

924

National

Words: Phil Watson. Photographs: Felix Page.

Weeks before the actual day of the National, the relatively modest numbers of confirmed attendees was understandably causing stress in some quarters and as the days ticked by, take-up seemed slow. But then a curious thing happened, disparate groups of members started to hook up, independently forming posses from the North East, the South West, the South East, the Midlands and Wales. It was as though 'Gumball' was being whispered and passed down the line; long inert cars were being dragged into life, MOT's booked and projects finished. More than one car being completed by the skin of its teeth, just in time for the cruise over to Baginton.

At the eleventh hour prospects looked good for a strong turnout but we could never have guessed just how good.

For me even the short 18 odd miles drive from home revealed we were in for a warm, even hot sunny day; with the sunroof open, the quick squirt around the leafy lanes to Baginton and Coventry Airport was over all too soon.

Pulling on to the gravel, and immediately drawn to the red and white Turbo that we've all read so much about on the forum, it was plain that the car was even more stunning in the flesh, and good to meet the proud owner for the first time. Gary's well-travelled Turbo was also an early arrival having faultlessly completed the journey from Essex.

As we speculated further on the weather in a typically English manner and on the possibility of donning shorts or not, Paul's silver Turbo pulled in, and not long after another, and another! For one of the rarest of the 924 breed, this phenomenon was the start of a trend that lasted the whole day. The two-tone green one was soon driven onto Andy's trailer to start the next phase of its life

in Ireland and a mini auto jumble had sprung up in the boot of the Furnell family wagon!

Chatting to newly arrived owners it was clear that this was the first major event for some, so boded well for a good show of 924's.

By the time the gates were opened to allow us into the main display area the car park was filling up nicely with a good turn out of NA's, S's, at least one 944 and ...even more Turbo's.

Initially I was concerned with my parking spot; with a backdrop of a jet in 'Trainer' yellow that clashed badly with my guards red! It turned out it was just a question of perspective and stepping back a few feet revealed the immense camouflaged bulk of the wonderful Vulcan was what I was parked underneath.

I was in good company with fellow Guards red owners of the NA and S persuasion, not to mention Felix's white NA with unique roof ski bars, a very cool looking addition.

Walking over into the main field revealed 924's on every horizon, nestled in between the impressive array of fighter and transport aircraft from many eras. The sleek lines of our Porsche's looking perfectly at home alongside their aerodynamic neighbours, all we lacked were nose mounted Gatling guns and drop tanks...now there's a thought.

The selection of club members cars was truly stunning, being a relative newbie of less than a year, I can honestly say I've never seen so many 924's in the flesh in one place and the big surprise as the day unfolded was that no fewer than eleven Turbo's were present, it truly was phenomenal.

Despite early rumours of calamity on the M6, the North Westerners safely made it as did





all of the other groups from all corners of the country, arriving in cars as individual as only 924's can be.

Some immaculate having had thousands lavished, some tough but tidy daily drivers, some, not so pretty with well earned battle scars from the years of use, dragged back into service at the last minute.

They all shared one thing, they got here and that is the really important thing, everyone deserved to be really proud of themselves for making the effort.

It was great to see cars in the flesh that I'd long seen on the forum, almost like meeting a celebrity after reading about them for years. Rich's beautiful Monaco blue Turbo stood

out as the unusual colour it is, Rob's Black Le Mans with Aqua highlights, the unique Italian Turbo special edition, the immaculate 944 and many more. From two tone green to GP white, ubiquitous Guards Red to Black, we seemed to be covering a large part of the trim and colour options ever offered on the 924 over the years.

As the day unfolded the sun burned down and a really chilled atmosphere prevailed, helped along by all the new acquaintances forming and old friendships being renewed as people linked forum 'handles' and cars to the real people behind them.

A healthy trade in pre-arranged selling and trading of 924 parts seemed to be thriving as

a guards red wing was seen carted off here or a Tool trolley loaded up there. It's great how it all hangs together, all these deals agreed on the forum beforehand and then using the gathering to exchange the parts; who needs eBay?

Everywhere I looked there were people scrambling over, climbing in and lying under fellow members cars to compare every aspect, learn which parts are missing and what colour they should be. This is one of the best bits of a meet like this and I came away wiser having spoken to so many owners and scrutinised their cars.

The choice of the Air Museum as the venue was inspired, the outdoor, almost picnic feel



to the day complemented perfectly by the weather and the incredibly helpful museum staff who were always there but unobtrusive; it felt like we owned the place. There was so much to see outside that I spent very little time in the indoor part of the museum, so richly packed with aviation artefacts that it deserved a day devoted to itself. Plenty of members had a good clamber inside the aircraft open to the public, especially the Vulcan where there seemed to be a permanent queue for the cockpit.

A spot of hands-on rear quarter light changing by Gary on Pete's Turbo provided diversion not to mention an educational demonstration for those wishing to try this at home. It's amazing what you can achieve with

a screwdriver and a length of oily string! Pete was delighted and now hopefully, completely watertight.

As the day wore on all too quickly it was time for the 'Best in Class' awards as voted by the club members and presented by our Chairman. Steve's amazing Carrera GT eater deservedly took Car of the show, Rich's Monaco Blue won Best Turbo, Robs wonderful Lemans got Best S, and the biggest surprise, to me anyway, my 2.0 litre took best NA. Thanks again to those who voted, I am humbled but very happy with the award. I'm inspired to keep the car as standard as possible now as a reference point for others. The relaxed tone of the day was carried over to the AGM itself, and the business of the club

was efficiently dealt with during the meeting including 'farewells and thanks' to outgoing committee members and 'welcome aboards' to new ones. It's this relaxed atmosphere of committed enthusiasts that make this club so special and one I'm very happy to be a member of.

In the final analysis, the day was a huge success by any standards, made possible by the enthusiasm of everyone who attended especially those who travelled considerable distances in untried cars. As I blasted home down the still sunny leafy lanes, I reflected on how we'd proved ourselves a club to be reckoned with, and how much I was looking forward to the next event. A big thanks to Gary for sorting such a fabulous day out for us all.



Cars of the Show

Best car in show: Steve Cooper / Carrera RS



Best Turbo: Mark Dawkins / Mark D





Best N/A: Phil Watson / Englander



Best S: Robert Finegan / robfin