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STUDIO 434

Photo courtesy James Abbott

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF CARLO ABARTH

Part 1

Karl Abarth was born in Vienna on the 15th November 1908, to Karl Anton Abarth and Dora (nee Taussig). Karl senior was at military academy from which he graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant when he married Dora, the daughter of a textile manufacturer in Vienna. Initially, the family moved to Czechoslovakia where Karl managed one of his Father-in-laws factories. The 1st World war saw Karl senior back in the army, from which he was discharged in 1919.

The family moved to Merano, where after a period of time running his Father's hotel, Karl senior again moved the family back to Vienna and then yet again back to Merano where he took up Italian citizenship. Dora had by this time had enough of her husband's inability to settle, so she moved back to Vienna with Karl junior and his sister Anna.

Despite his father's inability to settle down, Karl junior enjoyed a gentle, cushioned childhood during which although he didn't shine academically, he displayed a very good mechanical aptitude, often stripping down and then re-assembling kitchen utensils and locks.

Initially Carl's competitive spirit saw him compete, quite successfully, on pedal bikes but in 1923 (at the age of 15) one of his first motor-bike rides resulted in his first crash. He was unhurt, but his mother was less than amused as she had to foot the bill to repair the bike. As a 16 year old student at a technical/industrial institute, Carl was given permission to work at 'Castagna & Co', a precision engineering workshop, in his spare time. The acorn had been sown from which the oak would grow!

His mechanical ability earned him a job at 'Motor Thun', a motorcycle factory just outside Vienna where he met Joseph Opawsky, an Austrian motorbike champion. Carl joined Opawsky as his mechanic and test-rider, which eventually led to him competing on his own-tuned bikes with his own - designed frames. He eventually resigned from 'Motor Thun' when after, due to his success, his bike was found to be sabotaged.

Unable to get a 'factory' ride, he raced a self-tuned 'Grindley-Peerless', an English bike with a J.A.P. engine - so successfully that he eventually got works rides with 'James' and 'D.K.W.' However, a very bad crash in 1930 very nearly bought his career to an end. Advised by his doctor never to race again, and after a fairly long period of time in a 'normal' job, the lure of the race-track called him back into bike racing--but this time (due to his previous injuries) on a motorcycle combination. With his friend Joseph Holly, on a bike powered by an English 'Sunbeam' engine and with a 'chair' to his own design, the

friends embarked on a very successful career, even to the point of racing 'The Orient Express' from Ostend to Vienna - and winning.

In 1934 he transferred his loyalty to the Belgium company 'FN' and with a sidecar to his own design, which had its wheel connected by linkage so that it 'leaned' in parallel with the bikes wheels, they continued their very successful career.

In the spring of 1938 Karl was contacted by the Viennese branch of the 'Italian Fascist Party' who advised him that his father, a resident of Merano, had become an Italian citizen--so he was now to regard himself as an Italian citizen, and it would be appreciated if he raced under Italian colours. It was also pointed out that if he did so, he would be awarded a large sum of money from the Italian government - Carlo Abarth was born!

In October 1939, a very serious racing accident very nearly saw the demise of Carlo, only his very strong constitution pulling him through. It was his last bike race.

The war years saw Carlo working in Yugoslavia as a development engineer. In 1946 Carlo wrote to the daughter of Ferdinand Porsche (whom he knew through business contacts) asking for work. The outcome of this contact was Carlo



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being authorised to be Porsche's representative in Italy. Through a series of contacts, good luck and his engineering skill, he eventually became the 'Sports Director' of 'Consorzio Industriale Sportivo Italia' - Cisitalia.

The company counted Rudolph Hruska, Ferdinand Porsche and Dante Giacosa among its designers. Dante Giacosa went on to design a range of brilliant small cars for Fiat. A very successful range of cars came out of this talented collection, including a mid-engined, flat-12, 1.5 litre formula 1 car, but sadly, the development costs of this car was eventually to bring the company to its knees.

With the demise of Cisitalia, Carlo was out of a job, so with the financial backing of Armando Scagliarini, a 'Limited Liability Company' was set up, with its legal headquarters in Bologna - 'ABARTH & C.' had come into being. On the 17th June 1949 the workshop was established at 10 Via Trecate, Turin, with an initial staff of just 10 people. He also had 6 cars 'inherited' from Cisitalia, as well as 2 drivers - Tazio Nuvolari & Piero Taruffi.

Despite a very successful 1949 season with the Cisitalia/Abarth cars, Carlo realised that the new company required a regular and steady income if it was to survive. For this, Carlo returned to the clever exhaust system that he had designed during his bike racing days. Although initially designed for bike engines, Carlo realised that with small modifications, the system could be used on a wide variety of engines. Although the exhaust made for only a small power gain, it produced what the Italians love--a lovely exhaust note! Despite being more expensive than other contemporary systems, due to a very good advertising campaign the 'Abarth' system sold very well, and included Ferrari, Alfa Romeo and Maserati as the customers who fitted the Abarth exhaust system as standard. The success of the exhaust system expanded into improved inlet manifold and carburettor systems. Another product that sold well was a kit to improve the gear-change of the 'Topolino' Fiat 500.

