

Scammells Return to Watford!

by Mike Thomas

This story starts in September 2005, when Tony Billings and I arranged a Scammell reunion, aimed especially at ex-employees, to coincide with Carters' Showtrac meeting at Croxley Green. Here, I first met Joby Carter. The fair was adjacent to the "Classics on the Green" car show organised by the Watford and District Classic Vehicle Club (WVCV), whose President, Cedric, expressed an interest in Scammells coming to the show. That year, as reported in the December 2005 Newsletter, we had 16 Scammells, 6 of Carters, 4 Showtracs and 6 others. I maintained contact with Cedric and Joby and, last year, we went with the Display Lorry but only one Scammell came in addition to Carters, Viv and Peter McIntyre's Highwayman.

Over the next year, I made contact with Kevin France of the WVCV and he was extremely helpful and arranged, through Joby, that we could hold a two day event, their rally being Sunday only. He kindly promoted our event on their website, saying it would be the biggest gathering of Scammells in Watford since the factory closed - so no pressure, then! I also made contact with the Mechanical Horse Club who were pleased to become involved.



Carters were built up by the Friday, with their 6 Scammells lined up in front of the fair.

And so it was that the remaining Scammells began to arrive in Croxley Green on the Friday evening. By Saturday afternoon we had 19 Scammells on site which, with Carters' 6, made 25 - I believe we had achieved our aim of the biggest gathering in Watford, unless someone knows better? We also had our Display lorry, thanks as always to Dave Spain, and the photo display tent from the Mechanical Horse Club.

The Scammell collection comprised, Brian and Christine Carter with their "his and hers"



Pioneers, the recovery (his, second from right) and gun tractor (hers, centre) with

living van (who I feel deserve an endurance prize having taken 4½ hours to complete the 60 mile journey!); Peter, Viv and Cassie McIntyre with their Highwayman "Old Peculiar" and living van; 5 Crusaders - my ex-military 35 ton 6x4 sleeper cab, 2

military Eka recovery 6x4s, owned by Jonathan Pye and Chris Hawkins, who also



brought his Constructor PUC 475, Steve Rowdenhurst's superb 4x2 civilian day cab in BRS livery, and Dave and Andy Walker's civilian 4x2 sleeper cab.

The Walker "clan" brought a further 5 lorries -

the GPO R6, carrying a chain drive in unrestored condition, PSA Highwayman,

NYM 881E, and two 20LAs, one, NUR 858, nearly restored and one in Pickfords livery,

NGF120; Chris and Sara Acock, with the ex-Caffyns' Pioneer and an Explorer; and a Scarab with box trailer in British Rail colours to complete the line up for Saturday. This lorry is a TV star, having been restored by the Salvage Squad. Dave

Stretton brought his Handyman with low loader carrying Joe Freer's 45 ton chaindrive, DDT 32, one of the forgotten Scammells featured in Kay Townsend's book (see Scammell Mart) for the Saturday, but was parked at the far end of the Green. On Sunday we dropped to 18, having lost the Handyman and chaindrive but gained another Pioneer owned by Member Franz Danecker. Finally, there was



Carters' fleet of 6 Scammells, numbers 1, 4, 5, 12 and 14 and No 16, Peter Fleet's Showtrac look-alike. All in all a fantastic turnout which generated huge interest from the many visitors to the fair and car rally.

On the Saturday afternoon, with lots of help from Kevin and Peter from the WCVV,



we organised a road run to the site of the Scammell Works in Tolpits Lane.

With Kevin and Peter in escort cars the convoy of 10 lorries competed the run and parked up alongside the blue railings, pictured on the right of the photo, behind the Pioneer -



they are all that remain of the works, the rest being a housing estate.

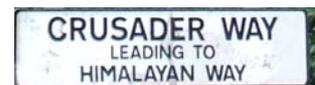
From front to back, the convoy was PUC 475, the Pioneer gun tractor, my Crusader, Viv in the Highwayman, BRS Crusader, Caffyns' Pioneer, Explorer, Jonathan's Crusader Eka and the Handyman carrying the chain drive - a sight for sore eyes!



We then turned into the housing estate where the works had been, travelling down



Scammell Way, passing Explorer Drive and Crusader Way with



signs to Himalayan Way and Pioneer Way.

We then headed up to the site of the trailer works at Moor Park, for more photos and, finally, returned to Croxley Green. For me it was the highlight of the weekend, taking my own lorry, as one of the 10, back to its roots!



Peter kindly gave me WVCV rally plaques for those on the road run and one each for our Display lorry and the Mechanical Horse Club - a really nice gesture.

Once back at the Green, the line up of Scammells continued to generate huge interest on both days, not least of all PUC demonstrating the articulation of the front axle. The photos on the Display lorry proved very popular, with huge interest from the locals and Scammell ex-employees who came to visit. The aerial photo of the works and the poster with a group of employees caused lots of interest. One very attractive young lady told me she lived in Crusader Way and, whilst someone had said something about a lorry connection, she was still curious, so came to ask. I took her over to my Crusader and she eagerly climbed aboard, then wanted to know about every control, gauge, light etc! Having descended, she asked about the other Crusaders and we went through military/civilian, 2/3 axle and day/sleeper cab. She left pleased as punch - another example of our aim to ensure that "The legend lives on".



Given the huge interest in the photos and merchandising, especially books and clothing, I was pleased that Christine Carter, Carol Cooper and John Collins all spent a lot of time on the lorry, along with the Committee Members who were there with their lorries. Carol took several orders for clothing, the new embroidered rain jackets and fleeces seemed especially popular. I was also pleased that Jack Kimp was among the many Members who visited, with some, including Jim Wells and Terry Welsh helping with sales and PR. Apologies to anyone I've missed! Sales were phenomenal, and far exceeded our expectations with many owners, Members and interested parties purchasing goods from the display lorry, a measure of the huge interest and loyalty still commanded by the Scammell name in this area of the country.

Saturday was rounded off in style with a barbecue, organised by Brian Carter, who brought and erected two tents. Andy Walker's wife, Tamar, kindly supplied salad, relish etc and we all barbecued the food we had brought - with varying degrees of success! A lovely, informal evening with chat over a range of topics was nicely rounded off by Carters' firework display.

Sunday was much of the same, but much busier with around 800 cars turning up for the rally. Christine and Viv kindly organised two raffles, one for the Saturday evening and a public one on the Sunday. We donated £25 to the WCVC, to pass to Cancer Research and Leukaemia Research, their chosen charities.

All in all, a brilliant weekend which we hope to repeat next year. Both the Register and the Mechanical Horse Club celebrate our 25th anniversaries, and it will be 20 years since the works closed. With that in mind, how about a few more Members bringing lorries and making it a real celebration?

In 2008, lets make sure that "the legend lives on" in real style!