

# Backfire

North West Casual Classics  
Newsletter February 2024



**The North West's Leading Classic Vehicle Club,  
Established 1996**

## COMMITTEE:

**Chairman: Nigel France 07932 057570**

chairman@northwestcasualclassics.com

**Vice Chairman and Events Management: Kenny Jackson 07983 755655**

vicechairman@nwcasualclassics.online

**Events Secretary: John Slevin**

events@nwcasualclassics.online

**Secretary: Michelle Jevons**

secretary@nwcasualclassics.online

**Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Steve Tanser**

membership@nwcasualclassics.online

**Webmaster and Social Media Admin: Phil Stott**

media-admin@nwcasualclassics.online

**Press and Public Relations: Position Vacant**

press-pr@nwcasualclassics.online

**Social Secretary: Dave Squires**

social@nwcasualclassics.online

**Backfire Editor: Steve Cropper**

editor@nwcasualclassics.online

**Co-opted members:**

**Club Videographer: Helen Forshaw, 07503 172086**

**Committee Member without portfolio: Jilly Tanser**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday 12th March 2024**

## DISCLAIMER

Views or opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the club, its officers or committee members. No responsibility can be accepted for inaccurate or misleading information within this newsletter, but every effort will be made to check accuracy before publication



**Phil and family in their Mini "Meg" looking suitably determined on the Wirral Minis run to Llandudno last month in freezing weather.**

## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER



Hi All!

I wish I could say that my first car was a 1956 Ford Zephyr Zodiac Convertible but truthfully, I can't. It looked '50s Ford-ish, and it was a single seater, and was automatic, well it had two pedals! I loved it. I was only 6. My dad had painted it with Dulux paint It was bright red with white wheels, steering wheel and windscreen surround. For me there was no downside, I didn't even know it was a hand-me-down from my elder brother Chris. This, however, was to be the format for a few years to come including my first two wheeled bike. Freedom! My own transport, I could drive anywhere within the confines of the whole of our back yard! As I became bigger the 'little red car' gave up its parts to a self-made 'bogey'/go-cart (call it what you will..) and was upcycled into later projects.

In 1969 I passed my Driving Test, four weeks after my 17th birthday and a 1965 Rover 2000 came my way, another hand-me-down, this time from my Dad. It was Yellow (Willow Green), I never liked the colour and so I resprayed it Cameron Green, a sort of British Racing Green with a black vinyl roof.

I stripped the engine and had it

machined and rebuilt, using high compression pistons and a quick lift dashpot to the single SU carb and had 120 mph out of it! Aah! the whiff of 5 star! Rust finally did its worst and by 1974, it was scrap. I kept the engine, it now resides in a 1975 Rover 2200 which has been in my brothers Durham lockup for 35 years. Yes I finally got my own back, he got my Rover 2200 hand-me-down and was later to put my 'special' engine in it.

In 1973, for my 21st I persuaded Dad to buy me a 1936 SS Jaguar 1-5 litre. It was very down at heel but I reckoned I could do the biz. I decided to strip it down to the chassis, assess it repair it and start the rebuild. This turned out to be the worst idea since Adolf Hitler's dad said to his wife "let's take this upstairs Klara, I'm feeling frisky tonight". I never braced the body, and most of the bottom 15" of the wooden frame was going rotten.

Around this time I met Anne, my future wife, and enticed her with a little used chat up line, "would you like to see my chassis"? Of course she was smitten and the rest is history. As there was more

strength in a jelly than in the SS's body, I decided to build my own. I used both the front and the back of the saloon, but made a two door convertible. By this time a suitable engine had been collected from Swaffham in Norfolk and was up and running. What I didn't know was that was a very rare car. Possibly one of only twelve in the world and they never made a tourer of that particular model. Still that made it rarer, did it not?

Anne and I married in 1980 and the SS came with me. I never finished it and in 2014 the dream was over, sold to a guy from Rugby and he sold it on soon after. I've checked and someone has registered it, but it's not on the road yet even though it was a driver when I said goodbye.