1950 was a good year for the fledgling company, Italy was pulling itself out of wartime recession, manufacturers were showing new models at the Geneva and Turin shows, and the body shops (carrozzeria) were getting orders, all which was helping Abarth with sales of his exhaust systems. Things were looking up! 1951 saw a re-organisation of the companies senior management, with Carlo becoming Vice President and Managing Director. Although the bulk of the early Abarth cars were 'one-offs' built by a variety of carrozzeria (Bertone, Ghia, Zagato and Italdesign among many others) in 1951 Abarth produced their 1st production car - the 'Abarth 205'.

In 1955 Fiat brought out their '600' (designed by Dante Giacosa), initially with a 633cc engine and eventually with a 767cc engine - the 600D. Abarth produced

a great range of 'road' and 'race' versions, from 750cc through to 850cc and finally, the ultimate version, the 1970 '1000 Berlina Corsa', a pure race car with disc brakes, modified suspension, 5 speed gearbox and a 115bhp 1,000cc pushrod engine with an 8-port cross-flow head on it, and that icon of the small Abarth racing saloons, the propped-open engine cover.

1957 saw Fiat bring out the 'Nuovo 500', again designed by Dante Giacosa. Initially, the 500 did not produce the sales that Fiat had hoped for, and it was not until Abarth produced a slightly tuned version for Fiat (still 479cc, but now with power increased from 13bhp to 20bhp), and then did a 7 day, 18,200km non-stop run round the Monza race track, that sales took off - to the point that eventually 3.7 million of the 'wee beasties' found buyers. Over time, Abarth produced a large number of versions of the 500. First by taking the capacity up to 499cc (Fiat sold it in 1958 as the '500 Sport', the only factory version sold without a 'soft' roof) and then by increasing the capacity to 594cc (the 595) and finally to 690cc (the 695). Both the 595 and the 695 had higher tuned versions - the SS models. The 696SS (which was still a 'road' car) produced 38bhp and had a claimed top speed of 87 mph - quite a jump from the 13bhp and 53 mph of the initial '500'!

Before the UK joined the Common Market, goods imported from European countries had Import duty slapped upon them, which along with purchase tax made some items very expensive. One illustration of this is the Fiat-Abarth 850tc, basically a tuned Fiat 600. The addition of these 2 taxes brought the price of the 850tc up to be the same as a Jaguar 'E' type. The outcome of this was that very few small Abarth saloons were brought into the UK. However, a way around this problem was arrived at; the UK dealer (in this case, Radbourne Racing, in London) was allowed to buy the base car from Fiat, and the dealer then ordered a conversion kit from Corso Marche (the Abarth factory) which would arrive in a big wooden box. The conversion kit was fitted to the base car, along with the Abarth chassis plate supplied as part of the kit, and the car was accepted by the Abarth factory as a 'pukka' Abarth car. The downside of this arrangement was that the factory records of how many cars were produced are, to put none too fine a point upon it, poor! Radbourne Racing 'built' about 250 cars, 500s/600s and 850s, using this method.

When Fiat moved on to the 850, Abarth, as usual, produced their own variants of the model, in saloon, coupe and spider format - ranging from a mildly tuned car (the OT850) through to the OT1600. The OT1600 had to have a specially strengthened 850 saloon body-shell to withstand the stresses imposed upon it by its engine - a 1600cc twin-cam producing 155bhp. With this version, Abarth

had hoped to compete with the Lotus Cortinas, but Fiat would not back the project, so very few were built by Abarth. Tony Castle-Miller of Middle Barton Garage has built one up from scratch, sounds glorious and goes like the clappers!

Abarth did not restrict itself to building modified versions of production cars from Fiat, and to a much smaller degree, Simca. From 1955 Abarth started building small GT cars, often based initially on the floor-pan of the 600. Designers such as Boano, and Zagato (their famous 'double-bubble' designs) produced small GT cars that punched well above their weight. Initially these cars had push-rod 750cc engines, but over time these were developed into jewel-like little twin-cam engines, initially also of 750cc, but over the years the Abarth twin-cam engines grew in size to 2,000cc. Abarth built a succession of really pretty GT cars (and possibly the prettiest the factory produced) in the 1,000cc to 2,000cc classes, the "Abarth Simca" and 'Fiat Abarth OT' range - beautiful little GT bodies, normally on a Simca floor-pan. Usually these bodies were designed by the senior 'in-house' designer (Mario Colucci) and built by 'Sibona and Basano' in Turin.

