

# **NORTH HAMPSHIRE *AUSTIN* ENTHUSIASTS GROUP**

***Founded 1973 [www.nhaeg.org.uk](http://www.nhaeg.org.uk)***

***March 2009***

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

Well, it won't be long before our intrepid travellers are returned from Kiwiland and Maureen will be back firmly in the Editor's chair. Hope my efforts, during her extended absence, haven't been too feeble and that she, in the meantime, hasn't lost any of the skills needed to put together our monthly 'rag'. Not sure I could stand the pressure for another month! Don't know how they manage at the 'Daily Mail' going through the process every 24 hours!!

Anyway, it'll be good to see them back and trust they both had a good time dodging the worst of our winter weather, reportedly the worst for almost a couple of decades. Let's all hope there won't be a return of any of the 'white stuff' and that we can spend a bit of time fettling our cars in readiness for another season of 'real motoring'. Certainly 'Clarissa', our A10 cabriolet, is going to need a bit of coaxing out of hibernation. She showed a marked reluctance to start recently which (it's suspected) may be due to nothing more sinister than 'time-expired' petrol which has been languishing in the tank since (possibly) last September! There wasn't much fuel in the tank in the first instance and I feel what there was has probably lost its 'get up and go'. Need to give the old girl a drink of something with a bit more poke in it. Will let you know if that does the trick.

*So, starting with 'Colin's Column', here is my third and final offering - (for the moment!)*

## **Colin's Column**

With February out of the way we can look forward, hopefully, to some better weather when we can start getting our cars out a bit more. As I write this, the sun is streaming through the window.

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We had a very interesting and busy February club night, which Trevor sent you full details of by email, so I will not repeat it all again here. What I will say though is well done to Karen and Jean for organising the Bring and Buy sale and also to everyone who bought things to be sold. It was amazing how much merchandise there was, with quite a large amount of it being sold, thanks to the generosity of our members.

Thanks are also due to Dave (Witton) for organising the fascinating talk by Peter Thompson the Chairman of the Normandy Veterans Association and also to Nick and Pat who arranged Peter's transport for the evening.

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At our March club night we have a talk, which has been arranged by John Hancock, on wind turbines. Tom Brinnicombe, who is Head of Marketing and Communications,

Partnership in Renewable Energy, will give the talk. It should be very interesting so if there is anything you have ever wanted to know about wind turbines this will be your chance to find out.

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I have not sent out a Parts and Services Directory update since last September as I have not received any recommendations except for one received recently. I would like to send an update out next month so please send me any recommendations you have. Quite a few of you have been working on your cars during the winter so if you have used any companies that are not already in the Directory and you would recommend them to others please let me have their details ASAP.

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Before finishing I would like to welcome Karen Witton to the committee for 2009. I would also like to say thank you to Trevor for editing the newsletter for the past three months while Maureen has been away. She and Don will soon be home from their short break to New Zealand.

Safe and Happy Motoring,

*Colin.*

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*Secretary's Scribblings*

**Quiz News**

Last month's quiz didn't attract quite so many entries as the January one did but, nevertheless, there's been a fair sprinkling so far. Remember, you still have until March 6<sup>th</sup> to enter, if you want to have a go. The winner(s) will be announced at the March Club Night (9<sup>th</sup>).

In the meantime another quiz appears on pages 19 and 20 of this edition. This time all you 'couch potatoes' should have a head start since the clues and answers all relate to terrestrial TV and National Radio programmes, a few of them from the past, but most of them still running.

If you do want to submit an entry, whether last month's or this, please try to remember to include a donation of at least £1.00 which will go towards our 'SAV' fund.

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## Half-Gallon Run

Following last month's plea for someone to take on the task of running the *Half-Gallon Run* this year, Richard (Scott) has kindly stepped up to the plate and offered to do so.

Many thanks Richard! One volunteer is definitely worth ten pressed men!

Rumour has it that Richard has something a bit different in mind this year so we can be certain that an interesting challenge will be in store.

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## Inter-Register Club

In January Colin and I took the opportunity of attending the AGM of the Inter-Register Club, held in Mildenhall, Wiltshire (not Suffolk!). As many will be aware, our annual '*Nightjar*' Navigational Scatter Rally is an event featuring in the I-RC series for the year and generally is the final one upon which winners and also-rans are occasionally decided.

