



NEWSLETTER

June/July 2015

Ciao, it has been a busy time with various events both locally, nationally and internationally so a big thank you to all our contributors this month. Our regular July meeting is our Fun Concours and next month we have Cotswold Alfa Day, see below for more details from John and Hazel Mills. - MB

Cotswold Alfa Day - Sunday 23rd August 2015

Whether you do the Giro Panoramico or drive direct, at some stage we will all be parked up on the Charlecote Park Estate. After the thrills of the Giro, this is one of the best bits about CAD with plenty of time to relax and renew friendships, compare notes on favourite cars or get to know us for the first time. Added to this is the anticipation that your car may win a prize! We shouldn't need to remind you of the pleasure of seeing lots of Alfas and maybe some other Italian cars mingling amicably together!

We chose this venue because it has something for everyone and the National Trust is allowing up to a 100 of our cars the privilege of parking within the estate, lining the main drive to the house itself! For the first 100 cars, Charlecote have agreed a reduced rate per person for entry which is payable at the entrance to the left of the house. To secure this, you will need to have completed and sent us the booking form (download from <http://www.aroc-uk.com/cotswolds/>) which will generate a Privilege Parking ticket being sent to you by post. This is needed for entry to privilege parking and will be checked at the gate. You will need this even if some of your group are NT members and not paying entry. Those who make bookings once we have reached 100 can still join in, but will have to park in the NT car park across the road and pay the non discounted entry fee (unless you are NT members).

Some of you are NT members, so may already know Charlecote or have seen it as the main feature on BBC Countryfile this June. As we are locals, we thought you might like a reminder of what is on offer.

For the **standard entry** rate (discounted for CAD first 100 cars) there is plenty to explore. You can pick up a trail map for free to help you to decide whether to do one of the many walks across the estate which encompass a lake, the rivers Dene and Avon, meadows and parkland or explore the formal gardens and outbuildings immediately around the house. Families can pick up activity sheets to make the visit a real adventure. Most of the grassed paths are buggy and wheelchair friendly with wonderful views and benches placed just at the point where you may want to pause. For the same price, the outbuildings are accessible too. These include the laundry and brewhouse, where you find out what catering meant for weddings and feasts in time gone by! The stables and carriage house are also open and you can watch a short film/take a virtual tour about the estate.

By going into the wonderful old kitchen, you can reach the National Trust Shop – but do stop on the way in to admire the wonderful old implements and ranges which are beautifully conserved. In addition, in the Servant's Hall, you'll find the pantry shop selling Charlecote venison, sausages, honey and hogget. Outside and nearby, there is a sensory garden and their own Tamworth pigs in a sty (another sensory experience!) Adjacent to the house, across the lawn, is The Orangery which serves light refreshments indoors or outside underneath the cedars within sight of the preserved Thatched Victorian Playhouse!

For the **agreed CAD full entry** (discounted for CAD first 100 cars), there is the bonus of visiting some of the rooms on the ground and upper floor of the house itself. It is not possible to see all rooms, because the Lucy family still live there and one area, "The Turret", is a NT holiday apartment let. Nevertheless, those which are open have many treasures to reveal, not least the Great Hall which tells the story of 400 years of the Lucy family. The marble for this hall was purchased in Venice on the Lucy's second continental tour between 1840 and 1842. This may suggest the ancestors will be looking kindly on a gathering of enthusiasts for all things Italian!

Before you go home – you may want to walk outside the park and across the road to the wonderful Charlecote Plant and vegetable nursery and its neighbour the Charlecote Garden Centre. Sometimes there are plants for sale within the estate, but, if not, you can certainly treat yourself here instead or just admire their collections and gifts. There is a further coffee shop over here and opposite the village church is the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, restaurant and bar which is open to non residents.

We have had bookings already, but we don't want you disappointed by leaving things until the last minute. Look on <http://www.aroc-uk.com/cotswolds/> or email aroccotswolds@933.me.uk for more information!

Buon Giornata Alfisti! A presto!

Mille Miglia 2015

This is an event you have to experience at least once in your life !

Starting and finishing in Brescia, Lombardy, Italy, the Mille Miglia was an endurance race that was run 24 times between 1927 and 1957. Participants raced with their Gran Turismo cars over the open roads of northern Italy from Brescia to Rome and back on an 8-shaped route. Due to frequent fatal crashes the race was banned in 1957 but since 1982 it was revived as a touring trip for classic and vintage cars.

Now a regularity race, in order to be eligible to take part your car has to be registered between 1927 & 1957 and be of a make and model that took place in one of the original 24 races. You also need a good bank balance !

The current race features around 430 cars from Alfa Romeo to Triumph, with a good mix of American, Italian, British, French & German car makes between.

Not really knowing what to expect but bearing in mind the popularity of this event and the fact it is organised by the Italians I was expecting chaos. I couldn't have been more wrong, this is one of the most relaxed car events I have ever been to!

Due to the inflated hotel prices in Brescia, not unlike what happens for the Goodwood Revival, we decided not to stay in Brescia but instead stayed in Desenzano, a lovely little town on the shores of Lake Garda, about 20 miles away from Brescia, a great decision and thanks to Mark Knight's previous experience we had a great little hotel just a few minutes walk from the lakeside, the bars and restaurants.

