



# **UK Crossfire Group**

**Summer 2011**

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**The Only Crossfire Group in the UK**



**"Crossfire Confidential"**

**The News Letter from the UK Crossfire group**

Welcome! There's been a break between our news letters which was due to a very heavy workload on yours truly, but now its business as usual again. After some consultations at the meets it has been agreed to move to a quarterly news letter, rather than a monthly edition, which I must admit in hindsight, turned out to be an over ambitious idea!

This year's programme of meets is well underway and numbers attending have continued to grow with 16 cars in attendance breaking our all time record. We have included a summary below of the meets so far, and despite taking a risk with some new ideas, they have all been a great success thanks to our members old and new, travelling many miles to attend, and helping to make our days out so enjoyable. My heartfelt thanks go out to all!



## **The Future**

As our little group continues to grow into a bigger group, we have been discussing what we need to do to take group to the next level. Inevitably to carry on building our group we need to become better organised, and more professional in the way we do things. We have learned a lot from attending other car club meets and gained some ideas about how we can continue to develop. As you know, officially, we are not a club, and we have no membership fees to pay. While this is our preferred way of operating, thus avoiding the formalities of a legally established club, it means we have no income and this obviously puts a big hurdle in the way of progress.

We are committed to the future of the group, helping it to develop and seeing its profile raised. So, to give the group more exposure we have decided to purchase a pair of Sail Banners showing the UK Crossfires name, logo, and web address etc, to use at the meets; and this will help to promote our group very effectively, putting us on a par with other clubs.

As the cost of the banners is just over £400, we launched the UK Crossfires fundraising drive at the Castle Coomb meet, where I explained our fund

raising plans to those attending. We had hoped that we might encourage the members present to donate a couple of one pound coins, just to start the ball rolling – But, I was literally stunned to receive a total of £180, this far exceeding my greatest expectations! So, my sincere heartfelt thanks go to all for their kind generosity; such support is a fantastic reward and encouragement for the efforts that go into organising the group!!

The Fundraising now continues towards our target of £400 and we will be accepting voluntary donations of any size at the meets or by post. We will be providing an account of our fundraising and expenditure later in the year so you can see what we have been doing with the money! 😊😊😊



## **The Meets**

The growth of the meets has been reflected in the growing number of UK Crossfire owners now on our emailing list, currently standing at 104. We receive enquiries from mainly new owners via the website and these are automatically added to the mailing list. The trend is that as the cars become more accessible to the enthusiast as values drop, the more new owners find us. So, we pick up our new contacts mainly when the cars change hands! Our programme of Crossfire meets has been very successful with attendance numbers still growing steadily. We have had 16 cars in attendance at Chatsworth and Castle Coomb, so the new target is to reach 20! It does not seem that long ago that our target was 10!



## **Classic & Sports Car Tour Millbrook & Silverstone 17th April**

The day started with six Crossfires heading to the meeting point at Woburn where some 200 cars of every pedigree had met. Some vintage and very rare classics were joined by the full range of Ferraris, Astons, Jaguars, Porsches. It was nice to have other drivers of such exotic cars come over and ask about the Crossfires. One portly chap squeezed himself out his F40 and came over to say "Wow what a great looking car mate, what is it!?" If only he knew the value of my car wouldn't cover the cost of his annual servicing bills! Our Crossfires certainly held their own, parked with so many supercars! This event is run to raise funds for the charity "Little Lives Appeal" the money being used to buy live saving equipment for specialist neonatal critical care units.

After a hearty breakfast we signed on and collected our route instructions ready for the start where we were put under starters orders, and waved off at 30 second intervals.

Damien was the first Crossfire away, followed by the rest of us intermingled with a throng of others, carefully following our route guide down the country lanes of Bedfordshire. We were in a convoy of amazing cars! We had an Aston DB9 ahead, and in the mirrors, I could see a Ferrari F40, Lamborghini Guillardo, Ferrari F50, and Ferrari Daytona! The route details turned out to be a bit vague and we did take some wrong turnings here and there. It was particularly worrying when I accidentally led the throng of exotic supercars down a farm track into a farm yard!

