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(Affiliated to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs)

MoT SHOCK HORROR – GOVERNMENT TO ABANDON TEST

Please forgive the rabid tabloid headline, but this is the only likely opportunity for the GLOBE to run a major news story for many years. Big news doesn't often happen in the quiet and lovingly-polished world of classic cars, and certainly not at the family saloon end of the market. Bugattis and Bentleys sometimes achieve newsworthy events, but as a rule, our Razoredges, and all the Standards and Austins and Morris Minors we meet at rallies, lead a quiet and comfortable existence. We are never likely to be pursued by paparazzi or to need to appoint a spokesman to fend off the interviewers.

But here we are: Mike Penning, the Roads Minister, has announced that as from November 18th 2012, cars manufactured before 1960 will no longer need to be covered by an MoT certificate. We have a headline in the Telegraph to prove it. The reasons given were that the 162,000 classic cars on the road account for 0.6 of the total miles travelled, but only 0.03 of the crashes; and that "owners of classic cars and motorbikes tend to be enthusiasts who maintain their vehicles well," according to Mr Penning. "They don't need to be told to look after them, they're out there in all weathers checking the condition of the engine, tyres and bodywork." Leaving aside the point that we would most certainly NOT be out in all weathers checking the bodywork – we're not stupid, and besides, we wouldn't want to get the car wet if we can avoid it – this appears to be logical and pragmatic. However...



Not all pre-1960 classic vehicles would inspire automatic confidence in their roadworthiness. Might classic cars now become regarded by others as potential hazards on the road?

Will insurance companies find that roadworthiness becomes an issue, and that our vehicles will be grouped with others who treat the lack of MoT requirement as an opportunity to take out

unsafe cars? The government says the onus will still be on the owner to ensure the roadworthiness of the vehicle; but Nigel Case, owner of the Classic Car Club, commented that "Scrapping the MoT on any car is pretty daft."

Apparently owners of classic cars will still be allowed to present their cars for the test on a voluntary basis if they wish. Alternatively – since the modern MoT with its checks on seat belts, catalytic converters, particle emissions and so forth is increasingly irrelevant to older cars – owners may wish to ask their garage to carry out their own roadworthiness safety check, which would probably be a more accurate assessment of the things that really matter.

This would certainly save the battles some owners currently face with MoT centres which are not fully aware of the exemptions and conditions which apply to the testing of older vehicles.

Are the Government's motives as simple and car-owner-friendly as Mr Penning would have us believe? They have a history in this area.

The website *MOT Testing* reports on a previous initiative:

**“Limited report wrongly ‘talked up’ by Government
– to justify less frequent MOTs**

Last year, in a move to gain motorists' popularity, the Government planned a campaign to justify less frequent MOT Testing. As part of that they commissioned a very low budget piece of research from the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) to find the 'latest information' about the link between defective vehicles and road deaths and injuries. They then 'tagged on' a request to project death and injury estimates from reduced frequency MOT Testing. This was probably to find something, anything, to challenge the Department for Transport's own projections in 2008 which suggested that over 400 more people would die annually should MOT Testing become two yearly instead of annually as it is now.”

It seems clear that the MoT Testing organisations would have their own vested interest in opposing that proposal; but even so, we might feel some concern. The EU legislation which permits the Government to scrap the MoT for pre-1960 vehicles says:



“Member States may, after consulting the Commission, exclude from the scope of this Directive, or subject to special provisions, certain vehicles operated or used in exceptional conditions and vehicles which are never, or hardly ever, used on public highways, including vehicles of historic interest which were manufactured before 1 January 1960 or which are temporarily withdrawn from circulation..”

This doesn't sound like my car – which was my main vehicle for six months last year, and definitely would not qualify as “never or hardly ever used on public highways”. However, it would bring classic car MoT regulations into line with those for goods vehicles, where unladen Heavy Goods Vehicles manufactured before 1960 already do not have to meet the plating and testing regulations.

Perhaps we should simply accept this gift horse at face value, and make the most of the freedom from regulation, and the trust which the government is reposing in us.

