

Getting to know you, Bobbie & Mac

Being a true Southerner, i.e. born South of the River Thames, I spent my first thirty odd years living in the Garden of England (Kent). My early exposure to petrol was due to my father who was a motorcyclist and drove professionally for the police. He had a number of very nice cars including a couple of Jags, Austin Westminsters and a Ford Zodiac. My first ever drive was in a pre-war Austin Seven which somehow ended up in the possession of the Air Training Corps. My squadron was based at Biggin Hill which was an operational RAF station at the time. I remember driving the old Austin up and down the peri-track several times.

However, my real passion was for two wheels (still is) and I passed my bike test at 16. I owned a series of different bikes for the next six years until an unfortunate contretemps' with a lamp-post in 1975 terminated my riding career, but not my passion. In the 70's you could pay £30 and spend a day riding round Brands Hatch which was less than 10 miles from home. I attended the racing school at Brands twice and even purchased a 250 Yamaha racing bike which I slid off on my second outing, ran out of money and sold. I also took my road bikes round Brands Hatch which was tremendous fun but in retrospect wasn't the best idea as it did lead me to ride too fast on the road with predictable consequences.



Bobbie and I met in 1977 at the Black Horse pub in Farnborough where all the youngsters used to congregate. Three years later we bought a flat together in Crystal Palace. The hefty mortgage payments ensured that we were pretty skint for the next few years but by 1983 we decided that it would be nice to have a car so I managed to pass my test after six lessons and we invested £400 in a Ford Cortina Mark 3. We were married in 1985 and moved from Crystal Palace to Sawbridgeworth in Hertfordshire (just round the corner from Posh and Becks) and then up to Dronfield, Derbyshire, in 1989 where we have been ever since.

We kept the Smart for about three years before deciding that something with better build quality and fewer water leaks would be a step forwards. I sold the Smart on eBay (which is where I bought it) and found a very nice MX5 Roadster Coupe in Stormy Blue. It was a 2009 car with about 23,000 miles on it.

I thought I would never part with my MX5 but I made the mistake of sitting in a lovely Soul Red RF at the National Rally and I was smitten. I found myself scouring Auto Trader and eventually spotted an ex-demo RF in Soul Red at Coventry Mazda. I went to have a look and the deal was done! In 2018 I took the RF over to Northern Ireland for the Ulster Grand Prix travelling with an old school friend on his 1,000cc Kawasaki and his daughter on her 650cc Honda. The Irish roads were fantastic and the RF was in its element. I would thoroughly recommend Northern Ireland for a road trip.

When Bobbie joined me in retirement at the end of 2016 we took a three month trip to visit my sister in Australia. Prior to the trip I mentioned to my brother-in-law that we would quite like to buy a car to use whilst we were out there. The next day he rang me to say he had got us a very nice Holden Commodore limited edition with leather seats and alloy wheels! The car was ideal and we covered about 3,000 miles in it, including a trip to Tasmania (oh how I wished I had my MX5 for that trip). At the end of the holiday I gave the car a thorough valet, left it outside my sister's house with a for sale sign in the windscreen and it sold within a couple of days. We only lost \$500 (about £300) so it was cheap motoring for three months and the car never missed a beat!

We found ourselves on another visit down-under just a year later following a trip round British Columbia and a cruise from Seattle to Sydney. We thought we should try to buy a car again and my brother-in-law contacted a friend who just happened to be the sales manager at the Mercedes dealership in nearby Newcastle. We really came up trumps this time with an immaculate Mercedes E320 saloon in gold with cream leather. The Merc was 18 years old but was low mileage and had belonged to the father of one of the directors of the dealership. It really was like a new car. We did about 2,000 miles in the Merc with a big trip up to Queensland. We had no trouble selling this one as people were queuing up to buy it! We made \$1,500 profit on the sale which we split giving \$500 to the dealer, \$500 to my brother-in-law and we kept \$500. Truly cheap motoring!

In 2019 Bobbie and I took the RF to Scotland to follow our nephew who was competing in the Highlands and Islands race. The race started in Oban with about 50 teams each consisting of two runners and a yacht with a crew. They started with a five mile run then sailed over to Mull. The two runners cross the island running over the mountain then got back on the yacht and sailed to Jura. They ran over the island got back in the yacht and sailed to Arran and, you guessed it, they ran over Arran. This was followed by a short sail to the finish in Troon. They finished in 52 hours having run three marathons over three mountains. Not only did they do all that but they also had to row the yacht, in becalmed conditions, between the islands! True ironmen.

