

**NORTH HAMPSHIRE AUSTIN ENTHUSIASTS GROUP**  
**Founded 1973**

**Monthly Newsletter and Events Update**  
**[www.nhaeg.org.uk](http://www.nhaeg.org.uk)**

**JUNE 2009**

**Club nights at The New Inn, Heckfield, 8pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in every month**

**Mo's Mutterings**

Help! Where is the time going? Since Marlene and Brian Grant returned to Cornwall, I have had a few days at Center Parcs Spa with Jenny G-B, Don has been taking out Chummy's engine and putting it back in again (bit like the hokey-cokey really) and suddenly, we are off to Normandy next Tuesday! (Well, hopefully!). I am sure we shall make it! I remember our first run abroad with the 750 Club many, many years ago when Don "finished" putting Chummy together for the first time and we were actually "running in". Needless to say, we broke down in a lovely town where no-one spoke English and Don had to repair the torque tube and pinion (yes, I DO know what one looks like!) Our two daughters, Karen and Jane were then about ten and twelve, quite big and we were well overloaded with two tents, four sleeping bags and all our camping equipment. Happy days! No, not really, I still hate camping! I am really looking forward to our trip to Normandy, the great French hotel, wonderful food and wine etc. Hope to be back in time for club night!

*Maureen*

**Colin's Column**

Our May club night was well attended and after the usual chat around the cars we watched a video that Don had made while he and Maureen were in New Zealand. The first part was filmed at an enormous scrapyard he found (just like the ones we used to have here) in which he spent quite a lot of time. Maureen I believe, decided she would rather stay in the car and read. I wonder why? The amount of parts they appeared to have was truly amazing and I would think it almost impossible not to find anything you wanted. The second part of the video was taken at a large car museum, which had a very interesting collection of vehicles.

Many thanks to Don for showing us the video and thanks also to John (Hancock) for bringing along his recently won television.

The REME Museum Run and BBQ in aid of the SAV fund went off very well despite the weather. When Ann and I set off from home in Arabella it was pouring with rain, we picked up Maureen and Marlene on the way as Don and Brian were busy at Beaulieu and made our way to the meeting point at the New Inn. The rain got worse and by the time we arrived the roads were awash. However about 15 minutes later the sun broke through and by the time we left it was really nice.

The route to the museum took us through some delightful countryside and villages between Reading and Basingstoke before arriving at the REME museum at

Arbourfield. The first stop was the café before being given a very interesting guided tour of the museum. If you have never been to the museum then I can recommend a visit. With the tour over we made our way to John and Joan's house for the BBQ although by now the weather had deteriorated and it was quite cold.

On arrival we went through to the garden where gazebos had been set up in preparation for bad weather and found a table laden with food. The rest of the afternoon was spent very enjoyably eating, drinking and chatting.

Many thanks to everyone for supporting this event but special thanks to Andy and Do and John and Joan who came up with the idea and organised the day, I hope we did not leave your garden it too much of a mess, Joan. Thanks also to Trevor who helped arrange the visit to the museum, where they gave us a reduced admission price, enabling us to increase the amount raised towards SAV.

Next month we have our annual Concourse d'Elegance at the club night so hopefully we will have a good showing of cars in the car park. The judging as usual will be done by you the members and there will be the 'Peter Adnams Memorial Trophy' for the car voted best overall and the 'The Breakspear Family Perpetual Challenge Cup' for the car voted the best Austin 7. There will also be a prize for the Landlord's Choice.

Coming up in June is the 'The Paul Finn Vintage and Classic Vehicle Rally' otherwise known as the 'Ben Run' which I know many of you take part in each year. This is an excellent event and is always oversubscribed so if you have not sent your entry form back yet then I should do so now to avoid disappointment. Anyone who has not entered before and therefore not received an entry form but would like to go should contact the organiser Eamonn Galligan, BEN, Lynwood, Sunninghill, Ascot, SL5 0AJ. Tel: 01344 620191 or email: [gillian.freeman@ben.org.uk](mailto:gillian.freeman@ben.org.uk)

Sometime in June I will be issuing an update to the Parts & Services Directory for which I have been given quite a few names already. If you have any recommendations to add to the list please let me have them by the **8<sup>th</sup> June**.

It has occurred to the committee that there are probably quite a number of members, especially new ones, who have no idea what happens on the "**Nightjar**", which this year is on the 21<sup>st</sup> November. This will be the 34<sup>th</sup> year we have run this event and as those who have taken part in the past, myself included, will tell you it is a great deal of fun. The event is open to anyone and we get people coming from far away to take part.