At least two of our number are known to compete in I-RC events but, now that we're becoming more involved with the I-RC and its activities, it makes sense to publicise its calendar of events for the wider interest and benefit of those members who may consider taking part in one or two of these throughout the year. Remember, by virtue of *our* affiliation with the ATDC, an *Austin* is perfectly eligible to enter any I-RC event, along with the Rileys, Humbers, Alvis's and others, of course.

The I-RC's recently published calendar of events is therefore reproduced herewith:

### Inter-Register Events - 2009

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organising Club</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Possible Clashes</b>
Sat 4 <sup>th</sup> April	Alvis	Scatter Rally + tour	Sussex	
Sun 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Humber	Navigation Rally	Evesham	
Sat 18 <sup>th</sup> July	Riley	Treasure Hunt	Malton, Yorkshire Wolds	VSCC Southern
Sun 19 <sup>th</sup> July	Alvis	Regularity & Observation Rally	Scottish Borders	
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup> July	STD	Driving Tests & Tour	Hungerford	
Sat 22 <sup>nd</sup> August	750MC Brooklands	Treasure Hunt	Surrey/Hampshire	VSCC Western?
Sun 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Alvis	Scatter Rally	Dartmoor	Beaulieu Autojumble
Sun 27 <sup>th</sup> September	Crossley	Treasure Hunt	North Yorks	
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> November	ATDC/NHAEG	"Nightjar" Scatter/Orienteering	Surrey/Hants/Berks	VSCC Cotswold Trial

Further information on any of these events may be obtained by contacting Nigel Coulter, the recently appointed Secretary, at [coulters.email@btinternet.com](mailto:coulters.email@btinternet.com)

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**WELCOME !** A couple of new faces were present at the February Club Night although, due to everything that was going on and the rather hectic nature of that particular evening, there was little opportunity for any of us to get to meet and greet them properly on that occasion.

They are **Dave and Anne Butcher**, who reside in **Sandhurst** and have a **1933 Austin 10/4 saloon**. Unfortunately, their own attendance on that evening was a little brief since they seemingly had to dash off to pick up their offspring but, hopefully, the situation will be a little calmer at the March meeting and we'll get to meet them again for a more appropriate introduction to our club.

In any event, we welcome them warmly into our midst and hope that they will find the club, our events and activities to their liking.

*Trevor*

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### 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 includes; Starting Handle Rattle – Austin Seven, Clutch Slip – Austin Ten (a very comprehensive reply) and Headlamp Mask – Austin Seven (highlighting some of the problems during wartime motoring).

No 980 appeared in January 1940, No 1029 appeared in February 1941 and No 1103 in October 1942.

#### **No 980 – Starting Handle Rattle – Austin Seven**

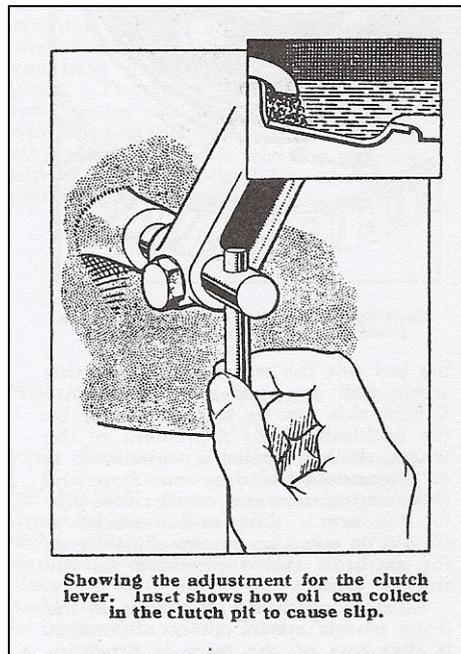
**Q.** *I am the owner of a three year old Austin Seven, the starting handle of which is fixed in position and sets up a distinct rattle when the car is running. There seems to be no method of tightening the loose portion of the handle, and although it is a very small point I should be glad if you could suggest a cure, as the car is otherwise very silent in all respects.*

**A.** A rubber handle-bar grip as used on bicycles, fitted to the starting handle, will usually effect a satisfactory cure. If the grip is a little too large for the handle a length of insulating tape bound round the latter will serve to secure the grip quite firmly. This method not only prevents rattling but is also neat and is kind to the hands if the starting handle has to be used much. No doubt you realise that the handle has a "rest" position, lying horizontal, in which position the bearing is sealed so that moisture cannot enter the engine through the starting handle bracket.

