

Humps and Pipes



Issue No.49

Quarter 4 2007

Humps and Pipes

The newsletter of the Ronart Drivers' Club

Issue No. 49 Quarter 4, 2007

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Cover Page Photo – Launch photo of the English Electric Lightning !



FROM THE EDITOR

This season begins with the AGM and Annual Lunch in April. There is much to deal with at the AGM so we hope there will be a good turn-out.

This will probably be the last lunch in this format, as Benjamin feels that 10 years is enough! He has done an amazing job in organising these events. The swan-song is at The Hanbury Manor where Benjamin works, and he has arranged an excellent deal at this superb location. In future we may try to amalgamate the prime social gathering with a major sporting event in the summer when W152s are more likely to turn up. Anyway, this will be discussed at the AGM.

As I intimated in the last issue, I feel I have to give up editing and typesetting the newsletter, Humps & Pipes, so this will be my last issue. My problem is primarily lack of time whilst running my one-man-band business, Grublogger Ltd, but also I am not able to participate in many tours/events these days, so I am not abreast of all the happenings and people, and less able to rustle up timely copy for the mag.

So we urgently need someone to take up this challenge. We now have a good colour printing company who can print directly from PDF, and is close to John Ellis. Since John now holds the master database, and has undertaken to pack and post the newsletters, this works well.

So the role is writing and gathering articles and photos, and then desktop publishing the newsletter, using whatever PC tools he or she is comfortable with.

The key is to get contributions from as wide a selection of members as possible, in order to get varying styles and viewpoints, as well as to reduce the amount of

original writing that is required. So for this to work the Editor will really rely on regular contributions from you. Anything - technical tips, tour reports, scandal, news, etc. Unless copy comes in regularly it is onerous to produce the newsletter regularly!

There is a lot of interesting stuff in past issues of Humps & Pipes. So past issues may be of interest to members, particularly to newer members who never saw them in the first place.



We have some stocks of the printed mags during my régime, and these are nicely printed and so, while they last, we could make them available for a modest charge. I could also produce PDF copies of all of these, and send via email or on CD, for viewing on-screen or printing out on your own printer.

We also have electronic copies of many of the earlier issues - not quite so easy to handle, but lots of interesting 'period' information.

I will try to catalogue and list the main topics for a future issue of H&P.

I hope you have enjoyed H&P in recent years, and I hope you will in the future. At least this may allow me a bit more time to overhaul the club website!

Squadron-Leader "Ginger"

Morning chaps, Hun Hunter Baker here again...

Been a while since i checked in for duty for the old diary, and so much to say but not a big enough time to tell all but here goes.

Fine piece of machinery the old Ronart, gave it to the local grease monkeys over the winter and they tuned the beast so she throbbed when i blipped the throttle and the noise reminded me of the line up at Biggin Hill during our finest hour.

Well to keep you up to date, things did not go so well with Molly Lampton. Took her out a few times in the beast, thought she would enjoy the wind rushing through her hair, turned out she was wearing a hair piece. Well there we were A21 on our way to Hastings for a bowl of eels and a quick half of lager and it flipped off. Thought i hit a pheasant there were so much fluff in the air! Had to use my nice flying helmet to cover her embarrassment on the way back and i never got my eels!!!

The final straw was broken when i turned up unexpected to take her out for a quick pie and a chat. She had been watching 'Can't cook, won't cook'. Got her to come out, but how was i to know she had not turned down her hearing aid!! Started the beast up, and well she still is not answering my calls. Don't know if she can hear the phone i suppose!

Went to the first Noggin last week at the Arkle. Fine night out it was, met a few fellow lads and lasses with Ronarts and had a Tally Ho



Peter-Dirk Bergerhoff's V12 progresses.

evening full of banter and laughs.

Found out that the Graham Halibut chap who has run the magazine for an age has decided to throw it all in and concentrate on something else, damn shame that. Still all fine chaps have to excel and then move on.... The magazine will miss him.

Going on this jaunt to Ireland in May, leaving the women at home this time going to concentrate on the Guinness and the boiled bacon.

So i will report when i get back, tally ho chaps....



The squadron-leader's latest fillies.

CLUB TOUR REPORTS

JOLLY JULY JAUNT - Barrie Cannon

After two months of the worst summer weather I can remember with rain at least once a day, even here in the South-East, my car activities have been much reduced, with many car shows being too wet to attend or cancelled. My Ronart has only been out four times and one of those was only to get it M.O.T'd. On a trip to visit my daughter the clutch went when almost home, then shortly afterwards mysteriously recovered.

So with dodgy weather & dodgy clutch it was with some trepidation that I set off on John Ellis's 'Jolly July Jaunt'. My friend Steve was now my passenger again, as on other trips and as usual he was late - 2 hours this time - and I then found that my



Our scribe - Barrie Cannon



W152 clutch only had a little bit of 'bite' at the bottom.

Steve suggested bleeding the slave-cylinder as there was no fluid loss and between us we did this and pressure returned. 'Yippee', I thought - all is well again, and we finally set off at 4.00pm.

After only half an hour on the M25, I noticed the clutch was limp again already and I knew it wouldn't get me to Wales and back so we turned back at the M1 junction. We got back OK though it was hard to get gears when the traffic slowed.

We then decided to take my Ford Scorpio, as we didn't want to miss seeing 'the gang', but it was now 5.30pm. and the Ellis B.B.Q. was at 6.30 - we knew we would miss this unfortunately.

The journey up to Worcestershire was very good even though it was rush hour, and the weather was good until about 9.00pm. when rain set in. 'Lucky we aren't in the Ronart after all', we thought.

We stopped for a pub meal and finally got to our B+B at Great Witley about 10.20 - too late to meet the gang, as I gather several of the others got a good soaking in their open W152s and the party ended early anyway.

CLUB TOUR REPORTS (Cont.)

The next morning everyone met at our hotel, which was convenient, and we saw who was attending. This was John & Vivien Ellis - the organisers, Rob & Barbra Latham, Freddie Trodd with friend Mario, Tony & Lesley Legon, Graham Hallett & wife, David & Sue Small and Peter Jordan on his own. Also Chris Logue came with us again in his very nippy 1950's MG Magnette, and amazed us with his ability to drive as fast as the Ronarts.



We duly set off on a very pleasant sunny-YES SUNNY ??!! Saturday, westward into central Wales to Rhyader, where we would stay over Saturday night. Nothing of note occurred and no car troubles other than poor Graham Hallett, our esteemed editor, who, while we gathered in a lay-by backed his lovely new(ish) V12-W152 into a metal gatepost. Even though it did not hit too hard, it was right at the very centre of the



boot-section which cracked from the boot-hole over a foot down; much worse than we would have expected. Poor Graham, you could see how upset he was, his car being one of the latest and a bit special. My heart went out to him as I was reminded of my accident on the Corsica trip in 2002, though at least he could carry on and drive it still.

When we arrived at Rhyader it was about 2pm and as we were to visit a bird sanctuary nearby we had no time for the usual lavish Ronart-style lunch. The hotel instead quickly rustled us up four big plates of excellent top-notch sandwiches—prawn, turkey, ham etc. We then had to leave them behind to ensure seeing feeding time at the red-kite & buzzard sanctuary on the hill behind the hotel. Nice and convenient but a steep hill to slog up. Many had brought binoculars for this and it was a rare treat to watch so many of these wonderful birds of prey swooping to pick up pieces of meat from the ground and wheeling overhead.

We then returned to finish the sandwiches and decided to go for a spin up the nearby Elan Valley, famous for its scenery which includes three (at least) Victorian dams with their ornate period buildings. The dams were for the purpose of creating reservoirs

CLUB TOUR REPORTS (Cont.)

for the big Midland cities. The first dam held a massive 8000-million gallons. It was a lovely afternoon for a ride like this and as we climbed higher we came across the upper dams. Due to the continuing rainy weather this summer the dams were all in full overflow and looked very impressive, like mighty waterfalls. The first one was particularly near the road allowing us to take some great photos. When we reached the top the country became very open and bleak with very few trees. We decided to turn around to return as the planned round trip was too far after all.

cars, – I think only the Small's and Latham's Ronarts had hoods with them, the others all having only their small aero-screens on. By the time we got to Old Radnor they must have been a trifle damp to say the least. I was impressed by the stoicism of the wives being put through this for the amusement of their husbands. Once again I was relieved to NOT be in MY Ronart after all as no doubt was Chris Logue in his MG saloon.

We soon perked up with a few drinks at the pub in Old Radnor that John had arranged with to give us lunch. This turned out to be an excellent carvery with a choice of meat, I having the very nice roast beef. This was generous and very reasonably priced, so well done to John for arranging it.

