

HISTORIC



The Magazine of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs

Issue 4 · December 2024

Mimbridge Fire Station & Museum

Plus

Sir Greg Knight

First interview with the new FBHVC President

A Long and Grinding Road

From Ashley GT to Scimitar SE4 GT

Revving Up For The Future

Why digital transformation is key for Member Clubs



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Creative and design by Fire Creative (07795 030885)

Regular Contributors



David Whale - Chairman

Chairman of the FBHVC since 2012, David has served on various historic vehicle international committees. His vehicle interests include a pre-production Morris Mini Make, a 1938 Rosengart coupé, a 1904 Curved Dash Oldsmobile and a 1973 Range Rover. David was elected to the CMS Hall of Fame in 2024.



Andy Bye - Museums & Archive Director

Formerly Director of Quality & Customer Relations for PSA Peugeot Citroën. After retiring from his career in the Automotive Industry, Andy became a trustee of the Rootes Archive Centre Trust and helped save the Rootes engineering archive.



Karl Carter - Deputy Chairman & Skills Director

Karl has led the development of the Heritage Engineering Apprenticeship Scheme and works closely with the Heritage Skills Academy. He is also a member of the Alvis Owner Club.



Dr HC Davies - Research Director

Huw grew up with an Austin Seven before starting a career in automotive engineering. He now focusses on transport policy and practice, specifically in developing and setting the technical requirements for current and future vehicle technologies. His role in the Federation enables him to combine his profession with his hobby, that currently includes a 1932 MG Midget.



Malcolm Grubb - Events & Technical Director

With 10 years as a government scientist before specialising in Business Systems and IT on a global basis, Malcolm now runs his own business systems consultancy. In parallel, he has been an active competitor, organiser and marshall, holding many committee and director roles within UK based motoring organisations and clubs.



Lindsay Irvine - Legislation Director

A qualified barrister who spent over 30 years as a commissioned Legal Officer in the Royal Air Force, Lindsay continues to practice in a regulatory capacity. A car and aviation enthusiast from boyhood, owning a Riley RME for over 25 years. Counting coach driving amongst his qualifications, he is a member of several car and aircraft clubs and a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society.



Wayne Scott - Communications Director

Enjoying a lifetime around classic cars, Wayne learnt to drive in a Triumph GTR4 Dove and has owned a Grinnall bodied Triumph TR7V8 for many years, which can be seen at shows and competing in regularities, hill climbs and endurance rallies. He is the founder of Classic Heritage PR, specialising in the historic vehicle and motorsport industry, working for both car clubs and industry brands alike.



Ian Edmunds - DVLA Manager

An engineer who has been involved with the Federation since its early days, notably as Chairman of the Legislation and Fuel Sub-Committee (as it then was). His career in the motor industry involved vehicle legislation and certification matters. Owner of several historic motorcycles and cars ranging from 1927 to 1981, Ian is a member of five Federation member clubs.



Nigel Elliott - Automotive Fuels Specialist

A career in engine and vehicle testing, fuels product development and quality in the oil industry culminated in his current role as a consultant and industry advisor in the UK and Europe. He is an active member of the British Standards Institute's Liquid Fuels Committee. He supports and competes at Shelsley Walsh in a modified Triumph TR7 and has many other historic car and club interests.



Andrew Fawkes - Editor

Andrew is a member of the Classic & Historic Club of Somerset and a contributor to AstonOwners.com. He qualified as an advanced motorcycle instructor in 1982. His role as editor enables him to combine his passions for classic cars, motorbikes and apostrophes!



Mel Holley - Secretary

With a lifelong passion for all forms of transport, photography and books, Mel spent his early career in electricity distribution, before moving to publishing. He has an eclectic collection of cheap quirky cars from eastern Europe and the Midlands.



Chris Cartmell - Project Co-ordinator

Chris lives in Northants with his wife, Jane. Originally trained as an Agricultural Engineer, he spent almost 40 years with Mercedes-Benz UK in After Sales and as Warranty Technical Manager. Since retiring in 2011, Chris has focussed his passion for his two Rover cars and as Director of the Rover Sports Register Club. He has been a local councillor for over three decades, three times the Town Mayor and organises its popular classic car show.

HISTORIC



The Magazine of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs

From the Editor

Welcome to the final edition of *Historic* for 2024. As I write, I'm one of many people around the UK and further afield who are preparing for the big Autumn event at the NEC in Birmingham, the Classic Motor Show. By the time you're reading this, you may have seen in person, or online, the Federation Village which is the ever-popular showcase stand of the event that features historic vehicles that are either unique or very rare, each with a fascinating story to tell.

Our tribute to the D-Day 80th Anniversary year – during Remembrance weekend – was a diorama kindly supplied by the Military Vehicle Trust. It continued the theme of the cover image from edition 3 of this magazine.

The cover image for this edition is the type that excites most small children (and the small children within us). Fire engines, perhaps along with big diggers and tractors, are always popular sights, none more so than preserved historic versions. Our story on Page 15 highlights a collection that started with one man's passion from childhood.

Like lifeboats on the water, the arrival of a fire engine when in need, must be an immensely relieving sight. Of course, their work today encompasses fire and rescue, from the apocryphal cat stuck in a tree, to the major disasters that seem to fill our TV screens all too often. Maybe the fact that their working lives are far more dramatic than, thankfully, most of us can imagine is the real reason we love to see historic ones being loved and cared for.

The big event within the big event for the Federation was the launch of our dedicated insurance scheme for member clubs. You can find out more on Page 14, but better still get in touch to see if and how your club and its members might be able to take advantage of this latest benefit of being in the FBHVC.

Sir Greg Knight, our recently appointed third President of the Federation, was our guest of honour at the NEC. If you were there but didn't get to meet him, we have printed on Page 12 his address from our annual conference in October. As you will read, Sir Greg is passionate about our hobby and kindly agreed to be interviewed by me before this edition of *Historic* went to press. You'll also read that his views are both steadfast and consistent in being aware of the risks facing our movement and how we might mitigate accordingly.

We're all very conscious that the Federation is supported by individuals and organisations, many of whom represent small clubs. There are hints and tips dotted throughout this publication (such as Will Jeffries' article on Page 21) that aim to help clubs survive and prosper, especially in the light of the ageing population. Getting people to volunteer to help is often a big headache for club leaders.

I have recently been reading copies of 'The Flywheel' where one passage caught my eye: "... it's up to new members not to sit back and just absorb... keep your ears flapping for any rider or driver who might be stimulated into a keen and entertaining member (and possibly talker)..."

I don't think I'm stealing Michael Ware's thunder here (see Pages 28 to 31), given that The Flywheel was the hand drawn magazine that was written by inmates of Stalag IVB prisoner of war camp in 1944.

