



MINOR MESSAGE No. 13

Morris and Me - Part Two

by Steve Chater

Sadly in 1963 "Bertha" was sold for £30 and exported to Holland. I have tried to locate her but unfortunately her registration BPL 914 was lost, and as I do not know her chassis number, as yet I have been unsuccessful.

Believe it or not, the garage that sold "Bertha" new (when she had finished her duties at the Motor Show), Wilsons of Epsom in Surrey, is still in existence. The garage Rice Brothers in Horsham, Sussex, where my Grandad purchased "Bertha" is also still in existence. However neither had records going back to 1935 and 1958, so could not help. Tolworth Towers in Surbiton, Surrey, where "Bertha" was first registered, did not send records of 1935 registrations to DVLA Swansea, and Gaydon did not have records from 1935 either.

In 1964 I purchased my first car, a 1953 Series II Morris Minor four-door saloon in Clarendon Grey, TPJ 751. It cost £150 from a work mate of my Dad. As I was not legally old enough to drive my new purchase, I had to be content with being a passenger. However I spent many happy hours fettling and tinkering.

One day my Nan decided she would like to visit her brother in the Isle of Man. Dad suggested we take her to the ferry in Liverpool and give my Morris a good run. I had recently serviced it and treated it to some brand new engine oil - BP Viscostatic - the bee's knees of the day!

Off we went and according to plan we arrived on the outskirts of Liverpool to spend the night in a B&B. In the morning before setting off to the ferry, I checked the engine oil level. To my horror, someone had stolen the oil, as there was not a drop to be seen on the dipstick. We filled it back up and as no apparent damage had been done we carried on. We waved Nan off and returned home.

On checking the oil the following morning, the same thieves had been at work, the oil had again disappeared. The Morris had consumed a pint of oil for every 50 miles. To cut a long story short, a replacement Gold Seal engine was obtained, and courtesy of my Dad's company discount cost £30. The engine was fitted and transformed the car, it really flew - well, as quickly as 803cc and 30bhp can!



At Newdigate Village, Surrey, in 1965