After a while we decided to head our separate ways. The rain had set in for the day anyway. So with much handshaking and good wishes we parted. Once again the gang put on their waterproofs, sat in the

We all enjoyed a lovely evening meal in-house at our hotel, - the 'Brynafon'. After the full English breakfast only hours later, for the next day - Sunday, we had planned another nice jaunt on remote country lanes to a village called Old Radnor. However overnight the weather had rained and was set to continue all day. We settled our bills and before leaving parked the Ronarts in a 'V' so a few other visitors could take some photos, as we did ourselves.

We then set off into the worsening weather. I felt sorry for those in the open



CLUB TOUR REPORTS (Cont.)



pools of their cockpits and squinted into the rain, except for us of course, ha ha!

Apart from poor Graham's bump and some pretty crap weather, we had a very enjoyable couple of days. Saturday particularly was excellent all day, the one day of sun. The hotels and food were all excellent and on behalf of all who came, I would like to thank John & Vivien Ellis for all their efforts in arranging it, and for the B.B.Q. which we unfortunately missed. Here's hoping it won't be too long before the next trip, hopefully in decent weather.

Barrie Cannon

PS Unfortunately there was more incident as, sadly, Robert and Barbra Latham aquaplaned and span into an armco on the way home, and did quite serious damage to their rear-end. It has been subsequently been repaired at Littlehey Prison along with Graham's.

These were the last couple of jobs for the foreseeable future out of this amazing resource, as John Paterson has left to join Arthur's growing operation. As a result the prison facility has had to close, but the Prison's loss is The Factory's gain, as John brings proven engineering standards and project management skills.



Little Old French Car Show

Salon de la Voiture de Prestige et de Competition Sat 12 & 13 Jan 2008

Ros and I had a great weekend, reminiscent of our old UK car club/exhibition days.

The lady who cuts our hair just happened to mention to her contact at the bank recently that we have some old Brit cars. This was because he told her that the classic car club (PAVE - Pilotes Amateurs Vehicule d'Epoque or Amateur Classic Vehicle Drivers) of Montauban (city just North of Toulouse) was putting on their bi-annual Expo in the out of town 'Salle de Fete' (Festival rooms). This year's theme was to be English Prestige and Competition cars of the 60s and 70s.

As an organiser/member of the club, he contacted me and asked if we would like to participate (what us?) so we emailed him some pics of the cars and he requested that we bring the Ronart W152.

So as was usual in the UK, on the Friday night I was desperately checking out that the old beast was ready for the journey. We decided to tow it there using our 'A' Bar as the weather was foul and it would mean that we had another vehicle to drive around in for the weekend. Cleaners, polishes, tools and clothes were packed in the car together with a few goodies to put on show with the car.

Next morning saw me up before the sun and connecting the L200 pick-up truck and Ronart in the cold; thank goodness it had stopped raining. We set out as the sun came up and the towing load felt 'funny' on

back but I could not determine exactly why, until that is we met an adverse camber on a roundabout and the Ronart jack-knifed on us, on the wet slippery road. The traffic behind ground to a halt, no cops around, so I put the truck into 4 wheel drive and pulled the load straight by driving it up onto the roundabout.

Then we proceeded a little more carefully to the event. On arrival I checked the tow load and determined that the front wheels on the Ronart could not turn freely due to the fact that one of the towing chains had jammed under the wishbone/stub axle - the first time this had ever occurred.

As we drove slowly to the entrance of the hall, 4 guys ran out to greet us; with buckets of hot water. They commenced to wash the car down. It had picked up loads of muck from the journey down. Inside they had reserved the pole front position for our motor.

We were amazed 'cos they had amassed an interesting range of cars, Jaguars - MK9, Roadster E Type, XK120, XK150; Bentley MK6 convertible; Healey 3000; MGs - TC,



Pyrenees Trip 2007

Little Old French Car Show

TD, TF, A, B & F; Morgan Plus 4; Lotus's - Elan, Super 7, Europa; Austin Minis - Cooper, Countryman etc.

Ros and I spent the next two hours polishing to bring the beast up to scratch before the doors opened, and the guys were particularly amused when we brought out the vacuum cleaner from the truck to do the interior.

They treated us to a simple lunch at the hall both days and were very kind in introducing us to many of the locals. They had been on the web previously and printed out lots of info on the W152.

The following day our regional newspaper (The Midi-Pyrenees Region, which is about the same size as England) was delivered and there on the back page was a write up on the show, incredibly the only car photographed in the article was... the Ronart W152.

I decided to drive the Ronart home Sunday evening, just to be safe, until I could sort the towing gear properly. But I had omitted to take any protective head gear and it was bloody cold. A lady seeing this immediately insisted that she would pop back home and bring me back a crash hat and goggles. They were all so kind.

Mike & Ros Kanter.



Vanwall Launch

Scattered throughout this issue we have a series of super photos of the launch of the Vanwall GPR which haven't previously been revealed in H&P.



Pyrenees Trip 2007



The Beginning of a Tomato Company

An unemployed man is desperate to support his family of a wife and three kids. He applies for a cleaner's job at a large firm and easily passes an aptitude test. The human resources manager tells him, "You will be hired at a minimum wage of £5.35 an hour. Let me have your e-mail address so that we can get you in the loop. Our system will automatically e-mail you all the forms and advise you when to start and where to report on your first day."

Taken back, the man protests that he is poor and has neither a computer nor an address.

To this the manager replies, "You must understand that to a company like ours that means that you virtually do not exist. Without an address you can hardly expect to be employed by a high-tech firm. Good day."

Stunned, the man leaves. Not knowing where to turn and having £10 in his wallet, he walks past a farmers' market and sees a stand selling 25 lb. crates of beautiful red tomatoes. He buys a crate, carries it to a busy corner and displays the tomatoes. In less than 2 hours he sells all the tomatoes and makes 100% profit. Repeating the process several times more that day, he ends up with almost £100 and arrives home that night with several bags of groceries for his family.

During the night he decides to repeat the tomato business the next day. By the end of the week he is getting up early every day and



Pyrenees Trip 2007

working into the night. He multiplies his profits quickly. Early in the second week he acquires a cart to transport several boxes of tomatoes at a time, but before a month is up he sells the cart to buy a broken-down pickup truck. At the end of a year he owns three old trucks. His two sons have left their neighbourhood gangs to help him with the tomato business, his wife is buying the tomatoes, and his daughter is taking night courses at the community college so she can keep the books for him.

By the end of the second year he has a dozen very nice used trucks and employs fifteen previously unemployed people, all selling tomatoes. He continues to work hard.

Time passes and at the end of the fifth year he owns a fleet of nice trucks and a warehouse that his wife supervises, plus two tomato farms that the boys manage. The tomato company's payroll has put hundreds of homeless and jobless people to work. His daughter reports that the business grossed over one million pounds.

Planning for the future, he decides to buy some life insurance. Consulting with an insurance adviser, he picks an insurance plan to fit his new circumstances. Then the adviser asks him for his e-mail address in order to send the final documents electronically.

When the man replies that he doesn't have time to mess with a computer and has no address, the insurance man is stunned, "What, you don't have e-mail? No computer? No Internet? Just think where you would be today if you'd had all of that five years ago."

Ha! snorts the man. If I'd had e-mail five years ago I would be sweeping floors at Microsoft and making £5.35 an hour.

Which brings us to the moral of the story. Since you got this story by e-mail, you're probably closer to being a cleaner than a millionaire.

Sadly, I received it also.

The Stella Awards

It's once again time to review the winners of the annual Stella Awards. The Stellas' are named after 81 year old Stella Liebeck who spilled coffee on herself and successfully sued McDonald's.

That case inspired the Stella Awards for the most frivolous successful lawsuits in the United States. Unfortunately the most recent lawsuit implicating McDonald's, the teens who allege that eating at McDonald's has made them fat, was filed after the 2003 award voting was closed. This suit will top the 2004 awards list without question.

THIS YEAR'S AWARDS GO TO -

5TH PLACE (TIED)

Kathleen Robertson of Austin, Texas was awarded \$780,000 by a jury of her peers after breaking her ankle tripping over a toddler who was running inside a furniture store. The owners of the store were understandably surprised at the verdict, considering the misbehaving toddler was Ms. Robertson's son.

5TH PLACE (TIED)

19 year old Carl Truman of Los Angeles won \$74,000 and medical expenses when his neighbour ran over his hand with a Honda Accord. Mr. Truman apparently did not notice there was someone at the wheel of the car when he was trying to steal the hubcaps.