It seems that recruitment and encouragement have been themes of our hobby for many years and in very varied circumstances. If anything tells us not to give up trying, reading The Flywheel does!

Finally, I won't dwell here on the longer nights and, in some cases, the preparing of our treasured vehicles for winter hibernation. Instead, looking back on a season of activities and planning next year's equivalents is the real pleasure to be extracted from the off season... in the northern hemisphere, at least! I was thinking back to my first visit to the racing at Angouleme in France and the great driving roads on the way there and back. If you haven't been, consider adding it to your to-do list. It's a heady mixture of pre-war classic racing (Bugattis, Bentleys et al) right up to 1980s Porsches and everything in between. The sights, sounds and smells are intoxicating, and the food and wine aren't bad either!

And thinking of food and wine, here's all the best to you and yours for the impending festive season.



President: **Sir Greg Knight**
Chairman: **David Whale**
Secretary: **Mel Holley**

Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs Ltd
PO Box 1563,
Peterborough, PE1 9AU

Email: secretary@fbhvc.co.uk
Phone: **01708 223111**

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs exists to uphold the freedom to use historic vehicles on the road. It does this by representing the interests of owners of such vehicles to politicians, government officials, and legislators both in the UK and (through membership of Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens) in Europe.

There are over 500 subscriber organisations representing a total membership of over 250,000 in addition to individual and trade supporters. Details can be found at www.fbhvc.co.uk or sent on application to the secretary.

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Lord Steel of Aikwood Passes the Baton

By David Whale

When Edward 3rd Baron Montagu of Beaulieu passed away a historic vehicle dynasty came to an end. John Scott Montagu had driven his recently acquired 12hp Daimler as the first car to enter the yard of the House of Commons at Westminster in 1899. Fifty years later Edward, Lord Montagu, opened Palace House to the public. A collection of five early motor cars was placed on display in the entrance hall as a tribute to his father. Edward became president of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs on its incorporation in 1988.

Selecting our second president was a challenge but I was quite clear that David Steel, The Rt Hon. the Lord Steel of Aikwood KT KBE PC was our man. David had already achieved much as leader of the Liberal Party from 1976 until its merger with the Social Democratic Party in 1988. David also has firm connections with the Federation through his friendship with our Vice-President Andrew Burt, they both studied law together.

My challenge was convincing David that he would make an admirable president. I visited the Lords on several occasions and consumed several cups of coffee until just before Christmas, David said...*"You're not going to give up, are you?"* We agreed that if I visited him again in the new year, he would accept our invitation!

David's humility is his most charming asset, and he remains a huge advocate of the historic vehicle movement. He is truly passionate about the Jaguar marque but diverse in his interests. I remember the enthusiasm he demonstrated when his daughter found a locally owned Morris Minor as an everyday car for him and his wife Judy. Who else would choose an Austin Gypsy to participate in the London to Cape Town Endurance Rally? It succeeded with David being awarded a Bronze Medal for his endeavours.

But David always conducts himself with a certain style and when he reached a decision to withdraw from public life,



he invited me to lunch to tell me. When I told him we had invited the Rt Hon Sir Greg Knight to succeed him, David's humility came to the fore saying *"Greg is an ideal President of the Federation. He was an excellent chair of the parliamentary group and while I was happy to step in on the death of Edward Montagu, he has a better collection of classic vehicles than I."*

David... thank you so much for your contribution to the Federation!

The Federation Village proves most successful yet as FBHVC Chairman inducted into Classic Motor Show 'Hall of Fame'

The Federation Village at the Classic Motor Show, NEC, Birmingham, hosted 20 vehicles, including mopeds, motorcycles, cars, a bus, lorry, and a 25lb field gun, thanks to our stand partners. Just before the show opened at 10am on Friday 8 November, the stand teams were gathered together.



A surprise presentation was made to FBHVC Chairman David Whale, who was inducted into the Classic Motor Show's inaugural 'Hall of Fame' as Industry Ambassador. This award "honours an individual who campaigns for the owners as well as the industry and strives to secure the future of classic motoring". Mike Brewer (pictured left) was announced as Community Ambassador which 'Praises a person who represents the classic car community, who brings new people into the hobby and gives their support to clubs and organisations.' The presentation was made by Show Director Lee Masters (pictured, right).

Road Pricing and the Budget

Should we be grateful for small mercies? There were some fairly pessimistic predictions for the petrol/diesel motorist before the latest budget. On the whole not all of these have come to pass. Our principal focus has been to ensure that the zero rate VED remains untouched for vehicles in the historic vehicle class and that is indeed the case. A further benefit is that the now lengthy freeze on fuel duty also remains. This should be contrasted with fairly eye watering increases in other motoring related taxes partly driven by Treasury need for more money and partly driven by the need to incentivise EVs. Thus, while EVs will for the first time become subject to VED at the standard rate next year (with a £10 charge in year one), there are large increases for ICE

vehicles emitting more than 75g/km CO₂, and particularly in first year road tax. For luxury cars emitting more than 255g/km, first-year road tax rate doubles from £2,745 to £5,490.

Depending on your perspective, Road Pricing did not feature in the Budget at all. The Chancellor did not accede to the urging of various "Think Tanks" nor the Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission. Their belief is that the concept is inevitable as the numbers of ICE vehicles decline along with the fuel tax they pay and the numbers of EVs (who don't pay) rise. They spice up their vision by making the assumption that the Treasury would see the justice in road pricing replacing fuel duty and VED entirely. They are reported as seeing "politics" as the only bar as they see the economic

case as unanswerable. The problem is that as in 2007 when the concept was rejected in a petition signed by 1.8 million, the general public do not believe that the Treasury would scrap fuel duty and VED, and that road pricing would be on top.

In the absence of any current enthusiasm on the part of government, it is hard for us to construct any arguments about the status of HV exemptions in relation to road pricing, but we are hopeful a case could be made. Let us see where this one goes if the government remains short of funds and the enthusiasm of the private motorist for EVs remains attenuated. For a full and, if I might say, impressive exposition of this topic, can I refer you to Edition 3/2022.

Advice is advice OR No good deed goes unpunished

One of the issues I reminded attendees at the AGM is that the Federation Legislation Director (me and team) cannot provide free and comprehensive legal advice to all 500 member clubs and their 250,000 members. There are obviously a number of reasons why this is the case, and I am sure you can work out most of them. Firstly cost. Whilst most motor insurers offer some form of legal cover, it will almost invariably come at extra cost and will be limited to specific legal issues. It is unlikely to allow an unlimited number of legal questions on motoring matters. The service will probably have been contracted out and the firms providing it will in turn have professional liability cover. It may also be in the interest of insurers from a commercial basis for a customer to take up this service. Secondly, clearly we are not resourced nor structured to provide such a service. Thirdly, whilst it is conceivable that we will know the answer to many legal questions, there are many more that we won't! Fourthly, legal advice must be constructed from clear and detailed instructions. Correspondents are not always forthcoming with all the details making it perilous to provide definitive answers.