Tom Montagu

To be concluded in the June issue of the magazine



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A 500D IN THE SIXTIES

The author of this piece, Robert Champ, has a history in motorcycles as a magazine columnist, historian, Bonhams valuer, and author of one-make histories - in particular "The Sunbeam" bicycles and motorcycles 1887-1940 (you will find his books on Ebay.) Now retired from cataloguing classic vehicles, he writes on veteran cycles and says "The 500 sits amid some unlikely two-wheelers."

It was, I felt, a bit of a compromise too far. My lovely Lanchester, with leather comfort, pre-selector gears and fluid-flywheel had gone to a friend, and the replacement was a second-hand, crash 'box, bare-bones, Fiat 500D in utility cream, CDA 448B, with an engine smaller than my motorbike - also gone. Changing gear, though, was the least of our worries, synchromesh being much less universal when we wore L-plates



The reason, of course, was marriage. After all, the house had cost £3250 back then in 1966, and we were not exactly flush with money. The Fiat was cheap, having stood at the vendor's premises for some time.

Anyway, the deed was done and I motored to work as a happily married man. The reception of the car at the factory (remember them?) was, to put it mildly, cheerful. On leaving after work, there it was, viewed by everyone else to my chagrin, a nicely-made and large cardboard key protruding from the engine

lid, clockwork-toy style, thanks to the design office comedians.

It was an omen for a car which always produced affection in others, rather than aggression or envy. I played rugby then and large team-mates delighted in lifting the little car into challenging places, to general amusement. One learned not to be last out of the clubhouse! Mind you, three players found, while grateful for a lift, that their gratitude was modified by having to hold two kit-bags out of the side-windows, there being nowhere else to put them.

Other drivers were never comfortable as passengers in the Fiat. When whistling up behind a stationary car, one could feel the nearside floor bending as the passenger applied imaginary brakes, unused to the Fiat's extremely short nose. A 500's brakes seemed better back then, before servo discs became common on the car in front.

Another early problem was the fuel light. New to the car and short of money, there was always the temptation to go just that bit further after the tiny bulb lit up. On occasion we pattered to a halt far from a garage, thus delaying our arrival and being the butt of enquiries as to how we newly-weds had passed the time. In vain we pointed out that, for two people in a 500D, the only way to see any serious action of that sort would have been to open the sunroof and stand up.

Holidays bought further amusement. As a mere male, my clothing filled a reasonably small space, leaving the rest for my wife. Except that there wasn't enough of it, apparently, a problem which, it seems, is not uncommon. We lived in Pelsall, north of Walsall and, for two years running, set out for Cornwall, along roads which are changed greatly today. Starting with a full tank we stayed overnight - a loaded Fiat wasn't fast - at Wellington in Somerset, where we filled up for the second leg to Mylor, near Falmouth. Two gallons exactly, giving 70 mpg. on the successive trips, a figure amazing to our friends.

On the first year, our successful July 1966 World Cup was on TV, of course, but while Mr. Day, our holiday host, and everyone else, watched the match and its famous victory, as a rugby player, I occupied the time by fixing a loose front-wheel-bearing, a move which I have since regretted. (This is being written on the day of goalie Gordon Banks's funeral).

That '66 victory, though, was overshadowed by the next day's tragedy. We took the Fiat from Mylor to Falmouth on the following day for a sea trip, and we chose one of the competing quayside pleasure boats, our day out changing from fine to a storm on the return journey. A local pleasure boat, the MV

'Darlwyne', sank in that storm, with the loss of its thirty complement. We got back to Mr. Day's in time to 'phone and reassure our worried parents that we had missed that boat.

1967's return journey is notorious because of my finding, in a Cornwall loft, a lovely 1914 'Sunbeam' bicycle (my first love) with a 26" frame and 28" wheels. With no way of fitting it in, we strapped it to the roof-rack, where, of course, it overhung both front and rear windows as well as both sides of the Fiat. Having to peer through the Sunbeam's front-wheel spokes for the return journey did not add to anyone's comfort.

After a couple of years' daily use, though, the 500 had begun to age. Mechanically reliable, but always a source of electrical problems, the tracing of a loose wire revealed that frugal Fiat had properly painted our car's metal only where it could be seen. This explained the rusty stains left on our drive by water seeping out. Wet morning journeys had become a start-stop trial, sometimes curable by hitting the regulator with a hammer. CDA was swapped for the first in a line of VW Beetles on the grounds of their higher cruising speed on French holiday autoroutes.

Fast forward fifty years. With a gap in the garage, madam suggested that another 500 might be fun, as long as it was RHD, she never having taken to an LHD Porsche 914 (that continuing fondness for air-cooled cars). Now, after a search, we have gone back in time with a yellow '72 500L (converted to 126 motive power, a mixed blessing, I think.)* for fun and summer use and, of course, that well-remembered process of the continuous 500 rebuild has started again. Surprisingly, it is still fun to drive and as fast, in traffic, as a Ferrari.