## No 1029 – Clutch Slip – Austin Ten

**Q.** *I have recently been experiencing some trouble with clutch slip on my Austin Ten Sherborne saloon. Can you please advise me as to the cause and anything I can do to cure this trouble.*

**A.** Clutch slip may be due to a number of causes. In the first place, are you sure that you have not been running the car with your foot resting on the clutch peddle, as even the weight of your foot would tend to reduce the clutch pressure and so cause slip, and this slipping, if persistent, would reduce the frictional efficiency of the linings. Another possible cause of the slip is the need for adjustment. You will appreciate that as the clutch wears and the members are moved closure together under the influence of the springs, the clutch pedal will rise towards the floorboards, and a time may come when, if there is no free movement for the pedal when released the resistance of the floor may have exactly the same effect as driving with your foot on the pedal. In these circumstances slip would be inevitable, and the remedy is, of course, to adjust the clutch pedal lever in accordance with the instructions in the handbook, which is not a very difficult job. This adjustment should leave at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch free movement when the clutch pedal is up with the clutch engaged before it is obstructed by the floor.



Of course another possibility that may apply in respect of your car is the presence of oil on the clutch linings, as the lubricant will materially reduce the efficiency of the clutch. Oil sometimes reaches the clutch from the engine through too high an oil level in the sump, or due to imperfect “breathing” of the crankcase.

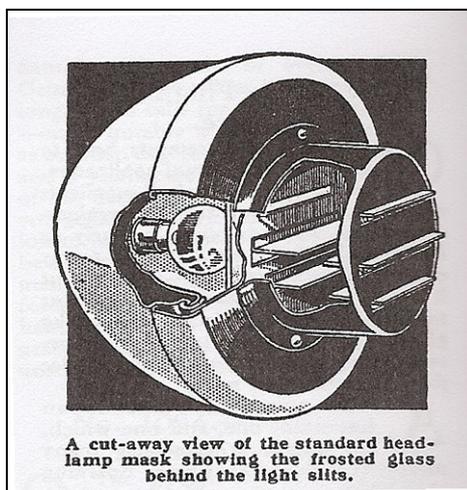
Another cause of oil collecting in the clutch pit is obstruction of the small drain hole which you will find below this part of the car. If this hole is not kept clear i.e., if it gets obstructed with mud, any oil that reaches the clutch pit through the engine, or for

that matter, from the gearbox, will tend to collect until it is sufficiently deep to be picked up by the flywheel, when it will be thrown around and on to the clutch as the engine operates. You should check up on this point with a view to seeing whether anything can be done without dismantling otherwise we think that it will necessary to withdraw the gearbox from the engine and examine the clutch for attention to the linings or the rest of the mechanism. We do not know what mileage your Ten has covered, but you should, of course, bear in mind the possibility that the linings have worn sufficiently to require renewal.

### No 1103 – Headlamp Mask – Austin Seven

**Q.** *I have on my Seven the Government type of mask for the headlamp and am wondering whether in view of more night driving being necessary, I ought to clean this mask out, and if so, how can I do this in respect of the frosted glass on the inside, i.e., the side facing forward. Do you recommend dismantling the mask? Also, as I have been thinking of fitting one of the new-type masks to the other lamp, I should appreciate your advice as to whether these are advantageous and whether they conform to the law.*

**A.** To ensure maximum lighting efficiency whilst conforming to the regulations, it is desirable to keep the headlamp mask clean. Whilst dust can be removed by a long thin brush, for this attention to be really effective we advise dismantling the mask, which can be readily done. The frosted glass can then be thoroughly washed, brushing all dirt from the frosting, and the mask reassembled. When refitting the mask, ensure that the slots are truly horizontal.



Of the other designs of mask, those at present on the market, namely, the Hartley and the Lucas, are authorised types and the lighting they give conforms with the legal requirements. Optically, they are claimed to give the maximum permissible illumination, but the throw of light differs from that of the standard mask. Thus, for instance, while the standard lamp tends to give an egg-shaped spread of light, the Lucas gives a crescent of light, with very wide spread to the verges of the road.

