



Colne Valley Classic and Vintage Club Newsletter

The CVCVC was formed in 1989 to encourage interest in Historic, Vintage, Classic Cars and Motorcycles



February 2023.



CVCVC Car Show 22nd June at The Thatcher's Arms

In This Month's Newsletter

- Christmas Lunch
- More Jackie Stewart
- How not to drive a Motorhome
- That new car smell
- Nostalgia
- Newark Bike Show
- Guess the car
- Gordon's Going On

Editor's Intro

Firstly, a huge thank you to Chris Sharman for producing the CVCVC Newsletter to such a very high standard, he will be a hard act to follow. As nobody has so far stepped forward to take over the role of editor I will act as the editor in the interim. The editorship role is still available! Bob Chaplin

Well the weather has been awful, what with the 'Cold Snap' before Christmas and since then continuous rain, definitely not the weather for the Classic's or even setting foot out into the garage.

No Club night in December so we have a brief review of the Christmas lunch.

Articles this month on more Jackie Stewart encounters, a humorous guide to Motorhome driving, 'That new car smell', Nostalgia, a review of the Classic Bike January show, Meet the Committee pt1, DVLA and Gordons Going on.

Stay Safe (Editor) name.....

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Coronavirus

In line with the Government's requirements, the CVCVC has commenced monthly Midweek Lunchtime meetings and Evening events. Members will be informed through the CVCVC Newsletters and Parish Notices if there are changes to the Government regulations.

Jan 19 Club Evening – Thursday 8pm, Andy White - Life as an RAF Armourer. Gt Maplestead Village Hall C09 2FJ.

Jan 25 Committee Meeting - 7.30pm The Bell Castle Hedingham CO9 3EJ.

Jan 26 Midweek Midday Meet Up - Horseshoes Inn Cockfield IP30 0JB.

Feb 16 Club Evening - Thursday 8pm, David Caulfield - The Semi-Pro Sixties. Gt Maplestead Village Hall C09 2FJ.

Feb 23 Midweek Midday Meet Up – Green Dragon Youngs End CM77 8QN.

Mar 16 Club Evening – Thursday 8pm, Speaker TBA Great Maplestead Village Hall C09 2FJ.

Mar 30 Midweek Midday Meet Up – Horse & Groom Cornish Hall End CM7 4HF.

Apr 20 Club Evening – Thursday 8pm, Speaker Peter Tatum – Thomas Telford. Great Maplestead Village Hall C09 2FJ.

Apr 26 Committee Meeting – 7.30pm The Bell Castle Hedingham CO9 3EJ.

Club Information

The CVCVC is open to all enthusiasts with an interest in vintage and classic cars and motorcycles

The CVCVC Committee

Chairman	John Goodman
Deputy Chairman & Events Co-ordinator	Stuart Black
Treasurer	Chris Harman
Secretary	Geoff Broad
Membership Sec.	Roger Martin
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	Bob Chaplin
Committee Member	Chris Sharman
Club Safeguarding Officer	Julie Ingram

CVCVC Membership

Club Membership is open to enthusiasts with an interest in vintage and classic cars and motorbikes. Membership details can be obtained from Roger Martin.

Website

The Club's website can be found here:

www.colnevalleycarclub.org.uk on it are pages of club and local classic car related events. There are links to other relevant sites and further information. Past copies of the Newsletter can also be found here.

The CVCVC and Electronic Media

eNewsletters

The majority of members now receive this newsletter, on a monthly basis, by email. If you receive the black and white copy by post and would like to receive the full colour edition by email, for home printing, then please contact Roger Martin.

Electronic mailings

Regular updates are sent out with reminders of lunch meetings and information on our evening speakers. Additionally, these include more details of forthcoming club events and activities. To receive these, please make sure Roger Martin has an up-to-date email address for you. Finally, please make sure that any spam filter is set to allow the email address.