However, we do like to assist where we can. Therefore, we are on occasion able to provide an answer to correspondents by directing them to official or reliable sources and in other cases we can use personal knowledge and experience to assist. In other instances, we will have contracted-in professional expertise such as to draft

our Essential Guide to GDPR. Our advice comes with the appropriate warnings and disclaimers about the context in which and basis on which it is given.

Aside from cost and resources, there is the issue of liability and the problem of "No good deed goes unpunished". This is more officially expressed through the legal principle that whether given in the course of professional business or "off duty" in a social setting, a professional can be liable for advice he provides if a duty of care can be said to have arisen. The leading case is *Hedley Byrne & Co Ltd v Heller & Partners Ltd [1964] AC 465*. Whilst the background to the case is in a business setting, it has been held as authority for the need for professionals to take care when providing advice off the cuff or in a social setting. If the recipient is aware of their expertise and acts to their detriment in relying on their advice, the provider can be liable if it was negligent even though free gratis perhaps at a party. The good news is the case also confirmed that a properly worded disclaimer can discharge the duty.

Whilst I have discussed this principle in the context of the Federation, I think it is relevant to club officials who are asked for advice. I have in mind particularly those who assist with completion of a V765 form or provide a report for a reconstructed HV or are

asked to give valuation advice. Where such actions are performed, proper professional skill and care must be exercised, backed up as far as possible by facts and cogent evidence with any limitations on knowledge or evidence highlighted. In other words, the task should not be approached casually but with appropriate seriousness. Just because it is a club matter and not a business issue does not necessarily reduce the possibility of a duty of care arising. Where HVs of considerable potential value are involved (and indeed more broadly) clubs may wish to check and procure if necessary the relevant liability cover. I am pretty confident club archivists and registrars invariably approach their tasks seriously but be aware of the "Can I just have a quick opinion/bit of advice?" situation and caveat any response carefully.

And on that note - **Happy Christmas**



As I wrote my words for the last edition of Historic, I noted that the Federation had just received notification of a revised date for the Historic Vehicle User Group (HVUG) meeting that had been postponed from late June due to the election. This meeting duly took place in September and although there is so far little concrete news to report we continue to be encouraged by what DVLA are telling us.

The meeting was informed of one very interesting statistic concerning the Call for Evidence (CfE). DVLA received around 1,400 responses which is an unprecedentedly high number. They told us that the previous CfE they issued, concerning driving licenses, had only received around 50 responses. It was explained to them that some of the 1,400 responses were themselves the distillate of thousands of individual opinions so, even if they didn't before, DVLA now understand that the historic vehicle community comprises a large number of individuals who are very passionate about their hobby and in some cases their business.

One very encouraging piece of information was that the change of Government has had no effect on activities within DVLA to review the registration process for historic vehicles (amongst others). The CfE was a part of this long-running process which actually started some time ago. Although nearing completion, this review is still ongoing. When completed it will require the approval of the DVLA hierarchy before the proposals can be disclosed. Once this approval process is complete DVLA will share the conclusions with the HVUG, either in a scheduled meeting or, if necessary, in an extraordinary meeting.

Once all parties are agreed, the new procedures will be shared more widely and FBHVC will bring you this news at the earliest opportunity.

I am also very happy to report that via DVLA Corporate Services Manager Dudley Ashford we are beginning to re-establish the useful and constructive relationship with the Agency that we had up to a few years ago. Amongst other things this enables me to seek resolution of individual cases where a club or an owner has reached an impasse with DVLA. The Terms

of Reference for the HVUG specifically exclude discussion of individual cases in the group for reasons of privacy and data protection. For the same reasons I will only refer to general principles rather than a specific vehicle or club in this column. In this context I must emphasise that DVLA do have certain obligations and restraints on what they are able to do and that such individual resolutions may not always be what the vehicle owner was hoping for.

I will close for this edition on a somewhat different topic. Recent correspondence has suggested that there may be a degree of misunderstanding with regard to the DVLA online Vehicle Enquiry Service (VES). This was instigated after the demise of the tax disc, primarily to provide a check on whether a vehicle is currently licensed and, in some cases, the MoT status. As the name implies, the intention is to provide limited information about a vehicle. Unfortunately, it is not an exhaustive means of checking on a registration number. For example, vehicles which have been inactive, i.e. not licensed, for a period, are archived to a file that VES does not access, and numbers held on retention will also not appear on VES.

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Events

It's been an extremely hectic, but very enjoyable summer as I participated in more than 20 events as either an entrant, organiser, judge or steward. These events have mostly been historic car related, but I have also been involved in several historic motorcycle events plus a couple of Utilitarian events too.

At all these events the enthusiasm and passion for the vehicles, as demonstrated by the owners, and also by the public, was truly amazing. It was also clear that seeing these vehicles 'working' and thus being able to experience the resulting noises and smells, was the key ingredient in attracting the visitors, young and old. At one of the events, I presented a best-preserved vehicle award to the leader of a small team of 'steam' enthusiasts who, together, were maintaining and running two traction engines, a Ruston Proctor and a Case, as well as two Rochester steam cars. The award was well deserved and helped promote their hard work and dedication.

By the time you read this the 2024 FBHVC Village at the NEC will have finished, so for those of you who attended the show and visited our stand, thank you. I hope I was able to meet some of you there and your feedback is always welcome.

Likewise, the FIVA General Assembly will also have taken place in Vienna. The event is being live streamed and recorded, so you will have a chance to watch later if you want to.

Please also put our FBHVC Club Expo event at Gaydon in your diary – it's on 18th January 2025 and I will be present should you have any event related questions.

My personal events calendar for 2025 is already very full, with a mixture of Car, Motorcycle and Utilitarian events in the UK and abroad. These include 3 FIVA World Events all of which are open to FBHVC club members.

- Motorcycle event in Italy in May
- Utilitarian event in Germany in June
- Car event in October in Turkey

If you are interested in any of these, you can check them out on the FIVA Events Calendar

I hope your 2025 Event plans are well advanced and that you are looking forward to them, whatever and wherever they may be.

Useful links.

FBHVC events calendar

<https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/events>

FBHVC List your event

<https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/list-your-club-event>

FBHVC Events questions and feedback email

events@fbhvc.co.uk

FIVA Sustainability strategy

<https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/fiva-sustainability-strategy>

FIVA Events calendar

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Midget & Sprite Club support 'Best Improved' Apprentice

We are pleased to welcome a new club who are supporting the Heritage Engineering Apprenticeship that is being offered by The Heritage Skills Academy.

Alan Abbey of the Midget and Sprite Club contacted us earlier in the year with a proposal for an apprentice award that he wanted to present to the board for approval. Together we chose the theme of 'best improved' apprentice which is a new category and we agreed that The Heritage Skills Academy would propose a candidate for the award.

