

Friends

On the move

April 2011



Another home:

The new store is literally next door to the old and still on the historic Motor Mills site.

At 35,000 sq ft, the store is substantially bigger allowing much more space for access to vehicles.

The move to a new store has been long coming, largely due to the amount of preparation of both vehicles and premises that was required. Physical movement of the “reserve collection” from old store to new began at the end of February and finished on the afternoon of April 1– just over four weeks.

The new store is literally next door to the old and still on the historic Motor Mills site. Apart from the tallest vehicles, everything could be taken through intercommunicating doors without going outside and this saved a lot of time.

A major contribution to getting the job done within a short time was the number of Friends who turned up to help, and Chris van Schaardenburgh, who organised the move. He asked for the Museum’s appreciation of this to be put on record.

At 35,000 sq ft, the new store is substantially bigger than the old, allowing much more space for access to vehicles. It provides a far better environment for the collection thanks largely to a better roof, but also thorough cleaning. High racking along one side allows for greater storage on pallets. As well as office space, there are side offices suitable for storage of small items. Finally, it has a potential workshop area. This would remove the need for all vehicles having to be transported to the Museum for all but very minor work.

Friends will have the opportunity to see the new store on the August clubnight. Store tours for the public will be held in June and September and may also be organised for visiting motor clubs.

Any Friends interested in helping with these tours who have not done so already, should get in touch with us and become involved.

JV

Chairman’s Chat

Last month’s AGM gave the opportunity to look back over a very busy year for Friends, accompanying Museum vehicles to a variety of outside events from school fetes to major exhibitions, helping with festivals of motoring and cycling and six tours of the old stores.

The three work groups – Archives, Maudslay and Motorcycle – all made substantial progress.

Thanks go to all the individual Friends who have been actively involved in these and other activities, many for the first time this year. Also to committee members for their regular input and to Museum staff for their considerable support.

Since then, the long awaited move to the new store has been completed.

We have looked at several events for the coming year that would involve Friends’ participation – further details in other parts of this newsletter.

So the “chairman’s message” is much the same as this time last year - plenty of opportunities for you to get involved. Please do!

What exactly?

In last month’s newsletter we published two mystery photos in the hope that someone would be able to identify the subjects.

By the time the answers were revealed after the AGM, no-one had successfully identified the Bertone bodied coupe.

According to two big chrome badges on the boot lid, it’s a Simca 1200.

On the other hand the other picture was an easy one for Bob Smith, who correctly identified the metal structures lined up on a Welsh hillside as World War 2 rifle range target holders that had been installed by the War Office.

Bob came across these in his army days and provided the additional information that they could not withstand machine gun fire.

Perhaps we should have asked what his job was and in whose army!

NEXT CLUBNIGHT:

**Harry Lawson,
Crook or Pioneer?**

is the subject of a talk by Steve Bagley
Thursday, April 21 at 7.30pm



The first bus on Ratchawithi Road didn't stop but the young lady assured us that the number 80 following would take us to the Victory Monument. We were in Bangkok heading for a station on the Skytrain line. Our 40-year-old Mercedes charged ahead while the conductress, who had been sitting on the engine cover, approached us with her ticket machine. Actually the ride was surprisingly comfortable with good aircon (windows wide open). The ticket - 14 baht irrespective of distance (about 25p) issued from a strange cylindrical machine as we sped to one of the busiest traffic interchanges we'd ever seen. The bus pulled up in the middle lane and we climbed down the two deep steps into moving traffic. This was our initiation into the 'no elf 'n safety' world of the Far East. Public transport in Bangkok is an exciting prospect with the streets filled to capacity with buses of every colour imaginable—Isuzu, Mitsubishi, Daewoo, Hino and the Chinese-built Golden Dragon;

these impressive machines even have a working speedo unlike many of the older vehicles. A ride on the Chao Phraya (river of kings), the choppy main water way, is a confusion of ferry boats going about their business at top speed, dodging the many barges, several hundred metres long. Ten seconds to jump on board and the ferry is away again, reversing to leave the quay, then full bore ahead into a confusion of boats. The ubiquitous tuk-tuk comes in several forms. One thing they have in common is the exposure to the ever present air pollution. They are fun but have little or no protection in the event of a traffic accident. The Bangkok version was introduced around 1960. It's a modified Japanese delivery vehicle, now redesigned and manufactured in Thailand. The driver sits astride a 200cc engine. The tuk-tuk in Cambodia is an entirely different affair.



Having recently returned from a long stay in Thailand and Cambodia where public transport is very different I have put together a few pictures from our travels. Hope you find them interesting. *Keith Draper*

Pictures from left to right >
 Our transport in Siem Reap, Cambodia—a Honda 200cc hauling a two-wheel cart along miles of brown dusty dirt roads. Rickshaws (or samlors), a rare sight nowadays, but more common in the seaside resort of Hua Hin, Thailand. A line-up of very smart, colourful tuk-tuks awaiting passengers at the huge shopping mall in the middle of town. Their design is better than those in Bangkok as the roof line is higher making sightseeing easier.