To ensure that everyone is aware what is involved I will give a brief introduction to the "**Nightjar**" at the June club night. For those who are interested in taking part but would like more information I can then arrange a time suitable to everyone to go through it in detail. Should anyone be interested but not able to come to the June club meeting I would be happy to tell them about it at another time.

Our campaign to raise money for SAV has now finished and elsewhere in this newsletter will be full details of all the monies raised. I would just like to say a big thank you and well done to everyone involved in raising so much money. Special thanks however must go to Dave and Karen who came up with the idea and put a lot

of time and effort into it. Also to Trevor and Jean who organised the “Grand Raffle” which took up quite a lot of their time. I am sure the recipients of the monies raised will be very appreciative of everyone’s efforts.

That’s it for now,

Safe and Happy Motoring.

Colin

### Secretary’s Scribblings

#### Sponsor A Veteran (SAV) - “Didn’t we do well?”

Now, as the saying goes, ‘the dust has settled’, it’s possible, finally, to report results arising from the various initiatives taken over what seemed like many months but, in actual fact, was less than four, in order to raise funds to be able to support one or possibly more than one D-Day veteran wishing to travel to Normandy next month to attend the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

When the idea was first floated, By Karen (Witton), aided and abetted by her other half, Dave, it was greeted with a mixture of enthusiasm and apprehension. No-one was sure exactly how to approach the goal and certainly there was a range of estimates as to how much money we would raise.

In the event the ‘bull was taken by the horns’ and ideas for raising the cash came in fairly thick and fast. These included, as members now will all know, the major enterprise – staging a ‘Grand Raffle’ for which tickets would be sold outside our immediate Club membership. In addition, a ‘Bring and Buy Sale’ plus a ‘Name the Teddy’ draw were held in March, and a Plant Sale in April.

Concluding the efforts made were a couple of organised runs in our ‘real’ vehicles, the first one being the Drive It Day trip to Clandon House, masterminded by Karen and Dave on the 20<sup>th</sup> April and, more recently, a run from the ‘New Inn’ to the REME Museum at Arborfield, this time orchestrated through the combined efforts of Andy and Do (Ranson) and John and Joan (Hancock) and finishing with a barbecue at the latter’s home. The weather wasn’t wonderful but the visit, the food and the company were great!

Interspersed with all the above have been the monthly quizzes which brought in a further useful £45.00 in all.

Sincere and grateful thanks are due to *all* those who took an active part in organising the various events and activities but the overwhelming portion of appreciation must go to *all our members* who clearly made a special effort to sell or purchase raffle tickets for the Grand Draw. The result was truly amazing. As will be seen from the table below a total of precisely 1500 tickets were sold! Two members in particular made exceptional contributions. At the risk of causing them embarrassment it must go on record that Andy (Seager), despite expressing certain reservations about his ability to sell the five books of tickets (as distributed to every member), actually disposed of these within 48 hours and even asked for more – twice! How he, (and Karen herself, also), persuaded so many of their work colleagues and associates to cough up is difficult to imagine but their efforts definitely bore much fruit.

Similarly, Denise (Adams), made a most magnanimous gesture, at the time of her birthday in March, by urging those whom she suspected might be intending

presenting her with a gift, to make a donation instead. In her own words her home, on such occasions, otherwise tends to resemble a cross between a florists, a confectioners and a wine shop. As a result she received a total of £100.00 which she donated to the fund, in addition to selling all her 25 tickets as well!

Special thanks to all these good people but also very many thanks to everyone who made an effort in aid of the worthy cause we, as a Club, had adopted.

Now, to the bottom line! Income derived from the 'Grand Raffle' itself and that from all other initiatives has been separated out and is presented in two statements for clarity.

The content of these is believed to be self-evident but, with regard to the 'Grand Raffle' income can be summarised by stating that we were able, in the end, to provide funds of £500.00 each to not just one, but two, deserving veterans. The

first one tracked down was Billy Ness, an ex-para from the Newcastle Upon Tyne area and, more recently, the second one, Stanley Jarvis, an ex member of the Royal Corps of Signals, from the Bristol area. A cheque for these amounts were sent to their respective local NVA branches to be handed to the gentlemen concerned. A letter of thanks received from Billy Ness is reproduced below also.

✓

ENCLOSED RECEIPT FROM MY  
BANK FOR YOUR ACCOUNTS.