The award was made at the Classic Car Show at the NEC and the first recipient of this award was James Keer who is an apprentice at RW Racing Services at Evenly near Brackley, Northants. The Heritage Skills Academy Development Coaches recommended James and James and Sarah Welbyoff who own RW Racing were in full agreement.

The Midget and Sprite Club very kindly gave James a cheque for £300 and a shield to keep for a year and a further award that he can keep. James also gets free membership of the Midget and Sprite Club and they have agreed to keep in contact over the next year so that they can tell their members how James's apprenticeship is progressing.

That should keep James on his toes and continue his improvement.



Left to right: Alan Abbey of the Midget and Sprite Club, presents James Keer, apprentice at RW Racing with his award, along with Karl Carter, Skills Director FBHVC and Mark Hall of the Midget and Sprite Club.

European Conference for Automotive History



The fourth European Conference for Automotive history was organised by Anders Ditlev Clausager of the Society of Automotive Historians in Britain, together with the culture commission of FIVA (Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens), and was hosted by Autostadt, at Wolfsburg in Germany from 4 to 6 October.

The 60 delegates came from 20 different countries, and were treated to

18 presentations on subjects varying from research into Citroën chassis numbers or patent databases, to cars in literature and in art. Topics also included the preservation and use of historic car factories, the history of the historic vehicle movement in Britain, the transfer of automobile technology from Germany to the Soviet Union, and aspects of the histories of various brands including AGA,

De Dion-Bouton, Diatto, Ford, and the Swiss coachbuilder Italsuisse.

For further information, please contact:

Anders Ditlev Clausager,
Secretary of the Society of
Automotive Historians in Britain
62 Viceroy Close, Birmingham B5 7UT
Email sahb.secretary@btinternet.com
Tel 0121 440 4745 or 07484 687849

In conversation with **Sir Greg Knight**

President of the FBHVC

By Andrew Fawkes



What better way is there to create a complementary piece to David Whale's appreciation of our former president (see Page 5) than to have a conversation with our current president, Sir Greg Knight? I managed to grab a few minutes with him as we prepared for the big showcase event at the NEC where he would be a guest on our stand.

Anyone who knows anything about the historic vehicle movement also knows that our vehicles start conversations (and sometimes lasting friendships) and so it proved as we digressed from my two prepared questions!

I started by asking Greg "What are the challenges facing your role as president of the FBHVC and the historic vehicle movement as a whole?"

"There always will be challenges, even if they can't be identified immediately. Our hobby is dynamic, and people are usually involved because they want to use and enjoy their vehicle and they're proud to see them maintained and being used on the public highway. I think it's important that people who have a passion for historic vehicles work together to not only share knowledge, but to also ensure that we as a group of people are not driven off the road. There will always be a need for the Federation to represent those people."

"Twenty years ago, no one could have predicted the challenges we are facing now and so we need to be constantly alert and represented to the lawmakers to stop us being accidentally pushed off the road."

I asked if Greg regarded this accidental aspect as being the biggest risk. He agreed, stating that laws are framed without necessarily considering smaller user groups and that historic vehicle users can be wrapped-up with all motorists. Even though we represent a sizable contribution to UK plc, we are still a small movement in that context and thus the 'law of unintended consequences' is a constant concern for the Federation.

How does your personal involvement as the FBHVC President fit into assuaging that concern?

"I'm simply part of a team that will be working together, that's where our strength lies. It's a growing hobby and one that covers all strata of society, from the student who buys a classic as their first car, to the person who's owned their Morris Minor or their Bentley for many years. Thus, we're not a group merely focussing on a narrow issue."

My second question was about the likely joys that Sir Greg can look forward to in his role as President.

"I'm looking forward to meeting more people and discussing their passion and the problems they're facing with their delightful and rare vehicles."

We then veered off into sharing stories about our mutual experience of owning classic cars, which will no doubt be continued when we meet at the NEC a few days later... one of many such conversations enjoyed by people who share our passion for the historic vehicle movement.

Thank you, Sir Greg.

Sir Greg

A former colleague of mine, Sir Ivan Lawrence MP, felt very passionate about a particular issue, and in one debate, he spoke non-stop for four hours 15 minutes. I'm passionate about historic vehicles, but you'll be pleased to know I'm not going to seek to break his record today.

The great thing about our hobby, in my view, is that we encompass all tastes and all vehicles beyond a certain age.

My first car was a Ford 105E Anglia, the car with a reverse-rake rear window. Being 6ft 4in tall, I had to have the driver's seat moved back a little bit more. It was the only car I've ever owned where I could wipe the rear screen from the driver's seat.

Then I qualified as a solicitor and I bought a Ford Capri Mk1, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and then moved on to an E-Type.

But one particular day during my E-Type ownership, a raucous neighbour had bought a new car, and unadvisedly, he ran it up a very high kerb at speed, knocking off both of the silencers. He did this at 6am and it woke me up with this almighty clatter, but the most impressive exhaust note I've ever heard.

I thought, *"I wonder what that car is? I've got to go and see it."* He had a Jensen Interceptor. So, in 1983, the first year I was elected to Parliament, I bought an Interceptor Mk3, and drove it to Westminster. Some 40 odd years later, I've still got that car, and I'm still enjoying it as much as on the first day when I had it.

The strength of our hobby, is that we cover all makes and all marks and all strata of society.

Some toffs and rich people may be among us in this movement, maybe indeed in this room. But this is not a hobby that is their preserve. It belongs to all, from the student with the old Austin Seven to the grandfather who still has his old Standard Vanguard.

And we also encompass, of course, the businessman with the Bugatti and the pop star with an old Bentley. But they are part of our very broad mix of supporters right across the general public.

This is important, because our support is as wide as it is deep, and we need to ensure that all politicians appreciate this.

Before I formed the All-Party Group for Historic Vehicles in the early '90s, I thought I was the only MP interested in classic vehicles. I hadn't come across any other MP who owned a classic car or spoke about them.

But in 1994, I took part in the Norwich Union run. About 1,000

Knights closing address to FBHVC AGM & Conference

cars from eight different start points converged on Silverstone and you parked as you arrived; whoever came in after you parked next to them.

I got there mid-afternoon, and the very next car to come in was driven by Labour left-wing firebrand Bob Crier, and it was an Armstrong Sidley. And we both gaped at each other, not knowing of our common interest and a result of that meeting, the idea of an All-Party group resulted.

So I, a Conservative MP, together with the then Labour MP, Bob Crier, decided to ensure that historic vehicle owners had an effective voice in Parliament.

We thought our influence would be stronger if it brought together politicians of different parties, so that whichever party was in power, we would have some support on the government side of the House, and we soon became an effective campaigning group.