Incidentally, one advantage of the Lucas type is the ease with which the lens can be cleaned, it being accessible from the front without any dismantling. Whichever type you fit, remember that the law requires the light not to strike the ground within ten feet of the car and not rise above the horizontal. You should ensure that these requirements are strictly conformed to. They are a matter of lamp mounting adjustment. Another factor you should bear in mind is the efficiency of the lamp bulb itself, as this may have aged, in which case renewal will be of benefit.

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

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Another old advertisement from January 1955, I have tried to trace the company, Colley-Bates Ltd, but as with most automotive component manufacturers or suppliers of that time, it appears they are no longer in existence. Assuming there was no problem with the extra height these auto fillers added to battery in the vehicle battery box, then, they seemed a good idea to the old style lead acid battery. Anyone in the club remembers these or even used a set?

**AUTO BATTERY FILLER** **IT'S NEW!**

The only transparent battery level indicator guaranteed not to discolour. Will remain transparent always.

- + DOUBLES BATTERY LIFE. ★ PERMITS CHECKING AT A GLANCE.
- + TOPS UP YOUR BATTERY AS YOU DRIVE.
- + PREVENTS OVER-FILLING AND CORROSION.

Made in six sizes.

**7/-** SET OF THREE

**14/-** SET OF SIX

When ordering give size of existing filler cap

**COLLEY-BATES LIMITED**

126, Seymour Place, London, W.1. Tel. PAD. 6920-25

*Andy Ranson*

**'CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT'**

AT

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

ON

SUNDAY 20th DECEMBER 2009

*Our local coach company are staging a trip to the above event. Trevor and I are booking tickets for ourselves and wonder if any club member would like to join us. The cost of the trip, which includes coach and entrance to the Royal Albert Hall, is £47.00.*

*The coach departs at 2:15pm and should be back in Sandhurst at 8:00pm. At the moment I just need names; payment will not be due until later in the year, possibly July/August.*

*The evening will include carols and seasonal classics, presented with all the grace and charm of the 18th century, in a candlelit setting featuring The Mozart Festival Orchestra in full costume.*

*I appreciate it's just a 'little' early to be inviting interest so far ahead but I'm sure this will be a spectacular and enjoyable evening so demand may be high and early booking is likely to be needed.*

*Please let me know by 10th March if you would like to join us.*

*Jean Edwards (01344 775012) or  
[trevor\\_c.edwards@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor_c.edwards@btinternet.com)*

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**SAV Update**

Everyone should have received a separate report on the February Club Night and will now be aware that the evening was very successful in kick-starting our efforts to raise funds to be able to send a D-Day veteran over to Normandy for the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations taking place there this June.

Elsewhere in this edition, Karen (Witton) has also alluded to the amazing turn out (on an awful evening) and the amount of goods brought and bought at the 'Bring and Buy Sale', which followed the interesting talk given by Peter Thompson from the Surrey Branch of the Normandy Veterans Association.

Since that evening the Committee has held a meeting specifically to discuss the direction we're going with the campaign and, in particular, precisely how any funds we may be able to raise should be disbursed.

Bearing in mind the original objective of our current fund-raising efforts the consensus strategy which has emerged can be summarised as follows and is commended to the club membership for consideration and approval:

- 1) We intend to stick with our initial plan to offer *some* financial support to the Surrey branch of the NVA and will be forwarding a cheque for a sum, yet to be agreed, to that organisation in due course.
- 2) However, in the meantime, we have now identified an actual D-Day veteran, by name, whom we have 'adopted' as our dedicated focus for the trip to France. This, in fact, is Billy Ness, a Geordie, whose fascinating story has now been acquired, the first half of which appears in this Newsletter, prefaced by Karen (Witton). We are currently in contact with the Secretary of the Tyneside Branch of the Parachute Regimental Association and are hopeful that this approach bears fruit and that we shall be funding Billy's trip across the Channel this June. More on this later.
- 3) In addition, in keeping with our key aim to fund a veteran or veterans who, for purely financial reasons, would be unable to make the trip to Normandy, we are pursuing other avenues a little closer to home and have been communicating with the Wiltshire NVA with, ideally, a view to identifying yet another deserving case, or perhaps cases. If so, then funds permitting, we will be able to subsidise others.
- 4) Finally, if, as now seems perfectly possible, we exceed our primary target and raise more cash than is required to satisfy our primary goal, we will need to consider and determine how best to dispose of any residue.