What do members think? It would be interesting to have the views of club members, and if you would like to write or email (the address is inside the front cover) with comments and your views, I shall report these in the August edition of the Globe.

Drive it Day 2012

by Colin Copcutt

For the last 5 years I have made the effort to participate in the national Drive It Day. I have done something different each year and this year I decided to take part in an organised event. A company local to me, Milton Keynes Classic Tours, have a reputation for organising high quality activities, so in January, I made my application for ERP 183 to be included in this years event. I was to be accompanied by my son Edward and fellow Triumph enthusiast David.

With my confirmation of entry were the details of the route which was planned to include Millbrook Proving Ground, Prodrive Motor Sports factory at Banbury and the Porsche Experience at Silverstone.

Two weeks before the day, my entry number and start time were confirmed. The start point was a large Garden Centre only 3 miles from home, where after signing in and receiving a goody bag, a full English breakfast was available. We were provided with a fully detailed rally style route book which we studied before heading for the rapidly filling car park. ERP was allocated running number 12, which was between a 1960s Chevrolet SS and a 1970s Vauxhall Viva HB.

A total of 212 cars had been entered and the majority were from the 60s 70s and 80s and included every make of sports car imaginable, including a De Lorean, at least a dozen different Porches, every type of post war Aston Martin, MGs, Triumph TRs and Stags, Austin Healeys and loads of red cars with leaping horse badges. There were only 4 or 5 pre war cars and ERP was by far the tallest car in the event!



Photographs in this article courtesy of Edward Copcutt

Our allocated start time was 08.35hrs and we were flagged away with a flourish and much flashing of cameras. The route to the first stopping point covered about 20 miles of country roads until we arrived at Millbrook. Millbrook is one of Europe's leading locations for the development and demonstration of every type of land vehicle, from motorcycles and passenger cars to heavy commercial, military and off-road vehicles. The custom-built facility provides virtually every test, validation and homologation service necessary for today's demanding programmes and has featured in a number of Top Gear road tests.

A special circuit of the Hill Route had been organised which was 6.5 Km of hills and bends varying from 1 in 15 to 1 in 3.8. All of the hills started and finished with a sharp bend so there was no opportunity for a run up. ERP managed very well but did need a change into 1st gear for the final assault of the 1 in 3.8 which was sited on a hairpin bend. The recently rebuilt brakes worked perfectly and there was no overheating of the engine. When we reached the end of the run, the Marshall offered me chance to go round again. I did not need to be asked twice. On exiting the proving ground there were many of the exotic cars waiting to go round the Hill Route. I expect they went much faster than us but will have had no more fun.

The next part of the event was a cross country run around the villages of Bedfordshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. A few faster cars did catch us up but soon passed when there was a suitable space. There were a few odd moments such as being passed 3 times within a 10 mile stretch by a rally prepared Hillman Imp. Perhaps his navigator was not as good as mine and they kept getting lost. We arrived at the Prodrive factory on the outskirts of Banbury and parked amongst a wide variety of cars including a couple of matching Austin Healeys, a Volvo P1800 and loads of red cars with leaping horse badges. Prodrive is one of the world's largest and most successful motorsport and vehicle technology businesses and were providing tea and biscuits in their museum.

A quick check under the bonnet showed that nothing was amiss, but the double circuit at Millbrook had gobbled up more than half of the tank of petrol. We set off refreshed for a spirited drive on mostly A roads to the famous Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit. Our destination here was the Porsche Driving Experience Centre which opened its doors in November 2008. Located next to Hangar Straight it is a specially designed track incorporating five elements; Handling, Kick Plate, Ice Hill, Low Friction and Off-Road circuits. This environment enables visitors to go through a variety of different situations in wet and dry conditions, as well as simulating ice and snow driving with the use of specially constructed surfaces. Showing some respect for ERPs halfshafts and tyres, I did not participate in the car spinning / tyre burning activities.



We finally parked outside the Hi-tech Porsche centre where lunch was provided. We spent the next hour watching cars go round the Porsche circuit, where there did appear to be an awful lot of drivers trying hard to wreck their cars and succeeding in wrecking their tyres. The air reeked of burnt rubber.