We live near a primary school and we are used to small, Pixar-primed people happily shouting 'Mum, Mum, it's Luigi'. My grand-children love it as it is the only car in which they don't have to be strapped in and in which their feet can rest on the floor.

NB. Motoring tip: leave the Fiat at the rear of supermarket parking bays to avoid incoming drivers thinking that the bay is empty and having an 'avoidance'. It also makes the 500 easier to find in car-parks increasingly full of giant 4x4s.

Bob CC.

** See 'Tech Talk' pages where Bob poses questions relating to 126 conversions & spare parts.*

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FIAT 500 - 6 MONTHS OF OWNERSHIP



I've owned a few classic cars, a 1974 MG Midget that I had rebuilt twice over the 14 years of ownership. One on a budget and the final one to concourse. Children arrived and a two seater was no longer enough. I then went into RS and XR3 ownership, finally giving up, with lack of parts availability.

I started looking for a Fiat 500 at the beginning of 2018. Went to look at 3, and then finally found one on classiccarsforsale.co.uk. It was in Devon, and I'm in Chesterfield. I asked plenty of questions beforehand and got as far a booking a train tickert, with the idea of coming back with the car if I liked it.

After doing some MOT checks, I noticed it was coming up as a Fiat 600. I got in touch with the owner again, and he did sound genuinely surprised, especially when he got his MOT sheet out, and it was listed as a Fiat 600. It had been completely restored in 2015 and the DVLA had requested to look at it to re-register it. They then went back and mistakenly marked it down as a 600.

I wouldn't buy it without this being sorted, so I patiently waited 6 weeks, and then drove down to look at it. It was in fantastic condition, I was more than pleased. I took it for a test drive and then reality hit home, they are so slow it's almost dangerous on today's roads. I got out, shook the guys hand and went home (250 miles), without the car or a sale.

Getting home at midnight, I went to sleep, and the following morning my mind was made up, I was buying it. I still don't know why! I arranged for it

to be trailed back.

Took the kids out for the first time in it, they absolutely loved it, my wife however loves it's looks and character but doesn't enjoy going out in it. I'm still on the fence. However I have enjoyed working on it, slowly returning it to original spec. Re-upholstered the seats, fitted the original rubber floor mat, reinstated the original crash gearbox (repaired and rebuilt).

There have been a few occasions when the sun has been out, I've thoroughly enjoyed a trundle out in it. There have been other times when I've questioned my own sanity.

Buying parts for the little Fiat is a doddle, and they do seem of good quality. It's only let me down once, and that was 20 yards down the road, and a kind chap walking past helped me push it back on the drive, and even helped me fix it. You wouldn't get that attitude with a modern car.

Carl Warner

DIGITAL ART PHOTOS

Alun has had some issues with his web page and it may be that some prospective buyers have been unable to contact him. This issue has now been resolved. JS



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A DAY AT THE STEELWORK



The Corby Steelworks site holds a double interest to me. Firstly, as a lover of our canal system and its history, and now, its use as a race-car circuit. Initially it was the site of the 'Stewart and Lloyds' steel works, a company that ran a fleet of very distinctive canal tugs, many of which have been restored and can be still seen at Historic Narrow-boat rallies. Stewart and Lloyds was a very long established steel tube manufacturer (and made the PLUTO underwater piping in the 2nd world war) who, in 1967 became part of the 'British Steel Corporation' conglomerate.

British Steel eventually shut the Corby works down in 1980 and over the next few years it was demolished to form a 'brown' site. In 1991, Peter Davies bought the site for £60,000 with a vision to turn the derelict site into a major race centre. In February 1993, East Northants planning committee gave permission for 'Deene Raceway' to turn Deene Quarry into a car race-track. In 1998, struggling to get serious backers and with planning permission time fast running out, Peter Davies got hold of a JCB and, to legitimise the planning permission, started digging. The story goes that he also poured the concrete that formed the foundations of the security guard's kiosk to help legitimise the planning permission. Soon after, his backer, Gary Hands (who was later to own the EMI music empire) agreed to fund the project.

Sadly, by 2000 Peter Davies had been ousted from the board and the money men moved in. On Monday, January 15th 2001, after 10 years of planning and 23 months of construction, Rockingham opened for business. The facility was

formally opened by the Queen on the 26th May 2001. Peter Davies, the instigator of the whole project was sadly not even invited to the first meeting - he had to watch it from the back of the Grandstand - and buy his own ticket!

In 2017 Rockingham Speedway was the host to an 'Abarth day', an event which proved to be so successful, that it was repeated again last year (2018), on 30th of June. I was invited by Tony Castle Miller (of Middle Barton Garage fame) to take my 'Abarth 695' replica and to have it in the 'Classic Abarth' display. As part of the display, I and the other 'classic Abarth' displayers, were allowed to drive our cars around the 'inner circuit' (but not the outer 'banked' circuit). 2 sessions gave us a total of 10 laps - it would have been more, but a breakdown after about 3 laps of the 1st session had it curtailed. With helmets on (mandatory) and the chance to give the car a 'bi' o' welly', it was fantastic fun - small my car might be (it was in fact the smallest car out on the circuit), but she did not disgrace herself, and I still have the 'quick' engine to finish building and be fitted!



