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YOUR
CLUB
NEEDS

YOU!

Following the communication regarding the future of the Club which Geoff Bowles sent out at the beginning of April, we have had responses from quite a few people, the general sentiment being that you don't want the Club to end. There have been a few volunteers to take on various positions within the Club – we now have two new Committee members, one of them being on the South Coast and the other in Scotland, and we also have someone willing to take over administration of the website (both people who currently do this no longer own barchettas).

Bernadette has reported a recent increase in the number of people applying for membership which in part seems to have been sparked by the discussion of the future of the Club. As a consequence, the Club looks as though it is in a position to continue and membership will NOT be closed to new members as had been mooted in Geoff's message.

HOWEVER, this is not a reason for you to sit back and be an armchair member and continue to let a few people do all the hard work - there is still a lot with which you can help. How about organising a Sunday drive and lunch for other owners in your area? Meetings don't always have to be "region" based, they can be arranged on a county-by-county basis if you like – you MUST have some favourite roads in your local area where you like to take your barchetta for a blast! Or you could write something for the Newsletter, which is just what Megan Pratt has done in this issue (see page 6). It doesn't have to be a lengthy article, so long as it's of interest to other barchetta owners.

So come on, get more actively involved in the Club. If you've never driven around the countryside with other barchettas (no matter how many or few) you don't know what you're missing – it's great fun and always makes people smile and enjoy themselves, AND you get to meet some great people too. After all, everyone who owns a barchetta is a little bit special aren't they?

See the "Contacts" section on page 2, and let Geoff, Rosemary or myself know what you can do to help keep the Club running and be as successful as it has been for the last six years.

We look forward to hearing from YOU soon.

Upcoming Meetings

Sunday 20th June - East Anglia Meeting

The meeting will start at 10:30am and leave from the car park of Tesco's in Milton, just north of Cambridge (Junction 33 of the A14). We will meet in the section of the car park next to the recycling bins.

There will then be a drive lasting about an hour, through the Cambridgeshire countryside taking us to Chilford Hall, where we will have lunch. If you wish, you can stay on for a tour of the vineyard and winery which starts at 2pm. The tour costs £4.50 per person and includes a wine tasting session (for those not driving of course).

SCOTTISH MEETINGS



Thanks to the enthusiasm of our new Scottish Regional Host, Ewen Brown, there are several meetings planned north of the border over the next two or three months. For details of all these events, email [\[redacted\]](#)

Sunday 30th May - Scottish Italian Car Day

The annual Scottish gathering of Italian metal has moved to Craigtoun Country Park at St. Andrews. We will be joining forces with the Scottish Region of The X1/9 Owners Club for the day.

Rendezvous 10:30am at Kinross Services, Junction 6 M90.