It seems that all the cars I have owned are now regarded as classics, which is I suppose to be expected, so here's the complete list:

1965 Rover 2000 SC

1975 Rover 2200 TC

1977 Fiat X19

1980 Volvo 343 DL.

1983 Volvo 345 GLE

1985 Volvo 245 GLE

1991 Volvo 245 GL

1996 Volvo 850 R , Red.

1972 Triumph Stag, Red. (2009)

1948 Austin 16, Fern Green. (2014)

Five Volvo's and you wonder why I wear a flat cap?

***Cheers, Nigel.***



## EDITORIAL

I was recently struck by the thought that vehicles that were once a familiar sight on our streets become extinct almost by stealth. As many of you know, I owned a Triumph Herald for many years, and I was watching a programme about Glasgow's last tram the other night, and Heralds were a common sight in the streets of that fine city. Yet I cannot remember the last time I saw one on a public road, and they are thin on the ground even at classic events. There are only seven listed for sale at [carandclassic.com](http://carandclassic.com) and just one listed by the owners' club, with three hopeful souls placing wanted ads for them. *Tempus Fugit* indeed for these characterful

and interesting little cars, which is a real shame.

More recently, the Ford Ka seems to be going the same way. We have owned three and they were a brilliant small car design, with fine handling, low running costs, lots of room and more than adequate go. But when did you last see one? Like the Herald, they are becoming extinct by stealth, or so I thought.

It appears instead that the little blighters have found a new career as endurance racers in the "Enduraka Race Series", which you can read about online. Our zippy little commuters are now hurtling round racetracks yapping at each other's heels in a new low-cost form of long-distance circuit racing. Who would have thought it?



Picture Credit: Mark Lees Photography

Diary dates for 2024	
21/04/2024	“Drive it Day” road run to Heskin Hall
11-12/05/2024	Blakemere Military Show (Pre-1950s only), Sandiway, CW8 2EB
18-19/05/2024	Anderton Boat Lift Show (Under discussion)
27/05/2024	Rainhill Village Gala
1-2/06/2024	Tatton Park (Early show)
08/06/2024	Hale Carnival, NWCC Annual Show, L24 4AX
23/06/2024	Lymm Transport Festival
07/07/2024	Lydiate Show
13-14/07/2024	Cheshire Steam Fair, Daresbury (Pre-1973 only) WA4 4AG
20-21/07/2024	Middlewich Show
03/08/2024	Newton Town Show
17-18/08/2024	Tatton Park (Late show)
7-8/09/2024	Avro 40’s Weekend at Woodford (Pre-1950s only)
8/9/2024	NWCC Show, Burtonwood
28-29/09/2024	Victoria Park Widnes (Provisional)
06/10/2024	Wirral Bus and Tram Show, Woodside Ferry

Events listed in blue above are NWCC’s own events. Those in black are where the club makes block entries. Those in green require individual entries to the organisers. Always check our web site or Facebook page before setting out for a show, as events can be cancelled at short notice or change dates for a variety of reasons.



## KEY POINTS FROM JANUARY MEETING

There were 53 members present, and the raffle raised £98.

Michelle accepted our cheque for £2,115.66 on behalf of "Room at the Inn", last year's charity.

Nigel reported that attendance on Boxing Day at the Jolly Thresher was at pre-Covid levels with lots of steam engines and classic cars and bikes present, but only a few NWCC members. The same was true of the New Year's Day gathering at the Black Swan.

Chris Lee warned members of the vast recall being made by Japanese and other manufacturers of vehicles fitted with defective Denzo fuel pumps. Chris also drew attention to the cancellation of the Bromley Pageant of Motoring due to ULEZ affecting stall holder's and exhibitor's vans transporting static exhibits. Classics other than "youngtimers" are already ULEZ - exempt.

A vote took place for this year's club charity, and "Warrington Disability Partnership" was chosen.

Steve T. circulated a statement of accounts, and took members through it. Total club membership is now 135, and income exceeded expenditure by £400.67. Turnover was £5135.88. Members approved the statement. Steve also took membership renewals.

## SHOW INFORMATION

Kenny advised members that sheets are now out for many shows this year, and asked members wanting to bring two vehicles to list the second on the back of the sheets, so that members can be asked to bring just one car if space should be at a premium.