PPS

AFTER I LEFT THE 12<sup>TH</sup> YORKSHIRE PARA  
BN. I WAS POSTED TO THE 4<sup>TH</sup> WESSEX  
PARA BN. WHICH IN TURN WAS  
ORIGINALLY THE 10<sup>TH</sup> BATT. THE HAMPSHIRE  
REGT. SO IN DOUBT GRATEFUL TO  
THE GOOD PEOPLE OF HAMPSHIRE

BILLY

BILLY MESS.

8 THERESA RUSSELL HILL.

HEATON

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

0141-2763091

NE6 2UE

MY DEAR CONN, KAREN & TREVOR.

TO SAY I

WAS DELIGHTED, AMAZED, ASTONISHED TO  
RECEIVE YOUR MOST GENEROUS GIFT IS AN  
UNDERSTATEMENT. AS JUANITA, JEAN & BRENDA  
READ OUT YOUR LETTER AND PRESENTED ME  
WITH YOUR MOST GENEROUS CHECK I BELIEVE  
ME I BECAME A BIT EMOTIONAL. TO THINK  
OF ALL THE PERSONS YOU COULD HAVE PICKED  
THAT YOU CHOSE ME I FIND IT HARD TO  
LET IT SINK IN. MAY I THANK YOU ALL MOST  
SINCERELY AND MAY YOUR ASSOCIATION CONTINUE  
TO CARRY ON AS I'M SURE YOU WILL AFTER  
THE MAGNIFICENT GESTURE YOU HAVE SHOWN  
TO ME.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL

YOURS

BILLY MESS

Clearly Billy was taken aback when he received the cheque and it's hoped that those of us who are going over to Normandy this June will get the opportunity to meet up with him and some of his comrades at the celebrations.

As will be concluded from the first table there was a surplus of £181.04 arising from the 'Grand Raffle' income, *after* forwarding the two cheques for £500.00. It was decided, by the Committee, to boost this up to £200.00 by an injection of £18.96 from Club funds. This amount was then forwarded, by way of a general donation, to the Normandy Veteran's Association (Surrey Branch). It may be recalled that Peter Thompson, Chairman of that branch, came along in February to give us a talk on his experiences of D-Day and beyond, as a sailor aboard one of the LST's taking over troops and returning with wounded during the campaign.

### Statement – Sponsor a Veteran Grand Raffle

	<b>TICKET SALES (INCOME)</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
1	£1,500.00	Small Society Lottery Licence (WBC)	<£40.00>
2		<i>Veteran Donation (1) (Billy Ness – Para)</i>	<£500.00>
3		Raffle Tickets (printing)	<£41.00>
4		Postage (various)	<£7.80>
5		Prize – M&S Voucher	<£50.00>
6		Prize – Portable TV	<£179.96>
	£1,500.00		<£818.96>
7	£18.96 Top-up contribution from Club Funds		
	£1,518.96		
	- <£818.96		
	<b>£700.00 Credit Balance</b>		
8		<i>Veteran Donation (2) (Stan Jarvis – R.Sigs)</i>	<£500.00>
9		<i>Donation to NVA (Surrey Branch)</i>	<£200.00>
	<b>£0.00 Balance.</b> All income from Grand Raffle disbursed as detailed above, in italics		

With regard to monies derived from other (i.e. non 'Grand Raffle') sources the following table provides a detailed summary of income, per event/activity, any expenditure arising from these and how it was disbursed.

The truly amazing sum of £1,142.32 was raised from all the various events and the Committee, at its most recent (May) meeting, deliberated on how best to disburse this not inconsiderable sum. There was a general consensus of opinion that, whilst we have been remembering and appreciating the efforts of those who took part in those far-off days in 1944, across the Channel, we should not overlook the heroism and suffering of those in today's conflicts, namely Iraq and Afghanistan. Our initial thoughts were to consider donating the money directly to Headley Court, near Epsom, which does such wonderful work treating injured service personnel and their rehabilitation.

However, there was general agreement that, in view of the excellent aims and achievements made by the 'Help for Heroes' charity, ('H4H'), which supports the work of both Headley Court and Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham, also heavily involved in the treatment of war casualties, this would be the better choice.

We have, therefore, and on behalf of all Club Members, forwarded a cheque for the full amount raised, £1,142.32, to that organisation and, at the time of writing, await their acknowledgment of same.

