

ELVINGTON

Sylvie couldn't make this trip, so with apprehension by my side, our yellow TR6 set off. It wasn't too long before I mostly got the hang of using the indicators and not the lights to make turn signals.

I pulled into the station for petrol, and then moved on to the Petrol station as the railway one didn't sell it: After filling up, Apprehension vanished, and with the passenger seat now full of Miss Trust (a feeling most of my passengers relate to) I set off. A nagging feeling that I had forgotten something arrived; I had taken the petrol pump hose out before I set off, I could see that it wasn't there, if you see what I mean, so it wasn't that, and I had reset the odour meter so it wasn't that: How the car was humming; I should have thrown those cheese sandwiches away that I didn't eat in Malvern two months ago.



Onwards we went and I was now looking nervously at my watch, it has a very faded Velcro strap which could fly off at any moment and I really didn't want to lose any time, much less my cap as we were doing at least thirty miles an hour (taking the average speedometer readings of between 20 and 40) and almost keeping up with the cyclists and horses on the pavement (why don't horse riders carry horse bags and why don't cyclists pay road tax?). Time was now my pressing concern (as well as the house keys which I had left in my back pocket and which were making a permanent impression). I didn't want to be late: I remember an old girlfriend telling me she was late, which never made sense as she had arrived on time: Life is like porridge and is full of inconsistencies unless you use a blender, in which case it would be all smooth and not at all like life, the universe, or even Porridge: I am getting side tracked and giving you the Welsh story (Dai's Version).

So back to the passenger seat: Miss Trust was evicted at the last Island and decided to holiday in North Korea, letting her friend the nagging doubt replace her. She proceeded to nag me about how I should not be confident about anything, especially getting to the meeting place because reality was really an ill usion, and like optimism there is no cure for it.

We forged forwards (reverse is hard to get into), just like the Tay Bridge rivets were forged: Mile after mile of checking all the gauges every two seconds and the handbrake every four: I would have had another sweet, but I was too busy checking gauges and handbrake: My train of thought wandered over the Tay Bridge, and the disastrous consequences of shoddy workmanship leading to its collapse when the extra weight was on the high girders during a stressful period of high wind: Then nagging doubt reminded me that it was my nuts, rivets and super glue that held the old '6 together: I now looked at the gauges more often.



Still, we ate the miles up as the sweets had now run out, and it looked as if we were going to hit the meeting place right time! So I slowed down to a safer pace and was gratified to find a triumph of TR's waiting there for me to be anonymous in.

After the necessary break in the convenient room we all started to form a plan, unfortunately everyone had a different one so the consensus was to drop the ladies and Jackie off at some market place.





At this point, as if to prove apprehension was right, the rains came down and forced us all to put our lids up: (This has to be a secret from Sylvie (who had decided no to accompany me, but to stay at home and enjoy herself) doesn't think that the 6 has a roof).

I helped Margaret put Mike's roof up as he had forgotten the instructions: All sorted and started, we set off in convoy, just as the Sun came out gaily, TRiumphing over the clouds, and driving the rain away to a darker place, probably Blackpool.

The drive to the market place (which turned out to be York's version of Meadowhall) was a little fraught with road works, heavy traffic and my radio stuck on Petula Clark (again), I thought it was starting to sound rough when I

realised that I was listening to Chris and Lindy's TR5 in front, and running on less than its full complement of explosions per revolution and producing a mist of oil from the gas outlet: This reminded me of Andrew and Jackie's '6 when driving around the hills surrounding Whitby, at least it would have, if we'd been able to see their car through the local fog it was producing: After a while Chris's '5 cleared its throat and sounded very sweet again.

We eventually arrived at the money changing pit, and the ladies arranged for their boys to pick them up later (a brave assumption that a TR would get to the Air museum and back), probably just as brave as James hoping that Rita wouldn't quite break their bank. Paul watched as Jill faded into the distance with a sort of 'yippee, shopping' look on her face. He didn't seem too worried, but that's Paul (N): Lindy couldn't go shopping as her leg brace had somehow been welded to their gear knob. Margaret decided that Mike might need her to show him how to put their roof down so stayed with us.



Off again, with a quick look around to make sure that Jeff and Russ hadn't sneaked away with the ladies.

The run to the Museum was nearly uneventful and very pleasant until we arrived at the entrance. The lead cars went in but I hadn't seen a TR behind for some little while so I stayed at the turn off and waited as a Yellow marker. Unexpectedly, a large white car then pulled up beside me and lowered his passenger window, I smiled nicely and waited for a comment like 'nice car' or, 'I had one of those': Instead there was an outpouring of indignation, castigating a gangling of TR's stopped right on a bend! I apologised and offered to give him everyone's telephone number which he declined and left in a huff- I had never seen that make of car before. I decided to do the honourable thing and go back and see if I could have a laugh at whoever was in trouble: As I sped back, I passed a flight of TR's going in the opposite direction; damn they look good I thought, as it dawned on me that I was now going to be last in, again!

I later found out that Russ having a screw loose was the problem, this had soon been tightened, and the gangling was able to proceed.

We managed to line the TR's up, (not bad for drivers with our average age),



and proceeded to find somewhere for food and drink: I am grateful to Paul (B) here for disposing of the green stuff that came with my cheese sandwich, which I enjoyed almost as much as the Kit Kat. After a light banter, we sauntered to the chapel, where we were given a very interesting and thought provoking insight into the 42nd base history and uses, in particular the free French squadron that was stationed there. Here are the salient figures for the brave men and women that carried out their orders, mission after deadly mission:



- 12,000 heavy bombers were shot down in World War 2
- 2/3^{ds} of Allied bomber crews were lost for each plane destroyed
- 6 bomber crewmen were killed for each one wounded
- Over 100,000 Allied bomber crewmen were killed over Europe

I question myself as to whether I could have been that brave, and hope we never have to find out.

Back to the museum visit: I passed Russ sitting outside the NAAFI as I was going for another Kit Kat and coffee, he looked like he could do with a meal so I asked



him in- he said he couldn't as Chris had given him the job of arranging the next run: It looked permanent.

The exhibits were terrific, with many interesting planes, vehicles, and dummies in uniforms:

This instilled an admiration for the engineers, scientists and service personnel who gave so much; without them, we probably all would be driving VW's.

After I had wandered around for an hour or so, I came across Christopher and Lindy with Paul (Bownes) Andrew and Russ, having some more nosh in front of the Victor, I wondered if Lindy had noticed the name?



The museum was brilliant, with many interesting planes, exhibits and some vehicles. It was a good place to be, and I am sure we will go again: Whilst in the shop, I picked up a nice book for Mum about the WRAF, in which she served during the war, (despite being head hunted by Hitler). She was pleased to receive this, as books on this service arm don't seem to exist and I was happy for her, until she pointed out that this was from the First World War: I am still doing penance.

But it is now time to go back home, the lady-less chaps have to go on a shopping dolly pick up. Geoff, Paul (Bownes) Russ and me decided to travel together until going our separate ways, I turned around to get in the car, looked back and realised they were all gone on their separate ways already! All alone now, except for miss giving's, I looked at the map, decided which way to go and set off: Gerty (the sassy nav) didn't like where I wanted to go (she never does) and started to take me to York. I turned around and tried a different way, and got lost again: I then realised that I was near to where I had set off from so I decided to turn around and start again. At this point Chris and Lindy passed me going very nicely in the opposite direction; as they were going to Scarborough I had to be on the right track now, so I headed home, and using the trusty Fosse way, it only took many hours to get back: It was a great TR day out.

As I locked up the garage, it suddenly came to me; it was paying for the petrol that I had forgotten.