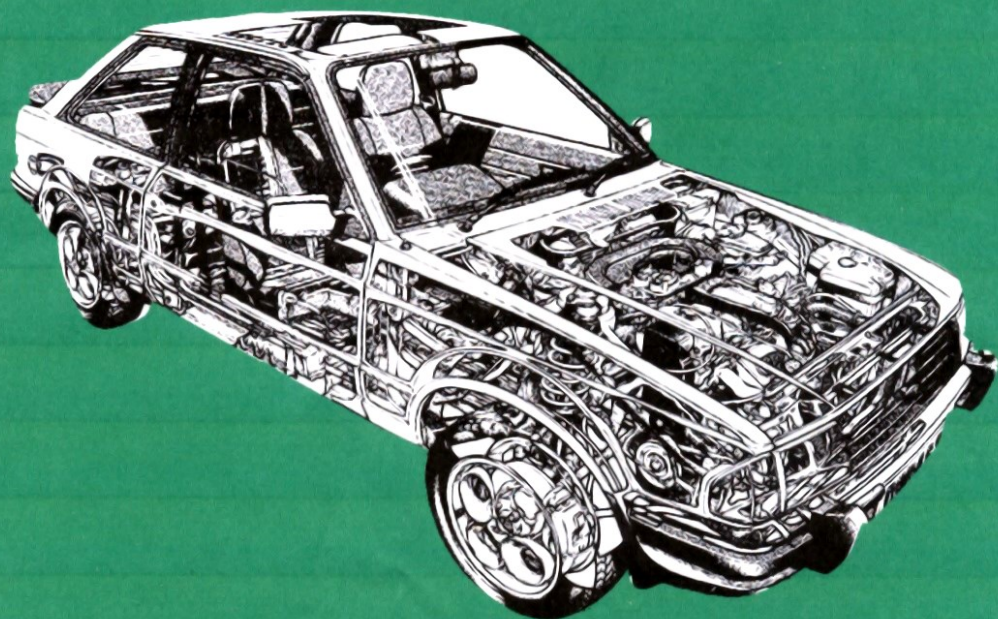
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MG CATCH UP

Graham Scattergood

Hi Gang.

Our annual BBQ night went well, apart from the bowling club being in attendance at the same time. However, our member attendees quite

through MG Motors UK, to be MGs in the true sense of the tradition of the mark, let me partly quote from an extensive interview with Carl Gotham, Advanced Design Director of MG Motors UK, in London, at the launch of the Cyberster sports car at Auto Shanghai 2023 – “our intention was to create a completely new roadster, ready for a new generation of drivers, with the focus being a design that was respectful of the brand’s illustrious past and to bring



enjoyed watching the bowling whilst also enjoying some good quality burgers, served up with the usual flair and efficiency by Steve and Mike whilst our Chairman took care of the money! The turn out was good, some interesting vehicles on display and a number of friendly faces we haven't seen a lot of since Covid.

Although, as I have mentioned previously, some members do not consider SAIC products, sold

back that sporting bloodline, whilst also being absolutely clear that it should be modern and forward thinking, like the MG of today, completely in tune with the rapid transition to electric vehicles”.

The Cyberster’s evocative styling harks back to the past, with its long bonnet, low nose and curvaceous surfaces whilst incorporating new features like scissor doors and kammback rear design. MG Motors UK considers it the perfect time to

introduce an MG that reconnects with the past's performance DNA and a design to enthral the driver on every level. A perfect way to celebrate the MG 100th anniversary.

The MG Cyberster is now expected to arrive for sale in the UK during 2024 and I am looking forward to being able to secure a visit, for those interested, to MG in Stockport for the dealership unveiling. In the meantime, I also read elsewhere in the press that MG had achieved record sales in the first quarter of 2023. New SMMT data established the company as the second best selling manufacturer of electric cars in the UK with 20,679 new cars sold in the first quarter of 2023. This marked a 49.4% increase over the same period in 2022. Crucially, its market share of the electric car market is now 9.4%. The MG4 EV is the second highest seller of electrics, so far this year, behind Tesla. LONG LIVE MG!!

So, whilst us classic car nuts



love our petrol babies, we cannot stop the future. Maybe we should embrace the fact that it looks like MG is here to stay and that can only be good for the marque for the next 100 years.