After Scotland we went over to the Isle of Man with about 35 other MX5s for the 30th Anniversary run with Scenic and Continental Car Tours. We had a fantastic time there with drives over the TT course, runs up a hill climb (The Sloc) on closed roads and an afternoon at the Andeas Racing Circuit reserved exclusively for our MX5s! I had never driven on a racing circuit before so it was with some trepidation that I ventured out for the first time. I took it steady at first, gradually picking up the pace and searching for the limits of adhesion. The RF was absolutely fantastic on track. The handling was benign, the car felt perfectly balanced and easy to push all the way until the traction control started stepping in (I wasn't brave enough to turn it off). Bobbie was chatting to a woman in the stand who had been out driving and she commented that one of the drivers out there thinks they are Ayrton Senna. Bobbie said "I think that's my husband". I might have to try another track day sometime.

I joined the MX5 Owners Club about three years ago at the Classic Restoration Show at the NEC. Definitely an excellent move especially as we are fortunate enough to be in Peaks and Pennines with so many new friends and like minded people. Looking forward to another year of great motoring and the brilliant runs organised by our glorious leaders.



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Newsletter

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MX-5

alive

April 2020

From the drivers seat...

2020 Briefly got off to a good start, Alan Round took a run around Derbyshire on Jan 5th, and from there it went steadily downhill!

The plan was to see the Snowdrops at Hopton Hall and finish the run with a curry at The Shalimar nr Rowsley with a mid morning comfort stop at Pooles Cavern in Buxton, storm Ciara put paid to that, Hopton Hall emailed me the night before the run to say that the Halls grounds were closed for safety reasons. Storm Dennis caused their continuing closure the following weekend.

The atrocious weather also prevented Steve and Nicola from trialling their March run to Cadbury World.

Our weekend away in the Cotswold's also had to be cancelled, many of the roads surfaces on our route suffered water damage, we now hope to get down to the Cotswold's in September.

During the last ten years prior to this I can only recall two runs being cancelled due to bad weather, the Bowling Run in February 2013 and The Tornado Run on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway in March 2018.

We were at least able to have a trip down Pooles Cavern and finish with a curry on March 8th, before Corona Virus restrictions started to be put in place.

So what about the future? The Covid 19 Virus is anticipated to peak in 3 months time, so hopefully we will be able to safely resume our meetings and runs during the summer. I propose to arrange two runs each month to make up for lost time.

Watch the Peaks and Pennines website for updates.

Safe driving.

Burton and Lesley



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The start for 2020 & more

Out at last the first of the year with Alan and Christine taking the lead. Starting at The Moorlands with 13 cars following his every move. Very dull, slight drizzle, but of course TOPS came down.

We set off towards Chatsworth, then making our way towards Monyash, Newhaven and Hartington, through Ecton, a very narrow, muddy winding road, Leading to THE TUNNEL more winding roads but fortunately no cars coming the other way so all was well.

The weather was still dull, but the rain still holding off. Still in convoy we headed towards Longnor, Ashbourn. The Tractors were out in the fields. A smell to clear the nasals.

At last sunshine, lasting for only a minute. SAD. We drove through Liton, taking a right turn we came to the Yonderman Cafe. Once again very busy but lucky the early bikers were ready to leave. Leaving us plenty of spaces for us to sit and enjoy some lovely food.

Sue joined us at Moorlands, not a member, YET, she thought she would come on the run to see what P&P was all about. John had also brought a companion, Domino, a beautiful black pooch. After an hours break, and saying our goodbyes to some of the group. Ten cars took to the road, doing a right turn at the Anchor Pub towards Castleton. Past Speedwell Cavern up Winnets Pass then towards Edale, No more empty roads it was very busy, up Mamtor and into Hope, following the road into Hathersage, up to Fox House then back to The Moorlands to say our goodbyes.

A round trip of 80 miles. Some GREAT NEW ROADS, with the PERFECT leader at the helm.

We thank Alan for a brilliant drive. He certainly knows his way around Derbyshire like the back of his hand.

Eileen



Pooles Cavern

Waking up to blue skies and sun shine, I felt like singing one of Michael Bubl  songs, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY.

Meeting up at Towsure, Sheffield and enjoying one of their lovely sandwiches. 13 cars started their journey towards Glossop. Taking notes of the flooded roads and tree falls with all the rain and winds we had. The sky now had lost the sun, dark clouds had gathered and a few drops of rain. Turning left at Ladybower, through Bamford, towards Castleton. Still raining but a good steady speed kept us dry. In Sparrow Pit we went slightly wrong, doing a UTURN we were soon back on the route. Plenty of bums with Lycra, and a bit of snow on them thur hills. Not much rain until we came into Buxton, the heavens opened fortunately we were in a traffic jam so the top had to go up. (HOW SAD) We soon arrived at our coffee stop, Poole's Cavern.