If you're able, please do take a look at the 'H4H' web-site ([www.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk)); it's an excellent one and gives a very good overview of its organisation, aims and achievements. Moreover, and what I personally consider as impressive as anything, is that its administration costs are extremely low. Operating, as it evidently does, out of little more than a tin hut in Tidworth, and staffed largely by a team of volunteers, **only 2%** of its income is expended on administration, the remainder going directly to the causes it supports! OXFAM and other large charities, take note!

**Statement – Income and Disbursement of funds raised via initiatives other than the Grand Raffle**

	<u><b>EVENT / ITEM</b></u>	<u><b>INCOME</b></u>	EXPENDITURE
1	Bring & Buy Sale	£193.02	
2	Donations, includes £300 donated from Club Funds	£490.00	
3	Quiz (Feb / Mar / Apr)	£45.00	
4	Plant Sale	£51.95	
5	'Name the Teddy'	£57.00	
6	Jewellery Party (Karen W)	£124.00	
7	D.I.D. Run/Clandon House	£570.00	<£450.00>
8	REME Museum Run / BBQ	£315.00	<£253.65>
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£1,845.97</b>	<b>&lt;£703.65&gt;</b>
		<£703.65>	

	<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>£1,142.32</b>	<b>Donated in entirety to 'Help for Heroes'</b>
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Hopefully the above provides a clear picture of what funds were raised and how they have been disbursed and distributed. However, should anyone have any questions please do get in touch with Jean (Edwards), our Treasurer, who prepared the above statements and will be happy to answer any queries.

(tel: 01344 775012; email: trevor\_c.edwards@btinternet.com)

Once again, a thousand thanks to everyone. We can all be a little proud to have done our bit towards some very worthy causes.

### Looking ahead to 2010 – Club Trip

Very provisional research is currently being carried out with regard to a possible trip, next year, to the battlefields of WW1 – i.e. the Sommes, Ypres, etc. Such a trip perhaps would be a little more ambitious, in terms of distance, than the ones taken in recent years to Normandy but, nevertheless, are considered to be 'do-able' and undoubtedly would be both interesting and fun.

At this time preliminary information is being gathered on the logistics involved but, before going too far down a road which might lead to a 'dead-end' it would be helpful to learn how many members might be interested in taking part.

At the moment, the plan is roughly as follows. It probably would be up to a week in duration. The likely Channel crossing route (though not set in stone yet) would be Newhaven/Dieppe; Newhaven is roughly 75-80 miles, from this neck of the woods at least (Crowthorne). The cost of the crossing cannot be determined yet but, this year's standard rate for a vehicle with two passengers for a stay over five days is £159.00 However, there's an indication that a discount on this price would probably be negotiable if travelling a group, as would be the case.

Little more has been done at this stage apart from identifying a couple of web-sites offering bespoke, self-drive tours of the places of interest. This might prove the best option to adopt although a 'home-grown', club-organised trip may also be possible.

In any event, members are invited to consider whether they might be interested in such a venture and, if so, without, at this time, being obligated in any way, to let me, Trevor (Edwards), know if

they are. Once a feel for how much support such a trip might attract is gained the matter will be pursued further. *If* signs are encouraging 'some meat will be put on the bone' by three of us, Don (Breakspear), Dave (Witton) and myself.

Having visited a number of WW1 sites a few years ago, on an organised, five-day coach trip, operated by the *Leger* coach company, I can strongly recommend the experience. Apart from that, the fun to be had when travelling as a group, in our 'real' cars is immeasurable- ask anyone who's done so!

### Half-Gallon Run – July Club Night (13<sup>th</sup>)

Last month a request was made for those planning to do the *Half-Gallon* this year so please let Richard (Scott), the organiser this year, know in advance. This is simply to ensure that materials he's preparing for the event are not wasted since these involve colour reproductions of the OS map (175 – Reading) being used. Ink used for such materials is quite costly and, obviously, it would help greatly if some idea of numbers is known beforehand. Those who haven't let Richard know beforehand *may* not receive all necessary paperwork and would be advised to bring along a copy of the OS Landranger 175 map.

So, if you haven't already done so, and do plan to do the Run, which promises to be something a bit special this year, please give Richard a call on 0118 983 2224 or drop him an email at [Rscottok@btinternet.com](mailto:Rscottok@btinternet.com). to confirm. Remember also, you can begin the Run any time from 7:00 pm onwards

### Welcome to New Members

This month we again are welcoming two sets of new members into the Club. Membership is really expanding right now which is excellent news after a period which has been fairly static so far as numbers are concerned.