ERP183, our 1948 Triumph 1800, which stood out amongst the crowd of low open topped cars, performed faultlessly all day and attracted many admiring glances from the people who had spent the day freezing in their cars without roofs. The crew had a great day and we all look forward to what next years Drive it Day will bring.

1940s revisited

by Graham Sinagola



I bought my car last September and thus I am a fairly new member. I did not originally have a burning desire to own a Renown but was looking for a pre-war style car to transport me back in time to 1940s events during the summer months. I eventually tried Ebay and to my amazement came across just what I was looking for, a few miles away and at the right price. It was also the same age as me; we were both born in 1951.

I have carried out a few repairs to the brakes and engine but on the whole it does not need a great deal of work. I now know, for certain, that my Renown is in good order as today it passed its MOT with just a couple of very minor advisories.

On Drive it Day I drove with other members of the Manchester Historic Vehicle Club to Ashbourne in Derbyshire (see photo – front cover). The weather was terrible: driving rain and a cold wind. Despite a windscreen wiper arm dropping off and a partially blocked carburettor jet. I eventually arrived at Ecclesbourne railway where a fellow member cured the carb problem. The photo above is one of me taken at Churnet Valley Railway 1940s weekend.

A Time-Travelling Detective Story

In February, Michael Dobson wrote to us with reminiscences of a Renown he remembered from his childhood.

“More than 40 years ago I lived in a mews house in Sloane Square, London with my parents. My father rented out the garage spaces that filled the whole of the ground floor, seven spaces in all. One of those spaces was rented by a Mr Isner for his Triumph Renown. Mr Isner did not drive and his wife had bought the car; but after she died my father used to chauffeur Mr Isner, picking him up from his City office every evening.

When we sold the mews house in 1972, we said goodbye to the Renown but I am sure that I saw it again on the very final episode of Sapphire and Steele (starring Joanna Lumley and David McCallum) when it glided into a petrol station. If I remember rightly, the registration number was OXL 216 but I may be mistaken. If the owner of that car is a member of the Owner's Club they may be interested in learning more about its history and I would be happy for you to give them my email address.

I only drove the car once, taking it to the petrol station to fill up for my dad. The three gear column change was fine but I have to say that it was a bit of a nightmare trying to keep it going in the direction that I wanted it to go! Having said that, it was a lovely car - silver grey metallic paintwork with a very comfortable red leather interior. It had an unusual RAC badge as I think Mr Isner was a Life Member which was reflected by the silver badge instead of the usual blue one.

As I say, if you know the owner please let them know that they are welcome to contact me. Meanwhile, thank you for taking the trouble to read this letter and good luck with the Club.

Yours faithfully,
Mike Dobson”

The final episode of Sapphire and Steel, entitled ‘The Trap’ can be found on the internet – it has been uploaded onto You Tube in a series of short overlapping clips. Since the story-line concerns a group of individuals apparently trapped in a time-loop, being investigated by Sapphire and Steel, two Dr-Who-like agents played by Joanna Lumley and David McCallum, watching the series of clips which continually re-enact parts of themselves adds oddly to the experience. “The medium is the message” – Marshall McLuhan would have been delighted by the layers of time-loop we see, watching the 1982 TV series about a time-slip from 1948, from our vantage-point in 2012.

The series is in strong contrast to the television stories we are served today: it was made by ATV on a shoe-string budget, and the ‘special effects’, although central to the plot, could be outdone today by anyone with an I-phone or Blackberry and a simple home computer. The production crew have hired a petrol station and café, plus the Triumph Renown, and filmed at night so they don’t have to worry about any other landscapes;



and they have a cast of seven. I thought at first that considerable time and research must have gone into getting the petrol station and café exactly right for 1982; but that was simply ‘the present day’ for them, so no wonder it’s right. The story they have woven, and the excellent acting, however, make it a suspense-filled experience, with unanswered questions and loose ends that we are not used to seeing in today’s more neatly-packed dumbed-down television diet. It is well worth searching out the clips and watching them through, in correct sequence, if you have the inclination.