Let me know what you think.

Toodle Pip for now ...





The World's First Truly 'World Car' (?)

Keith Yates

The 1968 French Motor Show (the Paris Salon) saw the introduction of Peugeot's latest mid-sized 'family' car, the Peugeot 504. Unfortunately, this couldn't really have been a worse time for a French car to be launched as the summer of 1968 saw industrial disputes and political dissatisfaction throughout France and riots on the streets of Paris. By the following year however, the 504 had started to win over buyers and it was also voted European Car of the Year for 1969. It was praised for its front engine/rear wheel drive configuration, (what eventually turned out to be 'timeless') Pininfarina styling, good visibility, strong chassis, robust and refined engines, comfort (including ride and handling) and generally, its overall build quality. Standard equipment included a manual, steering column mounted, four-speed transmission (with similarly mounted three-speed ZF automatic options arriving later) and, surprisingly perhaps, a metal sunroof. By the European automotive standards of the late 1960s, this car and the package that it brought to the market, was seen as quite sophisticated.

Using what was basically the same platform, the 504 was made available as a saloon, a capacious

estate car, a pickup truck (including a 'crew-cab' variant) and (introduced during early 1969) very stylish and pretty, fuel injected, two-door coupe and cabriolet models.

Peugeot marketed the 504 from 1968 to 1983 when it ceased to produce it. By that time, the car had seen many subtle changes and improvements over the years and these included floor-mounted gear shifters, various 'bulletproof' four cylinder petrol and diesel engines and a rather good 2664cc V6. This latter motor was planted into the coupe and cabriolet models in 1974 and it turned them into, not really road-burners but very cool boulevard cruisers and cars to be seen in whilst driving about the French Riviera.

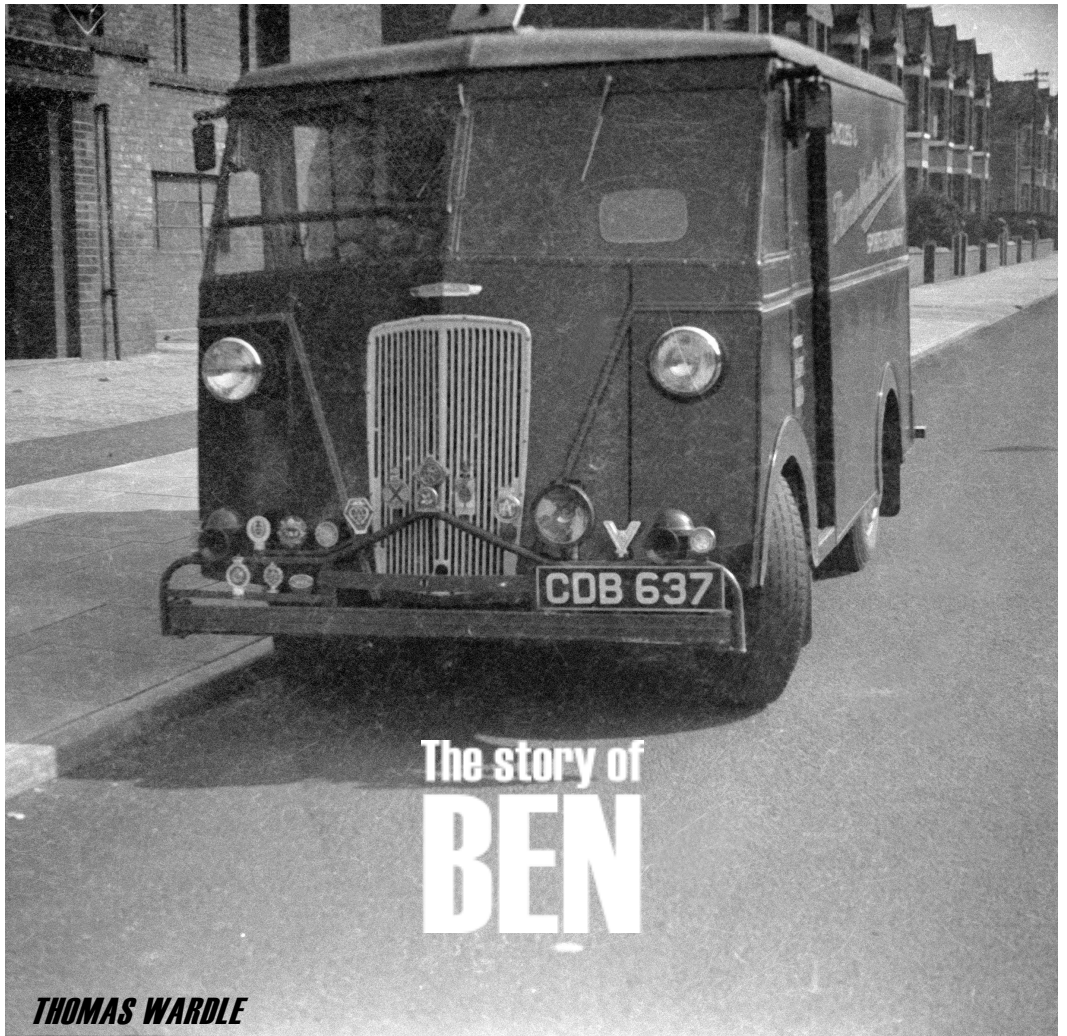
European production of the 504 easily exceeded three million vehicles but global production continued, following numerous licensing agreements, until 2006 when Nigerian production finally ceased. During its long lifetime, the Peugeot 504 variants had been produced in such far-flung places as France, Spain, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, China, Argentina and Taiwan but assembly, from kits, had also been carried out

