

SCARCE NEWSLETTER.

Saddleworth Classic And Rare Cars Enthusiasts.
No 1. April 17, 2010.

**Alvis, Mercedes, Hillman or Rover,
Jaguar, Lotus, Daimler or Roller
Aston, Austin, Riley, Lagonda
Bentley, Ferrari, Alfa or Humber**

The idea of trying to start a Car Club for Saddleworth came to me whilst on holiday in Africa reading my usual assortment of Classic car magazines and contemplating another drive into deepest Cheshire to join fellow members of another car club upon my return home in November. Whilst the thought of an hour's drive in my classic is quite a pleasant idea in Summer it somehow loses it's appeal in mid-Winter and I wondered what interest might be engendered in starting another Car Club nearer home. Being of a somewhat literary bent, soon bored by lazing round a swimming pool and possibly assisted by my third pint of the local brew, I put pen to paper and came up with the above "ditty" which I hoped might catch the reader's eye.

Well, judging by the response it certainly had some success and I hope those of you who come along to our first "meet" at the Kingfisher will feel it is a worthwhile enterprise and will feel inclined to support it. After racking my brains for a suitable venue in Saddleworth I came up with the Kingfisher for a variety of reasons. One is that the excellent car-park is large and accessible and free from mud and ruts and whilst exhibiting our "pride and joy" to a lot of motorists and passers-by on their way to Dovestones (thereby possibly attracting new members) it also gives us an uninterrupted view of our cars whilst we enjoy some food or beverage, either indoors or outside in the beautiful setting alongside the canal or river-bank. Another is that the Manager - John, is prepared to support us so long as we avail ourselves of some of the refreshment on offer and whilst the food may not be "haute-cuisine" it is extremely affordable (2 for the price of 1 main courses) which can be all important for many members who with petrol at £1.20 per litre may struggle to keep their cars on the road. Sometimes we may just use it as a quick meeting place before setting off on our travels but there is no denying that for Saddleworth it is a great focal point. If our numbers swell to such a degree that we are seen to be

“hogging” the car-park we may have to vacate further down the road but I don’t think that should be a problem in the immediate future.

This brings me to another all important point of which I feel quite strongly. This is that our club should be all encompassing and that a member turning up in his Reliant Robin should be afforded as much courtesy as a member arriving in his new Jag, after all I am sure Dell Boy is just as interesting a person as John Prescott if not more so!

In dreaming up a name for the Club, apart from the reason that I thought the abbreviation of SCARCE was rather apt I also liked the idea that the name underlines the fact that in order to be a member you don’t even need a car, merely the enthusiasm that motor cars engender in both young and old, male or female. I am sure that nobody is going to be offended if you don’t even live in Saddleworth! Thus I am hoping we will have a Club that has an eclectic mix of members that will not alienate anyone who wants to join us and make for a variety of enjoyable meetings with or without motor-cars, cruising along a country lane in the heat of Summer or sitting round a blazing fire in some local hostelry discussing the pros and cons of S.U.’s and Webers in the depths of Winter.

I think the idea of a regular newsletter is quite important for a number of reasons. For one thing it is frequently the case that members can’t attend every meeting (indeed I have a number of holidays planned myself for this year) and it is good to know what is planned for the future as well as what we have missed. It would also be interesting to learn about one another’s motoring history and any amusing tales we might like to relate.

As such I have started the ball rolling and I hope that when they have an hour to spare other members may like to put pen to paper and we can publish their “motoring history” in future Newsletters.

MEMBER’S MEMOIRS – Tony Littlewood.

My first car was a Triumph Spitfire, bought for my 21st birthday by my parents whilst I was still at University (£230), and being about 5 years old it needed frequent attention and since I never had any money it was a good incentive to learn quickly how to do the jobs myself! This was eventually joined by a 1949 Daimler Consort DB18 which was purchased for an unusual reason. I was sat round the fire with my Dad one evening reading the Sunday paper and my eye fell upon an advert for a car number plate for sale (along with the car) for £100.

