

Merlin Owners Club 30th Birthday Stoneleigh 2012



As you can see from the photo above Sunday was a dry, warm day, a mixture of cloud and sunny spells, for the club's official 30th birthday party. At its peak there were 21 Merlins on the club stand, each sporting a blue or white balloon; bunting abounded. Also loads of members turned up without their Merlins and as we poured the champagne at 4pm there were 60 takers for glasses! (I think Nita had one in each hand)

Our furthest members came from Germany, Heike and Daniel, flying over and hiring a car over here. Phillipe and Dominique arrived from France in their Renault bearing gifts from their local region of Burgundy for which we were very grateful, as the 12 bottles of champers we provided were clearly not going to be enough. Even the extra 6 provided by Phillipe were soon consumed along with his bread, cheese and cold meats. (How could they travel all the way from Burgundy with that cheese in the car?)

The Chinese raffle provided much amusement and there were some very funny and sought after prizes.



Whilst all this was happening Phillipe and Dominique were still in the show buying a multitude of items for their builds. Unfortunately when they arrived back at the club stand most of the food and drink had gone, for certain the parts they provided went first! “C’est la vie” said Phillipe with a gallic shrug. However we made amends by providing them with a barbecue meal, birthday cake and lots of red wine. Ivan Brocklehurst got to practice his (very good) french language skills. Dave Daniels was clearly impressed whilst Andy was more interested in pressing the advanced buttons on my camera.





As midnight approached they bid adieu and, loaded to the gunnels with car parts, carpets, etc., headed off to the car park to drive back to their hotel. 10 minutes later they were back with us, another gallic shrug, the car park was locked. I accompanied them to the main gate, sharing some of their load, and found, in charge on his own, a very friendly, laid-back guy called Clinton with a great Brummie accent that caused some confusion amongst the French pair. It transpired that the car park is locked at 9-30pm and it says so in very small print on the programme that no one reads. I managed to persuade Clinton that he could single-handedly improve English-French relationships overnight if he could get the car park opened. Eventually he got hold of Security who agreed to open up when they'd finished in the grounds. GOOD MAN, CLINTON!!!!!! The downside is that it was a 20 minute walk to the car park and we had to go and wait there until Security turned up. I was exhausted and those poor French guys carried most of the heavy goods...at least it burned off the red wine. Security arrived at the outside gate just as we did and the French boys were soon on their way. I thanked the security boys profusely and begged a lift back to the club marquee only to find everyone had gone to bed!

Now you'd think that, at a car show, you'd be able to buy a bottom water hose for your car. The problem with a kit car is that you are matching

different engines and radiators so our one mechanical problem of the show, a split bottom water hose on entering the showground, took half a day to get right; even then one end of the hose had to be widened by forcing over an empty bottle of Stella. Having tasted the Stella, of course, it was reluctant to come off again and we had to put together 2 tug-of-war teams to separate them. Hence Peter Wiklo's Merlin spent most of the day in this position.



I'm going to string together lots of photos now to show you the excellent turn-out in more detail....apologies to those whose cars I may have missed as I can't count to 21.





As we emerged from our stupor on Monday morning the Bradshaws apologised for the noise their kids had been making in the tents overnight...4'o'clock apparently before they drifted off to sleep. The genuine response was "What noise?"

There's no way of disguising it, Monday was a washout! It poured with rain on and off, mainly on; the campers packed up as best they could and disappeared early. The tradesmen closed up around 2pm and the whole site became a ghost field. Clive Pinker was left with the job of drying out the marquee at home, THANKS CLIVE&MARGARET, and only Nita and me and Andy&Helen Bell with their motorhome were left. We decided to stay another night to sort out club business rather than drive home in the Merlin in the rain and moved up to the official camping area. It was a good, relaxing way to finish a very satisfying weekend overall. Here are a couple of emails I received after the show:

Hi Barry we be back home at 9pm yesterday after a good trip via Thruxton to pick up the Porsche body Dominique and me want s to thank you for your hospitality and all the members presents and if one of you come in France you are welcome home now this morning i have to go to work on the Merlin cause at the end of the week she go to the painting garage to make a grey beauty and an other time thanks for all you are all formidable best regards Philippe

Dear Barry

Many thanks for the kind hospitality we received on Sunday at Stoneleigh and look forward to going again next year.

Let us know the itinerary for the Shropshire Adventure as we would like to meet up with you all.

We live near RAF Cosford if you are thinking of going to the museum and there is also Ironbridge Brewery not far away, where they make and serve wonderful beer!

Regards

John & Judy Fullwood

There were several more of the same ilk and a particularly nice one from Loraine and John Wynn which I've gone and lost!

In a way the Stoneleigh event was our own little Jubilee...at least WE had one good day of weather! Barry Jones, Secretary

p.s. If you are still to renew your membership and intend to do so by post please include a s.a.e and make sure your name is on your cheque, especially if using a company cheque. Thank you.

