



Monkey Business

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Written By Chris Taylor

Bunged Together By Simon Griffiths

15 friends gathered at the Deanwater for the penultimate meeting at our wonderful home for the past 10 years. As they say, all good things come to an end and it's with much distress, sadly, I have to report that, late in November, the Deanwater Hotel is closing its doors. We are all distraught about this unwelcome news as it has been the most perfect home catering for everyone's needs, whether just to gather to discuss anything that takes your fancy, staying the night after a good session, eating an excellent evening meal, or a special room for the Christmas bash, all tied up with friendly motivated staff and a great crime free car park, nowhere could have served us better.

Obviously our meeting is stronger than the venue but wherever is found to replace the Deanwater, and please be assured the hunt is on, it will have to be very special indeed to even equal the Deanwater. My sorrow extends to Barry and his team who have served us so well; to lose their jobs so close to Christmas is highly regrettable.

So, to my report of our meeting on the 3rd of October, where an inclement change of season weather was giving us the message that Autumn was in full swing and Winter is just around the corner. It was cold, wet and windy but that did not deter Charles and Judith from being Alvis borne from the Wirral which is our furthest catchment, as to go any further you would need a 'swimmer' to attend. Then again travelling from Wales, Richard Plant-Locke may have travelled a mile

Only just a bit closer than Wigan, what meeting would be worth attending without our mascot Norman and Claire Blundell from somewhere near Warrington. Getting nearer the venue we had Mike Robinson, Tari Mirza, Tim and Jayne Brown and last, but not least, Duncan Mather from just over the Midland border in Staffordshire and myself from the very edge of the Northern region. Of course there are many others that, for whatever reason, could not be with us on the night; like Mick Fletcher from Blackburn and Gez Holt from Stockport. Mick had tested positive for Covid and therefore, as a precaution, Gez banished him to home and did not attend herself just in case.

I am doing this run-around list of our many Drummers, which, of course, includes all those either too far away - or who simply weren't there - so as to give anyone who feels like joining in the hunt for our new home to consider access for all our friends. Certainly we cannot go east of the Deanwater, and the mood of both the meeting, and subsequent emails I have received, are clearly in favour of the hotel with a restaurant type venue. Ideally together with easy access to the various motorways and trunk roads in and around Manchester Airport.

Considering these facts, in my opinion my (our) hunt is centred around the Wilmslow-ish area. So with the compass pin in the Deanwater let's draw, say, a 10 mile D going west and get searching. To narrow the criteria even more, family owned is preferred over corporate and quality is a definite requirement. As it has so eloquently been put to me, the Deanwater is a place you can take anyone to and that is something we must maintain.

Sad though all this is we do have one more meeting at the Deanwater which is TUESDAY 7th NOVEMBER at our usual time of 19.00. To make our tenure end with a bang I have arranged with the hotel that, whilst there is not the time to organise our usual Christmas bash, they are going to provide a full traditional Turkey roast dinner as the Specials Menu for the night. The venue have not asked me for numbers but I think it would be polite if you do intend to join us, and you want the Turkey Special, please drop me an email on chrisalvis20@gmail.com and I can give them an idea of numbers; of course for those who do not want Turkey the standard menu will be available.



Given how many times Charles and Judith's TD appears in this issue I think we should rename Monkey Business as the Van Ingen Newsletter

or two extra and, of course, beating Elizabeth Bennett from Chester. Our next far flung regulars include Simon, even if it's only the journey home as he now works in Manchester, and not forgetting Peter Lakin who, with Simon, is from the Nantwich area. Then there is our historian, David Culshaw, who regularly joins us from Wigan.

So, at the October meeting, to follow my breaking of the sad news, but being able to say we were having a traditional Christmas meal, we took another decision that full regalia is to be encouraged but not at all mandatory. This will certainly be the earliest Christmas dinner I have ever attended so let's make it a big goodbye to the Deanwater. I for one will be booking a room so as not to compromise the night with driving worries.

As a further follow on to the decision to make November our official Christmas do, it occurs to me that most other venues with regular groups will by now have sorted their Christmas meals and rooms and it might prove difficult to have an actual Christmas do in December - if a meeting at all - so for our gathering on November 7th please bring any trophies with you as they will be being awarded on the night.

I will do everything I can to find a venue for December, even if it is just a pub meeting as a temporary home. I am also mindful that our January '24 meeting falls on the 2nd, and, looking back, we have been low on numbers when it does fall that close to New Year's Day. Which means it may be February '24 before we fully meet again in our new home; as I don't want to promise the new venue somewhere between 10 and 20 meals a month and only 6 turn up - if you get my meaning!

Therefore, if that ends up being the case, may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a happy, healthy and successful new year for 2024.

So, for the last time our venue is the Deanwater Hotel Woodford SK7 1RJ at 19.00

Please watch out for any announcements coming to keep you informed of progress.

And now we hear from from our roving reporter Dean O'Spyder...

I was out and about as usual over the last month and came across Charles and Judith's car at the East Anglian Section October Gathering based at the Seamarge Hotel at Overstrand, just outside Cromer.



I managed to take a picture of the car at Bayfield Hall, near Holt. It was a wet day so I caught them with the hood up!



Whilst in Cheshire I saw Peter Lakin and Chris Taylor tearing up the lanes in PN, Peter's 12/60, on the VSCC Cheshire run



Just to show how keen they are to win the Bent Valve Trophy again I also caught sight of Charles and Judith's car in Nantwich outside the Crown after Simon and Melissa's wedding. You can see their car in the company of Mick's Firebird, Tim and Jayne's TD, that had borne Melissa to the church, and Gez's TA14 that Simon had used to transport them both back from the church. A shame he couldn't have had BVC 46 ready but he claimed time was conspiring against him; not helped by his mum trying singlehandedly to re-enact a murder scene from Morse 2 days before the wedding!