Club Articles

The Newsletter always requires articles, so please forward details to the editor on your vehicle's motoring experiences, event reviews, or restoration and technical stories. New feature ideas are always welcomed.

March Newsletter

Would you please forward articles by email or post before Monday 13th February.
Bob Chaplin.

DISCLAIMER

The views, opinions and any technical advice printed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Committee or Editor and should not be taken as such. The CVCVC accepts no responsibility for the results of following contributor's advice.

Club Notices

Evening Speakers

For 2023, the CVCVC is looking for Club Evening Speakers and recommended pubs for the Midweek Lunchtime Meetings. If you can help, kindly contact Stuart Black

CVCVC Subscriptions - Time to Renew

Outstanding CVCVC Subscriptions

A remainder to non-paying members, that the 2022 annual CVCVC renewal subscriptions were due by January 1st. Would you please forward your outstanding cheques/payments at the earliest opportunity, as regrettably no further Newsletters will be sent to non-subscribers.



The Newsletter Editor position is still available, please do not hesitate to contact me if you are interested. The Editor's role involves producing the monthly Club Newsletter, the main process is liaising with members and

collating event information and members articles into the six/eight-page Newsletter. There are occasionally flyers to include with the publications. For further details, contact the Editor.

Future CVCVC Events

19th January Club Evening Gt Maplestead Village Hall.

Life as an RAF Armourer

Andy will talk about his experiences working as an armourer on various RAF aircraft including the F-4 Phantom.

He served with 4 different squadrons including four months in The Falklands.



16th February Club Evening Gt Maplestead Village Hall

The Semi-Pro Sixties A Talk by David Caulfield



The Semi-Pro Sixties is a talk by David Caulfield based on his book of the same name. Covering a period from 1961 to 1976 he takes his audience back to the time when budding musicians were forming groups and starting to play gigs in Youth Clubs, Pubs and Clubs. He raises plenty of laughs as he tells stories of

the life and times of a semi-professional musician setting out on the road for the first time.

Drawing on interviews with over fifty different musicians David details experiences from the outright funny to the downright dangerous!



These are real life experiences and illustrated with plenty of slides and pictures. Here's what some of the audience thought - Margaret D - "A wonderful talk and really funny" Linda S - "Very enjoyable talk, funny & informative" Angela B - "Very amusing and enjoyable trip down memory lane" Barbara L - "A really interesting insight into the music world of the

60s" Ken H - "A talk that invokes musical memories galore"

Monthly Midweek Lunchtime Meeting Review



The annual CVCVC Christmas midweek lunch took place on the 15th December at the Cricketers Fordham Heath. We had 41 guests; Chat was flowing around many subjects including the odd mention of a car or two.



Chris Watson being told off by

Gaynor for talking about cars!

Feedback was very positive on the food and service on the day and looks like they could be our venue of choice again in 2023.

Stuart Black

CVCVC Articles..... *Jackie Stewart Memoirs cont.*

Following Stuart Black's encounter with Jackie Stewart, I too had a memorable ride with the great man.



I had started Marshalling with TEAC back in the late 60's. I had become a member of the BMRMC and marshalled at Le-Mans and some continental GP's as well as the usual Brands Hatch, Silverstone, always cold Snetterton and up to ankles in mud Lydden Hill for Rallycross.

One day a year in the spring we had a training day for all us marshals and this one was at Silverstone on the original circuit, we had demonstrations

on how to do emergency first aid until the doctor arrived, how to fight fires, how to use flags etc. and it was all paid for by Ford, (wonderful bit of PR). Ford also provided a grid of MK2 Cortina Lotus's and us marshals drove them with varying degrees of competence as part of the training.

The three fastest marshals of the day were invited to race control, myself included as I was second fastest. We were then invited to join Jackie Stewart for a lap of Silverstone, he had selected the best of the Cortina's and did his 'party piece' of taping a champagne glass to the centre of the bonnet, half filling it with water and we all set off for a lap. The fastest in the front seat, the other two of us squeezed in the back. He was amazing, we arrived back on the pit lane, his time easily faster than the fastest marshal and he hadn't spilt a drop of water.