But what of our car? It is featured centrally in the story. Two apparently innocent people from 1948, travelling in the car, have found themselves pulling into a petrol station in 1982. They don’t know how they got here. The time in 1982 has stopped at 8:54. Sapphire and Steel, aided by Silver, another Elemental agent played by David Collings, must discover what is the meaning of all this. Therefore – fortunately for us – they have to examine the car in detail, and we are treated to a tour of the car with close-ups.

The sharp-eyed amongst you will have spotted that this is not quite the registration number remembered by Mike Dobson. This is OXL 481, not 216. However, he was not quite certain of the registration; and in subsequent emails he described details like the front fog-light on its unusually high mounting, so that we may be fairly confident this is indeed the same car.

In the episode, agent Silver says that the car dates from 1946, yet is only two years old, so that it must have been plucked forward from 1948, a date confirmed by the two passengers. However, agent Silver is definitely mistaken, because in reality this is a TDC model, and Tom Robinson’s research on the registration plate shows that this was a London registration from around June or July of 1954. Production ceased in October 1954, so that we are seeing is in fact a very late Renown.

Some pictures from the episode: searching the car for clues.



The car has 20,101 miles on the milometer: this could be correct for the requirements of the plot-line (two years old in 1948) but also for Mike Dobson’s account of the real car, rarely-driven in Sloane Square from new in 1954 until 1972 when he lost touch with it, and now appearing, well-preserved, in 1982. The trip meter shows 10 miles – would it be too fanciful to think the real owner would have reset this to record the mileage done for the filming, and that therefore he lived about 10 miles from the filming location?

People were most likely to have scrapped our cars in the late sixties and early seventies, as they began to age, rust began to set in, and wear-and-tear repairs became more substantial and expensive. The founding of TROC in 1975 marks the approximate watershed, when the evident class and style of the car made it more difficult to simply discard for the scrap value. Therefore, since this particular car was evidently still in excellent condition in 1982, it would

be very likely to continue to have been preserved. Yet we have no record of it in the club! Where, I wonder, does it now reside? If anyone has seen it or knows of it, please get in touch. It would be very satisfying to fill in the more recent chapters of this car's history, since its beginnings and middle age are so well documented.



I couldn't resist a final picture of the delightful Joanna Lumley with the car, even though this shot doesn't add much to our knowledge of the vehicle.

For Sale: TDB 1427 Reg RHK 226

The car is complete apart from the starter motor and exhaust. The engine turns over by hand and the vehicle has a later model carb and air filter fitted. The chrome is generally good apart from the front bumper.

The body is good for the age and will require attention to the rear wings. Chassis is good but will require some attention to the running boards. The interior is complete, but will need attention.

Please contact sales@karhouse.co.uk .



OCCASIONAL SUNNY INTERLUDES

London member Abdulaziz Karrar has a Renown and also a Citroen Traction Avant, both of which are currently located in Cyprus. Since the British summer this year seems to be arriving in brief interludes between varying doses of showers, drizzle, gales and rain, we thought it would be good to share thoughts of cars in warm climates.



There is something very special about the blue of the Mediterranean sea and sky; it reassures the eye that it goes on for ever, all around the horizon and across the great dome overhead, day after baking-hot day.

Note also how this white Renown is in its perfect setting here, basking in the sun. I have heard it said that white and cream are not good colours for our car; but it's not the colour that is wrong, just the weather!



The cars are photographed here against the backdrop of a crusader castle at Kyrenia, built by Richard I, the Lionheart; so it is very British really. Perhaps, after Broughton Castle this year, the Club should think in terms of Cyprus for the rally in 2013?

We also know of enthusiastic Razoredge owners in Belgium, France, Germany, and Switzerland. The grand tour, where the education of young Britons was completed by 'seeing something of the world', could be done in real style in a fleet of Renowns.

Our summery dreams are rapidly reined in, however, when we think of the realities of travelling long distances in our car. This is not a vehicle to sweep along the autobahn at 120, and covering any really long distance needs very good planning and regular breaks.

Perhaps, though...?