New rules and regulations affecting the use of historic vehicles are not always introduced by design. Sometimes it's by accident.

I think this is the most dangerous risk where you find there's a new restriction coming that is a by-product of some other deficiency or defect in the previous law.

Because civil servants, in dealing with a particular difficulty often only focus on the narrow issue they've been briefed upon, and they don't always take into account the wider consequences of what is being proposed.

So, changes in the law which affect historic vehicles can come about through ignorance and not malevolence.

Over the years, the All-Party Group, which I had the honour of chairing since its inception, has had a number of successes. We campaigned with the Federation for vehicle excise duty (VED) payment exemption. We obtained, and then had to fight and re-obtain the VED rollover, and we secured the Low Emission Zone exemptions.

Working with the Federation, we rebuffed a proposed new 'Weddings Law'. Eight years ago, the Law Commission decided that they'd introduce a new rule which would have effectively banned the use of any historic vehicle for use in weddings.

The All-Party Group, backed by the Federation, objected and argued successfully that this went far wide of their original proposals, and the plans were dropped.

I know some people don't agree with it, but we fought for an MOT exemption,

which I think is right and proper. Classic and historic vehicles make up 0.6% of the total number of licensed vehicles in Britain, but they're involved in a mere 0.03% of all road accidents, and this indicates they're being driven safely and carefully.

The figures also show that 97% of road collisions, the cause of the incident is human error, not the condition of the vehicle. All classic car owners should have a vested interest in cherishing and maintaining their vehicles anyway.

And, if you're not mechanically proficient, you can always get – and should get – a voluntary inspection of your car, because it's worth remembering the existing law does not let you off the hook. Your historic vehicle, MOT tested or not, still has to be roadworthy, and the prosecution can follow if it is not.

Whatever we do in this hobby, we know that we always have to face people who are anti-car or anti-motorist.

A little while ago I came across an interesting report in a London paper from an educated journalist in 1900, who argued that we should be keeping horse-drawn vehicles on the roads, and we should scrap the motor car.

And he wrote: *"We should not overlook the fact that the driving of a horseless carriage calls for a larger amount of attention, if not skill, on the part of the driver, than is necessary in regard to horse-drawn conveyances, for he does not have the advantage of the intelligence of the horse in shaping his path"*.

On national motoring issues, I have to say it is significantly easier to stop new laws and restrictions from being implemented, when they are yet to be debated or still under consideration, rather than arguing to get them removed once they are implemented.

So, the Federation performs an invaluable role in keeping a watching brief on your behalf, and that is something that will need to continue. Until now, UK Governments have recognised the special position of historic vehicles, but no parliament can bind its successor, so constant lobbying is required, both now and in the future.

This is where the Federation continues to have an extremely important role to play on behalf of you all, and it's a task now as President in which I will gladly continue to play my part.

Now, the new government we have is something of an unknown quantity, although during the election, the Labour leader did make a play for drivers' votes

and said 'Labour would bring down costs for drivers'. I don't quite know what that means. We'll have to wait and see.

But, Sir Keir Starmer has also said he really, really, likes cars. *"I love driving. It's in my blood"* he said.

His first pride and joy, he has revealed, was apparently a black Morris Minor, and his second car was a dark green half-timbered Morris Oxford traveller, which he said he had to start with a crank handle.

So, when he wanted our votes, he was keen to stress he's on the side of motorists.

Now the jury is out, and the Federation, I know, will seek to hold him to account should the need arise

You can help in this process too.

Most people only contact their MP with a moan, or when they want something.

If you're organising a large classic car show in 2025, invite your local MP or your local council leader as a guest of honour, and perhaps ask them to present any prizes being awarded before you need to bend his or her ear on matters of concern.

It's important to let your local politician see the support for our hobby that exists in the local community. It's far better to engage with a politician before his or her help is needed and establish a friendly contact, rather than your first encounter being a plethora of moaning and complaints. More so if your local MP, happens to be a minister.

Finally, I want to thank you all for what you already do and have done.

Sharing knowledge is vital to keeping our motoring heritage where it should be, on the road, and up and down the country. Car Clubs play an invaluable role in doing this. So, keep up the good work.

Without you, there'd be far, far fewer historic vehicles on our roads.

Your first president, the late Lord Montague, once told me that his father, who was also an MP, was the first MP ever to take a motorcar to the House of Commons in 1899.

The police refused to let him in, saying that this new-fangled contraption might blow up parliament.

But his father didn't take this for an answer and appealed to the Speaker, who overrode the police. So, one of the first parliamentary spats between officialdom and the motorist, was won by the motorist.

Long may that continue and with your help, I know it will.

Abridged transcript, as delivered, 19 October 2024



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Mimbridge Fire Station & Museum

By Andrew Fawkes

Having been tipped off about this place, I called founder and owner Alan Greenwood to find out a little more. To say he's an engaging character would be an understatement. I couldn't write my notes fast enough to capture everything he told me and so this is merely a flavour.

Alan's passion started with his father who was a Mayor of Surbiton and a member of the Surrey Fire Brigade Committee. 'Big red things' were soon in his blood, although he moved into the commercial transport business at the age of 19 and made a great success of it. He then branched out into the funeral business.

Having restored some 14 fire engines over the last 40 years, he opened Mimbridge Fire Station, adjacent to Longacres Garden Centre and Restaurant. The museum idea soon became a reality. It now houses a very impressive collection that includes the last turntable ladder used by the Surrey brigade, which has a 100 feet hydraulically operated ladder. The Dennis F27 of 1961 shares space with a Dennis F2 of 1949. The latter engine was itself saved from a fire in 2017 when returning from its own restoration!

Alan is passionate about 'giving back' and is a trustee of the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society. His museum and garden centre hosts classic car meets on the first Sunday of every month and the collection can be visited every Tuesday, which is maintenance day.

The fire engines are also regularly called up to support local good causes, offering rides to charities and to local special needs schools. Some are also available for private hire and have taken brides to weddings, escorted hearses or carried coffins at funerals of retired or active fire brigade personnel, and also taken school children to their proms.



Dennis F2



Dennis F27



Leyland Comet Pump: One of only 6 built, this appliance was new to Surrey Fire Brigade at Barnes Fire Station in 1951



Dennis F24 Pump: In 1958 she attended the Molesey floods when her pump ran around the clock for 2 weeks



Dennis Rapier: Delivered brand new to Sunbury Fire Station in 1993. Run by Surrey Fire and Rescue to 2010

A LONG & GRINDING

A recent article in a magazine, on an Ashley Special, stirred my memory of the, at times, tortuous four year gestation from an Ashley GT, seen at the Sports & Racing Car Show in 1960, to the Reliant Scimitar SE4 GT (aka the Coupé) which was first displayed at the Earls Court Motor Show in 1964.

