

CLASSICAL GAS

September 2006

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

Stuart's Stopped Getting Muddy!



Triallers Stuart Cairney and Andy Clarke pictured in their Hillclimb Cars. Stuart in his Imp at Gurston Down and Andy at Prescott in his Alfa.

My trials Imp hasn't seen much action of late due to a hairline crack which developed in the engine block. In the meantime, I finally finished my other project Imp which I've been using for speed hillclimbs. Built for purpose it has no interior trim or passenger seats, polycarbonate side and rear windows, fibreglass bonnet and boot lids, two gallon tank, motorbike battery, disk brakes all round, and a roll cage.

The engine is 998cc with an R22 cam (not quite full race), with the limiter set to 9000 rpm. The gearbox is straight cut with a close ratio third and top. I run in a class for road legal cars and use road legal (list 1A) tyres and so far they can still out-corner the driver!

The events are very sociable and I've met fellow Falconers Andy Clarke and Mark Ibbotson and at least six trials folk from Stroud and District MC, including Ian and Nigel Moss and Jim Scott with Imps competing at events. There's also plenty of time to watch the quick single seaters. At Prescott some clock over 100mph at the point where I change up from 2nd to 3rd....

The HSA (not the one that refunds your medical expenses but the Hillclimb and Sprint Association), include a class for modified road-going Imps up to 1040cc in their championship (entries a bit thin though) and I've done seven events so far at Prescott, Shelsley Walsh, Werrington (near Launceston), Wiscombe Park (near Normans Hump/Clinton), Gurston Down - that well known Irish hillclimb near Salisbury (downhill start!) and a sprint at MIRA. With two events still to go at Shelsley Walsh and Loton Park (near Shrewsbury) my season will finish at the end of September which still leaves plenty of time for trialing - all I've got to do is fix that engine..... - Stuart Cairney



High Jinks in Holland. Earlier in the summer Neil led Michael astray during a trip to Holland with the Ford Model Y & C Register. Read all about it on page two.

Holland in a Ford Model C

In addition to his Trialling and Racing exploits Neil Bray is also a fan of pre-war Fords and has restored both a 1935 Model C and a 1937 Model Y. Neil likes to give these cars a good work out on the Ford Y and C Registers Annual adventure, which in 2006 was a tour of Holland. Even Neil can't drive two cars at once and I was thrilled when he asked me to join him and drive the C.

Friday 2nd June

Neil came picked me up in the evening to take me round to his place to collect the C. I had only driven it once before when we took the cars to The Enfield Pageant. The wandering steering was familiar to me, just like my Dellow, but the low powered engine and three speed box were all new experiences (my Dellow is a trials car with a Kent engine, Rocket Box and Escort axle).

Saturday 3rd June

Off at 5.30 to meet Neil at Baldock Services at 06.00. I was very concerned the C would start. It needed full choke, no throttle and all 6 volts burst into life and strain to turn the little engine over. It took a couple of goes but away we went. Down to Harwich on the A120, with very little traffic to bother us we had time to have breakfast in a transport cafe just outside the port. Even then we were in the queue for the Stenna Discovery in good time. Stenna call it a HSS (High Speed Ship). Its a Catamaran with four gas turbines powering water jets for propulsion. A mere three and a half hours later we were driving off in the company of a dozen or more cars from the register.

Not to many problems with driving on the right and we soon got used to acknowledging the waves of the bystanders. The line got broken up when we came to the first set of traffic lights and it didn't take long for us to get separated from Neil. We weren't too badly off as I had printed directions to the hotel from the Internet. Neil had been depending on his Tom-Tom which had gone on the blink, so he was trying to stay on the bumper of the car in front.

All of this meant we were at the hotel in Voorschoten first. Other cars arrived in dribs and drabs but no Neil. A quick phone call revealed he was broken down in a Motorway Tunnel with no hard shoulder and finally arrived on a tow rope behind an 8hp Y. In the hotel car park it soon became obvious that the Y's 12v Lumination had gone on the blink and had to be replaced with a conventional distributor.

Sunday 4th June

Off at 08.30 for our first full day. Back to the Hook of Holland for a guided tour of The Atlantic Wall Museum, all about the defence system built by the Germans to keep us out during the 2nd World War. Then a boat trip around the canals of the Westland and a tour of a modern commercial greenhouse. We were off in convoy at 8.30 but only got a few hundred yards up the road when Neil pulled off as the Y was not running properly. Adjustments to the points and timing with help from John and Jim got things running properly and we were away. We had a brush with the law on the way, being urged on by a motorcycle policeman as we weren't going fast enough on the motorway. Our hosts at the museum did us proud and I think our cars parked outside attracted a lot of attention for their museum.

In the afternoon it was off in a suitably old restored boat to tour a commercial greenhouse where they grew and packed tomatoes for supermarkets all over Europe.



Above - Time to relax on the Ferry before the first breakdown! Below - Getting the Y to run properly and the answer to fertilizing tomatoes, buy a box of bees!





Above - Following Graham Miles in his tourer and Michael at the commercial vehicle museum in the evening.

Below - After visiting the Ford museum we had a technical day!



Back at the hotel we checked the cars over and noticed the C's fan belt wasn't very tight. Further investigation revealed that the dynamo pulley was loose and about to burst through the radiator. Tightening the nut did no good and we discovered that the centre hole in the aluminium pulley had enlarged and the movement had damaged the shaft as well. Graham Miles kindly donated his spare dynamo but it had a different fixing. The only solution was to take the old and new units apart and build Grahams parts into Neil's case. With Grahams help this was accomplished just in time for dinner.