**Tim and Anne Proctor**, who live in Mortimer, own a 1935 Austin 10 Clifton Tourer and **Stuart Mason and Trudy Coutts**, who hail from Alresford, run a 1937 Austin 10.

We welcome them all into our midst and hope to see them regularly at our monthly get-togethers and various events throughout the year.

*That's pretty much it for this month. Don't forget, it's the Concours e'Elegance evening on June 8<sup>th</sup> and Half-Gallon Run on July 13<sup>th</sup>; they've been switched around on this occasion. So polish up your venerable vehicle and come along to show it off at the next Club Night. I've an inkling that there could be some surprises in store this year! Meanwhile, happy and safe motoring!*

*Trevor*

## Don's Doodlings

Beaulieu weather was right on cue, a mixture of high winds, light and heavy rain and really nice sunny spells. It seems to be par for the course at Beaulieu weekends. On saying that, we did have a great time.

As you can imagine, setting up the stall selling items over three long days and repacking it away, living under extreme conditions etc. is extremely hard work, to make a few coppers especially knowing that back home, the girls are having a riotous evening, eating, drinking, chatting mingled with hilarious laughter. When Dave Witton arrived at our stall, he said he had called Karen halfway through the evening and said the noise was horrendous and if I had a house left when I arrived home it would be a miracle. I am glad to say everything was OK and from the thanks that Maureen received by cards and calls, all the girls seemed to have a good time.

Over the last couple of weeks I have had the engine out of Chummy as it was losing power. I thought the cause was a piston ring but it turned out to be all four exhaust valves burnt out. The block has been away at Roe Engineering in Fleet to have hardened seats fitted and with new valves, valve guides etc. I am hoping it will pull a little better up the hills in France.

I would like to thank all who offered to help me, Dave Witton for help with fitting the pistons and Trevor Edwards for the loan of the piston ring clamp etc.

On the subject of tools, I wonder if it would be a good idea if we had a club tool list e.g. tools which I have had made up to drive out valve guides, a centralising bar for clutch plates and also a clutch compression tool. I may pursue this a bit further next month, when I have more time.

Apologies to club members who didn't get a cup of tea at Beaulieu, it did seem to get a bit hectic at times. (Sorry, Hazel!).

**Don**

## **A Midsummer Meander**

On **Sunday July 12** we are organising a Midsummer Meander around the lanes and villages of Hampshire. It will start near Micheldever and will travel towards Alton. It will start in the early afternoon so a picnic is the order of the day, although there are pubs fairly close by where you can have lunch if you wish. There is an interesting walk of about a mile through the woods for those of you who would like a meander on foot before you start meandering around the lanes in your car.

There will be stops at a couple of villages for a good look round with some questions to answer for those who like something to do. They will not be too challenging! We will be finishing at a venue where snacks and cream teas will be available.

If you would like to join us, ring 01420 87450 for all the details you need.

I look forward to you joining us for a relaxing meander round the woods, lanes and villages of Hampshire.

Tony and Pat Westhall.

## **QUERIES OF THE MONTH**

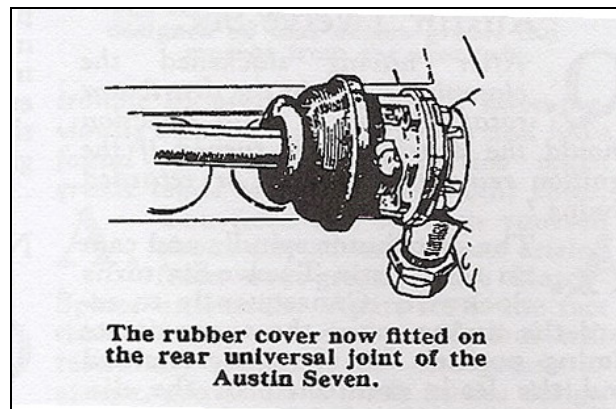
Some more “Queries of the Month”, these originally appeared in “The Austin Magazine & Advocate” during the 1930s and 1940s. This month’s selection consists of a couple of Austin Seven topics. Grease on Rear Wheel – Austin Seven and Speedometer Drive - Austin Seven.

No 445 appeared in November 1932 and No 793 appeared in March 1937.