Headley Court, near Epsom, has, for a considerable number of years now, been the foremost establishment dealing exclusively with the treatment, recuperative care and rehabilitation of severely wounded, currently serving service personnel. The other establishment, performing a similar function, is the Military Wing of Selly Oak Hospital, in Birmingham.

A charity, entitled '*Help for Heroes*' ('H4H'), was set up 12 to 18 months ago primarily to assist both these establishments in the wonderful work they both undertake.

Having accessed their web-site ([www.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk)) and learned a little about the organisation and its set-up I then spoke with its Director of Operations, Mark Elliott, who filled me in with much more information. They are very modestly administered and actually

operate out of a small shed somewhere in Tidworth Garrison (*Ah, I remember it well! Ed*) I was especially interested in what percentage of monies were actually expended on administration and was pleasantly surprised to hear that it is less than 2%! More than 98% goes towards the work done with modern day heroes which is remarkable when one considers the large charities such as Oxfam and the like.

We therefore feel that it would be quite fitting, if at all possible, to do something, *not only* for the heroes of yesterday, *but also* for those of today. Both are undoubtedly most worthy of our respect and support.

Please take a look at [www.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk). if you can. I think you will agree it could be a most worthy repository for any spare funds we may find we have once our key objective has been met.

It is hoped that this places everyone in the picture so far as where we are at the moment with this topic.

However, if anyone has any questions or concerns at all please get in touch with any Committee member for further clarification or, of course, get back to me on 01344 775012 **or** at [trevor\\_c.edwards@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor_c.edwards@btinternet.com)

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### **Club contacts 2009**

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On a train from London to Manchester, a American was telling off the Englishmen sitting across from him in the compartment. "You English are too stuffy", he said. "You set yourselves apart too much. Look at me.....in me I have Italian blood, French blood, a little Indian blood and some Swedish blood. What do you say to that?"

The Englishman replied, "Very sporting of your mother"



**Roy (Roberts) proud new owner of his 1935 Austin Ascot saloon; a real beauty (the car, of course!)**



**And what a pristine power-pack, as well!**

## CLUB NIGHT & EVENTS DIARY/UPDATE

- Mar 08 (E) Morris/Austin Day - Brooklands
- Mar 09 (CN) Talk: 'Wind Turbines'  
Tom Brinnicombe – Head of Marketing and Communications, Partnerships in Renewable Energy (part of Carbon Trust)  
All you ever wanted to know on the subject!
- Apr 20 (CN) 'Spring Airing'  
(N.B. *not* 13<sup>th</sup>) All those coming along in a 'real' car will be eligible for a free draw for a £25.00 M&S voucher
- plus!* *Grand Draw* - in aid of our Sponsor a Veteran campaign
- plus* Plant Sale
- Apr 26 'Drive It Day' Mystery Event/Run  
(Karen Witton)
- May 12 (CN) 'Feely Bags' competition  
*plus!* 'outdoor event' - *t.b.d.*
- May 17 REME Museum Run and Barbecue  
(John/Joan Hancock & Andy/Do Ranson)
- June 8 (CN) 'Half-Gallon Run' (Richard Scott)
- June 27 (E) BEN Run – via Windsor Great Park.
- July 13 (CN) Concours d'Elegance evening.
- July 26 (E) 'Picnic in the Paddock'
- Aug 10 (CN) t.b.d
- Sept14 (CN) t.b.d.
- Oct 12 (CN) Talk. Speaker to be identified.
- Oct 18 (E) 'Ben to Brooklands' Rally
- Nov 9 (CN) Auction Night (Don)
- Nov 21 (E) '*Nightjar*' Navigational Scatter Rally
- Dec 14 (CN) 'Festive Fun Evening'  
'Surprise appearance of TV quiz personality'

**Important Notice**

**Grand Draw Raffle Tickets**

*In order to be able to plan and stage a 'Grand Draw', as has been widely publicised previously, in support of our SAV campaign, a Licence has been obtained from Wokingham Borough Council which legally permits the sale of tickets to individuals outside our immediate club group.*