Most of the group decided to go down into the bowels of the earth, they all came back with glowing reports. How little we know what is under our feet.

At 1 30pm we took to the road doing a scenic drive to The Shalimar Indian Restaurant in Darley Dale, near Matlock.

Our scenic drive took us through Glutton Bridge, Staffordshire, at last the sun came out, then through Longnor, Hartington, Newhaven,

Pikehall Hopton, Wirksworth Matlock Bath and Matlock, towards Darley Dale where we entered the car park of The Shalimar at 2:50pm

The meal was brilliant, the service excellent. I speak for myself, but I am sure all thought the same. I am a novice when it comes to Indian food but with the help of friends a good choice was made.

We said our goodbye's at 5:15pm. The sun still shining with clear blue skies, we entered Chatsworth Park, seeing hundreds of deer. They crossed the road in front of us so we had to take great care. Even the full moon was out with its back drop of blue sky. It was a good feeling.

It was a great day, enjoyed by all. My thanks to Rob and Jayne for staying at the back with us, otherwise we would have been doing the run some of the time on our own.

I think I speak for all, Thanking Burton and Lesley for another BRILLIANT day.

Eileen



Our European Road Trip - Episode 1.

Ever heard of "The summer of 69?" Forget it. We're talking about the summer of 2019. What a wonderful time it was. And following the summer of 2018, "it" wasn't meant to happen at all. "It?" Our little European Road Trip, of course. But before we unfold the story, let's jump ahead to Sunday 8th September.

Picture this ... It's raining, and hard too. We're looking out of the windows from our overnight stop at The Garni Hotel (a fantastic gem of a place) in the village of San Valentino Alla Muta, Province of Trento, high in the Italian Alps. After many days of wonderfully dry and sunny, top-down weather, it's raining. Drat. Today it was meant to be warm bright and clear, because today was the day we were going over the Stelvio Pass. Again - we also "did" The Stelvio in 2018 - but that's another story for another time. This pass is not for sissies. With its peak sitting at 2785 metres above sea level, and a mere 75 hairpin bends, 48 of them going up (from the Northern, Austrian side to the Southern, Italian side), it's a dream of a drive, and absolutely perfectly suited to the MX5. And we (that's me - Bernie, aka Steven, and Janette, aka Mrs Bernie) were in the presence of two of them. Janette and I in our little red number, the one with those white wheels. Yes, now don't forget those white wheels. And Paul and Margaret (you know who I mean) in theirs (not with white wheels).

After a reasonably relaxing continental breakfast (for three of us), and Paul chomping at the bit to get going, with cars packed under the pouring rain, and our goodbyes and thanks said to our wonderful hosts, we set off over simply gorgeous roads to enjoy stunning scenery (well, the bits we could see, anyway) on our way to the foothills that enclosed the Strada Stratale (SS)38, the start to The Stelvio, its peak some 15 miles and 1805 metres (forget Brexit, it's 24.3 km for you Europhiles) ahead. Thankfully, and with sighs of great relief, the Big Sign at the start (Prato allo Stelvio) announced that the pass was open. Did I mention that Paul had been chomping at the bit? Of course he had. Why? Because this was a BIG dream of his, and he was about to fulfil it. We were off!

Did I also mention the rain? Well, it hadn't stopped. But when it did wow, oops, help!! You see, the thing about mountains, especially those up in the Alps, is that they can be unpredictable. And on that summer's day of the 8th September 2019, when we were just about half way up at Hairpin 34, they decided we needed snow, and lots of it. So there we were, on a Sunday morning, miles from anywhere and anybody, stopped on the SS38 around 7 miles below the summit, unable to go any further. Up or down. Now picture this ... we have slithered and slipped our way as far as we could go, the cars are stopped, the men are out of the cars in conference, the fair ladies are trying to keep warm, and our little red number begins to slide down the road ... all by itself. We're on this steep mountainside with a precipitous edge. From within the car, shrieks can be heard. So what does a man do? He throws himself at the back of the car to try to halt the inexorable progress towards damage or doom. What a hero! Saved the day. But no more of this. This is only a tidily little taste of what was an unbelievably fantastic holiday with great friends on a holiday of a lifetime to remember. And in Episode two did Paul's dream come true? Well, you'll just have to wait until next time to find out. And then some more.

Steven (Bernie) Dobrowski



IMPORTANT - Monthly meeting

Given the current situation with the Corona virus, please keep checking the website for the latest meeting dates as they are subject to change.