in such places as Australia (by Renault?!!), New Zealand, Tunisia, Egypt and Chile. Its many worldwide fans/buyers liked the 504's rugged construction, good ground clearance, long suspension travel that could take big undulations in its stride and rigid torque tube drive shaft. This all made it very suitable for tough driving conditions over very rough 'roads' and terrain. In Africa these vehicles were known as 'Africa's workhorse' and were used extensively as bush taxis (a goodly number probably still are) and as pickup trucks in the Far East.

So, the Peugeot 504's 'timeless' styling, simplistic design, rugged/tough construction and its ability to be repaired by people, with limited resources, in the 'field' made it a car that was eminently suitable for all sorts of conditions and in all sorts of places across the world. With very few exceptions, the 504 was produced, assembled, marketed or sold on every inhabited continent and must therefore be the first and arguably only, 'World Car'. Does anybody have thoughts on what might be another?







The story of **BEN**

THOMAS WARDLE

Seeing the picture of a commercial PVs being thrashed up the A34, on vehicle in the magazine prompted me to tell this story.

In 1946 my dad ordered a new Morris PV van from the dealer closest to the factory, in Birmingham, that he could find. The reason for this was because, on his weekly visits to that city, he saw brand new

trade plates, and he didn't want that to happen to his van. It was in the middle of February 1947 that he received the phone call telling him that his van had arrived. Borrowing a set of trade plates, his brother drove him to the dealership where Ben, as he was called, was waiting for collec-

Seeing the picture of a commercial vehicle in the magazine prompted me to tell this story.

In 1946 my dad ordered a new Morris PV van from the dealer closest to the factory, in Birmingham, that he could find. The reason for this was because, on his weekly visits to that city, he saw brand new PVs being thrashed up the A34, on trade plates, and he didn't want that to happen to his van. It was in the middle of February 1947 that he received the phone call telling him that his van had arrived. Borrowing a set of trade plates, his brother drove him to the dealership where Ben, as he was called, was waiting for collection. He had two miles on the clock. Dad spent the next month painting him two shades of green with a light orange stripe down the middle of both sides. He was first taxed on the 25th of March and was soon pressed into service.

Ben went to Birmingham every Wednesday where my dad bought anything he could get hold of for a cycle, camping, toys and sporting goods shop in Reddish. He would make 30-35 calls during the day. Dad knew which wholesalers opened at eight o'clock and which didn't close until six o'clock. On one occasion he bought 45 children's tricycles on the Wednesday and had to return on the Saturday for another van load. Such was the demand for goods which were very difficult to get

hold of shortly after the war.

In the mid fifties my mother's father died and we inherited a touring caravan. Two weeks in every summer Ben was pressed into service touring Scotland, towing the caravan (that we called Bill) and carrying three kids with associated cycles and everything else you could think of. One thing that I do remember seeing was the large clock, on the right hand side of the road, when heading north and just before the long steep climb to Shap summit. The inscription read "Leyland For All Time". When you saw this, particularly in thick fog, you knew where you were.