*Raffle tickets have been prepared and printed and we are taking the extreme liberty of forwarding 5 books to each subscribed club member in the earnest hope that these may be sold to other family members, friends (close and distant), work colleagues, associates, strangers seeking directions, lost dogs and anyone else who may consider the cause we've adopted a deserving one. You are, of course, under no obligation but please do your very best to sell the tickets you receive and do get back to me if you require any more. Books of tickets will also be available for collection on the March Club Night (9<sup>th</sup>).*

*Tickets are £1.00 each. Please hand or forward all proceeds, together with counterfoils and any unsold tickets preferably to Jean (Edwards), Treasurer, or, failing that, to any Committee member by Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April. Jean's contact number is 01344 775012; postal address: 55 The Brambles, Crowthorne. RG45 6EF  
The Grand Draw will take place during the April Club Night, 'Spring Airing' on April 20<sup>th</sup>.*

*Thank you very much, in advance, for your anticipated efforts. They undoubtedly will be greatly appreciated by those who, so deservedly, will benefit from them.*

*TREVOR*

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**In the frozen foods department of our local supermarket I noticed a man shopping with his son.**

**As I walked by, he ticked something off his list and I heard him whisper conspiratorially to the child, "You know, if we really screw this up, we'll never have to do it again"**

*'Listen Very Carefully, I shall say this only once' – Part 6*

*First I have to say that I'm absolutely staggered at how the whole club turned out for the Bring and Buy last month – it was such a fantastic success – Jean and I could not believe how generous you all were both in bringing items to sell and also in buying items. We have made such a terrific start and it is only the beginning. I have been busy selling Pat's marmalade at work and already have another £25 to add to our total. The marmalade is very popular. I know how much I love home made jams, etc and of course all my colleagues are busy like me so the chance for home-made wares is a treat indeed!*

Next, a word about the Grand Draw and raffle tickets which will be on sale very shortly!! As you may know, or maybe not, Dave and I wrote to the *Farnham Herald* about the club SAV initiative. Not only did Sir Ray Tindle – the proprietor - send us some great raffle prizes but we're now waiting for the Editor to contact us regarding the story. I think I may need to make an appointment at the hairdressers..... The only problem is that after a trip in *Molly* my hair is simply not in the right place – although at least it is still on my head!! We have also written to various other local organisations asking for raffle prize donations. If anyone has any other ideas please do shout as the more prizes the better. It's amazing how an idea has really taken off and we are going to be able to make a difference to some of these old vets – of that I have no doubt.

One of the old vets we have met at Pegasus Bridge is Billy Ness. He dropped at Pegasus on D-Day. I have promised you his story – as told by him – and at last I am so pleased to be able to provide that. He's an amazing old boy – lives in Newcastle, is in a wheelchair but each year he, together with other veterans of more recent conflicts who are part of the parachute regiment veterans association, makes the journey to partake of the celebrations and pay his respects to his fallen comrades. Despite the emotion of the event and the difficulties he faces, he has the most amazing smile. We are hopeful that we shall be able to take Billy for a ride in our old ladies whilst we are there. Dave and I are discussing the itinerary with his team so that hopefully we can do this and then provide photos etc., for all to see in the club.

*Now, departing from the normal format, here, in his own words, is Part One of Billy's story thus far.....*

**BYKER lad  
Billy Ness  
Born in Norfolk Road in February, 1925,  
he lived most of his childhood in  
Clifford Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.**

**A**fter leaving Raby Street School at 14 he wanted to be a plumber, but his mother got him a job at the Co-op stores and, as many youngsters found out, you had to do what your mother told you in those days!

"I was a cart lad, running behind the carts delivering parcels. I was still doing that when the war broke out. Before I was 17 I joined T coy of the Home

Guard in Newgate Street, Newcastle. There (were) lads from the Co-op, the Rediffusion, and a small group of men who took the films around. That became a perk because while they were in our lot we could get a few buckshee tickets to go to the pictures." In 1943 Bill got called-up. He went down to Brancepeth for six weeks in the GSC (General Service Corps), and then he applied for the infantry.

"I went into the Duke of Wellington's Regiment and after I did my training my mate from Sheffield and I tried to join the 12th Yorkshire Parachute Battalion. But Colonel Reggie Parker said he wanted all Yorkshiremen in his Battalion. So when we went into the 12th Parachute Battalion which was, in fact, the 10th Battalion the Green Howards."