He then took the glass off and we did another 2 laps each individually with Jackie explaining racing lines braking points etc., this was markedly quicker! The first lap to get up to speed then a flying lap, his control was simply on a different level, including tooting the horn and missing one of the Silverstone

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hares down the Hanger straight, power sliding the Cortina through Woodcote and Copse, totally flat through Maggots, he didn't even lift off! We were all like Stuart standing on an imaginary brake as he 'to us' was braking far too late but then he was a World Champion!

A great day and at every British Grand Prix for years, at the end of the day, Stewart would drive round to every marshals post and give out either a bottle of wine or beers to every marshal! Can't quite see Lewis Hamilton doing that.

Bob Chaplin

The Motorhome driving code

Motorhomes, not the classic VW Camper vans, the monster sized ones. Janice and I had a week's holiday in Scotland, we drove up along the A1, stayed overnight near Durham then a drive up the A68 past Hamsterly, Stanhope and Keilder forests where I used to marshal on the RAC rally. Over the Cheviots and into Scotland. By now the steady stream of Motorhomes had turned into an epidemic, they were everywhere! After a week of following them about and a cluster of them on the way home past Loch Lomond here is a list of how to drive them for the uninitiated!

Gaining a convoy and keeping it. A Motorhome requires at least a mile of convoy, once your convoy starts to form, the cars and vans who will 'go for it' will get past, however once



you have another Motorhome or a couple of cars behind who never overtake anything and at least a truck, your set, your convoy will now form, now you need to manage it.

Indicators. Never use indicators, keep your convoy on its toes, never give them a chance to realise where you're going, or one of them may manage to overtake you!

Parking. Never Park in those car park spaces reserved for Motorhomes, always park in the normal car park, this will take up at least 3 spaces especially once you have your awnings etc. set up.

Viewpoints. There are lots of lovely scenic viewpoints, these are especially good for collections of Motorhomes, the passing motorists don't want lovely views they just want to see a row of Motorhomes blocking their view.

Dual carriageways and overtaking lanes. These present a real problem, your carefully built-up convoy might actually manage to overtake, and this is definitely not on. On dual carriageways you need to match your speed to just below that of the HGV's so that when one tries to overtake you can manage your speed so either it takes the HGV at least 5 miles to get past, or the section of Dual carriageway finishes, this same technique applies to overtaking lanes, this is where having another Motorhome in your convoy helps as they can then perform the 'rolling road block' technique.

Signs, there are lots of signs asking HGV's and Motorhomes to use laybys to allow queues to pass as this can cause frustration and accidents. Ignore these.

Stopping, when arriving at a stopping place or place of interest, try and judge your arrival to when another Motorhome is leaving, you can then 'hand over' your convoy to that Motorhome.

Speed. 35mph on the open road is just fine, otherwise 25 - 30mph, In Wales and Scotland lots of towns are now 20mph areas, in these, drop to walking pace.

Petrol Stations. These are great places to meet up with other Motorhomes, you can then have a good old chat and totally

block up the whole place for ages and prevent motorists getting any fuel.

Make sure your doors are securely locked when driving as some motorists will not appreciate how much effort you have put into creating the convoy they have been stuck in for mile after mile at 35 mph and might be slightly annoyed! You will also learn some new words and have lots of people wave at you with that sign Mr. Churchill used.

That New Car Smell

An abridged version of a CVCVC article first published ten years ago in January 2013



What's this? The tenor section of the Swedish Bottle Orchestra perhaps?

