

A Trip down Memory Lane? Churnet Valley Railway & Classic cars

Having bought a Triumph Spitfire 1500 in November 2007, I had high hopes of it being on the road sometime during 2008. Sadly, this was not meant to be, but whilst still progressing on “Katie J’s” restoration the 2008 timetable at the Churnet Valley Railway (CVR) in Staffordshire was published which listed a classic car and train day in October. Having been a member of the Churnet Valley’s strong band of volunteers now for 12 years and joining the Triumph Sports Six Club (TSSC) at around the same time as I bought the car, it seemed a good idea to see if we could meet the 2 groups at Froghall station.

After much planning, e-mails back and forth about this and that, Sunday October 5th dawned, looking very wet and dull. With luck, the forecast was to get better, and this it did at around 11am when the first train arrived. We already had a good gathering of classic cars, which were not just from the TSSC when I arrived. More came during the morning and even more during the afternoon when it had started to dry out. We were nearly down to short sleeves in the afternoon! Not a raincoat in sight.

Cars on display began with an early 3 wheeler, an Bond Bug, two Rolls Royce, Triumph Stags, Spitfire Mk III, TR6, TR7, (a GT6 turned up about 3:45pm) and a Vitesse. MG’s, Bond Equips, even an AC Cobra from nearby Cheadle. 2 Vauxhall Viva’s, a VW Golf GTi and a Ford Transit, both under restoration.

For some, disappointment came with the first train, as the “Jinty” steam loco that we had hired in had been “failed” and had been replaced with an English Electric Class 37 on the service train, although this did in fact please some visitors as they had the chance of diesel and steam haulage when the Jinty came on the train after lunch to work the rest of the afternoon without any problems. We all know and understand from our cars that they can be temperamental from time to time.

Unbeknown to the attending cars, Ken Lupton (Froghall’s head station master) and I set about inspecting the cars and giving them a score each. We had planned to give some certificates for best vehicles in various categories and even the public’s favourite, but an error by myself ruled out the public’s vote (I forgot to print the voting slips!). We didn’t realise what a task it was to be!

So, we set to, going up and down the two lines either side of our large car park looking at the exterior and interior of each vehicle. Somewhere owners were present even offered to lift the bonnets for a look inside. After inspecting all the cars that were still around by 4pm, we dashed back off to the booking office to complete some certificates before the final train left. With luck, all were still there and handed out to the soon departing motorists, one or two with smiles on their faces looking forward to returning again next year.

The awards went to the following :

Best Overall Vehicle: C20RCH Damlier wedding car.

Best Commercial Vehicle: XSL522 Chevrolet Pickup.

Best Car: HER188F Ford Anglia

Furthest Travelled: YUY193G Bond Equipe.

Best Local Vehicle: JLD481K Vauxhall Viva Estate.

Sadly, my own Spitfire did not make the line up... Maybe next year ?

Regards

Andy Sollis

Notts TSSC Member