"What's your lucky number Dad?", I enquired. After Dad's typical answer of 13, I eventually gleaned the number 7. "Well there you are", I said. "GKL 7, you've got to have it". In those days the idea of cherished number plates was in its infancy but eventually we settled on fifty quid each; Dad got the number and I got the car.

Having said that, I was the one who had to go down to London to collect the car, and as a fairly young driver I was somewhat taken aback when the vendor mentioned that it had a preselect box and fluid flywheel transmission. A quick lesson in driving such an old system necessarily took place as I had to get the car back home that evening. Nevertheless for all its age the old girl flew up the MI and I think I only had to pause to keep topping up the oil which disappeared almost as fast as the fuel. Punctures were dealt with easily as each wheel had a permanent jack attached to the chassis above it which was easily lowered by selecting the hydraulics from inside the car. Not for owners of Daimlers to get a sweat on changing a tyre! I learned a lot of my motor mechanics on that well designed vehicle. I don't need to tell you who got the better buy and with no garage to house it in and after 3 more years of rotting outside I sold the car and got my fifty quid back. After my father's death the number plate GKL 7 brought a nice profit testifying to his business acumen and I noticed the other day it is now for sale on the internet at £4895. As a further twist to the tale, when my brother and I advertised the number plate for sale the newspaper misprinted the registration as, I think, GVL 7. When the one and only enquirer telephoned me I regrettably informed him that there had been a typographical error. He wasn't in the least bothered as he informed me he had a collection of Numbers all ending in 7! He must have been the only person in the world who didn't care about the initials! Thanks Dad!

If memory serves me right the chronological order of my automobiles then ran something like:

- MGB GT
- Ford Capri (x2)
- Fiat X1/9
- Triumph TR7 Convertible
- Rover SD1 2litre
- Rover VDP 2600cc
- Jensen Interceptor
- Volvo 480 Estate
- Land Rover Discovery
- 1963 Jaguar "S" Type

Triumph TR4A
Aston Martin Virage Volante
Jaguar XJ8
1952 4 ½ Litre "R" Type Bentley Special

You may notice the lack of German and Japanese cars on this list. This in no way deprecates the quality of these motors it is simply the fact that my father (in whose 420 Jag I learned to drive-and double-declutch!) was a Prisoner of War, and in deference to him I have done my best to stick to primarily British cars. Dad always reckoned that the lack of patriotism in purchasing British cars in the 60's, thus giving way to lack of funding of the one time greatest engineering Nation in the World, led to poorer and poorer build quality and eventually strangled by the union's grip on British Leyland, customers eventually turned their back on our once great marques. In order to continue to favour purchasing British engineering I now have to resort to buying older and older classics!

I would hope that as soon as possible our SCARCE members will decide what direction our Club should take and to that end whilst I am happy to preside over the day to day running of the Club I would hope that we may soon elect a Committee of members to have their say in what future events we decide to stage.

FUTURE EVENTS.

Whilst I envisage we may well decide on approximately monthly meetings, in the meantime I note that next Sunday 25th April is DID (Drive It Day) officially recognised as the closest Sunday to 23rd April which celebrates that date in 1900 when 64 vehicles set off from London to cover the Thousand Mile Trial. It would therefore seem rather fitting for us to meet at the Kingfisher again next week at the same time (though this time on Sunday) with a view to setting off for a drive around Saddleworth at noon. I am hoping we may be able to discuss what route we should follow at our inaugural meet. If time does not permit this I will print off a suggested route and give everyone a copy next Sunday in case our convoy should get split up en route.

Happy motoring and I hope it will not be long before we have a Committee who can invite Members views and suggestions on future events.
Best wishes to you all, and many thanks for supporting what I hope will prove to be a fine addition to the local attractions of living in our native Saddleworth.

Tony.

(tony@tonylittlewood.com 01457870066)