



BOURNE CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

President James Jones MBE

AUGUST 2024 Registered Charity No 512420



Our next event is the walk with Anthony Jennings on Sunday 11th August leaving Baldocks Mill at 3pm and going down Coggles Causeway and Willoughby Road and this is the oldest part of town and yet relatively unexplored so we will see a number of interesting old buildings that the public have nominated for listing as Local Heritage Assets, then back to the mill for refreshments.

September Monday 16th Tony Stubbs will tell us about some of his travels. Heritage Week will also be this month and the mill will open on all the days from 2pm to 4pm.

October Monday 21st Jonathan Smith will tell us about the History of the Red Hall.

November Monday 18th Ken Wainwright will update us on what is happening on Rippingale Railway Station.

No meetings in December and the Heritage Centre will be closed over Christmas and the New Year.

Civic Voice which is our voice to the MPs on what we want them to do for towns and especially high streets and housing and living on high streets and over shops and also taking over the empty houses that are dotted all over the country, not just in our own town. We all need to be proud of the place that we live in.

Discovering Bourne had an article about the watercress beds which covered a big area at the back of the mill.

Commented [J1]:

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MIKE PILBEAM, Race Car Designer.

On the 29th May an event to celebrate 50 years of Pilbeam Racing Designs, the man and his contribution to motor racing, was held at the Curborough Sprint Course near Hinckley. Cars from across Mike's career were present with owners from as far as Paris, the Channel Isles and Stirling, travelling for the day: such is the respect in the motor sport world for Mike Pilbeam's design and engineering.

Michael Roy Pilbeam, born March 1937.

A very accomplished race car designer and engineer who worked on designs for BRM, Lotus, Surtees, and Pilbeam Racing Designs. One of his earliest design projects was the four wheel drive BRM P67 Formula 1 car, and his company has continued to produce hillclimb winning cars and sports prototype chassis for world endurance racing and he is still designing and producing cars in Bourne today at age 87!

Mike spent his early life in West London with little interest in motorsport until he went to the 1958 British Grand Prix, whilst at Bristol University. In 1959 he built his first sports special and competed in several events unsuccessfully. Mike later designed a car for club racer Tony Gould who competed in the 1172cc class with some success.

1963 saw Mike join BRM as a stress engineer, and whilst here as an apprentice, he worked on the BRM P67 four wheel drive Grand Prix Car, the actual design is accredited to Tony Rudd, this car was driven by Richard Attwood and entered in the 1963 British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch, but was withdrawn after practice. The P67 re-appeared in 1968 at hillclimb events and won the British Hillclimb Championship.

Mike's work continued at BRM on the H16 engine project contributing to Jim Clark winning the 1966 US Grand Prix driving a Lotus 43-BRM.

During 1966 Mike went to work for Ford at Dutton in Essex to design for the advanced chassis development department.

1969 saw another move to Lotus Racing where he worked on the four wheel drive Grand Prix Car Lotus 63 and later on the 49B and 72 models which were both Formula 1 championship winning cars.

Next Mike went to Surtees where his considerable talents were employed on the Surtees TS9 formula 1 car.

At the end of 1972, chief engineer Tony Southgate, left BRM and Mike was enticed back to BRM in early 1973 to manage the design office. Here he was instrumental in the design and development of the BRM P201 for the 1974 Formula 1 Grand Prix Season. Unfortunately this car never reached its potential as by now the V12 engine was heavy and out dated and BRM was short of funds to really

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develop a competitive replacement. However this model was still racing in the 1977 Formula 1 season. Mike left BRM in late 1974.

1975 saw him start Pilbeam Racing Designs, initially working from home. The first design was a formula Atlantic chassis for Tom Wheatcroft and later adapted to formula 2. He also designed and built many hillclimb cars and his cars won the British Hillclimb Championship 17 times between 1977 and 1997.

Mike's reputation by now was considerable and he was involved in the design of the PC3 car for Penske racing in the US and engineering for the Ram Racing Brabham BT44's in 1976.

He designed the Lec CRP1 formula 1 car commissioned by David Purley's father for his son to race in the 1977 Grand Prix season.

In practice for the 1977 British Grand Prix at Silverstone, David Purley was involved in a head on heavy impact crash, which he survived, at this time the heaviest impact recorded. Pilbeam cars have the reputation of being strong and safe.

After this Mike was involved in various freelance projects and the production of hillclimb cars sustained the company.

A Pilbeam modified Brabham BT38-Cosworth won the British Hillclimb Championship in 1977 and in 1979 Mike designed the MP40, hillclimb car to European formula 2 specification, and this car won the British Hillclimb Championship in 1979 and from 1981 to 1984 with a Brian Hart engine.

Pilbeam Racing Designs moved into part of the old BRM facility in Bourne in 1981, and from here produced designs for Formula Ford 2000 and Formula 3 cars, though they proved uncompetitive in 1982 and 1983. The hillclimb cars were still very successful in this period.

1997 and the company moved into new premises in Graham Hill Way, Bourne, opened by Bette Hill. Mike continued to work in the industry on both road and race car projects as a freelance designer and produced race cars to his own designs in small numbers to order as freelance commitments allowed.

Pilbeam Racing Designs was involved in the development of the BRM P301 sports car in the mid 1990's and subsequently produced their own chassis for Le Mans 24 hours and for the World Endurance Championship, in LMP2 class, between 2001 and 2007 and in 2014 produced the MP100 intended as customer car for LMP2 and the Le Mans 24 hours itself.

Now at the age of 87 Mike Pilbeam shows no signs of retiring, he is still designing and helping present owners to keep his older cars on the race tracks. He is also involved with the Cranwell Business School and is influential in the Engineered in Bourne project.

This is a man of phenomenal talent who has contributed not only to the world of motor sport but to the economy of Bourne, provided employment and nurtured younger talented designers and engineers who are the new generation carrying on the motor sport tradition in workshops dotted around Bourne.

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Mike Pilbeam we salute you.



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