There was a good selection of cars on display, from an 'Abarth 850 coupe' (based on a Mk 1 Fiat 850 coupe) through to a couple of '600' based 1,000tcr race cars, and included Tony Castle-Miller's fabulous 'OT 1600'- a car based

loosely!) on the Fiat 850 saloon, but enhanced to handle the

power of the 1,600cc twin-cam engine in the rear of the car - it is VERY quick. M.B.G.'s workshop foreman, Anton Boutier, had one of his projects on display - a Fiat 600. This car was planned to look standard, but it isn't! With a very up-rated engine and brakes, it is an Abarth in all but name (and badges). There were about 12 cars in the 'classic' display - a good turn-out.

Although I wasn't able to take my own car around the 'banked' circuit, I was able to get a drive in one of the new(ish) 'Abarth 124 Spyder' models - 2 laps around the 'banked' circuit. I was very lucky, 1 lap was the norm, but the



wearing of my 'Middle Barton Garage Abarth' shirt gained me an extra lap, and strewth! for a 1,400cc car they are quick - VERY quick! Although I didn't go for one, there were also rides available in the modern 500 based Abarths, and if you wanted a thrill you could go for a 'Drift' in a '124 Spyder' -

the smell of tortured rubber hung over the area all afternoon.

Rockingham, despite its huge potential, has only rarely turned a profit, and when it did, the profit was modest, so sadly, there would seem to be little chance of a repeat of this event in 2019 as 'Rockingham' has been sold to be turned, so I am led to believe, into car parking space. Hopefully, the event will find a new venue (Oulton Park? it is close enough to home that I can drive my 'wee



beastie' to and from the event) as it is well worth keeping.

Finally, I would like to thank Tony Castle-Miller for my invite to the event, and all the work he put into helping make it a great success and a superb day out.

T. Montagu

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“TECH TORQUE”

Please note that the Fiat 500 Enthusiasts Club advise caution if following any advice given on these pages as the club can accept no responsibility.

RETURN OF AN OLD FAVOURITE

In a far, far distant age (my youth was, sadly, a long time ago) the oil of choice, especially if you ran an old mini, was ‘Duckhams Q20/50’. The main reason for this was that it was a slightly ‘thicker’ multi-grade, not that there were many multi-grade oils available in those days, so it helped to quieten the noise from the gear-box as well as materially helping to keep the engine in one piece. By 2006/2007, the product was almost unobtainable as it had ceased to be made some years prior to these dates and stocks had run out.

At the 2018 ‘Classic Car Show’ (at the NEC), stand 2-245 was occupied by ‘Alexander Duckham & Co Ltd’ - the famous green oil is back! At the moment, their range of products are limited to 4 engine oils (10/40 + 20/50 + mono-grade 30 + mono-grade 40), 3 gear oils and, possibly most interesting of all to ALL classic car owners, a fuel additive that helps resist against the ethanol found in practically all pump-purchased fuel, and which also boosts the octane rating as well as helping to protect valve seats.

I have been advised that there is the possibility of a 10/60 oil being available in the New Year - especially interesting to owners of 500 and 126 cars with tuned engines.

The modern Duckhams oils will have the classic green colouring, but has been up-graded in the light of modern oil technology.

I work at a ‘Classic Friendly’ garage 2 days a week and we will become an agent for this brand, as will the whole ‘Classic Friendly’ organisation. My engine will be having a full service and oil-change over the winter - guess who’s oil I will be putting in my engine?

Topo Peloso

CONVERSIONS AND SPARE PARTS

Regarding my 650 conversion. It is not quite a 500. The extra torque is welcome, but that cheerful top-gear whine is subtly different, and the synchro 'box doesn't let me brush upon my double-de-clutching, after years of non-synchro 'boxes on vintage cars. Drivers of an original 500 might now be the keepers of the flame for that particular skill! The slightly higher speed doesn't help the brakes, and the fuel goes faster. I didn't do the conversion and have now to change the starter-motor to couple up with the floor lever. (Incidentally, have you read the DVLA requirements on changing an engine?)*

Bob Champ

**(If you change the engine, the engine number will be different, and this needs to be reported to the DVLA, and your insurance company Ed.)*

Bob asks: -

- What's not so good about 126 conversions and is anyone going back to the original configuration?
- Why does it appear that the only spare he has been unable to source for his 500 is the R.H.floor. (to which the detachable heat-shield attaches) All his enquiries have come up with a 'no-one makes them anymore' response. Is this spare truly unobtainable? While Bob is able to 'draw' around an original to make a metal spare, he would need a template in the first place. Any ideas?