Monday 5 June

We had a long drive south today, down to the delta region to see the sea defences on the artificial island of Neeltje Jans. We didn't start to well as we followed our part of the convoy led by John and Jim the wrong way up A4. We regrouped at the ferry across the entrance to Rotterdam harbour and it was here the problems with starting the Model C when it was hot began. We finally got it going using maximum choke but it popped and banged as it kangarooed up the road for a mile or so before it cleared its throat. Neil felt it was down on compression on one cylinder, but that didn't account for the hot starting problem. The battery charge cut out was also playing up, the points sometimes stuck together needing a quick pit stop to flick them open.

Neeltje Jans was very windy but it was interesting to see the tremendous effort the Dutch have to make to keep their feet dry. The original idea had been to provide a permanent barrage to keep the sea out. However, this would have meant the water in the Delta would have changed from salt water to fresh water, changing the ecology. So the barrage at Neeltje Jans is only closed when the sea reaches a certain level.

There was a lot more traffic on the way back to the hotel with some long delays where we kept the engine running, keeping a careful eye on the water temperature. We had to switch it off on the ferry though and this time it wouldn't start until Jim and John bump started it for us.

Back at the hotel Neil changed the points, condenser and plugs and we hoped it would be better tomorrow. First there was an early dinner before a trip in a wonderful old bus to a private museum in Schipluiden belonging to Mr van Vliet. It was mostly commercial vehicles but there were some cars and bikes as well, including a Beetle police car and a Karman Ghia.

Tuesday 6 June

We checked out of our hotel as we were to spend the next two nights near Volendam. The Model C started fine in the morning, although getting it going from cold had never been a problem. Our Dutch hosts had arranged a private visit to the Ford Museum at Hillegom. This private venture is the largest collection of pre-war Fords in the world. All the exhibits were American, ranging from a 1896 Quadricycle to Bonne and Clyde style V8's. We had a wonderfully entertaining guide and it was a thoroughly enjoyable time. There was one European interloper, an Eifel, tucked away in a back room. It was available for sale and Jim and Graham had a good look at it, returning a week later to clinch the deal.

The C was running very well, or so we thought. But the engine had to be switched off for the ferry to Westzaan and absolutely refused to restart. We had plenty of help and, after an hour of swapping bits and pieces lent to us from other drivers, we found the problem was the coil. Once it was changed away we went. Although it was clear we had little compression on one of the cylinders starting was no longer a problem. One of the Dutch Model Y's was having problems as well, with all sorts of horrible noises coming from the transmission. It was diagnosed as the UJ on the back of the gear box and a team led by Neil fell upon the poor little car to change it in the hotel car park. As the model Y has a torque tube this involves partially removing and pulling back the back axle so it wasn't a quick job. It was done just before dinner, but a test run revealed the problem lied elsewhere, so the car went home on a truck the next day.

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Michael's Musings

After a few months of rest, well decorating a house from top to bottom!, its back to some Motorsport. The trials season has started again and they will come thick and fast now.

However, Neil's racing season hasn't finished yet and with one race to go he is joint second in the championship with a chance of winning provided the leader doesn't win his class!

On a personal front things are slowly moving forward and I have my cars back, although without a proper place to put them they are in a container in Hitchin at the moment. The goal is to be out trialling again by The March Hare.

The trip to Holland has made me very interested in old cars. With its more modern engine the Dellow doesn't quite come into that category so I may soon be shopping for a new toy! By the way, note the new email address.

As usual news, pictures etc, always welcome -
classictrials@googlemail.com

Michael Leete



Above - No cars today. Off to Amsterdam by bus to enjoy the cafe culture.

With no TomTom Neil had to resort to a map and phone to find the red light district.

Below - Time for a quick Ice Cream and Petrol stop.

Our transport across the North Sea. HSS Stenna Discovery



(Continued from page 3)

Wednesday 7 June

Wednesday was boring. We went by bus to Amsterdam so the cars didn't break down! While some of the group indulged in a cultural tour of the museums Neil and I concentrated on enjoying the cafe culture and Red Light district!

When we got back to the hotel we visited a sort of farm shop next door where we tagged along with a Spanish Tour group to see Cheese and Clog making, after which we bought some of each! We enjoyed our last dinner with the group, during which I said I hoped to join them again next year, perhaps in a car of my own!

Thursday 8 June

After breakfast we waved the group, away. They were off to see the gardens at Appelterm and the National War and Resistance Museum before going home on Saturday. We made for the Hook of Holland as we had to collect Neil's Capri from Manchester then next day, ready for racing at Lydden on Saturday.

Apart from un-sticking the battery regulator a few times the C behaved, although its increasing lack of compression made it down on power. We got a bit lost a few times but managed to find the Westzaan ferry again and diverted by the Zandvoort racing circuit. Later we got totally lost in The Hague and finally stumbled across signs to The Hook of Holland purely by accident, arriving at the Ferry terminal about an hour and a half early. We were parked right up against the berth and got a marvellous view of the Stenna HSS Discovery approaching and berthing.

We had the buffet dinner on the boat and arrived home about ten in the evening. No rest for the wicked though as it was 4am start to Manchester in the morning. But that's another storey!