### **No 445 – Grease on Rear Wheel – Austin Seven**

**Q.** *I find that the spare wheel of my Seven gets badly covered with grease, apparently from the rear axle overflow, which must be injurious to the tyre. What is your opinion please?*

**A.** The grease reaching your spare wheel seems more likely to have come from the rear universal joint than from the axle, as normally grease in such quantity cannot emerge from the latter. You should examine the universal joint cover to see whether it is still intact and in position. The cover fitted to your car is probably of the leather type, which, if not fitted carefully, may slip clear of the clip which secures it on the joint, or if overcharged with grease, sometimes splits along the seam, in either event then allowing grease to be thrown underneath the car, possibly to reach the spare wheel. If this proves to be the cause you should get your local Austin dealer to fit a new cover, preferably of the new rubber type which is interchangeable with the leather cover formally used, and is better able to withstand excess lubricant.



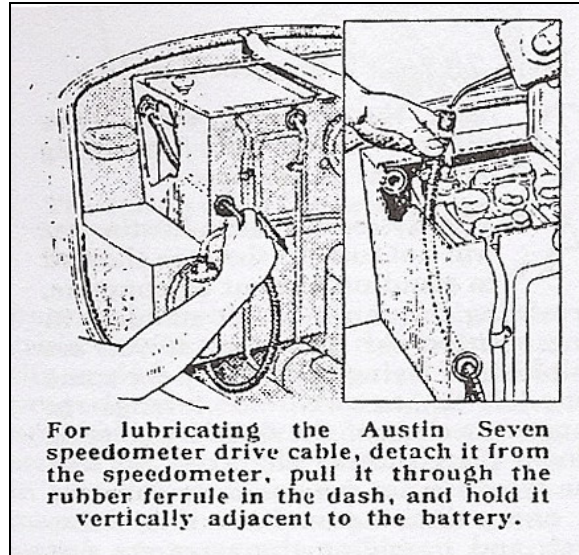
In the event of the grease actually coming from the rear axle overflow, this is an indication the too much oil is in the axle and you should discontinue adding lubricant until oil overflow stops.

### **No 793 – Speedometer Drive – Austin Seven**

**Q.** *I should be glad of your advice as to the best method of lubricating the speedometer drive cable on my Seven. As this has become slightly noisy of late I feel it*

*may benefit from lubrication, but how to introduce the lubricant into the top end is not immediately obvious to me, seeing that this end of the cable is located under the dash. Is it necessary to remove the cable for this attention?*

**A.** You will find lubrication of the speedometer drive cable quite a simple matter if, after disconnecting it from the speedometer, you pull the cable through the scuttle panel from the tool box side.



It will readily pass through its rubber mounting ferrule. It can then be held vertical while the oil is applied. The lubricant will pass more readily down the cable casing if the slotted retaining washer is removed from the cable, and the cable pulled out of its casing sufficiently for its end, which is of enlarged diameter, to be clear of the casing. When refitting the drive, ensure that its squared end mates with the speedometer driving spindle correctly before screwing the retaining collar well home.

*The “Queries of the Month” are reproduced with the kind permission of the Austin Ten Drivers Club (ATDC)*

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This months old advertisement was found in an October 1956 motoring magazine, I assume that the company undertook automotive trials on various cars to prove the “Ridemaster” effectiveness, but I wonder how much of an improvement to the cars handling it made. Perhaps today we expect more from motor manufacturers and take for granted a fully developed car instead of in the thirties, forties and fifties a basic car built to a price. I have tried to trace the company, the original Toledo Woodhead (Sheffield) Ltd company was dissolved in November 1973 but two other companies bearing the Woodhead name exist today and are producing similar products. Toledo Woodhead Springs Ltd can be found in Ossett, West Yorkshire and Jonas Woodhead & Sons (India) Ltd can be found in southern India with several premises producing traditional leaf springs.

**More than meets the eye...**



You will not be able to see anything unusual about this man's car. But follow him on the open road, and you will be surprised. You will notice at once the way in which his car corners without a trace of excessive roll or sway.

The car this man drives is "Ridemaster" equipped. He finds the "Ridemaster" gives a comfortable ride with safer, better road-holding, cutting down wear and tear on springs and tyres. He would certainly tell you a lot more about the advantages of the "Ridemaster"—but why not write to us about it? Just ask for brochure R.10.



comfort costs so little with the Ridemaster

- \* inexpensive
- \* simple to fit
- \* needs no maintenance

Brit. Pat. No. 734886  
Foreign Pat. pending.