Comments invited on the above - JS

ONE FOR THE TECH TEAM?

A member from Bristol is having problems with his oil pressure gauge. The warning light comes on in a random and erratic fashion. Following an oil change for a recommended mineral oil and changing the sensor switch there was a slight improvement. However the warning light still comes on periodically.

Any suggestions?

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STUDIO 434 VISIT

Photos: Except where otherwise identified, all pictures by courtesy of James Abbott



When the confirmed date came through from Jenny for the Studio434 tour, I was in two minds whether to sign up. I'd already expressed an interest; I'd heard of the place and it sounded intriguing, however, I live in the North East of England which is a good 4-5 hour drive away (or twice that in a Fiat 500!). I wanted to go but it was quite a commitment for something I didn't know all that much about. I chatted to one of my sons (Max) who often comes with me to car events. He was game so the email went back to Jenny with a yes!

We travelled down the night before, on Max's 8th birthday, so the weekend already felt special. Arriving at 10am on Saturday morning (with our fingers crossed) we need not have worried. There was a real warm welcome from Luis, Jed and Aneta who stayed with us for the duration of our tour.

So, what is Studio434? Well, I've described it to friends since visiting as 'the car collection of a mad man'. I mean this is the nicest possible sense; let me explain. The mad man in question is one Rodger Dudding, an 82 year old London businessman who has amassed some 400+ cars over his life so far.

"He buys what he fancies and has never sold a car since the 1960's" says Jed, "we've got all his previous daily drive Range Rovers and Rolls Royce here too."

Studio434 is the name of this collection and the business that looks after them. To keep the cars moving and provide some income to cover costs (I suspect Rodger does not need this income!) they rent the cars out for events and specialise in providing vehicles to the TV and Film industry (with around 10 cars/week going out on jobs). There's pictures all over the board room of stars in or around Rodger's cars. They also store cars for other people... but more of that later. There's some value here (over £40m) but don't think that means it's all fancy stuff. There's a real mix; everything from a Fiats to Ferraris. Just what I like, funnily enough.

This was my first Fiat 500 Enthusiasts Club event, despite being a member for some years too. The other members couldn't have been more friendly and welcoming to both me and Max..... thanks guys.



He's behind you! Courtesy B. Cottam

So, to the tour. We started in Studio 434/1 which I think is an old bus depot. It's a two floor warehouse absolutely packed with about 100 cars (and a whole load more motor bikes), memorabilia, car lifts and even a Dalek from Doctor Who. If you want a formal tour of a car collection, this is absolutely not the place to go.

"First things first", says Jed, "Who wants a coffee and a biscuit?" He goes on with, "Have a good look around, all the cars are open. Be careful not to trip on the charging cables and let us know if you want any bonnets lifted." Both Jed and Luis seemed to know every single car in detail. When Max asked for the

bonnet of an E-Type to be opened Jed replied with, "We've got another one which is even nicer, a silver one, let's open that. I think it's downstairs. Luis, where's the silver E-Type?"

Cars, it would seem, do not have fixed locations. I guess as they go in and out so much, they don't worry about keeping them together. There were 9 Ferraris parked together downstairs, "Yeah, we just had them all serviced, that's why they are here", says Jed. The idea of calling a main Ferrari dealer to book in 9 cars for a service...!

A SMALL SELECTION ONLY OF THE VEHICLES ON DISPLAY



...AND JUST A FEW OF THE VEHICLES WE TRIED OUT FOR SIZE..



Photo courtesy B. Cottam



We stayed here poking around the cars (not really believing our luck) for a couple of hours until the team pulled out trays of sandwiches and more coffee. After lunch we jumped in our own cars and followed Jed and Luis over to Studio 434/2 a brand new and much bigger purpose

built facility about half a mile away. Pulling into the car park, even that was littered with all kinds of odd ball and exotic cars... the signs looked good! We took the huge car lift up to the 4th floor which is their events space. It's a big loft area which can be dressed for events, launches and parties. It's done everything from launching a supercar to a 21st birthday party. It was completely empty, except.... is that Jag E-Type really far away, or just, well.... small? Lurking in the corner were two half size cars: an electric Jaguar and a petrol Aston Martin. Luis asked Max if he'd like a go driving the Jag, which pretty much made his life!





We then descended floor by floor seeing more and more of Rodger's eccentric collection mixed with a few client cars (which understandably, we couldn't clamber into). They have hundreds of other people's cars here now. Everything from a Bugatti Veyron to a Mini Cooper. There's a lot of brand new McLaren's around as well. Yes, they are a customer too.



We even find some classic Fiat 500's. There's 2 in the collection, plus a 600 and a Topolino. All in fine order and would normally have been quite a draw on their own. Today, if I'm honest, they were a little overlooked!

So, more than 4.5 hours after arriving we clamber back into our own car, a little dazed, having met some great people, and still not really believing our luck! I've learned some things too.... I don't really fit in a Lamborghini Countach and I definitely need a Citroen DS in my life.