In the early sixties my dad branched out on his own and bought a shop in Bredbury selling cycles, tools and DIY. Everything that was sold in the shop was collected by Ben. By the late sixties however, engine gaskets were getting difficult to source so my dad decided to convert Ben to diesel. He fitted an engine from a Morris LD, the successor to the PV, as the chassis dimensions were very similar.

In the late seventies my mam and dad semi retired to a small village in Cumbria. It didn't take the locals too long to realise that my dad had a welding machine and soon farming implements of every shape and size you can imagine were left outside the old village garage, which they'd bought with the cottage, for

him to repair. He was never paid for this service but sacks of potatoes and WHY were quite frequently found leaning against the front door. Ben was now semi retired himself. His work consisted of the weekly shop, collecting a ton of coal, from a private mine fifteen miles away, for the Rayburn and trips with the caravan.

In 1990 dad died and as my brother Philip, who lived in the same village, was not in a position to look after Ben he was sold to a man in Scotland. He did very little with him and, four years later, Philip bought him back, minus his original number

plate. With the garage roof raised, Ben was now back in a garage instead of a lean-to. His life now consists of going to various classic shows and winning numerous trophies, including best in show at Grasmere three years running and voted for by the public. He has never been restored as my dad kept him in good condition all his life. He has

also had a three page feature in Classic Van & Pick-up magazine all to himself. Even at seventy six years old Ben, when required, still does the odd job so he isn't completely re-tired.

C L A S S I F I E D S

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H A R L E Q U I N

FORD MUSTANG

Keith Yates



Avid readers of this magazine may well recall a short piece that I put into the May (376) issue about a multicoloured, early 1970s, Ford Mustang. I didn't, at the time, have any real facts about the car so I'd indulged in some speculation and "educated" guesswork. Well, that old saying that "a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing" sort of rings true here as a fair few bits of my guesswork have turned out to be incorrect

Saturday the 1st July saw me at the Tatton Park "Stars & Stripes" American Car Show. For some reason or other, for all the years that this show has been on, I've never managed to attend; until this year. I'd be the first to admit that my American car knowledge isn't that great but I do love the "classic" styling of

the 1950s and early 60s; those massive cars with their mega amounts of chrome, huge front grilles and fins inspired by aerospace thinking really grab my enthusiasm. I'm also very partial to a 1960s or early 1970s "muscle"/"pony" car and that is what brings me back to the afore said Ford Mustang.

The weather on the Saturday wasn't, like much of this dreadful summer we're having, very good but there were still more cars than you could wag a stick at. Despite the rain and drizzle, paintwork had been polished and the acres of chrome gleamed and glittered in the sparse sun shine. If you were into your American cars then this was the place to be. All of the great makes

and marques were represented and there was ample opportunities to chat with owners and take lots (and lots!) of photographs. Anyway and whilst taking a trip around the auto-jumble looking for more American license plates, I came across the same Ford Mustang that I'd previously seen in Stockport. This time, the owner, a really nice "car guy" named Phil, was standing with his car so I could ask him all about it and take some more photos (accompanying this piece) of the work-in-progress.

As part of his archive of photographs, Phil showed me several of his Mustang as it had been found and as he had acquired it. The car had been languishing in a Californian scrapyards for several years and had also been in a very sorry state. A lot of the front end, forward of the firewall, was either missing or in very poor condition. The interior was awful, missing or eaten by rodents! Not being a man to shirk a challenge

however, Phil had taken the Mustang on as a long term project and seeing what he's managed to achieve to date, he's getting on fine with it. Talking with him, it turns out that the car is actually a true Ford Mustang Mach1 – the bonnet/hood is incorrect as it doesn't have the "Ram-Air" scoops but it'll do for now. Also, the original colour was not yellow (as I had speculated) but a metallic shade of bronze. Phil is thinking of changing the colour to red and will be testing the shade that he has in mind when he fits a new rear valance. Most recent progress has been the fitting of a period correct set of wheels and, I have to say, this has transformed the car.