It's typically a two-wheel cart attached to the back of a motorbike. A fine way of getting around the temples of Angkor Wat and the drive through the rice fields and lotus flower wetlands to the floating villages on Tonle Sap (the Great Lake). We stayed in Siem Reap with its famous 'Pub Street' a hive of activity with its hot food on the street as well as some very choice restaurants. We were a ten minute ride away by Tuk-Tuk. One hundred miles north of Bangkok is Kanchanaburi where the Death Railway heads north-westwards to the Burma border. We travelled by standard carriage, all wooden seats, and hauled by a diesel for the 47 miles that remain of the route. Our accommodation was on the banks of the Khwae near to the steel bridge that carries the infamous railway. We had arrived in a Toyota 4x4, an easy drive from our previous location 200 miles south at Hua Hin. Our transport here in

Kanchanaburi was by push bike from the yard along the street. While the valley surrounded by Chinese-type limestone hills is beautiful and the valley floor a vast farming area with sugar cane the dominant crop, it was hard to forget the lives of the many that were lost during the Japanese occupation. On a lighter note the town was typical of so many with its two bus stations—one at bargain basement prices, the other, VIP class with real air con. But the revelation here was the number of luxury coaches and huge powerful Mitsubishi, Mercedes and Volvo double-deckers that took the hoards to walk the bridge and visit the vast jewellery and gemstone markets nearby. For railway buffs I mention the several static steam locomotives at the town's railway station. You could almost smell the steam! We drove hundreds of miles, even getting used to passing on both sides. But at least they drive on the left in Thailand!



Pictures Clockwise from far left:

- ▶ A Songthaew that literally means a van with seats along the sides. They gather around busy spots and take off when full along an approximate route! This one was waiting at Kanchanaburi bus station.
- ▶ There are 2,500 of these buses in Bangkok. They are mounted on a variety of chassis, all have a high floor, often with two sets of doors. This example is an ancient Hino.
- ▶ In the VIP coach street at Kanchanaburi I came across this latest luxury job, again on Hino chassis and now made in Thailand.
- ▶ A common sight on main routes are these huge and powerful luxury double-deckers. There are variations in the exact styling but they are sensational machines. Fancy a ride at the front?
- ▶ An orange midi city bus pictured near to the Grand Palace in the old town, Bangkok. The pink bus is heading for the Democracy Monument but one would never know from the destination indicator in Thai!
- ▶ Michelin men line-up on this Mercedes heading for the war cemetery in Kanchanaburi. Totally 'over the top' with its amazing paintings along the side.



Pictures:

(above): Petrol by the Johnnie Walker litre bottle, available everywhere we went.

(right): More 'modern' and safer this petrol station utilises a barrel and pump. In Thailand and Cambodia.

The Friends play an important role in helping to present the Museum to the public and to promote Friends.

Last year, Friends took Museum vehicles to a variety of shows and assisted with events in the Museum such as store tours and the cycling festival.

This year, a similar pattern will be followed but with some restriction on the number of times Museum vehicles will be taken out. A major consideration behind this is vehicles are carefully checked mechanically by workshop staff each time they go out and this has to be fitted around their other work. On the other hand, a number of Friends have asked for more occasions to bring out their own vehicles.

Out and About

The dates so far agreed this year involving Friends are shown below. Prior to Museum vehicles being taken out, after their mechanical check, Friends will be needed to wash and check for overall cleanliness. Opportunities for Friends to show off their own vehicles occur on June 4 and September 19 when Museum vehicles will not be going out.

Any Friends interested in helping with these events who have not done so already should get in touch with us and become involved.

The Programme

Sunday May 15 Transport Festival at Snibston Discovery Museum
Sunday May 29 Transport Festival at Ragley Hall

Saturday June 4 Braunston Church Fete – MEMBERS' VEHICLES

Saturday June 11 Store Tour

Saturday – Sunday June 25 – 26 Coventry Cycling Festival

Sunday June 26 Great Little Air Show, Baxterley

Saturday July 9 Bilton School and Community Fete

Friday - Sunday July 22 - 24 Silverstone Classic Car Show

Sunday August 7 BEN Fete

Saturday - Sunday

September 4-5 Coventry Festival of Motoring

Saturday - Sunday September 11 - 12 Heritage Open Days –
Public Store Tours

Sunday September 19 Atherstone Motor Festival –
MEMBERS' VEHICLES

Friday- Sunday November 11 – 13 Classic Car Show NEC

from Richard Dawe:

As some Friends may remember, I have always wanted to own a Morgan. The combination of classic styling and modern mechanics was irresistible to someone with no mechanical skills or aptitude.

At long last I have finally taken the plunge and I am now the proud owner of a 1996 Morgan 4/4. It has the 1.8 litre Ford Zetec engine, and has done just over 28,000 miles.

While it is one of the most uncomfortable cars I have ever driven, it is without doubt the most fun. The moral of the story? If you have an unrealised ambition, go for it. You only live once.



Travel talk

**Peter Forwood & his
World Travelling
Harley-Davidson
at the Museum**



Thursday, May 12 at 7.30 pm.

Australian Peter Forwood has spent a large part of his life travelling around the world on his Harley Davidson Electra Glide V2 motorcycle. So far he and his wife Kay have visited over 400 Countries and States around the world, and from mid-May they will be off again on the bike, this time to Europe and Russia.

Before they depart, Peter will be speaking about their amazing adventures on the Harley!

The Harley-Davidson is on display at the moment at Coventry Transport Museum until May 13.

Tickets for the talk are just £5 each, with all ticket money going to fund the Museum's future transport projects.

You can book your tickets on 024 7623 4270 or Email anne.dooy@transport-museum.co.uk

Record breakers

For the first time in the Museum's history, we have recorded annual visitor numbers of over 400,000.

We are now being talked about through social networking via Facebook and Twitter and that is motivating many to come to Coventry.

The Museum has enjoyed consistent media coverage throughout last year from newspapers, radio and television – the latest being BBC 1's 'Panorama' programme on Monday April 4. This milestone is the direct result of many family and children's activities in the Museum; also a rolling programme of stimulating and exciting temporary exhibitions.

Many of these visitors have also enjoyed the Museum's excellent conference facilities which in itself has resulted in a record number of bookings.

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