It was a bit chaotic as they all tried to turn around, watched by a bemused looking elderly farmer and his sheepdog! Luckily, the other drivers took this in good spirits and we then arrived at Millbrook Proving Ground. This is the home of the motor industry engineering testing facility, and familiar to many as the home of 5<sup>th</sup> Gear and many Top Gear antics. We had 2 laps booked on the Alpine Circuit, a long twisting undulating track with many blind corners and hairy summits. The surface was very grippy, and we pushed the Crossfire very hard almost taking off at the Ski Jump section, and bottoming out the suspension in the bottom. The car behaved impeccably and a couple of Porsche owners got a shock as we took them coming out the hairpin! Back on the route, and a coffee stop at an interesting heritage railway centre, we carried on to Silverstone and the Porsche Handling Circuit. Here was the chance to try the Crossfire on the skid pan before following the circuit round to the Porsche Driving Centre where a hog roast was waiting for us. All the latest models were on show here and we took the chance to look over many of the cars and also select some photographs taken through the day. A raffle had been laid on by the organisers with prizes donated by Porsche UK. The 1<sup>st</sup> prize of a beautiful limited edition scale model E Type in Pewter was won by our Ken, but alas, as he already left, so the prize was re drawn, despite my plea to collect it on his behalf!

All in all, a fantastic day with £7500 raised for the Little Lives Appeal and the cheque was presented to the charity in front of an applauding audience. This event is highly recommended for next year and we will be back with hopefully a few more Crossfires! Many thanks go to those Crossfire owners taking part – and in particular, Pete and Denise who could not attend due to gearbox problems on their black roadster, and very kindly passed their entry on to Simon and Louise to allow them to take part.



### Chatsworth House 8th May

It's been a couple of years since we last visited Chatsworth, and after a great meet there previously, we were overdue a re visit. As before, this meet ended up being a weekend event with 8 Crossfires arriving on the Saturday! Never being the sort of car enthusiasts to miss an opportunity, for those arriving on the Saturday – a cruise was organised and led by Paul in his black SRT to see some of the great Peaks scenery. Choosing a great route to take in the famous Winnets Pass in glorious sunshine gave every

one a feel of the real Derbyshire Dales. In the evening we all gathered for a good meal, catch up on events and properly welcome our new friends who were at their first Crossfire meet. It was a great evening which ended far too quickly, even though it was about 1.00am!

After the compulsory "all you can eat" breakfast on Sunday morning, we ventured off, to drive via Bakewell with a short stop along the way, and then on to Chatsworth House where we parked together. Chatsworth has many attractions apart from the main house, with a good choice of catering. Our visit also coincided with the TVR Clubs event. They had about 150 TVRs on display, but after looking closely at them all, I knew my choice to own a Crossfire had been the right one!

We broke the attendance record here with 16 Crossfires in attendance – a truly fantastic sight, with new members coming along for the first time! The list is too long to name them all, but our thanks go to all who made the trip to Derbyshire, some having travelled great distances. Chatsworth will definitely be back on our list of favourites again in the future!



### ***16 Crossfires in the Chatsworth Line Up!***



### **Castle Comb Motor Racing Circuit 11th June**

This is a major annual event for car clubs to come together and display their member's cars in the paddock. With several Crossfires going down the night before and staying close by at the Premier Inn, we met up for a great meal and allowed plenty of time to try the local ales! We had a great night and as usual our good intentions of an early night went out the window and I have no idea what time we went off to our beds! This event was organised by our Ken Hallett. Now Ken was hoping to get at least 10 Crossfires to come to

Castle Coomb, but little did he know, 16 cars were to book for this event and we had a fantastic display, our number exceeding most of the other clubs present! The UK Crossfire Group had its own designated parking area, and it didn't take long before the wax polish came out and every one spruced up their cars to look their best! Along with all the other clubs, we were invited to take to the racing circuit for a couple of steady laps to show off our cars to the public spectators around the circuit. This turned out to be steadier than we expected! The circuit was more like the M25 in rush our due to there being too many cars out there, and our laps were stop start, stop start!

Again, more new members joining us at a meet for the first time making our numbers grow. Castle Coomb was a great success and is now on our list of favourites. We will be back here again next year, and this is highly recommended for those who missed it this year.