Sunday in June – Date to be confirmed

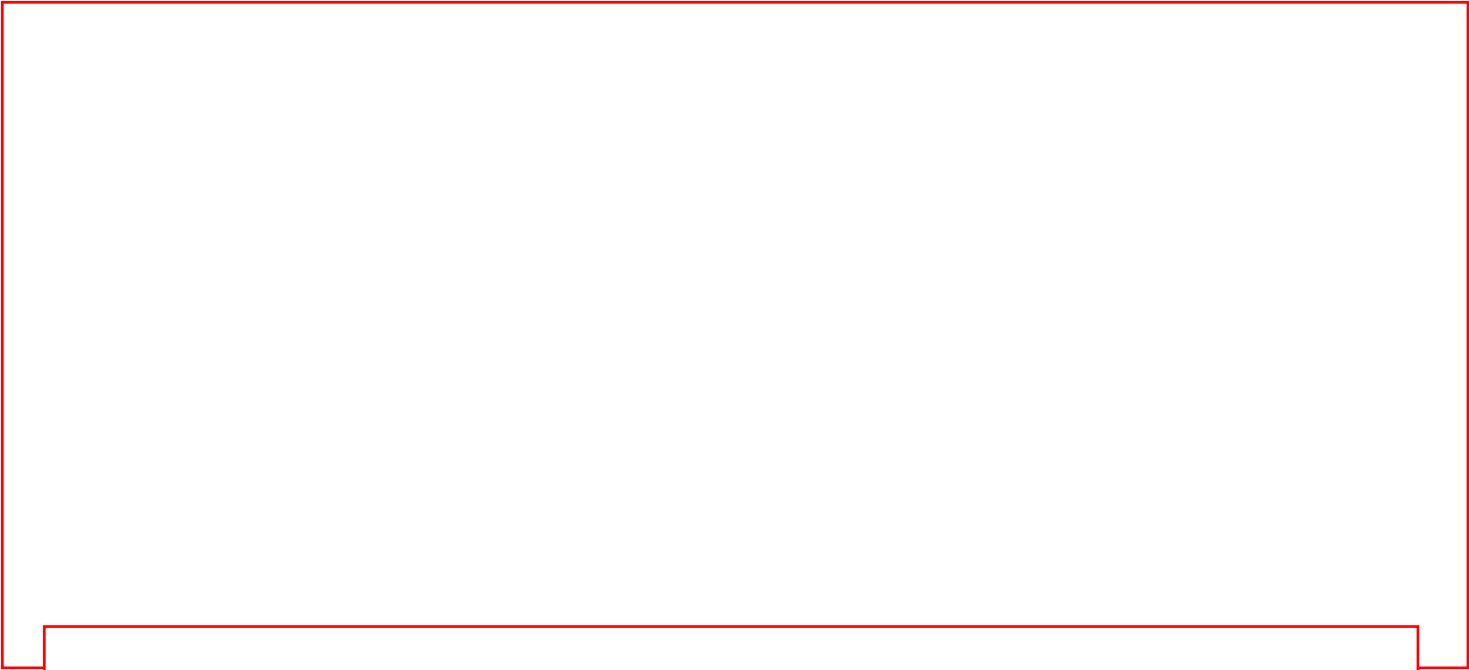
I would like to put together a scenic drive one Sunday in June for Scottish barchetta enthusiasts. This will start from Bothwell Services, M74 before making our way to Loch Lomond Shores in Balloch. A pit stop for sights and refreshments before heading towards the Trossachs and some of the best driving roads anywhere in the U.K. I hope to return to Glasgow for a meal at the Trattoria Trevi in Great Western Road. Anyone interested please get in touch and I will hammer out a specific date that suits everyone.

Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th August Callander Classic Weekend

The superb picturesque Ben Ledi Park in open countryside and within five minutes walk from the centre of Callander is the home of the Callander Classic Weekend. If you would like to attend I will require your details by mid August.

Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th September Scottish Classic & Performance Car Show

At the Royal Highland Showground, Ingliston, Edinburgh. This is the Scottish version of the annual classic car show held at the NEC in Birmingham. For this event we require two cars for an indoor stand over the weekend which is perfect for advertising the club. Free entrance tickets for those who can donate a car for either or both days.



Me and my *barchetta*

My previous cars had been a rust-bucket of a Fiesta and a Peugeot 106 that didn't like hills. The barchetta was my husband Roddy's idea because it was unusual, fun, and affordable. Not that I needed much convincing!

The little b has a rather interesting history. It started off as a Fiat press car, being registered in August 1995. I really don't like the thought that the likes of Clarkson and Needell have thrashed it, but there is undeniable evidence that they have - the car was used as part of a *Top Gear* magazine article in 1997 and there are pictures of them driving it.

We had thought this was the full extent of its modelling work until the *AutoItalia* day at Brooklands in summer 2002. There we were, waiting to go onto the track, when two marshals looked at the car and started laughing. I was thinking "Oh hell, what's fallen off now?", when they said to us "We drove that car to Belgium!". It turned out that the marshals were *AutoItalia* editor Phil Ward and one of his colleagues, and they had used the car for an *AutoItalia* feature in 1996. Nothing had fallen off, they'd just recognised the number plate!



Being terrified of anything even remotely technical and also believing the barchetta to be pretty much perfect as it is, I haven't done much to it. The steel wheels were replaced last year with simple alloys at Demon Tweaks in Wrexham (excellent place by the way) and Roddy put in the KSM windstop, which has made a big difference.

Living in a rural part of the country means there are lots of lovely quiet roads to drive on – wildlife, tractors and stray flocks of sheep permitting. Even winter driving is fun, although the car remains mud-coloured for much of the year. A favourite

outing is to The Bird On The Rock Tearoom near Ludlow (see photo, below). Some home-made lemon cake and organic Darjeeling tea is perfect after a great drive in the barchetta.

