



...she goes!

ELVA Newsletter November 2018

Like a London Bus!

The recent Newsletter was emailed to over 750 readers and received some wonderful responses, particularly with regard to the ELVA-PIGNATELLI story. Your comments always much appreciated.

Rather like waiting for a London bus, non appear for ages and then suddenly two or three come at once! **So to prove the point here is another Newsletter ...**

Peter Jones, ELVA Formula Junior owner, driver and exceptionally nice knowledgeable man quickly emailed to tell me that there were three amusing articles published in US magazines about the Pignatelli Company in the period 1959 to 1961. Bill Giltzow, who has previously owned a Courier and is well known as an artist and historian, also provided some fascinating details confirming that at least one American sports racing special was subsequently named Pignatelli.

Wouldn't it be great if a US based motorsports race car collector confirmed that he has the ELVA-PIGNATELLI tucked away, however it would seem that I am more likely to win the Lotto! So a fun story with perhaps an element of truth but let's assume was in reality a spoof. There are some people who believe in fairies but we all need a chuckle in these crazy times!

Courier Snippets ...

I wanted to share some Courier snippets which follow on from the words that I posted on the ELVA website [in the Forum](#).

THE BEST WITH ZEST + PRICE WHICH IS NICE = ELVA COURIER



This post 1961 period advert says it all!



Perhaps a careful search for all the parts needed?

I did mention that a number of ELVA cars had recently surfaced from many years of slumbering in garages or storage facilities.

Just a couple of weeks ago I heard from Brian who emailed saying that his late father had amassed a collection of British cars which included five ELVA Couriers, three coupe versions plus two roadsters.

The photos suggest that they will need a lot of attention to get them back in use, but for sure they all deserve to be out on the road or track in due course.



... plus a bird scarer!



Courier 991 CAB chassis # 200/45/RK settles in at its new home.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
SILVERSTONE BRITISH RACING MOTORING DAY
AT SILVERSTONE

PRACTICE & ALTERNATE PRACTICE (Silver Cars)

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A Silverstone Eight Clubs Meeting in '94 which includes the Couriers of Jerry Trace and J. Bruce Brown. Slower cars indeed! Most would appear to be under 2L.

Very pleased that the ex. J. Bruce Brown Courier, which can boast a very strong race history, now has new caretakers in Germany and will be out racing again early next year.

Bruce together with John and Jerry Trace were regular entrants at many of the U.K. circuits, in fact Jerry still has the Courier that was bought in the early 1960's and he enjoys racing today.

The Trace Bros still star ...

John Trace had helped a local friend Danny Gladwin build that car (remember the attractive money saving UK 'kit' option when no Purchase Tax applied), before he took over the ownership.

The Trace brothers raced alongside Bruce Brown under the patronage of the Cemian Motor Club which emanated from the London based College of Estate Management, and their ELVA mission continued which over the years had included the acquisition of Couriers 100/5, 200/29, 200/34, 200/42 and 200/59, perhaps more! A few of these cars were sourced for spares as they had badly rusted frames or were crash damaged goods in need of complete unpractical rebuilds.

There was often some confusion between which J. Trace was the actual race driver/entrant but solved at the meetings as Jerry was JR and John was JC Trace; sometimes after a paddock rebuild John was unkindly referred to as the "Oily Trace"!

I have DVD's of the 'Roadshow' TV programme which features ELVA and stars the Trace Bros plus other ELVA people reminiscing about those fun days of superb competitive club racing. Copies available.

Oh, did I mention that Jerry won a significant Championship and set a record at Silverstone involving a wheel, and that record still stands today. I propose telling all their stories soonest.



The Jerry Trace '59 Courier, chassis 100/5, which has been a Trace family member for almost 60 years.

The Previous Newsletter ...

The previous Newsletter included a very brief reference to Norm Babcock who had an important association with Frank Nichols and ELVA which began very soon after the launch of the Courier.

Norm had been posted at Spangdahiem Air Force Base in Germany during 1953-56 and had raced and rallied various cars with podium results. After a trip back to the States, he returned to Europe in 1959 but via Hastings so that he could check out a Courier which he bought and drove to Bitburg where Norm again won some club events. He reported this back to Frank Nichols making the proposal that he act as an ELVA representative in mainland Europe. This was agreed and Norm quickly achieved two important Courier sales.

One of those cars went to Wolfgang Daewel, a sales representative for Karl Metzger, the other to Bill Anderson also based on the US AFB in Bitburg; these three owner/drivers regularly entered events and won races, always beating the Porsches, however Norm then crashed his Courier during a road trip and the car needed to be sent back to the Hastings factory for repair. While there, FGN suggested that Norm should consider going back to the States to encourage Courier sales by setting up new dealerships west of the Mississippi area, and so both flew to New York after which Norm travelled to Continental Motors meeting with ELVA importer Walter Dixon.

Heading West ...

The next port of call was LA to encourage ELVA sales on the West Coast, but his early 'V' screened Courier demonstrator was a poor example, not truly representative of the now much improved version of the Courier so he had a difficult task, although new dealerships were signed up in Santa Barbara and San Diego. Meanwhile Frank had shipped several Couriers, Rytune-BMC tuned Formula Juniors and a Mk.V sports racer direct to San Pedro as there were concerns about the Washington DC importer which of course proved to be well founded. Once Continental Motors was effectively made bankrupt, the dockside cars were seized by the authorities, and Norm was jobless.

Some time later and now working for the dealership in Santa Barbara, Norm became involved with ELVA again, running a Courier at Sebring and supporting several other Couriers plus Formula Juniors along the US West Coast, which resulted in many good podium places and trophies. Happy days had indeed returned!

Norm was an influential figure putting ELVA on the US map.

Incomprehension becomes exhilaration ...

As a postscript, Norm had commented " On the subject of racing Couriers, Frank was very much opposed to racing them. They were his touring cars, and he just couldn't understand why anyone would want to race them. He was not at all interested in making changes that would improve performance. "

There were a very small number of Courier Spyder models built, but with very little enthusiasm shown by the factory. However, the much praised neutral handling observed by great drivers like Mark Donohue did not go unnoticed! The Courier was destined to become a race car whether Frank liked it or not, so no surprise that many have been modified to full-race track cars, thus very effectively supporting the ELVA tag line .. " SHE GOES! "

I think Frank would secretly have admitted that he was "chuffed to bits!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw2ruqROuGE>

Next Time ...



Hey ... get those high-heels off my exhaust!

Next time some stories from the days when Couriers were produced under the TROJAN-ELVA banner, cars which tend to go unnoticed but in reality have also become very potent race cars.

"She wasn't the only one to be surprised to find a PORSCHE engine in an ELVA chassis!"

Just 19 factory cars are listed with one 'extra' I was told (another story), with a few non-Porsche Mk.VII's later modified to take the popular German power unit.

The ELVA-PORSCHE union highlighted the expertise of the ELVA team and in particular the practical hands-on outstanding design talent of Keith Marsden, during an era when the cars just happened! A very special combination of British/German styling, handling and performance.

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