As we enjoy classic motoring, one of the key pleasurable ingredients can be the familiar smells of our cars that are a cocktail of many things - leather, wood and woollen carpet mixed with a whiff of hot engine oil. This gentle odour is very different from when cars were new, especially back in the sixties when plastic materials started to take over as the staple of automotive trim. I remember my Dad bringing home the family's first new car, a Hillman Hunter with an interior that looked like an explosion in a Caramac factory, covered in swathes of a brown vinyl material called Ambla.



It was clear that no trees or animals were involved in furnishing this particular version of the Rootes Group's Cortina basher. On opening the door, you were hit by the intoxicating wave of that new car smell that made you want to take a long, slow inhale...

So, what gave us this feel-good factor that went with new car motoring in those days? The various plastics, adhesives and fabrics all do something called "off gassing" which is a vapour soup of chemicals used in their construction and manufacture. I'm sure you have often tried to remove that stubborn film on the inside of the windscreen which is the fog produced as your dashboard exhales quietly whilst relaxing in the sun. Basically, if your children ask you if you "did drugs" in the sixties, think about the highs of new car motoring back then and your

4 unknowing enjoyment of solvents before you answer too quickly!

All this had to stop of course as the effect of industrial compounds became better understood. At the start of the 80s, I was working in Vehicle Engineering at Ford and asked to head up a new team. We had just launched Sierra and it wasn't the unfamiliar jelly mould styling that was upsetting customers, it was that their new car's interior soon smelt like a chemical truck had crashed into Billingsgate fish market on a hot day! So, I found myself as Chairman of the Vehicle Interior Odours Committee, which has to be the strangest job I had in my career with the Blue Oval. A procedure was developed to test samples of all interior parts which were put in a Kilner jar with water, cooked for 16 hours at 40C and then passed under the finely calibrated noses of a six-person jury who rated them from 1 (no odour) to 4 (extremely disturbing) - notice there's no rating for high as a kite! We then worked to identify the root causes of the smells with our experts and changed processes and materials until everything reduced to rating 1 and 2.

By the 90s, all major car manufacturers used odour testing as a regular procedure but nothing has been found to replace the sensitivity of the human nose. The top photo under the title shows Volvo's finest connoisseurs inhaling the latest samples of freshly simmered plastic. In 1988, Ford introduced an electronic nose, a costly piece of machinery which proved unable to replicate the subtle detection capability of our noses and it was back to lab technicians sniffing jars again.



These days, modern cars smell a bit bland compared to the heady days of the sixties and most people's favourite aroma associated with "newness" is leather on high end models. Even here though, it's not the smell of hide that you enjoy, but the softening and shining materials used after tanning, including fish oil. It's ironic that the most popular 21st century "new car smell" is mostly associated by us as the "old car smell" of classic cars.

So, as you enjoy driving your classic this year, inhale deeply and recognise that it may not provide the same high as when it was factory fresh, but marvel that it's still off-gassing gently after half a century of continuous flatulence.

Stuart Black

Nostalgia is not what it used to be.

A recent article in the *Octane* magazine brought back memories of my fondest everyday transport of the 1960s. The article described a Singer Le Mans 2-seater original owned by a crew member from an Avro Lancaster.

My car was also a Singer Le Mans but the four-seat version. It was just as pretty as the two-seat version with the slab petrol tank and spare wheels bolted to the back. ALX 671 was red and grey and I paid £12-10-0 in 1964 for it. Classic cars were generally not classic cars in the 1960s but just old worn-out cars that no one else wanted and were cheap.

The Classic Bike Magazine

Winter Show

Newark Showground 7th January 2023

Stepson Jason has recently taken his Motorcycle test, purchased an Enfield Himalayan bike, and is getting more into bikes. My last copy of Classic Bike contained a flyer for their Winter Show, as he stayed with us for Christmas he saw the

flyer was interested, as was I and so we decided to go to the show. So, on a very wet Saturday morning we set off for Newark, yet more roadworks on the A1, this time 40mph for miles from the Peterborough services to RAF Wittering! We arrived at the Showground to meet a long queue waiting to get in, however the very wet marshals were very efficient and we soon were parked and into the show.