Visiting the 1960 event was Yitzhak Shubinsky, the MD of Israeli company Autocars, for whom Reliant supplied kits of, and moulds for, several cars and vans being made and sold in Israel. With an eye on exports, particularly to the USA, Shubinsky was 'shopping' for ideas that could lead to a sports car to be developed by Reliant for his company to manufacture in Israel.

The visit proved worthwhile; he was attracted to the Ashley GT bodyshell, intended for a Ford Popular chassis but which could be made to fit the impressive EB Debonair rolling chassis also on show. This was designed by Lesley Ballamy, founder of LMB Components and the originator of swing front axle conversions for transverse-leaf Fords and Austin 7s.

At first, the Sabra was produced by Reliant as kits for export to Israel, though some 200 were assembled in the UK to 'get things going'. While most were made as convertibles, a fixed head version, closely following the design of the original Ashley, was introduced towards the end of the Sabra's production run.

Reliant felt that there was potential for a similar two-seat sports car for the home market, resulting in a right-hand-drive version named the Reliant Sabre appearing at the 1961 Motor Show. A combination of its unusual appearance, fairly meagre performance and untidy handling led to poor sales, with only 55 being made.

Reliant's boss, Ray Wiggin, took several bold decisions: to offer the Ford Zodiac's 6 cylinder 2553cc engine as an option, a major revision to the front end styling (becoming reminiscent of an MGB) and changes to the front suspension. The rear wings were raised slightly, to allow round wheel apertures to replace the somewhat discordant square-topped shape inherited from the Sabra, and the adoption of the neat rear light clusters from a Farina Austin A40.



Ashley. Credit: Steve Glover

Following Shubinsky's successful foray, Autocars purchased the rights for the Ashley body and the EB chassis. Reliant were swiftly able to produce a prototype, with drophead bodywork largely unchanged in outline from the Ashley GT, but the chassis was modified to incorporate coil springs and locating arms in place of transverse leaf springs. This led directly to the production version, known as the Sabra, powered by the 1703cc Ford Consul engine, the only discernible difference being the prominent overriders, to cater for the American market.



Sabra. Credit: Daniel Schmitt & Co.

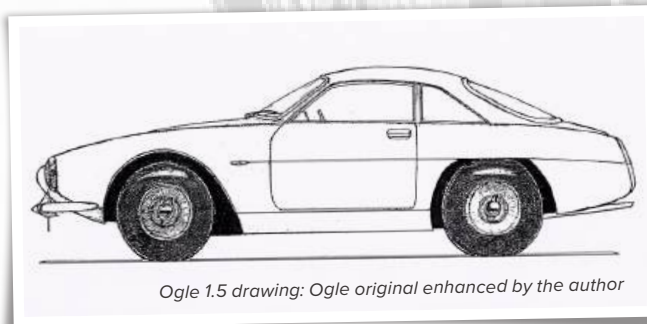


Sabre 6. Credit: Bonhams

Overall, the end result was believed by Reliant to be far more acceptable and an ambitious rally campaign was mounted using four- and six-cylinder versions. Of these, the 'sixes' understandably proved more competitive, notching up several class podiums in such rallies as the Coupe des Alpes, RAC Rally and the Welsh Rally, with some famous names among the many drivers, including Roger Clark, Raymond Baxter and Stuart Turner.

Sadly, these successes did not translate into showroom sales, with just 77 examples finding buyers. So, after 3 years during which only 132 cars were sold, production of the Sabre was halted in 1964.

Meanwhile, in 1962, an upcoming design studio headed by David Ogle had begun producing a neat GT based on the Mini called the Ogle SX1000. An offshoot with similar styling was then constructed using the mechanicals from a Riley 1.5.



Ogle 1.5 drawing: Ogle original enhanced by the author

ROAD

By Roy Dowding

This attracted the attention of Boris Forter, then MD of Helena Rubenstein cosmetics, who commissioned Ogle to make two 2+2 GTs using the running gear from the Daimler SP250 (aka the Dart).

David Ogle had been tragically killed while driving an Ogle SX1000 shortly before, so the job fell to Carl Olson under the direction of Tom Karen, who had just been recruited from Ford, to build what became the Ogle SX250. One example was completed in time to appear at the 1962 Earls Court Motor Show.



Ogle SX250:
Ogle Design catalogue

The car created much interest, though failed to lead to any fruitful association with Daimler, which by then had become part of Jaguar. But Ray Wiggin was most impressed by it and, speculating on its possible use as a replacement for the Sabre, began making enquiries. With no certain future plans for the SX250, Reliant engineers quickly ascertained that the Ogle body could be made, with only minimal alterations, to clothe the Sabre 6 chassis.

The exterior was subtly amended, notably at the front and the adoption (again) of rounded rear wheel arches in place of the Ogle's flattened tops. A prototype was constructed, retaining the Ford straight six, but now with an improved manifold and triple SU carburettors. And, shortly after its introduction, following suggestions from Autocar's editor Edward Eves, a revised rear suspension was devised, incorporating trailing arms and a Watts linkage. Thus the Scimitar SE4 GT was born.



Scimitar SE4: the author

At last, Reliant had a winner. The first fibreglass-bodied car to gain an award for coachwork from the Institute of British Carriage and Automobile Manufacturers at Earls Court, it also represented Reliant's first successful 4-wheel car and marked the start of a 30 year span of sporting Scimitars. All told, just over 1,000 examples of the SE4 were produced from 1964 to 1970; 297 bore the Zodiac engine (of which there are now only four survivors still on the road) and, from 1967, 711 were equipped with the Ford Essex V6 engine.



The Bean Count Continues

We have covered in previous issues the amazing journey of the 1923 Bean from London to Melbourne, recreating the same journey undertaken a century earlier. A brief update from the team tells us: "We are absolutely agog as to just how good the car is – having driven it from London to Athens through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece – through a weather bomb, blistering heat, expressways, crowded cities, country roads and mountain passes – the car has barely had one spanner put on it for any kind or repair.

"We have maintained a schedule of daily maintenance under the direction and watchful eye of Team Bean mechanic, Tony Jordan. The 100-years old car more than keeps up with modern autobahn/motorway traffic, sitting comfortably around the 100 kph mark.

"When this project was initially planned, the imperative has always been to get this car to the stage where it can compete with modern traffic... and it certainly does!"

There remains a few thousand miles to go, but it seems the portents are good.



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IN BRIEF...

RILEY

Words and images by Brian Page

Like so many other car manufacturing companies in Britain, Riley started out producing textile machinery and then moved into the production of cycles and on to car manufacture at the turn of the 20th Century. Riley produced their first car in 1898/1899 in Coventry.

