

ADDICTIONS

Numbers have always fascinated me. In fact, when I was younger, I was a real anorak – I used to collect train numbers – yes – I was a train spotter! That is until “Hairy Harris” – one of the boys in our “gang” – began to obtain copies of “adult books” with pictures of women in their bathing costumes spread across the centre pages – and just occasionally – very occasionally – one bared breast! How things have changed!

If it hadn't been for those books I might have become addicted to train spotting! But from then on, when we met at “the bridge” – our favourite haunt – instead of collecting train numbers we entertained ourselves by holding up the double page spread to all the passengers (and of course the driver and fireman – that dates me doesn't it?).

For a brief period I had an affair with collecting bus numbers – mainly because my Dad liked buses – and then, for a while collected car numbers – this because I got bored in the back of the car with nothing to do but watch the passing traffic. It was alright for my brother – he always sat in the front next to Dad and could imitate his driving – but sitting in the back next to Mom all I could imitate was her knitting! So collecting car numbers became a welcome alternative.

The only reason my brother always sat in the front was that he was sick once – and once only – on a return trip from Devon to the Midlands, and he managed to convince our parents that he might be travelsick again if he didn't always sit in the front. The fact that he had just eaten a huge fried breakfast and lots of chocolate appeared to have nothing to do with it!

Not sure why I seemed to be so addicted to numbers, but I've always been very numerate – I could count to 12 by the time I was 16 – or was it I could count to 16 by the time I was 12? Can't remember now! But like train spotting, collecting all other numbers bit the dust when I discovered girls, and then became addicted to them.

My interest in cars almost bit the dust at the same time. That interest had been there since I was knee high to a grasshopper and used to race my 1950's Vanwall, Ferrari and Maserati Dinky racing cars round and round the lounge carpet, with the squeal of tyres being one of my best imitated sounds. The fairer sex did take over for a short time – in fact until I got my first real car (an Austin A30), but from then on I was always addicted to both with equal amounts of dedication!

There are many things that one can get addicted to, and even though train spotting is only dangerous to your street cred, there are plenty more that can do irreparable damage. Most of us are aware of what these are, and if we are sensible, we avoid them at all costs. Well, at least that is the theory, especially relating to drugs and the like. Trouble is there are too many “drug type” substances that are not banned or illegal that we so often take without realising that they are totally addictive.

For instance Pringles crisps. Have you ever tried NOT eating the whole packet?! It's impossible! I'm not sure what they put in them, but it must be some mind altering drug that makes you believe that the more you eat, the more weight you will LOSE!

And for those not totally addicted to Pringles, who cannot understand my problem, you can bet there is something they ARE addicted to. We (beloved and I) recently had dinner with John and Liz, some very close friends of 35 years standing (or sitting as the case may be), and got to discussing this very subject.

I admitted to my addiction to Pringles, at which Liz broke down and admitted that she had eaten a whole (large) box in one sitting! Beats my record – I can only manage a small box. But then John, looking embarrassed, confessed to his addiction to wine gums. He openly admitted to eating wine gums “until his jaws ached”! He just couldn't stop!

Then we got round to beloved's confession. I held my head up as I expected her to say that she was addicted to me – but evidently I come third behind Battenburg cake (which she also admitted to being able to eat a whole one) and Dog Showing.

I thought this was the time we should change the subject, but as soon as I started talking about cars, and TVR's in particular, everyone suggested I was addicted to everything TVR! I denied it of course, but the more I talked, the deeper the hole I dug for myself!

OK I admit I like TVR's – I will even admit to muttering a lot about TVR's – but addicted? I'm not so sure.

However there are lots of things about TVR's that I guess a lot of club members are addicted to, like for instance that wonderful surge of power as you pull away from the lights, leaving all the other drivers to wonder if they've stalled!

Actually, every time I sit as the front car on the grid at the lights, with some Herbert sitting next to me in his Nova I think to myself, “I won't scream away when the lights turn green – I don't need to scream away when the lights turn green – I know I have the power – I don't need to prove it”

Approximately 4.7 seconds later, as the speedo touches 60, I gently ease my right foot off the gas pedal, glance in the mirror, and smile! Every time! I love it!

Trouble is, I sometimes forget I'm not in the Tiv and try it in the Rover tintop – a heavy 2 litre diesel that has as much acceleration under 2,500 revs as a one legged man on a bicycle! Then I wonder why the Nova and the dustcart have both got ahead of me (not to mention the one legged cyclist who waves as he goes past!!)

So maybe – just maybe – I'm addicted to the surge of power that we can achieve. But that doesn't make me addicted to everything TVR, now does it?

I will also admit to loving the sound. I now find that I flip the accelerator in traffic without even thinking – it's sort of automatic. I even do it when I'm reversing the car, parking the car, sitting in the car – in fact, just touching the throttle and hearing the engine roar gives me a much better kick than LSD or smack (at least, I assume it does having never tried either!)

But enjoying the sound and the power surge of acceleration still do not make me addicted to TVR's and all related subjects.

As I said earlier, I gave up train, bus and car number spotting before I got out of short trousers, but now I find myself TVR spotting.

As we drive to a garden or craft centre (one of the sure ways of getting beloved into the Tiv), the conversation often goes something like:

Me: "Look! There's one!"

Beloved: "There's what?"

Me: "A TVR!"

Beloved (looking round): "Where?"

Me: "Just gone past – you missed it!"

Does the same conversation go on in other TVR's as they all come out of hibernation on sunny weekends?

The Pistonheads website (am I allowed to mention that now that the TVR site has been updated?) often has "Spotted" threads, and I frequently look on it at lunchtimes to see if anyone saw me in the Griff. But they never do! I got so fed up with not being spotted that in the end I put my own on: "Spotted – me, by me, in a plate glass window!"

There are many TVRCC members that I know who are really into other aspects of TVR ownership, like polishing their charges, cleaning the engine bay (definitely not me!), ensuring that their vehicles are updated with the absolute latest "techno bits", getting the highest number of golf bags possible into the boot, along with the roof panels and full AA toolkit and even reading and collecting car mags. But I contend, m'lud, that that still does not qualify for addiction.

For a person to be addicted to TVR's would mean they had loads of TVR books (actually I do have quite a few), lovingly place each edition of Sprint into that year's binder (I do that as well), had lots of TVR clothing (I've only got 4 shirts, 2 jumpers, a hat, cufflinks and an "S" tie), had TVR pictures in their home and office (oops!), on their PC (yep!),

and had at least one picture of their TVR on every film they took in for processing (this is getting serious!).

But I still don't think anyone is totally addicted until they spend a grand of their hard earned money on a TVR number plate. OK. I admit it. I AM addicted to all things TVR. There you are – I've said it. Surely that's the first step to rehab?

I suppose one way to stop an addiction would be to replace it with something else. Now I admit I've always fancied an E-type.....!

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