



AROC COTSWOLD

Section Newsletter - October 2019

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

date per la tua agenda

19 Nov - regular monthly Section meet at
The Fox Inn, Broadwell GL56 0UF

7 Dec - COTSWOLD Section Christmas Lunch
at The Pudding Club, Mickleton.
BOOKINGS NOW BEING TAKEN

OTHER EVENTS - *altri eventi*

26 Oct - Cars 'n' Coffee at Unity Automotive,
Banbury Road, Oxford OX5 1JH

8-10 Nov - Classic Car Show NEC B'Ham
Tickets from www.necclassiccarshow.com
Use AROC code CC2127

THE SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES

gli scarabocchi del segretario

"TRICK OR TREAT"

I'm not referring to the forthcoming Halloween but to a subject that's been on my mind, and probably yours, for a while.

It's the inexorable march of the electric/hybrid car and whether we will continue to have the classic car industry as we know it to enjoy and cherish.

First, what will happen with legislation? Will older cars be ostracised from city centres? I suspect not. Most large European cities are starting to ban cars over a certain age but have seen common sense and given access to classic vehicles.

Is the combustion engine more polluting than they make out? Sure, in large cities, it's an issue, and vehicles that have a low carbon footprint are the answer. But hold on, how is

the electricity generated? How much pollution does a lithium mine generate? A recent government survey in Germany concluded that over its entire life cycle, including manufacture, an electric vehicle gives out more carbon than a modern diesel!

What will happen to the availability of petrol when electric cars are mainstream. I'm sure that it will still be available but more expensive maybe.

No, I think the main threat to our beloved classics is a generational one. Most car clubs - including our own - find it difficult to nigh-on-impossible to recruit the younger generation. They are just not as car oriented as we were and if they are you can be sure their money will go into the BM/Audi/Merc pot. But it's down to us and the industry in general to involve them and get them interested. We must open up and embrace the "modified" cars, the modern classics and the new Alfas. These and their owners are the future of our hobby.

I for one believe that the push to electric cars is a "trick" and not a treat. Let's have your views!
Ciao, Alex.

TELL your ALFA STORY...in words, drawings or
photos...dare to be different...

Please send your news and all other interesting snippets for publication FAO 'The Newsletter Editor' at least 3 days before regular monthly Section meetings:
contact@aroccotswolds.co.uk

Read on for Alex's story.....

MY ALFA ROMEO AND OTHER CAR HISTORY

My love of Italian cars started many years ago with a wonderful aunt, who, during the war, was an Air Transport Auxiliary and a lover of fast transport.

Whenever we went to visit, Auntie Iris would always have something interesting parked at the back of her business. She would hand me the keys and I spent many happy hours pretending to drive all over Europe in a Lancia Flaminia Coupe, an Alfa Romeo 2600 in lovely light blue and best of all, a stunning Maserati 3500 GT by Vignale. Auntie Iris certainly had very good taste.

My first car after passing my test in 1969 was an Austin A40 Farina; Italian styled at least. As my father ran a Ford garage, it was followed by the usual Anglia and at nineteen an MK2 Lotus Cortina! Several Mini's followed including a Mini van with a tuned 1275 engine and 100bhp!

After a few years of motorcycle ownership, I met Fran and our Italian car journey started. Over the years we have had mainly Fiats including a 131 Mirafiori T/C (fantastic engine), a 127 Sport, an Abarth Strada (wish I still had that one), a brand-new Panda when it was first launched and even a 126 - which one memorable evening transported six! Those were the days!

Unlike many in the club I have owned only four Alfa's which is a bit of a bad show really.



Alex's first Alfa, a Sud 1.3 ti in Matisse Green, exactly the same as my first Alfa - Ed

My first Alfa was inevitably a Sud, a 1.3 ti in green and what a car. It was very reliable apart from the bodywork which went the way of all Sud's. After one or two more Fiats and Fiesta Pop Plus! I managed to own a lovely 75 Twin Spark in Black. After the Fiesta this was like driving in another world with wonderful



What is it about Alfa styling? See item at end of this newsletter - Ed

performance, sublime handling and the induction roar from the engine very addictive.

Parenthood and raising the children then took over and the cars became dull but practical. Apart from when in 1989 Fran entrusted me to go and buy a car for the whole family and a dog. I returned from Peterborough in a Lotus Excel and forty-two years later we are still married!

Upon turning sixty Fran suggested I have a "toy" in the garage, and it didn't take long to think Alfa and a soft top. So "Birdie" was purchased and is a sheer joy to drive. We joined the owners club, started to go to meets and events and the rest as they say is history.



A photo taken by Phil Alton's sister Rosie, at the village show where they recently stayed in the Black Mountains in Wales. It's uncertain which vehicle won.

Not exactly from the same era; the tractor looks like a David Brown 850 Series from the early 60s; the Spider from the mid 80s - Ed

So what is it about Alfa styling?

I put my hands up in advance, this is just my personal view. So unlike the sheer hostility of self-proclaimed *Alfisti* one to the other over on the AROC Facebook pages as soon as anyone expresses any opinion about this sort of thing, I'm sure that Cotswold Section Members can discuss the matter calmly and rationally.

We can all appreciate that many Alfa models are very attractive. The original stainless steel-bumper-and-screen-surround Alfasuds and especially the Sprints were arrestingly beautiful, as was Alfetta saloon and GT/GTV.



916 Gtv and Spider were quite gasp inducing. 156 was very attractive at launch, now looking a tiny bit dated perhaps (?), 159 maybe not so instantly attractive but it has stood the test of time well and even today stands out handsomely on the road. And do you remember the initial criticism of the current run-out Giulietta, yet it is still a nice looking car on the road even after 10 years - yes, far too long without change, I know!

The photo of Alex's 75 Twin Spark (*previous page*) shows a very handsome car indeed. No question about that but it wasn't always so. When launched, admittedly in a bit of a hurry, the 75 attracted much criticism for the number of horizontal styling 'breaks' as well as some of the idiosyncratic (daft?) interior features such as the U-shaped handbrake. Of course, the 75 looked different from the blandness offered at the time by other manufacturers but guess what?

Now, contorted shapes and overly contrived bent metal, far more crumpled-looking in some cases than the 75 ever was, are the norm from the 'mainline' manufacturers while Alfa seems to have gone a bit...hmmm... safe. The current Giulia isn't an ugly car by any means but it is arguably a bit 'safer' than it needs to be. Similarly with Stelvio but we'll see how they age.

The yet-to-be-launched new Tonale is taking a bit of flack over on Facebook. Never mind that most who comment haven't even seen the concept version (as shown at Goodwood this year), let alone a fully productionised version, hostile opinion pours out on social media, even on supposedly *Alfista*-friendly AROC Facebook pages.

With Tonale, is Alfa deliberately courting controversy? Or is it just that we live in this awful age of social media where anyone can post any kind of drivel?

Well, I for one, an unashamed *Alfista* of 42 years standing, have always and will always give any new Alfa model the benefit of the doubt and will at least give it a chance - and a cheer along the way! *David Slorach*