The Riley family owned several different Riley companies, including The Riley Engine Company, which started the car manufacturing side of things and went on to produce fine sporting vehicles with reliable and innovative power units. It was also a leader in the manufacture of detachable wire wheels, which helped with cash flow at the time. The first success car-wise, was the 17/30 model produced between 1913 and 1922 with its large side-valve engine, being Riley's first 4-cylinder model and giving rise to the advertising slogan of the time "As old as the industry, as modern as the hour". Harry Rush, the works manager for Riley, designed the 17/30 and the smaller 11/40 model which sold relatively well

until 1924. Both models were considered as good-looking vehicles in their day.

Not only did Riley have their own wheels, but the engines were considered as modern with detachable cylinder heads, and their cars were fitted with four-wheel brakes. Some of the chassis were fitted with coach-built and more sporty bodywork. Later in the 1920s the 12 and 9 models were added to the line-up and various body types were added, such as a fabric-bodied Monaco and a Tourer, as well as the saloons. The Nine was referred to as "The Wonder Car", as it was reliable, well-built and modern, if 'tuned' was quick for the era, and sold for a reasonable price (under £300 in 1928). The OHV engine and 4-speed transmission rewrote the textbook for manufacturers of small and medium cars at the time. In particular, the

engine with its innovative cylinder head designed by Percy Riley, was significantly more modern than the other engines fitted to similarly priced vehicles at that time.

Riley not only produced some very attractive saloons and coupés, but also provided enthusiasts with some truly magnificent sports cars in the 1930s. The manufacturer also had some successes on the track and such talented drivers as Prince Bira of Siam, Raymond Mays and the like, all at one time or another drove a Riley in competition. Some of the great Riley sports cars of the 1930s included the Brooklands, the Imp, the MPH and the Sprite.



One of the many sporting Rileys: the Super Brooklands model photographed in Australia



An early 30s Riley 4 Seat Tourer with admirers at Helmingham Hall



The heyday of Riley was in the 1930s. Saloons, coupés and sports cars at their best! This is a 1937 Riley Nine



Riley Coupé



The Riley RM range of cars made from 1948, included 1½ litre, 2½ litre Saloons, dhc and roadsters...



...nicely produced and well built although a little dated by the 50s. The last of the Real Rileys?



Badge engineering Riley-style: the 2.6 Saloon...



... and 1.5 Saloon

They also produced some very pretty sporting saloons of the era, including Falcons, Kestrels, Lynx, Gamecocks and the Adelphi, to name just a few which had grace and style. In fact, there were so many different models available (over 30 in 1934) that the production of the vehicles was a little chaotic and the company suffered from cash flow and financial problems. By 1938 Riley sold out to the Nuffield Group of companies that included Morris, MG and Wolseley.

During WW2, Riley was involved in the manufacture of military vehicles as part of the Nuffield Group. It also made components for aircraft, including Avro and De-Havilland. After the end of the war, production

resumed in cars and Riley launched the RMA with its 1½ litre OHV engine with the high pushrod twin camshaft, and an elegant fabric roof. The vehicle retained considerable traditional build and looked like a modernised 1930s design. In 1952 a 2½ litre version first appeared, the RMB. The main external differences between the two versions is the colour of the Riley diamond badge on the front; dark blue for the larger engine model and lighter blue for the smaller. The range also had a very attractive RMC Roadster and a dhc, the RMD, both with the larger engine of 2,443cc. In late 1953 the range was updated and slightly modified with the RME and RMF models.

Increasingly, Riley products lost their individualism and 'badge engineering' took over. Morris products became the basis for Riley cars as the 50s wore on, especially after the merger with Austin to become BMC.

The new breed of Rileys, based on BMC models, included the Pathfinder which had the 'old' RM's 2½ litre OHV engine but with a much more modern looking body and build. The Pathfinder was basically updated in 1958 with the fitting of the BMC C-Type 6-cylinder engine which the Wolseley 6/90 also shared. It looked similar too and was designed by Palmer, the BMC's preferred draughtsman at the time. Another 'shared' model was the little 1.5 Saloon which, apart



from the twin carburettors and more external brightwork, was the same basic car as the Wolseley 1500, manufactured between 1957 and 1965 in various styles.

From 1959 the BMC Farina range of vehicles was launched. They had the trusted 4-cylinder 1,500cc power unit and included the Austin A55 Mk2, Morris Oxford V, the Wolseley 15/60, the MG Magnette 3 and the Riley version, the 4/68. The Riley and the MG versions had twin carburettors and were (slightly) more sporty than the other versions. The Farina range also had a 6-cylinder engined version in Austin, Wolseley and Vanden Plas, but alas not in a Riley. The 4-cylinder Farina range was updated with a slightly larger capacity engine from late 1961, including the Riley (a 4/72).

The 1960s saw the emergence of Riley versions of the Mini (with a protruding boot and 'fancy' grille), the Elf, and the 'upgraded' 1100 and 1300 Kestrels, based on the BMC

cars. They were both worthy examples of the new breed of Riley/BMC vehicles.

Unfortunately, the end of Riley came in 1969 and no other model has since worn the Blue Diamond badge so proudly displayed on the great marque and so missed by many. Was it a decision by the then owner of Riley, British Leyland, or was it time to move forward and cut

the number of marques within the group and look forward and not back?

"As old as the Industry, as Modern as the hour". Shame it seems that the hour has ended for Riley.

I have been lucky to have driven quite a number of both pre-war and post-war Rileys and particularly like the late 30s sports cars, such as the MPH and Sprite.



One of the many sporting Rileys: the Super Brooklands model photographed in Australia



Riley Kestrel 1300



Brian Page

Brian is a historic vehicle enthusiast and professional assessor who, for the past 30 years, has run Classic Assessments, the independent vehicle inspection and assessment specialists that works with numerous car clubs. He lives in rural Norfolk and owns a 1937 Wolseley.

Revving Up for the Future:

Why Digital Transformation is Key for Member Clubs

By Will Jeffries

Member clubs play a vital role in preserving our automotive heritage, bringing together enthusiasts who share a passion for classic vehicles and the stories they tell. Whether it's members swapping tales of their first restoration project, the thrill of an engine roaring to life, or the joy of driving a classic car with fellow enthusiasts, these moments define the essence of our clubs.

As a classic car enthusiast and proud owner of a 1976 Ford Escort Mk2, I understand and value the connections and experiences our clubs foster. Yet, in today's evolving world, member clubs face challenges that require proactive solutions for operators to ensure their clubs' survival and growth. As Charles Darwin famously said "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change"

Before exploring solutions, it's important for us to understand the key challenges clubs face and how to turn them into opportunities.

Some of the Key Challenges Facing Member Clubs

Membership Retention and Recruitment:

An ageing membership base makes it essential to attract younger enthusiasts. Balancing traditional practices with the digital preferences of younger members adds complexity. Additionally, with modern hobbies competing for attention, maintaining and growing membership is more challenging than ever.