Would we go back? In a heartbeat!

Ben and Max Cottam

EVENTS 2019

If you are thinking of attending any of the shows or events, PLEASE register your interest with the Club contact/organiser.

Saturday 4 May 2019

Auto Italia Car Day at Brooklands

8:30a.m. - 5:00p.m.

One of the biggest events of the year at Brooklands. The UK's first and finest all-Italian car event.

Contact: Nathaniel Cross, web@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07802 410896

Sunday 5 and Bank Holiday Monday 6th May 2019

Stratford Festival of Motoring

For one weekend only, Stratford-upon-Avon's streets play host to fantastic cars and activities for all the family. The 2019 Festival of Motoring features everything from classic cars to modern-day motors.

Contact: Jenny Squillaci, magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07749 499785

31st May, 1st & 2nd June 2019

Stockton Park, Stockton, Wiltshire, BA12 –OSP

The event focuses and celebrates all that was great from before the turn of the century up to the 1980's. Vintage/classic cars, veteran cycles, automobilia, children's entertainment and more.

Contact: Jenny Squillaci, magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07749 499785

Sunday the 12th of May

9:30am-16:30pm

Villa Scalabrini, Green Street, Shenley, Herts WD7 9BB (satnav address)

Organised by a group of Italians passionate about cars and food. Set in 25 acres of attractive gardens. All money raised goes to charity. All makes and models are welcomed from Supercars to classic cars / bikes / race cars etc. Cars and Great Italian street food. Regional foods include Cannoli Siciliane, Birra Peroni, Franchi Seeds from Bergamo, Porchetta Romana, pasta, wood oven pizzas ,BBQ, Sausages from Parma, Salumi from Piemote ,Italian ice cream, Coffee from Piacenza and a lot more.

A real family day. £10.00 per person (U16's go free)

Contact GIULIANO on 07956156741 or email giuliano123@hotmail.com

For our Northern Members*
Scottish Italian Car Day Revived for 2019
26th May

Hopetoun House Edinburgh

Contact Keith Philpott on
dreammachinesit@btinternet.com

**There will not be a club presence as such at this show, but we thought members in the region may like to have a heads-up of the event.* JS

Sunday 2 June

London to Brighton Classic Car Run

Details can be found on WWW.CLASSICMOTOREVENTS.CO.UK

Contact David on david@classiccarcompany.eu

Sat/Sun 15 - 16 June

Bath Festival of Motoring

Parades, exhibitions, demonstrations, car rides, & family activities

Contact: John Jenkins, chairman@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07773 132645

Sunday 30 June

10 am—3 pm Classics at the Clubhouse

This year in aid of Cancer Research

Sandford Springs Hotel and Golf Club Kingsclere Live Music,

Awards and Prizes, BBQ, Bar, & other Food Stalls, Shops

Retail Stands, and Games.

Contact: Jenny Squillaci, magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07749 499785

Sunday 7 July 11am to 4pm

Broughton Pageant of Transport

Broughton Sports Field, Buckholt Road SO20 8DA

Displays of Classic & Curious Vehicles. Cars, Bikes,

Military, Agricultural, Commercial, Marine, Steam

Traction, Rocketry and much more.

Brilliant day out for the family with entertainment
 and refreshments for all. Raising funds for local causes

Contact: Jenny Squillaci, magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07749 499785

Sunday 28 July 2019

Stroud Classic Car Show 11am - 5pm

The Playing Field, Bisley Old Rd, Stroud, Glos GL5 1NL

As well as a variety of interesting cars, also on the day Hot Food and Drinks—Car Boot and Auto Jumble
Craft Stall Bric a brac—Raffle—Tombola
Children's Fun Fair—and more

Contact: Jenny Squillaci, magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07749 499785

Sun 28 July

Audlum Festival of Transport Cheshire

A showcase of classic motor vehicles and accessories from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s with some owners in fashions from the period.

Contact: John Jenkins, chairman@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 02380 730765

Saturday August 24th 2019

Gloucester City - Classic & Retro Festival Classic & Historic Cars in the City.

Classic Cars, Military Transport, Buses Motorbikes etc themed with memories of times past. Live Music, Fashion, Army Personnel, Ladies & Gents in Period Fashions, TV Personalities, & VIPs also attending on the day. Kings Square will play host to Live Bands and Singers with a Dance Arena.