Kenny confirmed that neighbouring clubs will be invited to some events where we have plenty of capacity as our guests, just as we attend some of theirs.

We have applied for 30 places at Lymm, but may be restricted.

Widnes show details should be out at the next meeting, and it is likely to be individual entries.

Kelsall, Daresbury and Astle Park steam rallies are all by individual application, with a pre-1972 age limit currently in force for all 3 events. This may change, and Kenny will keep us informed.

St Helens and Newton town centre show dates are still to be confirmed, and we also await dates from Phoenix for their events.

If any members are aware of events we do not attend which the club could support, please discuss this with John and Kenny.



**Michelle receiving our donation of £2115.66 on behalf of our 2023 charity partner “Room at the Inn” from Nigel. Well done to all our members for a terrific fundraising effort in these difficult times.**

## Drive It Day 2024

Our annual “St George’s Day Run” will take place on **Sunday 21st April, to coincide with the FBHVC “Drive it” day.** The starting point will be **The Hayloft, Sandy Lane, Bold, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 3XP** The Hayloft will be open at 10.00 am and you may purchase tea and coffee and items from their breakfast menu if time permits. Please note, the Hayloft only accepts card payments, so **no cash** please. The Run starts from 10.30 am . The Finish is at **Heskin Hall, Wood Lane, Chorley PR7 5PA** where we went last year. If club members would display rally plaques if they have them this will enable staff at the hall to direct us to the correct parking area, as our visit coincides with a classic vehicle show. Full details of the event and route, which has been ably plotted by Chris Lee to take in some of Lancashire’s finest roads and scenery will be in next month’s issue. Chris will be emailing out route details to all who have signed the sheet.

There are a sufficiency of lunch options at the hall, both within the historic building and without in the adjacent craft village to suit all tastes.



## The Docker Daimlers: The story of how the oldest car company in Britain brought glamour to 1950s Britain, but lost it's Royal Warrant and its identity in the process. Part one.

Britain in the 1950s was a drab place. The scars of war were everywhere, and rationing lingered until July 1954. An indebted and exhausted nation had started the long process of rebuilding, and coming to terms with the loss of 450,900 citizens who would never return, and many thousands with life-changing wounds. The Empire would soon be dismantled, and a generation of those who had fought were no longer prepared to accept the power and privilege of the upper classes as a given.

Despite this, Britain was the largest motor manufacturer in the world after America, and the biggest exporter. The Attlee government had nationalised steel in 1947, and it was available only to car makers who exported at least 75% of their output. This "export or die" policy created an artificial boom, but it would not last, and by 1952, US-owned Ford and Vauxhall had 29% of the UK domestic market. For most however, the 50s meant making do and mending old cars, with warmed over pre-war designs available to only a privileged few.

Daimler was Britain's oldest car manufacturer. Founded in 1896 in Coventry by H.J. Lawson, they

purchased a licence from Gottlieb Daimler's company in Germany to produce cars using his patents. This is why today we have a dormant British Daimler brand, owned by Tata, and a Daimler-Benz very much alive in Germany. The British Daimler was bought out by the Birmingham Small Arms Co. In 1910, and acquired Lanchester in 1933.

By the 1950s, Daimler were producing small cars under the Lanchester brand, large cars under their own name, and also had a considerable presence in the truck and bus market. They had become known for their use of fluid flywheels and Wilson pre-selector gearboxes. These would remain a Daimler feature until 1956.

The company was also synonymous with quality. Daimler had held a Royal Warrant since 1902, and its stately limousines, trailing oil smoke from their almost silent sleeve valve engines, can be seen on many old newsreels of the period.

Sir Bernard Docker had become Chairman of BSA in the 1940s, giving him oversight of Daimler. Almost the archetypical cigar chomping tycoon, he was already a very wealthy man by the late 40s

In 1949 he married Norah, Lady Collins, who had two previous marriages. Born above a butcher's shop in Derby, Norah had been a dance hall hostess before marrying two wealthy men in succession. A determined social climber, she acquired the cut glass accent and airs of the aristocracy. She convinced her husband that she could revitalise the staid Daimler brand, and was given a seat on the board .