I'm going to try and keep in touch with Phil and follow future progress towards the completion of what I'm sure will be a fabulous Mustang Mach 1 running project. As I stated last time, one to keep an eye out for as it'd be great to see it finished.



PEAKS & DALES CHARITY RUN

Conclusion

Keith Yates

As reported in last month's issue, due to timing and schedules a more detailed and finalized report on the Club's annual Peaks & Dales Charity Run (Sunday 25th June) couldn't be accommodated at that time. The good news is that we can now bring you the headline facts and figures and a good selection of photographs from the event (including this month's front cover).

First off, a small puzzle. Graham and Jean Knowles received 50 official entries for the actual run but Dave Rawson, as marshal-in-chief on the day, reckoned that there was 70 cars at the finishing point. Perhaps this will just have to remain one of life's mysteries. Anyway and one way or another, Christine and her dog Jessie were kept very busy flagging cars and crews away from the Marple Memorial Park starting point. Jessie was very tolerant and particularly so being as it was such a hot day – like most well trained dogs, Jessie has learnt to take the woof

with the smooth that's thrown at her

Helen and Jane, car/crew registration and route handler outer team, recorded where crews had travelled from and, yet again, it's a wonder just how news of the Peaks & Dales Run gets around and just how far people are prepared to travel to take part in it. We had cars/crews from Leicester, Walton-on-the-Wold, Stoke-on-Trent, Liverpool, Bury St. Edmonds, Wigan, Newark, St. Helens and, perhaps the furthest travelled, St. Albans. Thanks to everybody for your support and participation and we hope to see you all back again next year.

Now, here's a question for you. It's one that's unlikely to register with people that don't eat meat but, why is the smell of frying bacon so irresistible? Perhaps it's just me but I also find the smell of frying onions rather irresistible too. So, how about fried bacon and fried onions on a lightly toasted barmcake (bread roll if you're not a Mancunian)? I'm not sure if the combination could be considered as slightly weird (I've never seen it on offer anywhere) but I may have to try it sometime just to satisfy my culinary curiosity. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, I can resist anything but frying bacon/onions and temptation. Is this prattle leading anywhere I hear you muttering? Well, pre the Run, the bacon barms that were on sale in the Scout Hut must have been tempting to a fair few other folk

too; we managed to sell £170 worth of them which, at £2 per barm, amounts to 85 bacon barmcakes. They were pretty good though!

The annual prize winner was this year chosen by the Rt Hon' Robert Largan MP. As in previous years, our 'celebrity' guest has to choose, from the cars marshalled at the finish point, the car that, given the opportunity, they would most like to drive home in. A difficult choice to make I'm sure but Robert Largan picked out the green, 2009 Morgan Roadster R100 of Darren McKain and Louise Tonge. Well done to them and thanks to Mr Largan for attending and giving us his time.

And so to the biggest and most important question, how much money did we manage to make for our charity – Hearing Dogs for Deaf People? Well, barring any late/unexpected donations or expenses, Graham and Jean have now accounted for all of the monies taken in and, after paying out on all known expense, the net result is going to be circa £1220 for our charity. Well done and many thanks to everybody that contributed.

Finally, David has put together a selection of photos that show some of the fabulous cars that took part in this year's run. You can choose your own favourite that you would have most liked to drive home in.









LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

It was with a great deal of interest that I read Mr T Wardle's article(s) - Motorway Driving Standards & Smart Motorways - in your February (373) issue magazine. It has also been very interesting to read subsequent articles, by Messrs Coxey & Burke, in response to this. All of your correspondent's, including points and comments made in your own editorials, have, I feel, made some valid points and contributions to the debate about Smart Motorways and perceptions about safety issues that seem to continually

plague these roads. Unfortunately, I'm compelled to say, I have been most disappointed by the lack of any response(s) to the excellent points raised in Mr Wardle's piece about the standard of driving (or the great lack of) on our motorways, be they Smart or otherwise. I would like to correct this if I may.