We went into Brescia early on the Thursday morning to watch the cars assemble for the start arriving in the Piazza Paolo VI just as the Alfa Romeos starting arriving, fortunately they decided to park the cars up by marque, so we parked ourselves in a café in the Piazza and watched literally millions of pounds worth of Alfas arriving in the warm sunshine, sheer bliss. We then took a walk through the streets and Piazzas of Brescia which is a beautiful city, not really on the tourist trail but well worth a visit, watching the rest of the cars assembling. No-one tried to organise us, you can wander in amongst all the cars, talk to the drivers and generally become a part of the event with no effort, including a BMW which was worth around 20 million euros.





After a bit of lunch we went to the Corso Giuseppe Zanardelli to watch the cars leaving, again it was so relaxed, we just stood wherever we wanted by the roadside and watched the cars go by, no barriers, no blokes in hi-viz jackets and no police. Having been to the event previously Mark K, suggested we go up the Via del Castello, where there is a hairpin bend at the end of a long straight run down under the shade of some trees where we stayed until the last of the 430 odd cars had gone by with a handful of locals, a perfect spot for photos.

We saw a few of the celebrity drivers; Derek Bell in a C type Jaguar, Jodie Kidd in an XK120 with her co-driver David Gandy and TV chef James Martin and Charlie Boorman in a D type Jaguar, strange all the celebrities were driving Jags! The star of the event for me was a pale blue Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 SS cabriolet, driven by a Czech driver Remon Leonard Voss, absolutely stunning.

The next two days we spent time around Lake Garda and a visit to Verona and on the Sunday we went into Brescia again to do it all again watching the cars coming back into the town. Again totally relaxed and informal including the finish line, the cars come over the finish and either drive back into the town or are abandoned on the roadside whilst the drivers go off to have a few well-deserved drinks and lunch!

Of note was car no 722 a Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR driven by Stirling Moss and navigator Denis Jenkinson when they won the event in 1955. Moss's drive was amazing, and is still the course record he drove the 992-mile course in 10 hours, 7 minutes and 48 seconds, an average speed of 98.53 miles per hour, in a car with no modern safety features and brakes that would be outperformed by any modern car.

Sir Stirling Moss was reunited with the car and despite expectations that it was too valuable to allow him to drive, he drove the first stage of the race in the car. Bearing in mind the value of the car and Sir Stirling's age, it is likely this is the last time the two will be together!

Written by Mark Grimshaw

Keep an eye out on our website for a slideshow of photos from the event

Classic Car Night at the Norman Knight

A report from the June event by Richard Morris.

Classic Car Night at the Norman Knight, Whichford is a popular event on a summers evening. It takes place on the third Thursday of the month, and as Mays third Thursday was such a beautiful evening, the village green opposite the pub was packed with a bumper crop of characteristic vehicles. Alfa Romeos on show included three 916 GTVs (one belonging to our Treasurer Mr John Mills) and a very tidily presented 105 series Berlina (Ian Jephcott's). Away from the Alfas a pretty little Renault 4CV and a mid-50s primrose yellow Studebaker Champion caught the eye. More commonplace offerings from Ford, MG, Healey, Rover, VW, Austin, Porsche, etc. abounded, while a trio of 1920s Bentleys added a touch of grandeur to proceedings. The number of vintage motorcycles was impressive and the smattering of commercial and military vehicles certainly added weight to the evening. Several of our members are aiming to attend future meetings at the Norman Knight. If you fancy joining us just turn up any time after 6pm and if the weather is as good as it was in May you're in for a treat. Whichford is about 5 miles north of Chipping Norton just across the Warwickshire border. It is where the Giro Panoramico 2014 got underway.

The Norman Knight's postcode is CV36 5PE.



National Alfa Day - 2015

Alex Payne reports on NAD 2015.

My second visit to Gawsworth House, the first being Spring Alfa Day in April 2013, was greeted with some trepidation as Dave Parker and I drove through heavy rain on the Saturday to our hotel.

The Sunday however dawned cloudy but thankfully dry. Gawsworth itself looked splendid and after an early start to help with the 916 series parking, we watched the cars flow in. Apart from pre war cars just about every Alfa was present including two 8cs and at the last count 11 4cs, also some fine and rare Zagato bodied cars, including my favourite SZ, how I wish! and everything else in between. The concours cars were laid out on the lawn in front of the house overlooking the lake, it was a splendid setting with some superb entries.

It was almost like Pebble Beach!

I decided early this year to offer a special prize to the best 916 at N.A.D. to coincide with 20 years of the cars production launch. To this end I built a 1/24th kit of a GTV, and the winner at the end of the day was a fantastic one owner Phase 1 car in Proteo Red (what else!) owned by Terry Fensom, he was delighted, and also picked up a class win trophy, from the judges so my judgment was not biased. On the subject of 916s our Rupert's "Kermit" drew lots of attention, for many reasons, it's growing on me Rupert, honest!

The whole day was so relaxed and friendly and after what seemed a few moments it was sadly time to go home. I have to say a big thanks to Nick Wright, John Griffiths, Mitch Barnes (for much advice leading up to the day) and all of the splendid North West team, bravo guys you did a magnificent job. Alex Payne



Green is obviously the new red....

A very big thank you to everyone who contributed to this months newsletter.

If anyone would like to write a few words about an event, roadtrip, your experience with a new car, a car related product, or an ongoing project please let me know and I'll include it in a future newsletter.

Cheers, Mark B.