Contact: Jenny Squillaci, magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk 07749 499785

2020

September 11-21, 2020

Micro Marathon to the Pyrenees and north-east Spain

Micro Marathon to the Pyrenees and NE Spain, for pre-war cars up to 1000cc, and microcars. Authentic Category sub-500cc pre-1959 (type) & sub-700cc pre-1969 (type, inc. all 2CVs & Fiat 500s)

Next year, committee member Sheridan Bowie has entered for this event. If you are interested, please get in touch with Sheridan on: -

sheridanbowie@btinternet.com

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Sounds like a brilliant idea? - Posted on April 1st

MEMBERS WANTED AND FOR SALE

Please note that the 500 Fiat Enthusiasts Club only offers free advertising in this column to private individuals who are paid up members and not to businesses or commercial enterprises. The Fiat 500 Enthusiasts Club advises those placing or responding to adverts to take reasonable care as the club cannot endorse or accept

FOR SALE

1974 500 Giardiniera Navy/tan 85000 kms (original). New king pins
New steering gear, new rear wheel bearings, new starter / handbrake cable.
Complete brake overhaul. New bottom door panels (usual 500 problem)
Mechanically sound (no oil use!) Any garage test welcomed.

Car is in Cheltenham

£6800.00

07570 616570 Email: julian67@mail.com



FOR SALE
1937 TOPOLINO



1937 Fiat Topolino as per club calendar November page. Purchased 3 - 4 years ago from club member in Wales.

Body sandblasted and in grey primer, complete new floor, inner and outer sills sitting on 4 wheel trolley. Chassis sandblasted and powder coated. Engine restored and assembled, new master cylinder, semaphore arms etc. Four brand new tyres and tubes—not fitted, 2 axles, frame to turn body upside down etc.

All papers and English factory workshop manual.

Someone with a lot of time needs to assemble it. Not a cheap project but will look good when finished. I have no time.

Would like to get back £5000.00 the cost minus labour. Make me an offer - Phone Jeff 07768 830943 or 01487 773367 (Surrey)

FOR SALE

A number of Fiat 500 items including cylinder head, clutch, covers, cases, springs, pedals. Can be collected from Dorset or postage can be arranged.

Contact Colin 077719 77933

FOR SALE Late 1973 500 Fiat - £5750 ono

White, RHD Rust free - (garaged) Re-sprayed last year. All major body work completed. Since this car was last advertised it has had extensive electrical work done. Original tartan seat covers. I will include a spare gear-box. Present owner has owned the car for 10 years. 308 chassis.

ALSO Many 500 spares for sale.
 Located Bridgewater Somerset.
 Tel. Rod Bryant 07817 666459 or email
rodbryant123456@yahoo.co.uk



A KIND OFFER OF FREE SPARES

Malcolm has owned various 500s over the years and has a 126 engine and other bits and pieces, among them distributor and dynamo etc. that he would like to get rid of.

He asks if anyone in the vicinity of Tavistock in Devon might be interested in this 'freebie'

If so please email Malcom on rose873@btinternet.com

FOR SALE 1965 500F (otto bulloni) £8950 ono

'Luigi' has been restored to a fantastic standard in Italy with it's full desirable original specification. This is the highly collectible and rare 8 bolt model (otto bulloni) from 1965. Very few remain of this historical model, particularly in such outstanding condition both inside and out.

Comes with lovely provenance having it's original Italian log book showing just 4 previous owners in it's 50+ year history since new.

Fully UK registered and ready to show or use as a fun appreciating classic.

This car is in Okehampton, Devon for viewing and can be transported anywhere in the UK without charge. Contact me for photos and full details :-
07944 847174 or davidblackshaw@googlemail.com



FOR SALE

WORKSHOP MANUALS

Haynes Fiat 500 Owners Workshop Manual. Used but in excellent condition. £25

Autobook Fiat 126 Owners Workshop Manual. As new. £25

For both contact Keith on 07778 383552 or 01372 469240 or keith@avico.com

FOR SALE

1975 500R LHD

One of the last to be made, 594cc and synchro gearbox.
Completely rebuilt in Italy with new engine etc and only 350 miles since.

Looks fantastic in metallic silver and a joy to drive.

Paying for storage as I've lost my garaging so make me an offer!

07961 182294 charles@charleshobbs.co.uk (Winchester area)



WANTED

SCALE MODELS

Pocher-Rivarossi 1/13 scale FIAT 500 & 600 models in any condition

Peter Barnes 01420 88275 or Peterb@aosmith.co.uk

ROTISSERIE

Member would like to rent/buy a rotisserie to allow him to work comfortably on his 600. If anyone can oblige, please contact the editor (details on first page) and I will pass on the message.

NON-MEMBER SALE

1972 FIAT 500 FOR RESTORATION

Complete and in original condition as unfortunately never got round to starting this project. Log book present with 4 keepers - last being from 1988.

Please email matthewbellis@hotmail.com or 07753806606 (Wrexham area)

£2500 ovno



NEW MEMBERS

The Fiat 500 Enthusiasts Club extends a warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined our club

Francesco Checchia	Wilts	500F
George Berger	Hants	500L

**COPY FOR THE JUNE 2019 MAGAZINE SHOULD
BE WITH THE EDITOR NO LATER THAN
MONDAY 20 MAY 2019**

email magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk TEL: 07749 499785



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