

2004 UK International Meeting Announced!

The West Country 2nd - 4th July 2004

See inside pages for more details

2003 UK barchetta Owners Club AGM

Sunday 7th December 2003, 2pm prompt



Slepe Hall
HOTEL & RESTAURANT

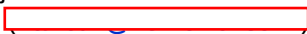
www.slepehall.co.uk

Ramsey Road
St. Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 5RB

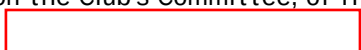
The second Annual General Meeting of the UK barchetta Owners Club will be held as shown above.

Prior to the AGM, there will be a 90 minute (approximately 50 miles) drive through the Cambridgeshire countryside, followed by lunch at Slepe Hall, which ALL barchetta owners are welcome to attend, be they Club members or not. **However, the AGM itself is open ONLY to paid-up members of the UK Club.**

The drive will start at 10:30am and leave from the car park of Tesco's in Milton (Junction 33 of the A14) – meet by the recycling bins! Lunch at Slepe Hall (costing approximately £15 from the Hotel's bar menu, which also features daily specials) will be at about 12:30pm, and is at your own expense.

You are welcome to join in as much or as little of the day's programme as you like, but could you please contact Ian Barnett  as soon as possible to tell us if you intend to join us for the drive / have lunch / attend the AGM, so that we wait for you at Tesco's / book enough seats in the restaurant for lunch / reserve enough car park spaces and tea and coffee for AGM attendees.

If you wish to stay at Slepe Hall the night before the AGM, bookings should be made direct with the Hotel (please be aware that there are only 16 rooms). Room rates for Saturday night Bed & Breakfast are: £50 single; £65 double/twin; £75 Superior double; £55 double with single occupancy.

As for the AGM itself, if you would like to nominate yourself for a position on the Club's Committee, or if you have any ideas or issues which you would like to raise, contact Rosemary  again ASAP.

We hope as many members as possible will attend the AGM – it's your Club and we need to know your views!

Chairman's Chat

When most of you read this newsletter, we'll be approaching the time of year when we start looking ahead and making resolutions, knowing that they will almost certainly be forgotten within a month. This is also the season to review what's gone before, so I tend to think about the UK barchetta Owners Club and to consider whether it is achieving what it originally set out to do.

When the club was established five years ago, the purpose was clear. It was simply to bring owners of this wonderful car together. Bernadette and I already had driven thousands of miles to barchetta meetings across Europe, and met owners from many countries including Italy, France, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

At every meeting we were immediately made to feel that we were among friends who were genuinely pleased that we had made the effort to visit them. We found that they have their stereotypes of "the British" as we have stereotypes of "the French" or "the Germans", but these stereotypes simply provided another opportunity for jokes and banter between friends.

At that time, Fred Fatoux had successfully established a club in France, and a group of German owners had come together to form a club in Aachen, but attempts to set up clubs in other countries had been less successful. I had no great ambition to create a club in the UK. Thanks to the internet we didn't need to be in a club to discuss the car or to get together for drives, but the car club culture is well established in Britain and an increasing number of people started talking about creating a club. Once a few hardy volunteers came forward to help run it, there was no going back!

Now the club is five years old, it has more than 100 members and an efficient and enthusiastic committee and it provides a broad and increasing range of services, from discounted insurance to merchandise. But the main purpose of the club has not changed – it is to bring owners together. The newsletter, the website and the mailing lists provide excellent channels of communication and sources of information but there really is no substitute for meeting other owners face to face and driving with them over some of Britain's finest roads.

The club proposes to organise a series of meetings across the UK in 2004 (see *next page*). Many of these will be simple one-day meetings featuring a visit or a drive, making it easy for people to attend. So when you come to make your New Year's resolutions, why not pencil a few meeting dates into that shiny new diary....

Geoff

A WEEKEND IN THE WEST COUNTRY

The barchetta UK Owners Club are delighted to announce preliminary details for the 2004 UK International Meeting.

This will be held from Friday 2nd July (10am) to Sunday 4th July (3pm), and will be based around Wiltshire and Bristol and Avon.