5TH PLACE (TIED)

Terrence Dickson of Bristol, Pennsylvania was leaving a house he had just finished robbing by way of the garage. He was not able to get the garage door to go up since the automatic door opener was malfunctioning. He could not re-enter the house because the door connecting the

house and garage locked when he pulled it shut. The family was on vacation and Mr. Dickson found himself locked in the garage for 8 days. He subsisted on a case of Pepsi he found and a large bag of dry dog food. He sued the homeowner's insurance claiming the situation caused him undue mental anguish. The Jury agreed to the tune of \$500,000.

4TH PLACE

Jerry Williams of Little Rock, Arkansas was awarded \$14,500 and medical expenses after being bitten on the buttocks by his next door neighbour's Beagle dog. The Beagle was on a chain in its owner's fenced yard. The award was less than sought because the jury felt the dog might have been a little provoked at the time as Mr. Williams, who had climbed over the fence into the yard, was shooting it repeatedly with a pellet gun.

3RD PLACE

A Philadelphia restaurant was ordered to pay Amber Carson of Lancaster, Pennsylvania \$113,500 after she slipped on a soft drink and broke her coccyx (tailbone). The beverage was on the floor because Ms. Carson had thrown it at her boyfriend 30 seconds earlier, during an argument.



2ND PLACE

Kara Walton of Claymont, Delaware sued the owner of a Night Club in a neighbouring city when she fell from the bathroom window to the floor and knocked out two of her front teeth. This occurred whilst Ms. Walton was trying to sneak in the window of the Ladies Room to avoid paying the \$3.50 cover charge. She was awarded \$12,000 and dental expenses.

1ST PLACE

This year's runaway winner was Mr. Merv Grazinski of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Mr. Grazinski purchased a brand new Winnebago motorhome. On his trip home from an OU football game, having driven onto the freeway, he set the cruise control at 70 mph and calmly left the driver's seat to go into the back and make himself a cup of coffee. Not surprisingly the RV left the freeway, crashed and overturned. Mr. Grazinski sued Winnebago for not advising him in the owner's manual that he could not actually do this. The jury awarded him \$1,750,000 plus a new Winnebago Motorhome. The company actually changed their manuals on the basis of this suit just in case there were any other complete morons buying their recreational vehicles.

Do these people actually sleep at night?



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The Office Party

Have you ever organised the Office Party?

FROM: Pauline Lewis, Human Resources Director

TO: All Employees

DATE: 4th November 2004

RE: Christmas Party

I'm happy to inform you that the company Christmas Party will take place on December 23rd, starting at noon in the private function room at the Grill House. There will be a cash bar and plenty of drinks! We'll have a small band playing traditional carols. Please feel free to sing along. And don't be surprised if the MD shows up dressed as Santa Claus! A Christmas tree will be lit at 1.00p.m.. Exchange of gifts among employees can be done at that time, however, no gift should be over £10.00 to make the giving of gifts easy for everyone's pockets. This gathering is only for employees! The MD will make a special announcement at the Party.

Merry Christmas to you and your Family. Pauline

FROM: Pauline Lewis, Human Resources Director

TO: All Employees

DATE: 5th November 2004

RE: Holiday Party

In no way was yesterday's memo intended to exclude our Jewish employees.

We recognise that Chanukah is an important holiday, which often coincides with Christmas, though unfortunately not this year. However, from now on we're calling it our 'Holiday Party'. The same policy applies to any other employees who are not Christians. There will be no Christmas tree or Christmas carols sung. We will have other types of music for your enjoyment. Happy now?

Happy Holidays to you and your family, Pauline.

FROM; Pauline Lewis, Human Resources Director

TO: All Employees

DATE: 6th November 2004

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RE: Holiday Party

Regarding the note I received from a member of Alcoholics Anonymous requesting a non-drinking table...you didn't sign your name. I'm happy to accommodate this request, but if I put a sign on a table that reads, "AA Only", you wouldn't be anonymous anymore!!!! How am I supposed to handle this? Somebody? Forget about the gift exchange; no gift exchange allowed now since the Union Officials feel that £10.00 is too much money and Management believe £10.00 is a little cheap. NO GIFT EXCHANGE WILL BE ALLOWED. Pauline.

FROM: Pauline Lewis, Human Resources Director

TO: All Employees

DATE: 7th November 2004

RE: Holiday Party

What a diverse group we are! I had no idea that December 20th begins the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which forbids eating and drinking during daylight hours. There goes the party!

Seriously, we can appreciate how a luncheon at this time of year does not accommodate our Muslim employees' beliefs, perhaps the Grill House can hold off on serving your meal until the end of the party - or else package everything up for you to take home in a little foil doggy bag. Will that work?

Meanwhile, I've arranged for members of Weight Watchers to sit farthest from the dessert buffet and pregnant women will get the table closest to the toilets. Gays are allowed to sit with each other. Lesbians do not have to sit with gay men, each will have their own table. Yes, there will be flower arrangements for the gay men's table too. To the person asking permission to cross dress - no cross dressing allowed.

We will have booster seats for short people. Low fat food will be available for those on a diet. We cannot control the salt used in the food we suggest those people with high blood pressure taste the food first. There will be fresh fruits as dessert for diabetics; the restaurant cannot

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supply "No Sugar" desserts. Sorry! Did I miss anything?!?!?!?! Pauline.

FROM: Pauline Lewis, Human Resources Director

TO: All F***** Employees

DATE: 8 November 2004

RE: The F***** Holiday Party!

Vegetarian pricks I've had it with you people!!! We're going to keep this party at the Grill House whether you like it or not, so you can sit quietly at the table furthest from the "grill of death", as you so quaintly put it, you'll get your f***** salad bar, including organic tomatoes. But you know tomatoes have feelings too, They scream when you slice them. I've heard them scream. I'm hearing the scream right NOW!! I hope you all have a rotten holiday, drink drive and die.

The Bitch from HELL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

FROM: John Bishop - Acting Human Resources Director

DATE: 9th November 2004

RE: Pauline Lewis and Holiday Party

I'm sure I speak for all of us in wishing Pauline Lewis a speedy recovery, and I'll continue to forward your cards to her. In the meantime, the Management has decided to cancel our Holiday Party and instead, give everyone the afternoon of the 23rd December off with full pay.



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Electric Lightning - EVO Release

UK company announces electric supercar

Battery-powered Lightning GT claims over 700bhp – and 2200lb ft of torque

18th July 2007

Independent British manufacturer the Lightning Car Company has announced an all-electric supercar. The Lightning GT boasts 700-plus bhp, 0-60mph in under 4sec and a top speed of over 130mph.

An earlier Lightning was first seen at the 1999 motor show with a Mustang Cobra V8, but that has long gone.

The new car's 'nanotechnology' batteries are said to have a 12-year lifespan and offer up to 15,000 recharges. LCC claims that these nano titanate power cells take just 10 minutes to charge from flat – if there's some industrial three-phase power to hand (slightly longer if you're using domestic mains). A full charge should enable a range of 125 miles, or 250 miles in the bigger-battery model.

Transmission is via a 120kW Hi-Pa Drive motor in each wheel, with switchable two-

or four-wheel drive on demand. Integrated electronics take care of traction-control and the disc-free regenerative braking that turns the motors into generators on deceleration, recharging the cells. Max power is theoretically available at any speed, and a mind-boggling 2200lb ft of torque from standstill.

The Lightning GT weighs just 1350kg thanks to a Kevlar body and a carbonfibre/aluminium honeycomb chassis. Despite all the electronic gubbins in the wheel assemblies, the unsprung mass is similar to a conventional car's due to the lack of a brake assembly or driveshaft.

The Lightning GT will avoid road tax, congestion charges and, of course, petrol prices, and the company estimates it will cost just 2.2p per mile.

That should help soften the blow of the £150,000 list price... First deliveries are due in 2008.

For more info, visit

www.lightningcarcompany.co.uk



Electric Lightning - Press Release

THE LIGHTNING TAKES THE PERFORMANCE CAR MARKET ELECTRIC

The Lightning Car Company today announced its development of a range of 700 bhp Lightning electric cars, for the first time genuinely harnessing electric motive power and uniting it with class-leading sports car design, engineering and production.

The remarkable car range has been conceived to satisfy three essential criteria, namely to deliver a highly stylised, graceful sports car with cues hinting at the quintessential British treatment of Aston Martin or TVR while delivering an explosive, dynamic performance based on new breakthrough electric technologies that make the ownership experience quicker, easier and



cleaner than traditionally fuelled cars.