Made by one of Britain's leading car spring manufacturers.  
**TOLEDO WOODHEAD (Sheffield) LTD.**



**THE RIDEMASTER**  
variable - rate  
**SPRING CONTROL**

CLIFTON WORKS      SHEFFIELD 3  
TSF52

Andy Ranson

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## HISTORY OF A VETERAN

### Stan Jarvis of Royal Corps of Signals

When the War started I was living in Manchester where I received a Grammar School education. On leaving school I was trained as a telephone engineer and was a Cycle Messenger in the A R P during the Manchester blitz.

When the Home Guard (L D V) was formed I transferred to them, initially as a Messenger but my skill on the rifle range allowed me to transfer to the Demonstration Section which meant spending most weekends in Derbyshire hills with grenades, sticky bombs and Blacker Bombard mortars – rather like a drainpipe.

On receipt of my Calling Up papers I did not tell my employer but left a letter to be posted after my departure, being in a reserved occupation. I had elected to join the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in which were several uncles and cousins and I was directed to Prestatyn 'Holiday Camp' for initial training. After a few days I was called to the office of the Adjutant who had received a letter from my employer. He gave me the option of returning to my job or joining The Royal Corps of Signals and I had no hesitation joining the Corps.

After training I joined the Trades Training School at Huddersfield, spending six months learning to be a Lineman Mechanic - an A Trade. Only 20 miles from home but not even a weekend pass until my training was completed. This was followed by six months in Ireland for 'special training', returning to England just before Christmas 1943, finishing up in requisitioned houses in Hendon, with a cook house in Hendon Golf Club.

Several months were employed converting 3 Ton Troop Carriers, with hard tops, to Terminal Equipment Vehicles which were equipped with 40 Line Telephone Switchboards, six Teleprinters, sophisticated Line Test equipment, (supplied by the American Signals), and four bunks to accommodate the Line Mechs. Our final build was completed at Tunbridge Wells from where we convoyed to Southampton to board our cross channel transporter.

The Landing Ship Tank which took us across to Normandy was a fore runner of the cross channel ferries, being a two decker with large bow doors and adjustable ramps. It was an American vessel on its maiden voyage and, as we had days delay, it was in some ways like a holiday cruise. We had meals available at all times and we were fed with steaks and chicken - as much as we could eat and coffee literally on tap with cream and sugar. The crew could not do enough for us and filled ammo boxes full of gum and Herschi? Bars. It was a rude awakening when we were sitting with doors open and vehicles starting to unload when two Messerschmits raked the beach. They made a return journey a few minutes later, rapidly followed by two Spitfires. This was 'D plus 3', 9<sup>th</sup> June.

Our Section transport was 2 xTEVs, 2x3Tonners and 4xJeeps, all were fitted with large painted boards on the front in blue above white (Signals priority) and in large red letters, SECOND ARMY SIGNALS PRIORITY - we often got priority. We had twelve Line Mechanics, 8 Linesmen, three Sergeants, a number of Driver Mechs, a couple of cooks and a clerk, all looked after by Major Jimmy Gardner. Often a Line Mech was alone at a Setpoint or accompanied by a Corporal Lineman and Corporal Driver. Often the last two were detached to repair or replace sections of line.

We had several near shaves, one particular when I was in one side of a school and German infantry was approaching the other when a Canadian Armoured unit came round the corner. Another time, during the attack on Mount Pincon we were a bit too far forward and sent the vehicle back to check on lines while we settled in a farm house. We had obviously been spotted and we came under intense mortar fire, quitting the farm house when it was set on fire. We had field telephone with us but were dressed only in shirt and trousers. After a while we got in 'phone contact but the approach to us was under observation and we had to wait until it was clear for the transport could pick us up.

As the War in Normandy came to a conclusion in August we were told to reassemble and make our way towards Brussels. This involved trying the crossing of the Seine at Vernon and when we got there we found the centre section was down in the river and Royal Engineers were attempting to close the gap with road sections and they were under sniper fire. The approach to the bridge is lined with multi-storied flats and the Germans were occupying those on the eastern bank. We changed our Stens and revolvers for rifles and went into upper floors on the western bank, firing across the road. I cannot guarantee that we hit anybody but there was much scrambling under the bridge and the Engineers finished the job.

I transferred to a jeep and four of us made the run into Brussels and arrived there on their Liberation Day, 4<sup>th</sup> September. They made quite a fuss of us and we located the Central Telephone Exchange which we had been sent to occupy. We found it booby trapped and fortunately we encountered some of the Engineers we met the day before and they organised the make safe.