For anyone that hasn't been to the Newark showground it's an

old WW2 airbase that has been imaginatively 're-purposed' and has a large air museum attached that's well worth a visit (in better weather). The site has a number of large buildings along what was once the main runway. The first and largest building had a mix of trade shops and bike clubs, including 'The Old Codgers MC' what a great club name! A long gazebo like open building housed more trade stalls. The old airfield workshops have been turned into an auction area, these buildings housed more club stands and the 'scooter show' Lambrettas, & Vespas, plus some of the weird 60's alternatives by other manufacturers. A large selection of racing Lambrettas were on display, then the final building which housed a meet and greet area plus some dealer stands.



Outside were the auto-jumbler stands, anything you wanted for your re-build, hopefully. Some of the stalls had restoration projects for sale, one a very tempting 1949 Matchless but as we had gone in Jason's Audi and not the Kuga there was no way I could have got it home!

What was interesting were several large displays of 70's 250cc – 350cc Japanese bikes. These are really starting to climb in value these days as many former owners look back to their youth when it was just these same bikes that were in use. Back in the day it was 250cc bikes that you used to pass your test not the limited 125cc machines of today. Especially as most of today's 125cc 'learner bikes' are made mainly of plastic or so it seems. There were displays of some lovely Velocettes, Norton's, Triumphs, including the one-off Quadrant (the bike that could have saved the UK bike industry) and BSAs. A well-organized event despite the dreadful weather, some superb

In many ways of all my early cars this (the last one that might be classed as a classic) is the one that I have the fondest memories of. Perhaps this was because I worked on it more



than others, perhaps because it was so simple and accessible. Even when it let me down, I could usually fix it by the roadside. I loved the chronometric speedo and rev counter that resulted in

the needles indicating the speed and RPM of about 10 minutes before. The floor was half inch thick ply in four sections on which the seat cushions sat, your legs stuck straight out horizontally in front of you. The gear lever was a short stubby one with a black golf ball knob on the top that gently rattled at any speed in any gear. I got used to holding the gear lever to stop the rattle; a habit I have never lost even with my current Mercedes automatic! The hand brake was incredibly effective but it would not release without removing the rear wheels and physically prizing the drums and brake shoes off. I failed to



solve this fault so equipped myself with a brick to jam under a wheel if I parked on a hill and a stick so I could hold the Singer on the foot brake and juggle clutch and accelerator conveniently with my feet. I often had to ask passers-by

to hand me the brick as I got going.

This didn't work for two policemen who wanted to catch me out with an ineffective handbrake – no amount of their energetic pushing moved the car a fraction but of course after they left I had to spend an age jacking up, removing wheels etc. I replaced a big end bearing (white metal) by dropping the sump and extracting the con rod and piston from underneath. I measured the crankshaft diameter with a borrowed micrometer and guessed the clearance. I did all this in an unlit lock up lying underneath the Singer on a dirt floor. Ignorance was bliss!

A habit of Singer engines was that the bolts holding the flywheel to the crankshaft become loose and foul the clutch. This will leave you clutchless on the road at any, but usually at the most inconvenient time. With experience I could take out the ply floor, release the bell housing, tighten the flywheel bolts and be back on the road in about 45 minutes. Talking to the Singer Owners Club I understand this problem is still unresolved even with a dab of Loctite. Most of the servicing took place outside my parents' house next to a main road and pedestrian crossing. My small selection of tools I kept in an old apple box. My memory says that the Singer was, apart from the clutch issue, entirely reliable and took me to work, college and pleasure trips for many months.

Sadly, over time, and encouraged by girlfriends, I was seduced by the possibility of reliability, a heater and draught free motoring and bought a Hillman Imp (also a classic now!)

Geoff Broad



bikes, and absolutely rammed with people all keeping a good distance apart which was great.