***Chris & Linda Jones taking the curves at Castle Coomb***



### **Canal Trip & Lunch Stoke Bruern Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July**

Our latest meet brought fantastic weather when we headed over to Stoke Bruern for a 3 course meal in The Boat Inn Restaurant, set on the banks of the Grand Union Canal. After lunch we stepped aboard the Indian Chief for a leisurely cruise up the water way through the famous Blisworth tunnel. This two hundred year old tunnel under Blisworth Hill is the longest in regular use on British Waterways. Construction began in 1773 under commission from the Grand Junction Canal Company and was restarted in 1802 after the original alignment ran into trouble. The 3076yd long, brick-lined tunnel, carrying the Grand Union Canal, opened to traffic in 1805.



It was great to see new friends joining us for the first time, and our thanks go to all for helping to make this such an enjoyable day for everyone.



## Crossfire Technical Bit – BAS / ESP

Just when you think all is well and your Crossfire V6 is purring like a contented cat, sometimes a nasty surprise is lurking, waiting to take that smile of your face! Indeed, this happened to me recently when out of the blue, my BAS/ESP warning light came on, firstly intermittently, and then staying on! Now, most car problems are pretty straight forward; especially mechanical ones where the dog can see the rabbit and a bit of nifty spanner work can sort it! But alas, not in this case. After studying the manuals, the wiring diagrams, and some tests I got to the source of the problem. These cars, with their typical German pedigree, are very well engineered, some say over engineered, and like a racehorse, perform brilliantly when on top form. But the slightest problem can cause havoc, and give you a hefty Vets bill! Both the Brake Assist System and the Electronic Stability Programs are monitored by the computerised control unit, which is constantly measuring the cars mechanical and electrical systems as we drive, and recording any detected faults in the form of error codes and messages in the memory chip. Research told me that a whole host of issues could be the cause, including speed sensors at each wheel, steering angle sensor, vacuum pressure sensor, brake pressure sensors, ABS module and various other solenoids and switches! Yes, a nightmare, especially for me for me as I have never been beaten yet by a car problem and don't intend to start now! So a process of elimination was needed, firstly to mimic the various situations in which these systems become active, and eventually narrowing it down to the two brake pressure sensors mounted in the brake servo unit. After setting my sights on these components I needed to prove it, and that meant having the car hooked up to device to interrogate the fault codes stored in the car. Chrysler Nottingham and Chrysler Leicester both wanted £120 + Vat for this 10 min job, so instead took it to my local Bosch - Lucas branch who charged £25 for the same thing! This involved simply plugging a specialised Fault Code Reader and lap top into the socket under the dash. Once the software identified the car (as a Mercedes W170 SLK320!) The code C1141 came up – ESP Pressure Sensors 1 & 2 signal implausible! BINGO! The engineer then cleared the cars memory and we looked at various electronic connections associated with these sensors, disconnecting and reconnecting as we went, looking for any obvious faults or damaged wiring, drawing a complete blank. But then, to my amazement, when re starting the car, the offending warning light went off! And it has stayed off since, making me wonder if, all along, this had just been a bad connection which had been unknowingly fixed. Time will tell, and the next good run out will be the test. It is often the case that it is either a bad connection or the sensors that are the issue, rather than the system they are monitoring. If new sensors are needed it will be expensive, as the whole brake servo has to be replaced – so hand on wallet and fingers crossed! The ESP/ESP warning light can be activated in various driving circumstances, including hard cornering, hard acceleration, wheel spin and even uneven tyre pressures. But the light should go off again within minutes when systems are detected as normal again. If the BAS ESP light does stay on, the first thing to do is get the car hooked up to Fault Code Reader. Get any codes interpreted, cleared from the memory, then cross your fingers!



## Soapbox!

The launch of the Chrysler Crossfire in the UK market caused a big stir. Dealers had waiting lists with pre orders being taken at the full list price. Anyone who was anyone wanted to be seen in Crossfire!

Then the BBC's motoring buffoon Clarkson stepped in, and not surprisingly, given his blinkered view, where if a sports car has the engine in the front, has no rack & pinion steering, and has no prancing horse badge on the bonnet, it can't be any good! Then typically on a whim, and showing his complete ignorance, calling it a "typical American attempt" at making a sports car. If only I had been there to correct him - the crossfire was designed by an Englishman, and built by the prestigious German car maker Karmann GMBH using Mercedes engineering. So, after showing a complete lack of research, he sacrificed the cars reputation as cannon fodder for benefit of light entertainment TV. Who knows whether the words of our favourite car - clown did have an impact on sales. I believe it did, because I've lost count of the occasions when folks have said to me " wow, its a great looking car, pity it had such a bad write up"

So a maverick was born. For those content to follow the crowd, a wide choice of "me too" products are available to make sure they can blend in. But for those individualists, for those with imagination and an eye for something extra special, the Crossfire finds its welcome home.



