



BUSINESS SENSE by TIM KELLY

Where were you?

I don't know about you guys reading this, but I was everywhere last month. How everything landed in the same week certainly caught me on the hop.

The inaugural *bodyshop* Magazine #UKGBE2022 Launch Party kicked things off on the Tuesday (7 June) at the Forest of Arden Marriott near Birmingham. After attending this evening networking BBQ, the inaugural UK Garage and Bodyshop Event presented by Automechanika Birmingham took place at the NEC and I was there on the Wednesday (8 June). And that was followed by the Institute of Traffic Accident Investigators' Crash Day at Darley Moor on the Thursday (9 June).

So this all made me think about what makes a great event.

Starting off with the *bodyshop* mag BBQ – what a cracking night! What makes an event? You do. If you were not at this networking event, pull your finger out and get to the next one. After two years of looking at the four walls in my office, the world appears to have snapped back to normal. In that time, I have spoken with many of you, but not actually met you. I knew it was going to be a good night when Jordan Salt from Multi-Mix phoned me to ask “what do you want from the bar?” I had not eaten all day and hadn't even got out of my car.

From that point the evening moved very quickly. Great to see so many people. Always very much a pleasure catching up

with Andrew Marsh, as ever the font of all knowledge on vehicle technology. And finally meeting the gang from Laird Assessors, after having last seen Lee Batty about five years ago. Great catch up. And the south finally met the north when I caught up with Anthony Heard from Braintree Motor Works in Essex.

This is what makes events, meeting people you have never met or have not seen for a long time.

At 7pm we heard from Professor Michael Cox, a founding director of LSE IDEAS and Emeritus Professor of International Relations at LSE, who discussed the factors impacting the global post-pandemic economy, how this is impacting the collision repair sector and other industries, and what the future holds for us all.

This for me was the most informative part of the evening. If you wonder why I keep shouting from the roof tops about the need to be an expert in your business, and how the future is quite dire, when a professor in economics is saying the same you need to get planning on your profit and future.

But back to the networking, beer and great food, and a thoroughly enjoyable night. Up early and quite literally over the road to the NEC to what will hopefully be the first of many UKGBE events.

Lots of education to be found in the training hubs, though some clashes meant I could not attend all the things I would have liked to, but great to hear what

different manufacturers have in the pipeline. Technology moves so fast; this was a great place to keep track of what is happening.

A long day, a longer drive home in a never-ending traffic jam, and then a drive back down to Derbyshire the next morning.

Any time that starts with a 5 is early in my book. Drive to collect a friend who has never been to an ITAI Crash Day, and a good two-and-a-half hours of trying to miss traffic. Any fears of the repair industry not having enough work are allayed by the number of crap drivers and incidents seen.

If you have never been to an Institute of Traffic Accident Investigators Crash Day, go to one. You do not need to be a member and it is free to attend. If you are an engineer or VDA, definitely go.

Nine different staged crashes, some very big bangs, massive amounts of data to run through, and very informative lectures. “How safe are electric vehicles?” and “Digital photography for forensic investigators” were highlights. I could do an article on this day all on its own. So this might just be part 1.

Tim Kelly is founder of motorclaimguru.co.uk and an expert in insurance and assessing vehicles, a consumer advocate and bodyshop consultant whose goal is to change the industry and put repairers back in control of their profits.