BC

Jason Admiring a BSA

The Futures Electric or is it?

Electric Cars, The Betamax of Motoring?

The last few days have seen the problems of running EV's as they are called beginning to sink in. What us petrolheads have known all along, and ignored in the headlong rush up a blind alley by governments all over the world.



Firstly, just after Christmas large queues of Tesla's built up at motorway service areas across the country as they waited to get onto charging points, the South Mimms M25 area reporting waiting times of 3 hours, bet that

wiped the smug look off the owners faces!

Then the announcement that the Swiss Government has abandoned the policy of all electric as the electricity grid can't cope, plus in a mountainous country the EV range is useless.

The resale value of EVs, Tesla's resale values have plummeted so that over half the cost of the car is lost in the first year and with nobody wanting to buy a used one anyway, dealers are unwilling to take one in exchange., Tesla are offering discounts on new cars, as a result they are facing a barrage of legal action by owners who paid full price, Tesla shares have plummeted as well.

Now the cost of actually running one; these figures are taken from a number of articles off the web in the last few days. To have a charging point installed at home, average £1K. Fast charging at a typical service area, that is one capable of delivering 100Kw costs 74.79 per kilowatt hour, this is a 47% cost increase from 2022. So a 80% charge will cost £38.29 that's £20.42 more than a home charge. Therefore, actual running costs of a typical EV is 20 pence per mile, a petrol car running at 40mpg costs 17 pence and a diesel even with the rip off fuel cost of the present (gross profiteering by the fuel companies and the service stations) is exactly the same at 20 pence per mile, if the profiteering was to stop then diesel would also be cheaper. If you can only charge at home and not have to recharge away then at the present you may be slightly to the good, but with the changing tariffs of the electricity suppliers on the horizon, if you have a Smart Meter fitted then you will be paying the same rate as a service station.

If you are using an EV to run around town with home charging and solar panels fitted, then an EV makes sense, if however, you are using one for longer journeys then it appears to be a different matter altogether.

6 This is leaving alone the environmental impact of producing the batteries by extracting the precious metals, shipping the raw materials, how they are to be recycled (if possible), at the batteries end.

BC

Guess the Car Answer



Aston Martin Atom

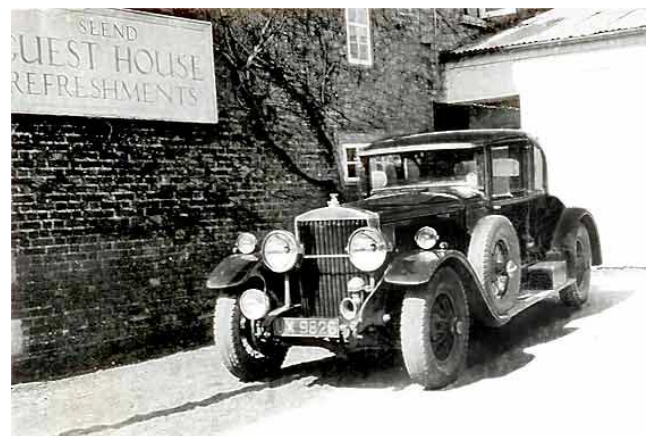
This car was really advanced for the period, unfortunately the Second World War intervened to prevent production for further models.

Correct answers from – Bob Chaplin, Philip Frogg, Keith Heywood, Richard Stanbridge & George Wilder.

The Aston Martin Atom was started in 1938, used Unitary construction instead of the traditional ladder chassis of the times. It had long travel independent suspension, with anti-roll bars, a limited slip differential and a Cotal pre-selector gearbox. It was simply years ahead of its time. It was used for essential war use during WW2 but after the war with Aston Martin in dire financial straits it was driven by one David Brown, he was amazed by its performance and the rest as they say is history. Although it didn't go into production it saved Aston Martin. BC

This month's Guess the Car.

Not all is as seemed!