If other members think there'd be any interest, I'd happily arrange a meeting around south Shropshire/Herefordshire – Abergavenny is another great area for barchetta driving that I know well - we once came nose to nose with a Belgian Jaguar car club (there must have been about 50 cars) driving through narrow hill roads. All the E-type drivers and passengers waved madly and grinned at us, while the XKR owners barely acknowledged our presence!

Occasionally I have moments of thinking that the barchetta isn't a practical car and maybe now is the time to have a Fiat Coupé, but I soon come to my senses, usually just by looking at the barchetta. A Honda S2000 is probably the only car that I can see replacing my beloved b, and that won't be for some time. Besides, the barchetta isn't destined to become a classic - it's already there!

See you out on the roads, enjoying the summer sunshine – hopefully!



Megan Pratt



Meeting Reports

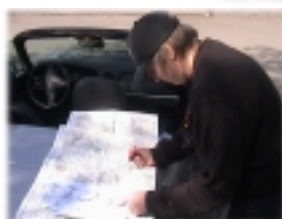
Midlands Meeting (Northampton) – Sunday 25th April 2004

How do you drive 50 miles in 90 minutes without really getting anywhere?
Simple – take part in a local barchetta meeting! Let me explain

By 10:30 on this overcast but very warm Sunday morning, fourteen barchettas and their drivers and passengers (plus one honorary barchetta aka an orange Citroen Pluriel belonging to Ian Barnett!) had congregated in the car park of the recently rebuilt northbound Northampton (formerly Rothersthorpe) Services on the M1, much to the curiosity of other drivers. Unlike some other meetings I've taken part in, silver was not the dominant colour, and the convoy would be made up of 2 blue, 3 silver, 3 yellow, 3 black and, amazingly, 3 orange barchettas. We set off, top-down of course, with a sheet of printed directions in case anyone became separated from the main convoy, to begin our circuit of Northampton.

We drove through some typical English villages – Blisworth, Stoke Bruerne, Hartwell, Horton, Castle Ashby, Whiston, Earls Barton, Mears Ashby, Sywell – all the while attracting smiles and waves from oncoming drivers, before our fleet of little boats took to the water at Pitsford Reservoir (well, the road goes straight across the reservoir!). Not far now, through Brixworth, Creaton, Ravensthorpe and East Haddon onto the A428 passing the gates of Althorp, home of the Spencer family, to our final destination and lunch at the Dusty Fox in Harlestone, only about five miles from our starting point! We all enjoyed a wonderful alfresco lunch which was promptly served considering that the place was packed with people enjoying the by now very warm sunny afternoon.

Many thanks to Rosemary for organising this lovely drive.



Northwest Meeting (Cheshire) – Sunday 16th May 2004

Five teams took up the Cheshire Treasure Hunt challenge on a gloriously hot sunny day - sadly Anneka Rice, Annabelle Croft and Suzi Perry didn't have the courtesy to turn up. Answers to 100 questions (with 200 points at stake) were to be found in a total of 10 villages local to Macclesfield and Congleton, with a maximum time of 2½ hours allowed, after which time penalties came into play.

Before they could set off each team had to work out which villages they had to visit in order to solve the clues. It was their decision which villages to visit and which was the best route between them. After about half an hour of head scratching and poring over their OS maps, they raced off within an interval of ten minutes - sticking to the speed limit of course!

Of the five teams taking part, four were in silver cars - the fifth was red - so the inhabitants of several villages must have been suffering from a strong sense of déjà-vu as the participants slowly drove by looking for answers.

All teams arrived safely at the end point for lunch without having to resort to the "suicide envelope" (yet more penalties if they had!), but three of the five teams did incur time penalties. The winners were Rosemary and Chris ("Fix" I can hear you all shouting) with an absolutely awesome score of 160 points. They visited all but one of the villages, which I had thought would be very difficult to do in the time allowed, so goodness knows what speed Rosemary must have been doing around some of Cheshire's back-roads! Runners-up were Sharon and Mark, in the only non-silver car, with a score of 116 points reduced to 96 (if I remember correctly) by time penalties.

Many thanks to those who took part (Rosemary & Chris, Paul & Helen, Paul & Jo, Sofia & Geoff, Sharon & Mark), which made all the effort of setting up the Treasure Hunt worthwhile.

If people are interested I may hold the same event again next year – but those who did it this year may have to be handicapped if they turned up again!

Reports and Photos by Steve Auty



How's this for a cracking shot of a barchetta in action? Thanks to Peter Yeo for providing this great image.