The next high light occurred during the Arnhem Battle. We had a setpoint in Graves and were advised to head for Eindhoven. Our transport was away and I got a lift in a Jeep of 101<sup>st</sup> American Airborne who dropped me at the telephone exchange. I met the Dutch telephone engineers and we pulled some of the lines which had been in German use. Somebody brought in a mattress and I settled down in the canteen with a window overlooking the central cross roads,

The following morning I was enjoying bread and cheese brought in for me and I heard the approach of armour. I sat on the wide sill of the window and watched the approach of the tank from Valkenswaard. As they drew near the lead tank turned his gun towards me and I hoped he did not think I was German. As he approached the gun swung until it

was within inches and he stopped his engine and asked me 'what I was.....playing at,' he was supposed to be the first Brit in Eindhoven. He then removed his helmet and goggles to reveal a school friend. We had a good night despite the air raid.

My most frightening occasion was during the spring offensive in Holland, at a small village called St Antonis. A British unit was moving in, just before moving on the Reichswald Forest when their C O was killed and they withdrew. I had chosen the basement of a bakery for the test point and had only a field telephone, having sent the line unit away to repair a broken line. The basement had narrow slots of windows close to the ceiling and these were at road level outside.

I heard a brief fire fight outside and then saw German jackboots outside the window so I hid behind some sacks of flour. After a while the baker's wife came in to tell me what was happening and she was very frightened – so was I. I suggested that I went out 'hands up' but she said they would be shot for not telling them I was there - and then they would shoot me. We arranged the sacks of flour as a barricade behind which I could hide and we covered the 'phone cable under empty sacks. While we were doing this I had a call from the line party to say the cable was repaired and I had connection through to our H Q. I explained the situation and begged them not to ring my bell. Soon afterwards an Intelligence Officer whispering to me on the 'phone, asking about the enemy tanks and I called the baker down to provide details of the enemy.

I did not sleep but welcomed the dawn and looked forward to being relieved. Shortly after full daylight somebody opened the door but did not come over the threshold so I could relax. I was down there for 30 hours before a British counter attack set fire to one tank and the other two made off. I went outside and saw an armoured car approaching. He fired a burst but aimed high and afterwards said it was a 'welcome back'.

During April we crossed the Rhine at Xanten, in our case on the back of a Buffalo with tracks for a Jeep and trailer. We carried a drum of cable on the trailer, paying it out on the river and setting up after landing on the far bank. The 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division had crossed the river in boats the previous evening and the Paras landed as reinforcements. We had requisitioned a line laying Bren Carrier and when the Para Commander landed he was offered a field telephone and was speaking to Monty.

After the Rhine crossing we moved into Germany; some of the towns and villages were badly damaged but others were hardly touched. We came into Luneburg and found it relatively untouched and we went into the PTT Office (telephone exchange) and started monitoring and disconnecting the lines. Shortly an Intelligence Officer made himself known and asked if we could provide monitoring facilities. I called up one of our units with a 40 Line F & F (Field & Fortress) telephone exchange. On the telephone exchange it was possible to connect to 10 lines and these were fed into F & F in groups. The officer sat with head phones on and went from line to line asking 'ist jemand daar' (is anybody there, and, after a number of false starts he contacted the North German Naval Headquarters. ALL THE SURRENDER ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE THROUGH THIS LINE BEFORE ANYBODY EVER MET ANY GERMANS.

## **CLUB NIGHT & EVENTS DIARY/UPDATE**

### **JUNE**

8<sup>th</sup>

Concours d'Elegance

27<sup>th</sup>

BEN Run – via Windsor Great Park

### **JULY**

12<sup>th</sup>

Midsummer Meander

13<sup>th</sup>

Half-gallon Run (Start from 1900 onwards)

26<sup>th</sup>

'Picnic in the Paddock'

### **AUGUST**

10<sup>th</sup>

Walking Rally

16<sup>th</sup>

August Amble

31<sup>st</sup>

Littlewick Show, Maidenhead

### **SEPTEMBER**

12/13<sup>th</sup>

Beaulieu Autojumble

14<sup>th</sup>

SAV Review/Normandy

20<sup>th</sup>

Peter's Potter

### **OCTOBER**

12<sup>th</sup>

Poss. Talk by Vince Leek

18<sup>th</sup>

B2B Run (BEN to Brooklands)

### **NOVEMBER**

9<sup>th</sup>

Auction Night

21<sup>st</sup>

Nightjar Navigational Scatter Rally

### **DECEMBER**

14<sup>th</sup>

Festive Fun Evening