The Lightning Car Company draws upon 25 years of automotive experience from design and engineering personnel whose industry experience includes McLaren, Lola, Ronart and Vanwall, as well as championing the adoption and use of new generation electric battery and motor technologies derived from application in the aerospace industry. The business owners jointly share a clear vision of an electric-powered future for high performance motoring.

The Lightning began life as a traditionally powered petrol vehicle in order to develop the car's chassis dynamics. Battery and motor technology applications allow the handling characteristics of the car to be optimised. The chassis derives

its inherent dynamic quality from its aluminium honeycomb and carbon composite monocoque structure, essentially a Formula One derived concept that blends low mass with high impact qualities.

Arthur Wolstenholme, Technical Director at Lightning explains, "Ten, or perhaps even five years ago, electric power was dismissed as a poor substitute for petrol, diesel or LPG. But the world has moved on significantly – from military and aerospace applications, electric motor and battery technologies have been developed that will enable the Lightning to demonstrate 700 plus bhp performance over a range that exceeds some of today's petrol performance cars. What's more, the Lightning is intended to compete

with premium market sport cars, but our electric power should outstrip the response rates, torque characteristics and driveability of most exotic performance super cars. Electric power has truly arrived in the performance market."

The Lightning is set to dismiss all the preconceptions about electric power. It will be there immediately, and in abundance, providing amazing responsiveness. And, with a chassis

designed to be more than capable dynamically, will make a great point to point proposition to rival the established guard.

The Lightning will combine high performance electric motive power with an advanced regenerative energy system that recharges the car's batteries under braking by capturing lost friction energy. This emerging technology utilised by Lightning in the road car sector will be adopted by Formula One from 2008 when KERS (Kinetic Energy Recovery Systems) become mandatory. The Lightning's use of this technology enables the range of the car to be extended to over 250 miles/400km.

With concourse elegance, blistering performance (expected to be a 0-60 time of sub 4 seconds)

Electric Lightning - Press Release

and a ten minute charge time to sustain a 250 mile range, the ownership costs of the Lightning range are set to be significantly lower than traditional fossil fuelled vehicles, with exemption from road tax, congestion charging and an urban cycle energy cost estimated at 2.2p per mile, the Lightning could be as much as £10,000 per year cheaper to run than a Audi RS4 based on an average 20,000 miles of motoring.

There are 3 Lightning models planned, a Grand Tourer, a competent and quick car which maintains a depth of luxury and specification; the Lightning Sport is the GT's lightweight, purposeful cousin, with the ability to achieve 0-60 in under 4 seconds. The third Lightning will be an extended range model, with the capability of reaching an estimated 250 miles on a single 10 minute charge.

The electric Lightning prototypes are now in development and pre-orders are being taken for 2008 delivery. Customised options for interior and exterior finishes and accessories will be available on a build to order basis.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHTNING - TOP 10 FEATURES

- Ultra smooth 100% electric power (700+bhp) immediately from zero rpm
- 10 minute charge time for over 250 miles of motoring (GTSE model)
- Uncompromising performance with 0-60mph in less than 4 seconds (GTS model)
- State of the art NanoSafe™ battery system and Hi-Pa Drive™ electric motor technology
- Full regenerative braking so the battery receives charge every time you slow down, travel downhill or simply coast
- Commanding presence of carbon fibre/Kevlar hand-crafted bodywork

- Clean technology means no congestion charge or road tax and the ultimate A grade green rating
- Phenomenal economy up to 10 x cheaper to run than petrol
- Safer with no large fuel tank, thermally stable batteries and a bodywork structure similar to that used in F1 to protect the driver
- Luxury spec. interior – incorporating sat nav, iPod interface and virtual engine sound



MORE ABOUT ELECTRIC LIGHTNING TECHNOLOGY

NanoSafe™ from Altairnano Inc.

Until now, battery technology has hindered electric vehicle innovation. In 2000, US company Altairnano Inc. established a research programme to create an ultra safe, high power battery using cutting-edge Nanotechnology. The result of their hard work is the NanoSafe™ battery.

SAFER - NanoSafe™ batteries use nano titanate materials instead of graphite which makes them far more thermally stable - there are no toxics or heavy metals used in NanoSafe™ batteries.

LONGER-LASTING - NanoSafe™ batteries have a life expectancy of 12+ years, versus the 3-5 year life of other batteries. NanoSafe™ can retain up to 85% charge capacity after 15,000 charges.

Electric Lightning - Press Release

FASTER CHARGE - NanoSafe™ batteries can be recharged in approximately 10 minutes, rather than the hours required by many other rechargeable batteries.

MORE POWERFUL - With instantaneous power even at extreme temperatures, NanoSafe™ batteries deliver power per unit weight and unit volume several times that of conventional Lithium-Ion batteries.

Hi-Pa Drive™ from PML Flightlink Ltd

Hi-Pa Drive™ is a real revolution in motor technology and it's a British innovation to boot! With its integrated motor and drive electronics in one single unit it produces an ultra high power density - up to 20 times more than conventional systems.

The compact, energy-efficient, electric wheel motors produce unrivalled levels of torque with internal heavy-duty tapered roller bearings that can withstand heavy radial loads for robust use. Yet they achieve the power to weight ratio important for the performance sports car capability of the Lightning

Other features include total weather proofing, total energy transfer and several levels of redundancy, so any single failure will not prevent the vehicle from operating safely.

Carbon fibre/Kevlar® composite technology in association with Amber Composites and Technical Resin Bonders

The Lightning bodywork will incorporate aluminium honeycomb crushable impact cells. This composite monocoque structure uses the same technology that is used in Formula 1 motor racing to protect the driver. This material will be used in the front, rear and sides of the car as well as around the battery area

Regenerative braking

Upon braking, the car's kinetic energy is converted to heat through friction - throwing away the energy that was previously used to

accelerate. In city driving, about 30 percent of a typical car's engine output is lost to braking.

When an electric vehicle is decelerating, it does not create friction and useless heat in order to slow down. Instead it reverses its electric motor turning it into an electric generator, creating electricity which is fed back into the battery and stored for future use. In fact any time an electric vehicle decelerates it causes the system to use the vehicle's momentum to generate electricity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



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English Electric Lightning

Mark Hales of EVO looks at the development of a new electric sports car that uses world-leading battery technology - 01/09/2007

The news that a small company in Peterborough is about to produce a car featuring world-leading technology is good reason for scepticism. From this Cambridgeshire town you might expect advances in microchips or possibly food science - but cars? It's all too easy to assume that if a major automotive development were possible, a big manufacturer such as Toyota would have already achieved it. Remember, too, that the small but relatively successful TVR firm no longer exists partly because Audi, BMW and Porsche make the kind of cars that once came out of Blackpool, only rather more reliably. All that said, it would be remiss not to investigate what the little Peterborough outfit had to say.

The car is the electric Lightning and the world-leading technology is a combination of wheel-mounted electric motors and, more importantly, the Nano-Titanate batteries that power them. The former is British, the latter American, and far from being refugees from the George Lucas

lexicon, each is proven technology. The car is also proven, albeit not yet with electric power. It is the brainchild of Arthur Wolstenholme, long-time maker of the Ronart series of upmarket Jaguar-powered specials, more recently creator of the 1950s Vanwall F1-inspired single-seat road and track car tested in these pages on August 13 2005.

The current Lightning is a Ford Mustang-powered supercar project that first appeared at the 1999 Earl's Court Motor Show, where it attracted 20 orders. The project was then put on hold, although seven pre-production cars were built, all of which still exist. Production restarted in 2006 and in January this year Wolstenholme and partner Iain Sanderson formed the Lightning Car Company with the intention of using the Lightning and all its jigs and tooling, but minus the 4.6-litre Ford V8 engine and transmission, as a vehicle for the new batteries and electric motors.

The electric car is not a recent phenomenon; it's a little-remembered fact that the first car to exceed the magic 100kph (62mph) - Camille Jenatton's streamliner of 1899 - did so with an electric motor. Electric power has since become more familiar in invalid carriages, milk floats and forklift trucks, but in theory it should be an obvious answer to many more modern motoring problems; it's clean at the point of use, it's quiet, it can draw energy from renewable sources and it ought to be relatively cheap. In practice, however, the electric motor hasn't been able to compete with an internal combustion engine that releases large amounts of energy from a fuel source that is easily stored.