Norah may have been brash "new money" but she was a relentless self-publicist, and she and Bernard were the "Posh and Becks" of their era. Always in the news and wildly extravagant, "Naughty Norah" was a gift to press editors, always ready

with a photo opportunity for the press and newsreels. Norah applied the same approach to Daimler cars. The "Docker Daimlers" would be the undoubted stars of Earls Court Motor Shows for six years, from 1948 to 1954. Each was a rolling showcase of extravagant materials, luxurious features and the finest coachwork Hooper's could produce. In an era of unremitting dullness yet to experience Rock and Roll, teenage rebellion or the Swinging Sixties, they looked as if they had landed from another planet, and gathered miles of film and newspaper coverage. The sequence began spectacularly in 1949 with the "Green Goddess".



**The 1949 Daimler "Green Goddess" Motor Show car**

Originally Jade Green, but in red over garnet since its restoration in America, this is a five-seater, 3 ton roadster measuring 20 feet long by 6 feet five inches wide. On a DE36 chassis, powered by a 5.4 litre straight eight engine with a 4-speed pre-selector gearbox it is one of only 4 survivors, including one at Gaydon. Good for only 12 mpg it was heroically extravagant and not very practical, but it is beautiful, and probably the closest Britain ever came to the style of the continental Art Deco masterpieces. Costing a mere £7,001, this car was built before Sir Bernard Docker's marriage to Norah, but it undoubtedly shows her influence.

Next below we have the "Golden Daimler" built for the 1951 Motor Show, again by Hooper's on a DE36 chassis. Originally all bright work was gold plated, and the flanks were adorned with 7,000 gold leaf stars. With upholstery and headlining in gold silk brocade, Australian camphor wood cabinet work, gold on black china and gold on crystal cocktail set and even a gold thermos (and the inevitable gold vanity set), it was quite a statement. The chauffeur sat on gold-piped black leather, and all side glass was double-glazed and electrically operated as was the division. All this cost £8,500, but it did win designer Osmond Rivers a design award.



**The 1952 "Golden Daimler" Motor Show car**



**The 1952 “Blue Clover” Daimler show car, again on the DE36 Chassis**

For 1952 Osmond Rivers created an extravagant 2 door coupe on the same DE36 straight eight/fluid flywheel/4 speed pre-selector chassis as his previous show cars. Originally in pale grey over mid-night blue, the flanks featured a 4 leaf clover pattern. Note that there are no rear wings, as the fronts sweep the full length of the car to the rear. This featured spats on sprung struts that hinged outwards for wheel changing. The interior was lavender blue leather piped in dark blue, with room for three up front and two separate chairs in the rear, which could fold away to increase luggage space. The dash, door cards and cabinet work were finished in blue lizard skin, with the usual Docker silver and crystal

vanity sets, cocktail sets, sandwich boxes and flasks and even a cine camera and a set of field glasses in a roof compartment. The roof also featured a glass panel with sun blind, and all windows were electrically operated.

For all its size and undoubted extravagance, along with “Green Goddess”, “Blue Clover” is probably the most harmonious and resolved design of the Docker series, and was called “The most elegant thing at Earls Court” that year by “Motor”. Today it can be seen in the Samsung Museum in Seoul.

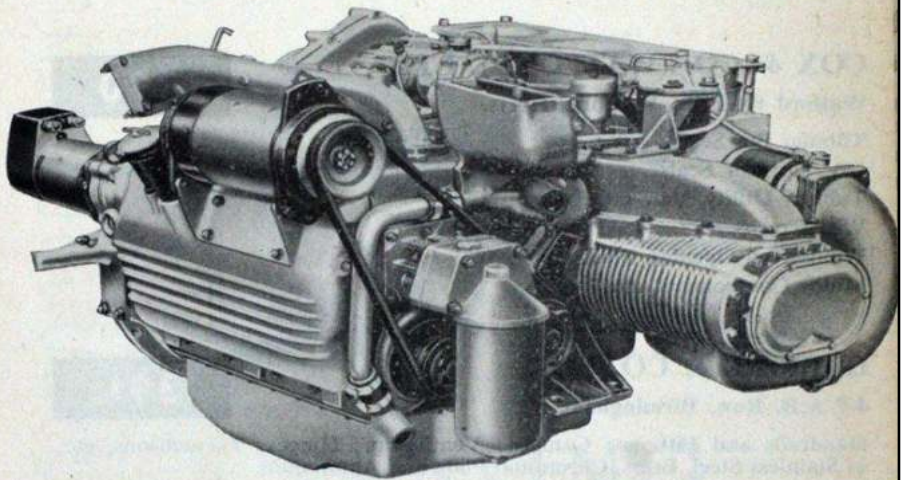
Next Month: The final three Docker Daimlers, a reckoning with the BSA Board, and has history been fair to Lady Docker?