At the beginning of October 1943 when Billy got down to the Battalion. A Company had been formed, B Company had a few men in, C Company was just getting under way. The company commander was at Ringway doing his jumps, so everything was just getting under way.

"I remember going into the barracks," said Billy. "We went from Brancepeth Castle, I met up with some blokes in Hardwick Hall and one of them was Joe Barnett, he finished as my Company Sergeant Major. We went down to Larkhill, into the camp where I put my stuff and I'll always remember Joe Barnett said to us go and see if you can find Sergeant Hardcoat. I saw a Sergeant and I said "Excuse me Sergeant, can you tell me who Sergeant Harcourt is?" and he said: '*And you are?*' "Private Ness, Duke of Wellington's Regiment." He said: '*Son, we all have problems*'. And that to me broke me into the 12th Battalion that a Sergeant would sit and joke with you because in the depot a Sergeant was a man above all men. By February 1944, we were doing exercises, going out on schemes, and then you got what you called Biz One and Biz Two, they were two big exercises.

The first one we did was jumping out of Albermarles, they were horrors. The training was pretty good because everything we were doing seemed to be experimental. In 1944 the training started in earnest. We'd be out at Cranborne Chase for the whole weekend, battle order, battle drill. I've got to say it was interesting. Before D-Day we had no leave for about three months. We had weekend passes, and that's all right for the London lads, but for us it was tough, it was just hard lines." One day they said to Billy and the lads, right, get ready, this is it. They knew they were going to go on the big one.

"About two or three days beforehand there were big maps, lots of sand tables which we knew would be our objective but there were no names.

We knew it wasn't just a raid because we knew the whole Division was going although they were in different camps. "There was the 7th 12th and 13th Battalion in one and we knew the 8th and 9th and the Canadians were in another, so we knew it was the big one.

We got lectures, talks. I always remember General Gale saying, '*Now don't worry, only a bloody fool would send anybody right on top of the Atlantic Wall,*' and he stood for

about 20 seconds, then said, *'I'm that bloody fool, that's where you're going'*.

Later one of the officers made one of the best statements I ever heard, he said, *'The only good thing to come out of the First World War is the Second World War Generals'*, because most of them had been in the trenches as young officers and never again were they going to do that. One day we got two eggs, we used to get one egg, so that means you were going in, then all of a sudden, *'Oh it's scrubbed, oh what's going on?'*

Well, we knew it had been called off, but they didn't tell us it had only been scrubbed for 24 hours.

When the time came we all ended up at Keevil Aerodrome and then you're all lined up, blackening your faces, getting your chutes on, you knew what was coming I was scared, obviously, but not as scared as I was over the Rhine because I knew what was coming there. But I think I would have been disappointed if it had been put off, but I was no hero. If they told me to go 100 yards up that alleyway and stay there I went 100 yards. I didn't do 102 just to make sure, if that was where they wanted me that's what I did.

Soon it was in the plane and off. We were supposed to get there just after 12 but in actual fact we didn't land until about 20 to one in the morning. It only takes you less than a minute leaving the plane to landing. We were going to the back of Ranville. I was very, very lucky, I actually landed on the correct DZ (Drop Zone). The first thought that came to my mind was wait till my mother finds out where I am, she'll go bloody mad - she did actually.

Anyway, we're scared and we're milling around. I stopped and said right, what we've got to do is listen for the bloke blowing the whistle, the hunting horn was for the 7th Battalion, the bugle was for the 13th, and we had the whistle. Well, I couldn't hear no whistle.

Look, they said, there'd be a winking white light and one of those winking white lights will be for you. But the pathfinders had surrounded the whole of the DZ with lights.

So the next step was the time method; you had to look up, follow the flight of the aircraft, turn back to 20 past five and walk that way. So I looked up, there was two going that way, one crashing over there, some coming in this way. By now officers were landing and shouting make for the quarry. There was shouting and a sound of battle, the whole atmosphere was queer, eerie, you would see layers of tracer bullets, just layers, but what you forgot was there were seven bullets in between each tracer."

Billy and a collection of lads made it to the quarry and dug in. A captain went to the forward hedgerow and was wounded, a lad from Greenside, Sergeant Milburn, was killed. Seven were killed in the forward hedgerow which was proving a dangerous place.