There are nevertheless plenty of electric-car projects, not least the Tesla Motors Roadster that is being produced in conjunction with Lotus Cars. Looking very much like a Lotus Elise and offering a claimed 130mph, 0-60mph in four seconds and a 250-mile range for about £60,000, this uses a conventional electric motor driving through a gearbox and driveshafts, and features lithium-ion batteries similar to those in your laptop computer (6,500

cells in total); it has the considerable advantages of existence and near readiness for delivery. Nevertheless, the Lightning does appear to offer some significant variations on the electric theme: the four wheel-mounted electric motors, made by PML Flightlink of Alton in Hampshire, and the Nano Titanate batteries from the nano-particle specialist Altair Nano of Nevada, USA.

We have written about wheel motors in these pages before. Although they appear to offer several vehicle-control advantages for little more than the cost of a line of computer code, the main reason they haven't succeeded is their weight, particularly for a car's steered wheels; even the highly advanced units proposed for Mitsubishi's i concept were dropped in favour of a single engine, transmission and driveshafts when it came to production. Nevertheless, PML claims its motor, for which there are a number of patents pending, offers a power-to-weight ratio 10 times better than anything before. PML's Martin Boughtwood expects people to be sceptical about such claims and while he wouldn't reveal exact details, he says the key is the motor's power-handling capability of 240Kw per wheel and the use of a 24-phase system instead of the usual 3-phases. Wolstenholme adds that PML's wheel motor and rim are only 2kg heavier than the Chevrolet Corvette wheel, bearings, brake disc and caliper assembly used on the Lightning so far.

If the weight problems can indeed be overcome, the potential benefits of electric wheel motors are undeniably extensive. There is mechanical simplicity because the power source is within the wheel and has no mechanical link with the rest of the car; there is no engine under the

bonnet, no exhaust under the floor, no gearbox, differential or driveshafts. This releases a lot of space; the batteries, which represent the largest additional mass, are relatively compact and can be situated where they have least impact on vehicle dynamics. There is multiple redundancy because each wheel can operate independently, offering extra layers of facility to electronic traction control and stability systems, plus infinitely variable all-wheel drive that is easier to control because there are no mechanical systems to be linked.

Boughtwood is most enthusiastic about the wheel's capacity to act as a generator when not driving the car. He says most current systems, such as those on the Toyota Prius and Lexus hybrids, make only a token gesture in gathering useful electrical energy from the braking function because the



batteries cannot accommodate much of a charge in such a short time; if it takes several hours to charge a battery from the mains, it stands to reason that it will take a similar time to charge it via regenerative braking. The Lightning's Nano Titanate batteries, however, are capable of taking a large charge in a very short time. It is one of the technology's key attributes and, according to PML, it will allow regenerative braking to store 85 per cent of the electricity generated, rather than the 15 per cent or thereabouts offered by a conventional lithium-ion battery.

The electric motor's accelerative capability is another apparently extravagant claim and it is difficult to equate this with an internal combustion engine that requires a certain number of revs to deliver torque, and needs a transmission to convert it. The electric motor

relies on a completely different principle and effectively delivers its maximum torque at zero rpm, rather like a steam engine. That said, PML's numbers are undeniably impressive; claimed torque is 550lb ft per wheel and, unlike a conventional piston engine, the curve is relatively flat thereafter. PML says the motors will accelerate a 1.5-ton vehicle to 60mph in about 4.5 seconds, a feat that is more easily repeatable without a skilled (and mechanically unsympathetic) driver because the traction control function is much more accurate.

PML Flightlink has an SVA-approved BMW MINI fitted with the wheel motors as proof of the concept - although, like the Tesla, this features conventional lithium-ion batteries - plus a petrol engine and generator in the boot to expand the range. PML has also concluded a number of deals: with Lotus for a world series of wheel motor-equipped cars, and with a major European vehicle manufacturer. The proof of that, says PML, will be on show at the Frankfurt motor show in two weeks.



The thorniest problem is the same for all of them, and indeed for any electrically powered device that is intended to operate away from its base and the nearest three-pin mains socket. Battery life and weight are already the bugbears of laptops and mobile phones, but they are even more so for cars, where the demand for power can vary so greatly. Think how long it takes to flatten a car battery on the starter motor when the sidelights have been left on all night, and then how long to charge it again.

The Nano Titanate particle technology replaces the more usual graphite electrode, which in turn eliminates any interaction between the

electrodes and the electrolyte while speeding up the movement of ions. This is the process that governs how fast the battery charges and releases its energy. There are no toxic materials or heavy metals involved and the claim is immunity from explosion or fire, a faster charge (10 minutes for 90 per cent and, in this case, a 200-mile range, compared with a conventional three or four hours), performance at extreme temperatures (think mobile phone left in freezing car) and longer life (15 years against five) because the battery doesn't physically expand and contract as it absorbs and releases energy. To sum up rather more succinctly, therefore, the technology delivers all the Holy Grails of battery technology. Altair Nano's proof of concept is in the form of several large pick-up trucks equipped with Nanosafe batteries, albeit driven by conventional electric motors through a transmission and axle.

The Lightning connects these batteries and wheel motors in a sophisticated honeycomb chassis covered with a slightly chunky carbon-fibre and Kevlar body. Its engineering, however, is a great deal simpler than it was. Out goes the big Ford V8 and its support systems, while the batteries are mounted low down to optimise the centre of gravity. It's fast, it's quiet and - at least until companies such as AeroVironment have installed "charging stations" at all major petrol retailers - all you have to do is to plug it in every night, just as you do with your mobile. One catch is that purely electrical linkage between controls and wheels might take some time to be accepted by legislators, but so did the Airbus, which has no mechanical connection between cockpit and control surfaces.

None of this will be cheap, however. The Lightning's projected retail price is about £150,000 - twice as much as an Audi R8, half as much again as a Porsche 911 Turbo and so on. The claim is that the electric torque will outperform these conventional sports cars, but they have the benefit of established status and proven residuals. The Lightning also costs three times as much as the Tesla, for which orders are already being taken.

Wolstenholme and Lightning's managing director, Chris Dell, are realistic about their situation. "I reckon we've got about two years to capitalise on the opportunity," says Dell. "There are cars on the market already but the majors are unlikely to make anything like the Lightning because at the moment it's too expensive to be produced in volume. We're utilising technology that has some real advantages and once we're able to bring that to everyone's notice, then the majors might be more willing to pick it up, especially if legislation carries on getting tougher. Once they do, prices will decrease. Meanwhile, we're seeking customers prepared to spend the money to make a statement and do their bit for the environment. Hollywood looks pretty green at the moment..." I left Peterborough with a sense that just as the computer revolution had empowered many smaller companies, the same thing could conceivably happen in a car industry that has grown too big and too unwieldy, and cannot make a profit competing with itself for too few customers. Smaller companies such as PML, Altair Nano and Lightning could well be the vanguard for new technology, simply because they are in a position to react.

I'm quite confident that Lightning will have a car running by the end of the year and that it's likely to do pretty much what is claimed. Whether anything like it will ever be affordable while there's oil on the planet is another matter. If nothing else, it might make people realise there are alternatives and, if they really want to walk as green as they talk, governments need to start encouraging them. The political challenges might prove tougher than the technology.



Understanding Engineers -

The graduate with a science degree asks, "Why does it work?"
 The graduate with an engineering degree asks, "How does it work?"
 The graduate with an accounting degree asks, "How much will it cost?"
 The graduate with an arts degree asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

An engineer was crossing a road one-day, when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess."
 He bent over, picked up the frog and put it in his pocket.
 The frog spoke up again and said, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a beautiful princess, I will stay with you for one week."
 The engineer took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it and returned it to the pocket.
 The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a Princess, I'll stay with you for one week and do ANYTHING you want."
 Again, the engineer took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back into his pocket.
 Finally, the frog asked, "What is the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess, and that I'll stay with you for one week and do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?"
 The engineer said, "Look, I'm an engineer. I don't have time for a girlfriend, but a talking frog, now that's cool."

TECHNICAL TOPICS

FACTS, MYTHS, OLD WIVES' TALES & OUTRIGHT LIES - Roger Bywater

I cannot resist taking up the cudgel about marketing ploys that really amount to misrepresentation or even fraud. Along the way I will tackle one or two popular fallacies and clarify certain aspects of high performance engine technology which are not always fully understood. Hopefully the reader will enjoy reading it and will look at some of the wilder claims with a little more scepticism. The popular view of "it must be true or they wouldn't print it" is no more valid now than it was in the days of cure-all quack medical remedies.

Buyer beware - they just want your money.

There was a time when motoring journalists were sufficiently knowledgeable to spot extravagant claims in a flash but, sadly for the consumer, that does not often seem to be true any more. In so many walks of modern life superficial image is often more highly rewarded than substance so perhaps we should not be too surprised.