Meet the Committee Part 1

At the AGM it was suggested that the committee members would provide a small profile of themselves, well here is the first instalment.

Meet the Committee - Stuart Black



I'm the club's Deputy Chair and Events Co-ordinator living in Coggeshall with my wife Mary-Ann and have been a CVCVC member since 2011.

Cars have always been a major part of my life. In fact the die must have been cast when "car" was the first word I uttered, much to my Mum's annoyance!

I started driving Land Rovers at thirteen and my own wheels were a priority as soon as I passed my test. I worked my way through Imp Sports, Escort Mexico's and an RS2000 which were driven in a variety of road rally events in South Wales and Hampshire. I swapped to the left-hand seat since my friend's Dad owned a BL garage and would spend the weekend juggling potty lamps, OS maps and a romer in a Mini 1275 (reliable, but outgunned by Escorts on the long straight sections) and then a Dolomite Sprint (kept up with the Fords.... but sometimes broke down and DNF!).



I joined Ford in 1980 after a spell with GKN and worked my way through different jobs over a 30-year career – Engine Testing, Vehicle Engineering, Product Planning, Engineering Program Management and Service Operations. This provided the opportunity to be involved in the creation of new cars and trucks from clean sheet to production, work abroad and drive many interesting cars. These were the programs I was most closely involved with:



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I retired from Ford in 2010 and have since worked for Azure Dynamics on the Electric Transit Connect van project, Magma Consultancy with Jaguar Land Rover and Centaur Robotics on an exciting new self-balancing electric wheelchair which will come to market later this year.

However, my involvement with the blue oval has continued for the last 12 years as a volunteer with Ford Heritage as you will know if you've seen some of my Newsletter articles.



This has been great fun, helping to maintain Ford's historic fleet of around 120 vehicles from 1910 Model T to a 2023 Electric Mustang MachE. Unfortunately, our working day has changed to Thursday which means I can rarely get to join you at our enjoyable monthly lunch meetings. I plan to be there this summer.

Classics in the garage? Well, you'd expect more Fords but I have enough of those to tinker with at Dagenham so my British brace are an Austin Healey 3000 MK111 which I've owned for 30 years and a Jaguar Mk2 3.4 for 7 years



Co-incidentally, both were built within a month of each other at the end of 1963 and give me very different driving experiences. The Healey is quite a heavy car to drive and its 50's origins are very obvious including a brutish charm. It's also very easy to work on, being simply engineered and constructed. By contrast, the Jaguar feels more modern (although it isn't by much) with its relatively sophisticated chassis, all round disc brakes and power steering. It's a densely engineered car and everything is packed in so tightly that it can be a skinned knuckle experience doing the simplest of tasks sometimes. To me, their styling represents the best of British sports convertible and saloon design.

Let's end back at the beginning.... I guess I must have known at an early age how things would turn out. Here I am in 1960 with my Uncle Craig pointing out the Ford 300E van's massive door panel gaps and vowing to work in Body Engineering at Ford to sort them out one day in the future!



Stuart Black

DVLA finally get something right!

DVLA are usually in the firing line for appalling service, losing documentation, terrible waiting times and to be fair, mostly the complaints are justified.

To backtrack slightly, last year I acquired a 1985 Honda motorbike, not a 'Barn find' but what you could call a 'Shed find'. It had been in the shed for at least 20 years, it had been acquired second-hand with a mystery fault, in order to learn to ride had never been used for that purpose and was now in the way, so it entered the Chaplin garage.

To backtrack even further, way back in 1968, November 14th 1968 to be precise, I had passed my bike test on a BSA 250cc and used the bike extensively until the usual acquiring a car.

Then during the late 1980's in a very difficult period of time, I had moved house a few times and DVLA had deleted my bike licence from my licence. I did visit the old DVLA centre in Chelmsford back in the early 1990's and the woman at DVLA accepted the documents I had then, but the bike never went back on my licence.