A German tank came up and we scattered and came back again before they were reorganised.

"The Germans came back that night and were probing us all the way around," said Billy. "It was a bit hairy and some of the lads couldn't sleep, I

did, I slept, I was tired. I was 19 and had seen some of the lads killed and couldn't quite take it in. I wasn't as scared as what I've read in the books about the blokes in the trenches in the First World War. But I kept saying to myself, *'Crikey Moses, what's going to happen'*, but you still did it.

Between June 7 and 8 we had just been what you call holed up in the perimeter, by the way you could go in and out because you hadn't a straight line, a Jerry could cut through and we could cut back, blokes were coming in. On the 8th we went back to the quarry and had a sleep.

The next morning, June 9, it all started up again. We left the quarry and headed for the bridges, beside the bridge was a tow path and we started walking down it towards a village.

As we were walking I heard a noise and a lad stumbled in front of us. I thought what the hell's the matter with him? But as he was going down I realised that they were shooting at us from the other side and we started running.

The first thing you're taught is that if you're going through a hedge and there's a nice little space don't congregate there, spread out.

There was five of us and there was a nice little gap, so contrary to training, we were going through and a six-barreled mortar caught us coming out.

It killed one man, one bloke had his arm badly shattered and he fell across me, I was slightly wounded in the foot and the other two got up and walked away. I kept looking down and I saw lots of blood and thought *'Oh my God!'* But I couldn't feel anything, and then I remembered the poor lad going down and the all blood.

The medics came up and I said I'm OK but the medic said, *'Stay where you are and I'll have a look at your foot'*.

You know your heavy army boots, well I had no toe in one, the toe cap had been taken off and my foot was streaming blood, some shrapnel had gone in. But they just bandaged it.

I was taken to a chateau and they put us outside. A German sniper was shooting the lads on the stretchers, I think the Padre from Blyth went out and was killed, then one of the medical officers went out with a Red Cross flag, and I saw this, they shot him through the arm.

So we're lying in this chateau and a jeep came up with a lad who used to work in the Co-op, Alfie Price, he said *'Are you all right do you know what's happening?'* I said, *'No'*. He said all the walking wounded are going back to the beaches and are getting sent home on the empty ships. He said, *'Can you walk?'* I said, *'I can bloody run'*.

Actually, Alfie Price took me back in his jeep with a few other Northern lads. I went down to one of the docks into a tank landing craft which brought me back to England."

Billy was only in hospital for about a week and then he was sent to convalesce.

"After I had left and came home the 12th Battalion had to attack Breville. They attacked it and lost 156 men, they got a battle honour for it," said Billy.

"We then went back to the Battalion and just got there in time for the break-out. We got as far as Pont le Vek before they brought us back home."

Soon it was getting near Christmas and everyone was hoping to enjoy a well earned festive occasion, but things changed dramatically. "All of a sudden there was panic on, the Germans had broken through in the Ardennes.  
....."

**Makes fascinating reading doesn't it? This isn't fiction; it actually happened!**

**Part Two of Billy's story will appear in the April Newsletter.**

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*Well it looks like, yet again, little difficulty has been found filling 20 pages with bits and pieces to help you while away a few spare minutes or so – perhaps even more if you tackle the quiz!*

*Next month Maureen will be back tapping the keyboard. Don't know what she may have in store but no doubt will have some tales to tell from the experiences she and Don have had 'Down Under' (or does that term only refer to Australia?. Anyway, if anything, NZ's a bit more 'down under' than Oz.)*

*Keep your reports, articles, Sales and Wants Ads etc., coming in. The Newsletter is yours to use as you see fit (providing it's legal!), so don't be shy.*

*Spring's just around the corner now which, as Colin mentioned in his opening comment, means we can maybe enjoy some improved weather conditions and be able to get out and about in our 'real cars' once again. In the meantime,*

*Take care and safe motoring!*

*Trevor*



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\* \* \* \* \*

**Send in your entries by Wednesday 25th March and, as for February, please include a donation of at least £1.00 towards our 'SAV' fund. A prize will be awarded to the winner(s) who will be announced at the April Club Night. Many thanks!**

**Entries should be forwarded to me, Trevor Edwards, at:**

**55 The Brambles, Crowthorne. Berkshire. RG45 6EF**