## Where Have All The UK Crossfires Gone !

The question has often been asked "just how many Chrysler Crossfires were produced, and how many came into the UK?" Well for those inquisitive minds, here are the numbers for the UK which include all Coupe, Roadster and SRT models:

### Vehicles registered in UK for the first time (2003-2010)

Year	New Registrations
2010	3
2009	6
2008	44
2007	386
2006	944
2005	954
2004	1739
2003	378

That's a total of 4454 UK cars registered in the UK since they were launched in 2003. The number of Crossfires being Road Taxed peaked at 4164 in Q2 2009 and since then have started to decline with only 3852 being Taxed in Q1 2011. This is due to the growing numbers being put on SORN Notices, and natural losses due to being scrapped or exported. So going forward, numbers will continue to decline and the car will become an even rarer sight on our roads. But, it is also interesting to see that there were a few new registrations in 2009/2010 – these cars must have been tucked away at dealers for some time before being liberated to the freedom of the road.



## **Meets 2011 – See Web Site For Updates**

### **31st July 2011. Brooklands Museum**

11.00am Meet at Mercedes Benz World for a look at the latest models plus other landmark models from over the years. Then drive round to Brooklands where there is an auto jumble, open cockpits and engine runs.

### **14th August 2011. Billing Aqua Drome**

The UK PT Cruiser Club invite us again to their annual 2 day event. Our main day is the Sunday and this has been a popular meet over the previous 3 years that we have attended. Note there is a £10 charge per car for site entry at Billing, plus the PT Club have this year asked us to pay £5 per car

### **26th - 29th August 2011. Classic Sports Car Tour Brugges**

A handful of Crossfires will be going on the continent to take part in this sports car tour, taking in Flanders and some picturesque routes through rural areas. 4 \* Hotel. Places are still available for late takers – details are on our website.

### **11th Sept 2011. Warwick Castle**

Our first visit to Warwick Castle, and for those who have been before, a highly recommended opportunity to see this superb attraction. There are good catering facilities here, or a picnic would be perfect if we get the weather.

### **2nd October 2011. Santa Pod "Run What You Brung"**

For those Petrol Heads amongst us! Most of us will be watching the action on the quarter mile drag strip from the grandstand. But, anyone arriving in a roadworthy car can take part and try their hand at drag racing here. Will we get any Crossfires on the standing quarter mile? More info will be emailed.

### **04th December 2011. Xmas Lunch Meet - Location TBC**

Our annual Christmas Lunch get together will be held again. The restaurant previously used in the Cotswolds was very good and had plenty of parking, but we are doing some research to find other choices preferably closer to the M1. This is because of the travel problems last time due to bad road conditions, and we want to minimise the risk in future.

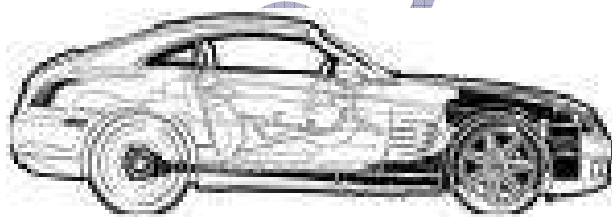


## And Finally!

We hope you have enjoyed our Summer Newsletter! The next one will be out in September 2011. Remember every Crossfire has a story behind it - we want your Crossfire stories for the news letter, so please put pen to paper and tell us about you and your car, how you came to find out about the Crossfire, what you like about it, or what you dislike as well. Just email your words to me at [ukcrossfires@gmail.com](mailto:ukcrossfires@gmail.com)

Meanwhile we will keep you up to date with news and extra information about the meets going forward. We do like to send out an email reminder about the meets about two weeks before each event. This often serves as a reminder and this often means folks can make short notice plans to attend.

The website is the backbone of our group and this continues to develop with new information and articles about our favourite car. Our thanks go to our member Paul Dunning for his work in creating and running our website.



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