

### Heathrow Area Centre reaches its quarter-century!

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With the news of our long-term landlord at The Queens Head suddenly departing to take on a new venture running a restaurant/bar in Thailand, it got us thinking as to how long we had known the family. This, in turn, reminded us that 2015 will be the 25th anniversary year for the current incarnation of the Heathrow Area Centre.

In the Spring 1990 Impressions there were the first tentative feelers put out to start a Heathrow Area Centre by Jeff Day. The first meet at The Queens Head in Cranford took place in March 1990 and Jeff continued to establish the area until he left for university in September 1991, which was when I was handed the baton to become the new ACO for Heathrow.

You may have noticed I mentioned "incarnation" earlier. Well, before the March 1990 meet, there used to be a West London Area Centre run by long-term member Chris Clark. At my time of joining the Imp Club in 1988, and only starting to drive an Imp, aged 17, in January 1989, I'm afraid this was a meet I never got around to visiting. It was held on the London A4 Great West Road at the Firestones Pub



Circa 1989/'90, Firestones pub. Chris Clark's Californian and Jeff Day's Stiletto (subject of a school restoration project!) Photo: Chris Clark



The Firestones Factory, circa 1980 Photo: Gavin Stamp, Czo Society

on or near the site of the famous Firestone Tyres factory. (My grandfather used to work there – I still have an ashtray he was presented with in the form of a replica Firestone tyre about 6" in diameter with a



The Queens Head, Cranford, home of the Heathrow AC for the last 25 years Photo: Chris Clark

glass ashtray in the centre. GP) This Art Deco factory made the headlines for being mysteriously pulled down just before it was given a Preservation Order. Sadly all that was saved were the entrance gates.

Chris was leaving his home in Ealing in 1990, soon to (temporarily) emigrate to Australia, which prompted the requirement for a new Heathrow Area Centre.

I'm proud to consider the Heathrow AC as a now well established area. Attendance may not always be huge, with numbers going up and down, but we have a nice handful of regulars and new visitors are always made welcome. We have our regular group visit to the Uxbridge Autoshow, our Christmas dinners, other ad hoc events and we've helped out at a few Nationals, which is possibly our 'chickens'



way out of actually organising a National of our own!

Thank you to all our visitors and friends that have come to see us and keep your Heathrow AC alive and kicking. Here's to the next 25 years!

Queens Head regulars, June 2002, midway towards the Heathrow Area Centre's quarter-century!

Photo: Grahame Pearson