We will be staying at the Swindon Marriott Hotel and the weekend price will be held at no more than last year's costs which were:

Option 1

Arrive Friday morning by 10am, full programme leaving Sunday after lunch (approx 3pm)
£170 per person twin / double
£220 per person single

Option 2

Arrive Friday evening (meeting at the hotel in time for dinner), leaving Sunday after lunch.
£155 per person twin / double
£205 per person single

Option 3

Arrive Saturday morning by 10am, leaving Sunday after lunch.
£105 per person twin / double
£130 single.

If you wish to stay Thursday night please add £35 per person twin / double and £55 single to Option 1 (this is lower than the last 2 years!)

Costs *may* work out to be slightly cheaper than these quoted prices, but we don't want to get you too excited too soon!

New for this year we are planning to include a Treasure Hunt. There will also be time to enjoy driving around varied countryside and seeing some of the local attractions.



More details will follow on the website shortly.

This is part of an extensive summer programme in what promises to be an exciting year for the club. Other events through the summer will be one-day meetings rather than weekends, so why not make the 2004 UK International Meeting a key date in your diary and enjoy a whole weekend of true barchetta magic!

Autotalia 2003

It's the 3rd of August, the middle of a heat-wave, and time for the annual Autotalia festival of Italian cars at Brooklands. In previous years the organisers have been quite ambitious, setting up an improvised race track and organising competitions and awards in the hope of attracting rare and priceless cars from around Europe. This year they have settled for a low-key event, where ordinary owners of Italian cars have time to meet and mingle and enjoy the ambience of the place where circuit motor racing really started.

I had spent the previous morning on an intensive Autoglym session, so the various shades of red paint on my car gleamed in the sun as we left home on Sunday morning. I had volunteered to lead any cars that turned up at junction 17 of the M25 to Brooklands, and we arrived there to find one black and two silver cars waiting. I introduced myself and explained that I'd come to bring some colour into their lives ...

One of the silver cars was a rare brand new 2003 model, which had travelled all the way from North East England to join us. With the new front and rear bumpers and some internal trim changes it attracted a lot of interest during the day, especially in the context of Fiat's baffling attempt to withdraw the new model from the market before it had actually sold any. These cars could prove to be exceedingly rare, although opinions are inevitably divided on the styling and detail changes.



Our little convoy arrived at Brooklands just after the gates opened at 1000. The club had been allocated a prime position next to the famous concrete banked track, and we were directed there past the old clubhouse and the aviation museum. A handful of barchetta were already there – more silver and black ones – so we lined up beside them and made or renewed the acquaintance of the other owners. Within the hour several more cars arrived and we enjoyed meeting and chatting to the other barchetta owners. Some were familiar through the mailing lists, but this was the first time we had met in person and it was good to put a face to a name and email style.



We wondered why there was an empty grass field behind us, but noticed a small notice marking it as the area reserved for Alfa Romeo. Sure enough, a variety of Alfas trickled in throughout the morning, ranging from modern unwashed 156's to some very nice old Spiders – some carefully polished and adorned with For Sale notices.

Walking down to the clubhouse, we were intrigued by the sound of something very loud revving its engine down among the Ferraris and Lamborghinis. When we arrived, we couldn't help laughing when we found the noise coming from a highly tuned Fiat 600 drag car with a large engine and a metre of chrome exhaust pipe hanging out of the back....

Walking round the rest of the festival, it was interesting to see how different cars attract people. Did you know that there is a thriving Bravo club, and another that takes immense pains to tune and beautify Cinque- and Seicentos? Naturally there was an impressive lineup of Lancia Stratos in their garish rallying colours, but even they were outshone by the lurid paint-jobs of the immaculate lime-green Lamborghini Miura, and the metallic purple Diablo.

For me, however, the highlight had to be the glorious 1910 Lancia. It looked like an open chassis with two seats and engine on top – surely the epitome of top-down motoring - but its performance and racing record were staggering for the period.



Finally, some questions.... What was that Nissan Figaro doing driving up the test hill? If they're going to let in any car with an Italian name, can we expect to see Allegros and Marinas here next year?

And lastly, why no Multiplas?

Geoff Bowles



Some amusing cherished number plates were on display at Autoltalia!