HOT CHIPS

The mid-eighties spawned a whole new industry - Chip Tuning. The principle is that the programme chip, usually an EPROM, is removed from the engine management ECU and the data in the various fuel and ignition maps is altered to increase performance. This of course presupposes that the original manufacturer's mapping is not optimised for performance.

The car that probably started it all was the Cosworth Sierra on which the wastegate of the turbocharger could be easily adjusted to give more boost pressure. The original mapping of fuel and ignition ran to higher speeds and boost than were actually used

for production cars but the programme imposed production-rated cut-off limits for both. Once it was found out how to alter the programme to lift the boost and speed limits, the way was open to run much higher boost and r.p.m. just by changing the chip and adjusting the wastegate actuator. A few people soon found out the hard way that in practice it was not quite that easy and some refinements to the original maps were needed to keep piston goulash off the menu.

People then started thinking that if it could be done to the Cosworth then why not others and in no time at all it seemed that a hot chip kit could be provided for almost any car which had a turbocharger. The problem is that the programmes in different manufacturer's ECUs are unlikely to have much similarity and it takes a lot of work and probably a bit of insider knowledge to learn what to do with each one. Even then there will be some which use dedicated components which are all but impossible to reprogramme or substitute. Because not all wastegates are adjustable, devices appeared which amounted to nothing more than a graduated leak in the pressure pipe to the actuator. Also some so called "chipping" was nothing of the sort and we have seen examples which consisted of nothing more than a few resistors crudely tacked onto the ECU circuit board.



Last photos

TECHNICAL TOPICS (Cont.)

The Boost Module.

Another approach to the problem appeared - the add-on boost module driving one or more extra injectors to add extra fuel according to boost pressure, independently from the ECU.

A popular method was to have the extra injector(s) squirting onto the throttle plate. This can work reasonably well if the injector(s) are driven with the appropriate pulses. We have seen one or two systems that simply trigger extra injectors at a fixed rate and shove in a load of fuel only vaguely related to the amount of air. For some people that seems to be good enough - and if the power falls off through over-fuelling then even more boost is the "cure".

All these things worked and some were quite cleverly done but there has been a lot of rubbish about as well. I do not think that allowing air to leak from the wastegate pipe and fiddling with registers added to the coolant sensor circuit, amounts to the high technology it has been passed off as to the gullible public.

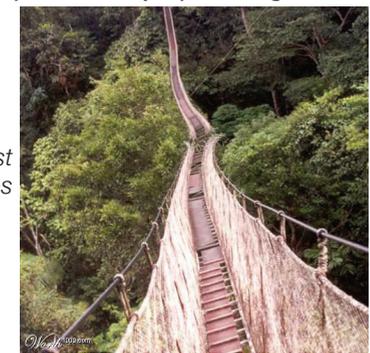
Reliability?

The question often asked is how will engine life be affected by increased boost? The answer rather depends on the quality of the conversion and how much extra boost is produced. A mild increase will probably not make any significant difference if it is done properly, but logically, engine life must be shortened as stresses are increased. The problems come when the stresses are taken beyond the safety margins inherent in the basic engine design. For example, if thermal loadings are increased, a point will come when the radiator will no longer be

big enough and unless the performance is limited to very short bursts, trouble is bound to follow.

Chipping Unsupercharged Engines.

Naturally aspirated engines are far less amenable to "chipping" because it is not possible to turn up the boost to get more air into the engine. In some cases it is certainly possible to improve drivability and throttle response by richening up certain areas of the fuel map and up to about 5% more power might be achievable if the top-end fuelling is weak. This is by no means always the case and because individual cars vary it will not necessarily apply equally to all examples of a particular model. For anyone to imply that more power than this can be found amounts to an accusation that the manufacturer is incompetent. I have seen it said that ignition can be advanced to get more power but it really is not likely. If the ignition mapping had such a safe margin there would hardly be a need for air temperature and knock sensors. In the case of a large engine like the Jaguar V12 there is no doubt that the manufacturer is forced to use weak fuelling at low and moderate speeds to satisfy emission standards and maximise the set speed economy figures. Such an engine can be noticeably cheered up by revising the



Last photos

TECHNICAL TOPICS (Cont.)

fuel map without any real consumption penalty, but top end power is, if anything, already over-fuelled for safety, so no power increase is possible. Smaller engines are less compromised and the scope for improvement is generally very limited.

ECU REPAIRS

You should now realise that to definitively check all the functions of an ECU by simply plugging it into some sort of universal test instrument is only practical for the original manufacturer.

It is conceivable that you could programme a device to cycle through all the functions of a known ECU and record data for comparison against others. The problem is that minor running changes are a fact of life in any production system, so keeping up to date and differentiating between specification changes and faults is a mammoth task and one that not all manufacturers are likely to be helpful with. As an example there are over 20 different ECU part numbers listed for the Jaguar V12 HE from 1981 to the present time. Some are interchangeable, some are not, but there are a lot of variations, some being subtle, some not so. If you consider that the other manufacturers are going to have similar permutations then clearly for an outsider to determine what is a fault and what is an intentional change would be extremely difficult across a whole range of vehicles.

The real problem is that most ECU faults seem to be caused by "dry joints", a term used to describe a soldered joint which did not fully adhere at the time of manufacture and which has since developed high resistance, often intermittent in nature. If the joint is behaving itself at the time of test then it cannot be identified as faulty.

A dry joint is rarely obvious from visual inspection and the normal way to find an intermittent one is by temperature cycling and flexing the printed circuit board while it is running on a test rig. If it cannot be positively identified the normal practice is to desolder the suspect area of board (or all of it sometimes), resolder it carefully, and test again.

Of course components do fail from time to time and can often be renewed with equivalents from commercial sources. However many ECUs contain some dedicated components for which replacements are not commercially available. The only solution then is to have a stock of similar ECUs which have been scrapped for other reasons and which can be "robbed."

An increasing problem with recent ECUs is that they often have double sided printed circuit boards one side of which is populated with "surface mount components." Surface mount technology uses specially miniaturised components which do not pass through holes in the board but sit on the surface. They are put there by a "pick and place" robot machine which glues them onto the board and the whole assembly is then wave soldered (suspended over a bath of molten solder which is agitated to produce waves which sweep the workpiece). Not surprisingly,



TECHNICAL TOPICS (Cont.)

repairing surface mount boards is extremely difficult.

Another problem is that if a device containing the programme or data has failed, how do you find out what it contained so that you can transfer the programme into a replacement. If you have others in stock then a copy can be made quite easily, but remember the earlier remark about how often these things are changed.

We have repaired hundreds of Jaguar and Rover V8 digital ECUs over the years but this has only been possible because we were already geared up to modify them to suit high performance applications. We do not see it as being a growth industry for the reasons stated above and because factory replacements will probably become cheaper.

AFTERMARKET EMISSION SYSTEMS.

There are people of a "green disposition" who, in the belief that they are helping to limit damage to the environment (a worthy enough aim with which I have no argument at all), may be tempted to purchase an emission device such as a catalyst to fit onto a car which was never intended to have one. Catalysts can only function properly in the right conditions. They must either have extra air available to act as oxidisers or must have very carefully controlled fuelling via Lambda feedback to operate in 2 way mode. Vehicle designers have to go to considerable trouble to ensure that not only do their catalyst installations function properly but that they do not constitute a fire hazard to the vehicle and its surroundings. For many years now some countries, notably Japan, have insisted on total shielding to eliminate any possibility of a catalyst vehicle setting

fire to grass in an off-road situation. A catalyst overheat warning system may also be obligatory.

It is irresponsible to even think of just bolting a catalyst into the exhaust system without carrying out the considerable re-engineering that would be necessary to make it both effective and safe. The combination of an elderly car, unskilled maintenance, and a bodged catalyst installation represents such a potential hazard that any sensible insurance company would immediately withdraw cover and reject any associated claim.

There is little probability of a bolt-on after-fitment emission system of any sort ever becoming a practical reality.

Those who offer such conversions, usually in the name of "saving the environment", are at best ignorant and at worst cynically taking advantage of people whose motives, whilst undoubtedly somewhat naive, are certainly virtuous. The same remarks also apply to most of the items in the next section.

ECONOMY, EMISSION & PERFORMANCE ENHANCERS.

Extravagant claims are often made for all sorts of relatively inexpensive (£30-50)



TECHNICAL TOPICS (Cont.)

devices, magnets strapped on fuel pipes, balls of stuff dropped in the fuel tank, spark-intensifying HT leads, manifold air bleed systems, etc. Their merits are claimed with a theme which is usually some variant of one or more of the following:

“The polarity of the fuel molecules is aligned ready to burn cleanly!”

