

Smallholder Sid

By Richard Barr

Old Boy-Racer Sid

“Let’s give the Cowpat and Fly a miss tonight,” said Smallholder Sid. He had intended to ring his drinking colleagues Farmer Fred and Allotment Holder Alice. He got through to Fred and was a little taken aback to hear Alice answer. His first thought was that he had dialled the wrong number.

“No, it’s alright. Fred wanted me to advise him on his mimosa pudica – you know, his sensitive plants” she explained coyly.

Regular readers of the exploits of Smallholder Sid will know that our Harrowing Times trio meet regularly at the Cowpat and Fly public house where they settle into the Snug and discuss the ways of the world or, more accurately, they discuss the ways of Sid. There are also rumours of a blossoming romance between Alice and Fred as Sid frequently sees them peering languidly into each other’s eyes when by rights they should be listening carefully to what he is saying.

But tonight Sid had a different idea for their close encounter.

“I have a treat for you. I’ll pop round and pick you up later. Shall I come first to your house Alice?”

“No need,” was the response. “I will be here with Fred.”

Later they both heard a loud roaring in the distance and vaguely wondered whether a helicopter was about to land or an out of season combine harvester had arrived. Then there was a screech of brakes and a crunch of gravel. Alarmed, they looked out of Fred’s kitchen window (recently polished by Alice) and saw Sid getting out of something that looked not unlike a Batmobile.

“Come have a look,” said Sid proudly as they gingerly crept out of Fred’s house. “Bought it this afternoon from the dealers, you know Wedoyouou Motors. It’s a real bargain. The nice sales lady told me it had had one careful owner, a primary school teacher. It has been immaculately looked after. Brilliant condition.”

“What did she look like?” asked Fred.

“Well you can see, she’s beautiful. Look at that chrome, the stripes and the spoiler at the back.”

“No Sid, I am asking about the sales lady.”

“Well I can’t say I really noticed to be honest.”

“Come on Sid, every time I have been with you when you drive past that place you crane your neck to look for the sales lady. I am sure you used the word ‘crumpet’ last time! You don’t think she might have clouded your judgment do you, because I think your exhaust is about to go.”

“Nonsense. She said it has been regularly serviced and is in peak condition. Come on let’s go for a spin.”



Nervously Alice and Fred got in, Alice covering in the back seat, while Sid turned the key. It took several goes before the car sprang to life.

“Hold onto your hats,” urged Sid. “Let’s give it a spin on the Northern Distributor Road. I will show you what she can do.”

“I hope you are not thinking of the sales lady again Sid,” said Fred.

A little while later they were humming (no, roaring) along the NDR at seventy miles an hour, rapidly approaching a roundabout where they were faced with a bewildering choice of lanes to take.

“Take the left one,” shouted Fred.

“No the middle one,” wailed Alice.

“Bugger this, I am taking the right lane,” said Sid, and he did - just at the moment when a very large articulated loomed in front of him. Sid swerved and braked, hurling Alice from one side to the other. Somehow a collision was avoided but once they got on the open road again there was a loud clattering from underneath the car and the sound of the exhaust became even louder.

“Sid I think you have lost your silencer,” said Fred quietly. “And by the way I noticed that when you accelerated your rear screen became covered in oil, and isn’t that the engine check light glowing on the dashboard?”

The Sidmobile (as Alice quietly named it) limped back home. The promised night out courtesy of Sid’s driving did not materialise and they all quietly voted that in future the Cowpat and Fly was a better place to be than the Northern Distributor Road. ♦

Slightly serious legal note.

If you buy a car that has at the point of sale defects like this from a dealer you have an absolute right under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 to get your money back so long as you give notice cancelling the deal within 30 days of the purchase. This applies even if you have driven the car a few hundred miles since buying it. The seller has to pay you back everything that you paid. This also applies if you have taken out finance at the same time that is linked to the purchase (that is covered under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974). Sid got his act together and gave his notice in time. He was refunded in full for the cost of the Sidmobile. Now he drives a more sedate model and we expect to see him next time in the Cowpat and Fly but he probably will say not a word about fast cars.

For more silliness buy a copy of Richard’s book *The Savage Poodle* (get it on Amazon or contact Richard on Richard.barr@paston.co.uk for details. Price now £7.99) or listen to him every month on the Chrissie Jackson mid-morning show on BBC Radio Norfolk (when he tries to be a little more sensible).