Firstly, I should like to concur with Mr Wardle's observations about, what he calls, "middle lane hogs" and the nuisance that they cause to other motorway users. Not only are these people seemingly ignorant of the very basic, 'drive on the left', rule of

the road, they also seem incapable of driving their vehicles, on a motorway, with any concentration, competency, consideration or courtesy to others. It appears to me that these "middle lane hogs" drive in a state of semi-stupor, lost in their own in-car worlds of music, mobile phones, passengers, eating and drinking etc. Sadly, it is pretty obvious that they are also totally ignorant of their ignorance and that this state of affairs will continue, unchecked, unless the police decide to do something about it. This, it must be said, doesn't have to be done by the "iron fist" method of simply fining people but, like many speeding offences these days, it could be dealt with and improved with the more educational "velvet glove" approach of "awareness" type courses. In the meantime, you and your readers may be interested to hear of my intention to call upon the Police Authorities to adopt a new campaign. Rather than continually and (seemingly) single-mindedly hunting down speeding motorists (perhaps in the hope of getting a starring role in yet another "sexy" speed hunting TV cop show), is it not time that the police took a more active role in correcting the numerous other motorway driving "misdemeanours" that, collectively, make any motorway journey unpleasant, irritating and dangerous? My campaign plea of "Muller the Middle Lane Muddle-Heads" will be front and foremost and I will let you know if this is taken up.

Another motorway irritant is, I'm afraid to say, lorry drivers. I would just like to say that I have a great deal of respect for these "knights of the road" and, generally speaking, their professionalism. That said however, I find that I am continually being baulked by lorries in lane two that are overtaking other lorries in lane one. They, of course, have every right to do this but, given that they are all mostly travelling at the same speed, it takes so long (in both time and mileage) for an overtaking manoeuvre to be completed that both lanes one and two are blocked and resemble a mobile chicane. Even worse is the fact that lorries are now allowed in lanes one to three of Smart motorways. What total lamebrain thought that this would be a good idea and then allowed it happen? The nations' taxpayers have contributed a small fortune towards the construction of these Smart motorways. We were all told, by some now long gone politician with yet another cunning plan, that these were the answer to our congestion problems. Well, I am here to tell you that they are not because lanes one, two and three are now continually being blocked by the mobile chicane that is overtaking lorries (all seemingly travelling at a governed speed of about 60mph) and the "middle lane hogs" (aka "muddle-heads") who can not make their minds up about hogging lane two or lane three. So and thanks to this unfathomable thinking, we now

have four lane motorways that are just as congested as three lane motorways ever were. Restrict the lorries to lanes one and two only, that is what I say.

And another thing, have you and your readers noticed the proliferation of the "magic indicator" that is alive and in full vigour across our motorway system? What do I mean by this? Well, ask yourself how many times have you been minding your own business, whilst driving down one of our motorways, when suddenly, a vehicle on the inside lane to you pops on a right indicator signal and starts to drift into your lane. Seemingly, the old adage of "mirror, signal and manoeuvre" (when safe to do so) no longer applies to the "muddle-heads" (the chief culprits I believe). It would seem that these people are incapable of a proper mirror(s) check and that their "magic indicator" simply means 'I'm coming out into your lane so you have to do something about it! It doesn't seem to matter what speed you are approaching the "muddle head", could they perhaps adjust their own speed or, perish the thought, could they perhaps let you pass them before they commit to their manoeuvre? Oh no, I have my "magic indicator" so that allows a change of lane, regardless of any other road user or immediate and ongoing traffic conditions. You may very well find that the "magic indicator" is also used extensively when entering a motorway from the left-hand slip-road.

Again, it doesn't seem to matter what is actually happening with or the position of the existing motorway traffic, I have my "magic indicator" flashing and I'm coming on to the motorway regardless - deal with it!

I do wonder if a lot of the problems and negative issues that we all regularly encounter on our motorway system are down to a lack of knowledge and education about motorway driving. Is the British Driving Test really good enough in this respect? I appreciate that learner drivers have been allowed to drive on motorways, accompanied by an approved instructor and in a dual control car, since June 2018. However, any such motorway driving lessons are entirely voluntary, at the expense of the learner driver and do not form a part of the actual driving test. That being the case, I can not imagine that this is an option that is taken up by many learner drivers. So, the question that all of this highlights is, have we surely not reached a point where newly "passed" drivers should have to take a compulsory and specific motorway driving course prior to being allowed a full driving license?

I remain etc, etc

Bernard Rassbottom Esq (address supplied)

The views and thoughts expressed in this letter are solely those of the correspondent - Ed

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