“The fuel is pre-ionised ready for more perfect combustion.”

“The spark energy is enhanced, concentrated, converted to plasma, etc.”

“The presence of certain compounds or elements (e.g. tin) increases fuel octane and burn rate.”

“Sonic shock waves break down the fuel particles ready for combustion.”

“It was devised during the war to keep aircraft flying in Russia (or the Western Desert or wherever).”

THEY ARE ALL BOGUS AND HAVE NO FOUNDATION WHATSOEVER IN GENUINE TECHNOLOGY OF ANY BENEFIT.

The marketing ploy is nearly always on similar lines with lots of impressive testimonials and technical buzzwords taken out of context. Claims are usually made that the evil motor manufacturers and fuel companies have tried to “buy it out” or “suppress the evidence”. It is all nonsense.

The main marketing effort is generally targeted for the early spring when ambient temperatures are rising after the winter. A “punter” buying an “economy device” at this time is bound to see an improvement because of the seasonal change. There is a bit of psychology involved as well because nobody wants to admit that he has been conned so most mugs continue to extol

the supposed virtues of the product even when there is solid evidence to the contrary.

Motor manufacturers are actually very keen to know about any genuine innovation that might be used to improve their products. On the other hand fuel companies are well aware that their product has a finite life and far from suppressing a real economy improver they would prefer to use it to extend the time that they can stay in the business they know. Fossil fuel saved now can be sold for more later when it is becoming scarce! Recently “New Improved Shell Advanced Petrol” was announced for which an economy gain of - wait for it - 2.3% (yes, 2 point 3 percent) over its rivals was claimed, along with drivability improvements and reduced emissions. If that is the best that a company with the expertise and resources of Shell dare claim in a serious petrol war then the likelihood of some “inventor” being able to do better is not something to bet your shirt on.

Even if the economy devices and aftermarket additives did improve combustion in some way, it does not follow that any benefit would be obtained thereby. If combustion speeds up then the ignition timing will be too advanced and



Last photos

TECHNICAL TOPICS (Cont.)

power will be lost. If the spark is enhanced so what? Certainly high energy sparks can help to ignite lean mixtures but unless the fuelling is weakened how will there be any advantage? How do you weaken the mixture of a catalyst car with Lambda feedback?

If a manufacturer introduces an engine with a genuine means of improving combustion the whole engine management programme will be revised to suit. Even so the benefit is unlikely to ever be more than a few percent, yet the after-fitment enhancer sharks happily claim power, economy and exhaust emission improvements of 20% or more.

DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT!

BEWITCHED BY “BIG TALK”.

A few years ago a fellow came to my house to try to interest me in a scheme for making 4-valve cylinder heads for an engine with which I have long had some involvement. My recollection is of someone who talked a lot, made incredible claims for his abilities and accomplishments, whose engineering drawings were of a standard that would be derided by even a junior draughtsman.

The man told me in a quite unabashed manner that he had personally designed and had manufactured a racing engine for an (unnamed) American client who had just bolted it into a car and went out and won repeatedly without it needing any further attention between races. Anyone with an ounce of experience of motor racing would be instantly wary of any claims to have made a maintenance-free racing engine. It has been said that the ideal racing engine would blow up as it crossed the finishing line because otherwise it must be over-

engineered and therefore too heavy. A bit of an extreme statement perhaps but I think the point is clear enough.

As yet another of my vaguely relevant asides, it brings to mind a tale recounted by a good friend of mine who, when paying for a very expensive engine for top fuel dragster racing, asked, in a tongue-in-cheek sort of way, what guarantee he might expect. The answer in a Californian drawl was “I guarantee it will start.

I guarantee it will blow up. I won't guarantee the interval of time between the two events”.

Returning to the original story, I remember being intrigued that the drawings showed inlet ports tortuously routed around head studs and other obstructions in a way that defied accepted wisdom regarding efficient airflow. A number of other aspects of the design were equally open to question.

To me it was as plain as day that despite the claims and bluster the fellow had little real knowledge about the subject of engine design. I do not claim to be an expert myself but I know enough to tell the real thing from an impostor. I did not exactly throw him out but I think I made my opinion of his efforts quite clear before he left. A year or so passed and I met him



TECHNICAL TOPICS (Cont.)

again. On that occasion he tried to tell me that a 4-valve conversion of the same engine by a well-known racing team was actually his design of which I had been so critical. I knew this to be untrue but there did not fit seem to be any point in arguing about the matter with such a person so I refused to be drawn.

Another couple of years or so passed and the same fellow popped up again - this time in the motoring press described as an eminent engine designer who had produced a new FI racing engine for which amazing claims were made. Nothing more was heard of it however, and another couple of years passed, then yet another blaze of hype acclaimed him as an engine designer highly thought of in the industry for his outstanding efforts on various important projects. Just what these important projects were was never announced because they were "of a confidential nature". I may be completely wrong, I may have totally misjudged the man, or he may have vastly improved his knowledge about the subject of engine technology since I first met him. Somehow I do not think any of these alternatives to be very likely, an opinion which is not unique to me.

The problem is that every time such a person gets the press to say how wonderful he is, so his credibility is boosted making it easier to raise money for yet another doomed project.

I find it amazing that so many people who should know better, can be taken in by a person who is so transparently not what he claims to be? The world is indeed a funny place - Walter Mitty is alive and well!

Understanding Engineers

A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers. The engineer fumed, "What's with those blokes? We must have been waiting for fifteen minutes!"

The doctor chimed in, "I don't know, but I've never seen such inept golf!"

The priest said, "Here comes George the greens keeper. Let's have a word with him."

He said, "Hello, George! what's wrong with that group ahead of us? They're rather slow, aren't they?"

The greens keeper replied, "Oh, yes. That's a group of blind fire fighters. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime."

The group fell silent for a moment.

The priest said, "That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight."

The doctor said, "Good idea. I'm going to contact my ophthalmologist colleague and see if there's anything he can do for them."

The engineer said, "Why can't they play at night?"

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."
The woman below replied, "You are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."
"You must be an engineer," said the balloonist.

"I am," replied the woman. "How did you know?"
"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far."
The woman below responded, "You must be in management."

"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"
"Well," said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are, due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault!"

Possibly the best letter ever to come out of the Inland Revenue...

taken from the Guardian, an actual letter sent by the Inland Revenue:

I am writing to you to express our thanks for your more than prompt reply to our latest communication, and also to answer some of the points you raise. I will address them, as ever, in order.

Firstly, I must take issue with your description of our last as a "begging letter". It might perhaps more properly be referred to as a "tax demand".

This is how we, at the Inland Revenue have always, for reasons of accuracy, traditionally referred to such documents.

Secondly, your frustration at our adding to the "endless stream of crapulent whining and panhandling vomited daily through the letterbox on to the doormat" has been noted. However, whilst I have naturally not seen the other letters to which you refer I would cautiously suggest that their being from "pauper councils, Lombardy pirate banking houses and pissant gas-mongerers" might indicate that your decision to "file them next to the toilet in case of emergencies" is at best a little ill-advised. In common with my own organisation, it is unlikely that the senders of these letters do see you as a "lackwit bumpkin" or, come to that, a "sodding charity".

More likely they see you as a citizen of Great Britain, with a responsibility to contribute to the upkeep of the nation as a whole.

Which brings me to my next point. Whilst there may be some spirit of truth in your assertion that the taxes you pay "go to shore up the canker-blighted, toppling folly that is the Public Services", a moment's rudimentary calculation ought to disabuse you of the notion that the government in any way expects you to "stump up for the whole damned party" yourself. The estimates you provide for the Chancellor's disbursement of the funds levied by taxation, whilst colourful, are, in fairness, a little off the mark. Less than you seem to imagine is spent

on "junkets for Bunterish lickspittles" and "dancing whores" whilst far more than you have accounted for is allocated to, for example, "that box-ticking façade of a university system."

A couple of technical points arising from direct queries:

1. The reason we don't simply write "Muggins" on the envelope has to do with the vagaries of the postal system;

2. You can rest assured that "sucking the very marrow of those with nothing else to give" has never been considered as a practice because even if the Personal Allowance didn't render it irrelevant, the sheer medical logistics involved would make it financially unviable.

I trust this has helped. In the meantime, whilst I would not in any way wish to influence your decision one way or the other, I ought to point out that even if you did choose to "give the whole foul jamboree up and go and live in India" you would still owe us the money.

Please forward it by Friday.