# *Diesel* OPERATORS

VISIT STAND NO. 395

## SEE THE *NEW* TS3 DIESEL ENGINE



- MINIMUM BULK AND WEIGHT
- MINIMUM FUEL CONSUMPTION
- MINIMUM INITIAL COST
- MINIMUM MAINTENANCE COST

Tilling-Stevens T.S.3. 3-cylinder direct injection water cooled horizontally opposed piston, 199 cu. in. (3261 c.c.) capacity, 3.25" bore and 4" stroke 2-stroke diesel engine with blower assisted scavange.

*Ask at the stand for full details*

**TILLING - STEVENS**  
MAIDSTONE · KENT

Telephone : Maidstone 3932

Next month, a feature on the remarkable TS3 "double knocker" two-stroke Diesel engine and some of the vehicles it powered.

They really shouldn't have: An occasional look at some cars that really should never have got beyond the drawing board...



I try to feature beautiful cars in these pages, so for a change, I have sought out some true automotive horrors for you to feast your eyes upon. Taking (in vain..) the name of the revered Stutz Bearcat sportster from 1912, this gargoyle appeared in 1987, based on

a Pontiac Firebird chassis and a form of carbon fibre body. Resembling a startled carp, this riot of clashing lines was sold as the Bearcat II, at a trifling \$125,000. They sold just twelve, before it died in 1995. Amazingly, the Sultan of Brunei bought two..





**Below:** One for claustrophobics everywhere, I doubt if even “two large windows” could compensate for the sensation of being entombed, even if it was made by the firm that brought us the Berkley Bandit.

**Towed by any 7 h.p. car**

Go trailer camping in the new

## **BERKELEY CARAVETTE**



For full details write Department N.3

BERKELEY COACHWORK LIMITED · BIGGLESWADE · BEDS.



The Caravette lifts the trailer-camper to a new level of completeness and comfort. Light alloy exterior, insulated interior, with two large windows. Deep-sprung double divan bed. Detachable kitchen unit. Finished in Berkeley 'Vellum' grey. £99.15s. Fitted tents making side and rear extensions are optional extras.

*Of special interest to many will be the truck body, easily interchangeable with the Caravette. £15.*



## **Our NWCC Charity Partner 2024**

Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) is an internationally acclaimed user led charity. With over 30 years' experience of developing and delivering mobility and independent living services, our aim is to support disabled people and people living with long term health conditions.



<https://www.disabilitypartnership.org.uk>

**FIND THE CLUB ON THE WEB AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA AT:**

**Web:** <https://nwcasualclassics.online>

**Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/groups/northwestcasualclassics](https://www.facebook.com/groups/northwestcasualclassics)

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/NWCasualClassics>



Back Page Beauties: This Italian beauty is a 1964 Lamborghini 350 GT, the beginning of the Lamborghini bloodline, and one of only 120 ever built. Ferruccio Lamborghini was a tractor and oil heater tycoon, who allegedly fell out with Enzo Ferrari over a clutch problem, and declared he would build a better car himself. He did, but lost \$1000 on every one. With a Bizzarinni-designed DOHC all-alloy V12 sporting 6 Weber DCOE40 carburetors and pumping out 270 BHP, with 239 lb/ft of torque, this masterpiece of short-stroke Italian engineering would go on for decades. Capable of 0-60 in 6.4 seconds and 156 MPH, its value today is between £400k and £750K.