With now a bike it looked very likely in order to use it I would have to start again from scratch, a CBT, then an A1, then an A2 etc. In order to get a full bike licence these days it is a long-winded affair. Jason (stepson) did his using an extensive course but that cost him £750! I did speak to Dave at the Benson driving school who do CBT's and he said I wasn't alone in this, DVLA had done this to hundreds of people back in the late 80's, but try DVLA, after all you have nothing to lose.

With myself reaching that age when a licence has to be re-applied for, I decided to have a try, after all I did pass my test!. I phoned DVLA, I must admit I was starting with a low expectation, to my surprise the phone was answered in about six rings.

I explained about my old bike licence and was passed to a 'specialist'. He listened as I explained about taking my test, he asked where it was taken 'Crowstone Road Centre, Westcliff. He then said that centre was closed in 1985 and all the documentation was never transferred to digital and all paperwork destroyed, that was when DVLA deleted the licence. But he accepted what I had said, gave me a case number and told me to send in the licence renewal to DVLA, do not do it online, photocopy my license and that I was still legal to drive whilst the case was looked into. I did a covering letter giving all the addresses I had lived at and sent the whole lot off to DVLA, he said it would take at least two months.

A month later a questionnaire arrived, it asked for all the information I had already given in the letter, but I filled it in, then another wait. Then a letter saying no record could be found, I replied that the DVLA office in Chelmsford had that information in the 1990's after data was inputted.

Then exactly 2 months later just as I had found on an old PC a copy of my original licence, my licence dropped through the door with my bike licence back!

Result or what! So, with patience DVLA can actually get something right, so thanks Doug at DVLA.

As for the Honda, a new carburettor, new points, new coil pack, nipped low tension wire in the magneto housing re-insulated, new kick-start lever and it burst into life! Total cost £65.

Gordon's Goings On

Looks like 2023 is turning out to be "more of the same" for lots of us. The cold snap didn't cause too many problems, but the large fluctuations of temperature cause condensation which is not ideal for the wellbeing of our old vehicles. We manage to keep warm, but we should spare a thought for what's going on in Europe.

And the Chinese are yet again causing a threat to the world's health with covid, just as they did at the end of 2019. Let's hope our government have learned a few lessons, but don't rely on that! Interesting that new car sales in the UK are the lowest for the last 30 years. Yet, Tesla sold 1.3 million cars last year.

Must be the cheap coal fired electricity in other parts of the world! I have had the 911 out a couple of times having waited for the rain to carry the salt off the roads. I gave it a good wash underneath as usual afterwards, although driving through about a foot of water over a local road probably did that anyway! We spent a lovely Christmas with our daughter's family near Preston which involved a trip using the M6. Following advice from a CVCVC member, we have used the M1 and the A50 across to Stoke on Trent, before getting onto the M6 for several trips, and again it proved to be the best route. However, coming back on the Tuesday after Christmas it took us almost 7 hrs for a journey of about 280 miles. Queuing traffic everywhere. What a contrast to travelling in Europe. We could have been half way to Spain in that time! We are hoping to get down there again before too long.

Strangely enough I only spotted two Tesla cars in all that time, one of which was in a lay by in the middle of one of the queues. Can't imagine why! Despite the traffic, the old Passat managed 56mpg. The world of motorsport has been very quiet over the last couple of months. Let's hope the criticism of the football world cup will filter down and cause others to reconsider their venues. and of course, the TV over the festive season, was the usual disappointment. One of our bike clubs has followed your lead and moved to The Cricketeers for our club nights, and despite one or two exceptions, the move has been well received. We even had our first annual meal since 2019 and with an attendance of 53 proved to be the best attended ever, and was a great success. Rides for the year are being planned, and you are all welcome. The garden continues to keep us busy, and it's amazing the resilience of the plants and the grass, as well as the weeds. I must get digging!

Gordon Levett