Yours sincerely, Customer Relations

For more information on the Electric Lightning technology, go to

www.lightningcarcompany.co.uk

www.pmlflightlink.com

www.altairnano.com

www.aerovironment.com



Last photos

Letter to the Bank Manager.....

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my cheque with which I endeavoured to pay my plumber last month.

By my calculations, three 'nanoseconds' must have elapsed between his presenting the cheque and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my Pension, an arrangement which, I admit, has been in place for only thirty eight years. You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account £30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.

My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways.

I noticed that whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you, I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, pre-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become.

From now on, I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan payments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate.

Be aware that it is an offence under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope. Please find attached an Application Contact Status which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative.

Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Solicitor, and the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof.

In due course, I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in

dealings with me.

I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Let me level the playing field even further. When you call me, press buttons as follows:

1. To make an appointment to see me.
2. To query a missing payment.
3. To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
4. To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
5. To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
6. To transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home.
7. To leave a message on my computer (a password to access my computer is required. A password will be communicated to you at a later date to the Authorized Contact.)
8. To return to the main menu and to listen to options 1 through 8.
9. To make a general complaint or inquiry, the contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service.

While this may, on occasion, involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.

May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous, New Year.

Your Humble Client (actual lady aged 98)



Sven & Becks

The England Football Coach, Sven Goran Ericsson is on "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" and has reached the million pound question.

Chris Tarrant says "Right Sven, this is for one million pounds, and remember, you still have two lifelines left, so please take your time.

Here's your question: What type of animal lives in a Sett ?

Is it...

- a) a badger
- b) a ferret
- c) a mole or
- d) a cuckoo?"

Sven ponders for a while and says "No, I'm sorry Chris, I'm not too sure. I'll have to go 50-50."

"Right, Sven, let's take away two wrong answers and see what you're left with."

"Badger" and "Cuckoo" are the two remaining answers.

Sven has a long think, then scratches his head and says "No, Chris, I'm still not sure, I'm going to have to phone a friend."

"So who are you going to call, Sven?" says Chris.

"Hmmm.. I think I'll call David Beckham."



So Tarrant phones David Beckham.

"David, this is Chris Tarrant from 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire'. I've got Sven Goran Ericsson here, and with your help he could win one million pounds. The next voice you hear will be Sven's".

"Hello David" says Sven. "It's the boss here. What type of animal lives in a sett? Is it a badger or a cuckoo?"

"It's a badger, boss." says Becks without hesitation.

"You sure, son?" says Sven.

"Definitely, boss. One hundred per cent. It's a badger. Definitely."

"Right, Chris," says Sven, "I'll go with David. The answer's a badger. Final answer."

"Sven," says Chris, "That's the correct answer. You've won One Million Pounds!!"

Cue wild celebrations.

Next morning at training, Sven calls Beckham across. "Son, that was brilliant last night. I thought I might be taking a gamble giving you a call, but you played a blinder! But how the hell did you know that a badger lives in a sett?"

"Oh... I didn't, boss," replies Beckham, "But everybody knows a cuckoo lives in a clock"



MEMBERS' NEWS

Henry Weitzmann -

Many of us will know that Henry has been battling with illness recently, and has been undergoing treatment with fortitude.

He is in good spirits but does not have the energy we all remember. I know we all join in wishing him a full recovery soon.

From David Small -

"I have made a useful discovery.

One frustration of the W152 has for me always been the lack of cockpit storage for small items such as gloves, glasses, notebook, pen, etc. I have been on the look-out for those elasticated string pockets which one saw in cars in the 40's and 50's.



At last I have found some which are absolutely perfect. They measure about 300mm long by 190mm high and will fit onto the side panel next to the driver's right thigh where they don't get in the way at all. They are mounted on a simple metal frame which is secured to the panel by four small screws.

They are available from the Uxbridge Boat Centre (Tel. 01895-252019) and cost about £10 each."

Carolyn McLaughlin -

The 'Leslie and Peter Downes' is now on station at Pwllheli with the naming ceremony scheduled for 26 April.

The 'Peter Downes' arrived at Seahouses earlier this month and will be officially named sometime when the weather is better!

The link below gives some more background to the recent publicity that RDC members might like to see, given their generous contribution towards the project some years back.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/7179595.stm>

It is possible that this link may be dropped at some point from the BBC website, so here is the first column -

"A Northumberland lifeboat station has taken delivery of a new boat donated in memory of a man who died at sea.

The £29,000 craft, named after Peter Downes, is due to be unveiled later and put into immediate operation at the Seahouses RNLI station.

Mr Downes, from Sutton Coldfield, died in a diving accident in the English Channel in 2002.

In his memory, wife Carolyn McLaughlin and brother Michael decided to raise money for the RNLI."

MEMBERS' NEWS



From Peter Langmaid -

"My Ronart is sold to a dealer from Germany. Had a bit of a disaster as I blew the engine at the start of the test... holed a piston or burnt a valve, not sure which. In the end we reached a deal on £14500.

If this wasn't bad enough, we did the dealing in torrential rain, both getting totally soaked, and then I got a phone call to say my son had crashed his car. So I went off to see him and when I got back, the Ronart had gone.

The good news is that my son is fine, apart from being very shaken up. The car is a write-off - he skidded in the rain and leaves, bounced off the stone walls we have down here, so has done in all sides of the car.

By the way, the German dealer also advised me that Bart from Belgium has put my car on an ebay auction in Europe - I will be checking this out later. Bit naughty of him as we had no deal in place."



From Peter Langmaid -

Now that I'm no longer a Ronart owner, I am looking to dispose of my collection of magazines, newsletters, 'club letters' etc., dating back to the very early days of Ronart Cars Ltd. Can this also be added to the next newsletter? I will list the items in due course.

As for the Ronart Register, I will tidy up the info and pass on a copy to anyone who wants to take up the challenge! Meanwhile, I don't mind still looking after the Register for the club, and to remain a technical person for the Mark I cars.

I believe Tony Legon is up for the Register. (Ed)



Annual Lunch Sunday 13th April -

The Club's 15th luncheon will be held at the Hanbury Manor Hotel, Nr. Ware, Hertfordshire at 12.30pm.

Ronarts will have their own meeting/display area. At this time of year there is a good chance that many will be back on the road, and that the weather might be clement!

Arthur will present on the latest progress at the factory with Ronart, Vanwall and Electric Lightning.

So don't miss it! This is Benjamin's home-domain and the surroundings and food are excellent. If you haven't booked, there may still be time to contact Benjamin (details back page).

Forthcoming Events Calendar

Please do let the Editor know well in advance of any events which are worth listing here. If you are planning to go to a Car Show and are willing to organise a few other Ronarts into turning up, please call Benjamin Weitzmann for the loan of a Club banner or flagpole.

2008

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|-------------------|--|
| March 6 Thursday | Southern N & N - The Arkle Manor, Dorking, Surrey |
| April 3 Thursday | Southern N & N - Three Horseshoes at Knockholt, Kent |
| April 12 Saturday | AGM & Dinner |
| April 13 Sunday | Annual Club Luncheon |
| May 3-7 | Tour to Dublin & Giant's Causeway (Tony Legon/Continental) |
| May 8 Thursday | Southern N & N - The Castle at Outwood, Surrey |
| May 18th Sunday | Three Counties Tour (Graham Hallett/CDMC) |
| June 8th Sunday | London - Brighton Run (Graham Hallett/Greenwood) |
| June 12 Thursday | Southern N & N - The Black Horse, Chorleywood, Herts |
| July 11-14 | Tour to Le Mans Classic (David Small) |
| July 17 Thursday | Southern N & N - The Sun at Dunsfold, Surrey |
| Aug 7 Thursday | Southern N & N - The Parrot at Forest Green, Surrey |
| Sept 6-7 | Cotswold Classic Run (Graham Hallett/Greenwood) |
| Sept 11 Thursday | Southern N & N - The Castle at Outwood, Surrey |
| Oct 9 Thursday | Southern N & N - The Sun at Dunsfold, Surrey |

KEY: Main Event Local Event General Interest

AGM Saturday 12th April -

The 8th AGM will be held at the Hanbury Manor Hotel, at 5.45pm, followed by an informal dinner.

Lots of important issues will be discussed, especially this year, so please be there, and stay overnight (contact Benjamin) - he has arranged an excellent rate, for a luxury experience.



CLUB CONTACTS

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The Factory - Vanwall Cars Ltd (prev. Ronart Cars), Arthur Wolstenholme

T: +44 (0)1733 332913 - email: awolstenholme@vanwallcars.com

Email Addresses! Please send John Ellis an email to record your address with the club.

Club Website - www.ronartdriversclub.org.uk