Administrative Burdens and Outdated Processes:

Many clubs rely on manual processes that are time-consuming and error-prone, overwhelming small teams and hindering member engagement. Simplifying these processes with modern solutions can improve efficiency and free up resources to focus on promotion, engagement and growth.

Financial Sustainability:

Membership fees are often the primary revenue source, making a declining membership base a financial strain. Unpredictable income and outdated financial tools make long-term planning and budgeting challenging. Modern accounting tools and payment methods can help manage finances more effectively.

Limited Visibility and Reach:

Traditional outreach methods, such as printed magazines and local events, limit a club's reach. In today's digital world, a strong online presence is essential to attract new members. Without it, clubs may struggle to engage younger audiences who prefer digital platforms.

Adaptation to Change:

Embracing new technology can be daunting for clubs that value tradition, and members may resist change. Additionally, club operators may lack the technical expertise needed for digital adoption. Effective change management requires planning and member buy-in.

Data Utilisation Challenges:

Poor-quality data and a lack of analytical tools make informed decision-making difficult. Clubs may lack the expertise to leverage data for insights, limiting their ability to understand member needs and drive initiatives that support growth.

Recognising these challenges is the first step towards building stronger, more sustainable member clubs that are prepared for the future. Acknowledging these obstacles is vital, but understanding how to address them is equally important. This is where digital transformation comes in.

How Can Digital Transformation Help?

Digital transformation offers a bridge between tradition and innovation, enabling clubs to adapt while safeguarding their future.

Save Time and Free Up Resources:

Modern membership management software automates administrative tasks, allowing clubs to shift from manual processes to strategic activities that enhance engagement and operations. For example, membership software can automate the renewal process, sending reminders and collecting payments, saving considerable time.

Enhanced Member Experience:

Modern software provides user-friendly platforms that improve engagement. Features like online registration and member portals encourage participation and boost satisfaction, creating a modern experience that meets members' expectations.

Data-Driven Decisions:

Reliable digital software enables clubs to collect better data and generate reports that support informed decisions. Accurate insights help tailor activities, optimise operations, and align plans with long-term goals.

About Will

Will Jeffries is a classic car enthusiast and digital expert with extensive experience helping membership organisations successfully navigate their digital transformation journeys. As Director of sheepCRM, he has supported numerous clubs and associations in adopting modern solutions to enhance member engagement and streamline operations.

If you would like to explore digital potential for your club, please contact Will directly:

Email: will@sheepcrm.com

Website: sheepcrm.co.uk

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/wiljeffries/

Personalised Communication:

Modern CRM (customer relationship management) and newsletter tools, like Mailchimp allow clubs to segment their audience and tailor content to specific member groups. Personalised emails, newsletters, and social media interactions foster engagement and strengthen relationships.

Improved Membership Retention and Growth:

Enhanced engagement leads to higher retention and membership referrals. A strong digital presence expands visibility, opening opportunities for growth and diversified income streams.

While adapting to new technologies can seem daunting, it doesn't have to be overwhelming. Many clubs have already taken steps towards digital transformation in small ways, paving the path for others. Across sectors like sports, education and science, membership organisations have embraced digital tools to stay relevant and responsive to their communities' evolving needs. It's important to remember that digital transformation isn't a one-time change; it's a continuous journey that involves adapting and improving over time.

Digital transformation enhances rather than replaces tradition. By taking even small steps, clubs can preserve their heritage while strengthening their community, ensuring that their legacy thrives for generations to come. Embracing digital solutions enables clubs to grow sustainably, creating a bridge between cherished traditions and modern engagement. This approach not only protects the club's essence but also invites a new wave of enthusiasts who will honour and contribute to its legacy.

RUNWAYS *to* RACETRACKS *Part Three*

By Michael Jones

Following a tumultuous meeting with clubs in December 1949 the RAC clarified its stance on “airfield racing”, indicating that it would consider applications for permits to race where land formerly occupied by the military had been returned to a private owner or tenant.

By happy coincidence, Tom Simmonds of the Bristol Motor Cycle and Light Car Club had recently met an ideal person. Simmonds spent several weekends scouring the countryside in late summer, hoping to find land suitable for a trials event. Having identified a promising location near Ford in Wiltshire, he was told that the owner was a Mrs Maurice.

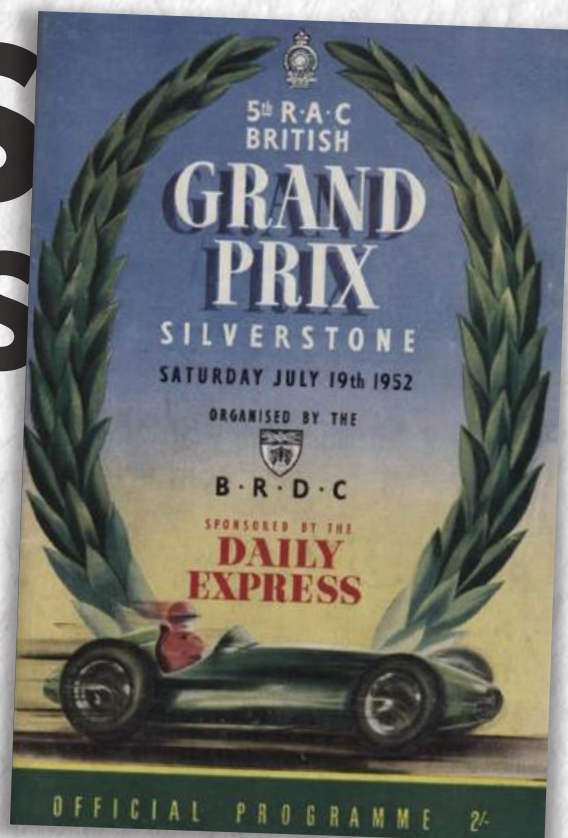
On approaching the lady in question, it was soon clear that he had been wrongly informed. Mrs Maurice did not own the hill and most of her land was given over to agriculture. However, she did own the former aerodrome at Castle Combe.

Even better, Kitty Maurice was an active member of the Riley Motor Club and had rallied, with some success, in the 1930s. Kitty was very interested in the possibility of creating a racetrack and keen to collaborate with Bristol MC & LCC.

Both parties realised that a long-term plan was required to make the site suitable for racing. A joint committee was formed, and Kitty generously agreed to forego rental payments in the early years to allow the club to plough profits back into the enterprise.

Club members soon volunteered to make the site suitable for racing. They dismantled a wartime pill box, removed concrete slabs and relocated a haystack at the entrance to what would later be known as ‘Farm Straight’. A herd of cows crossed the track twice a day for milking, so any slippery deposits also had to be cleaned up prior to racing!

Castle Combe’s first meeting, featuring both motorcycle and car races, was held on 8th July 1950. Attendance was strictly restricted to Bristol MC & LCC members,



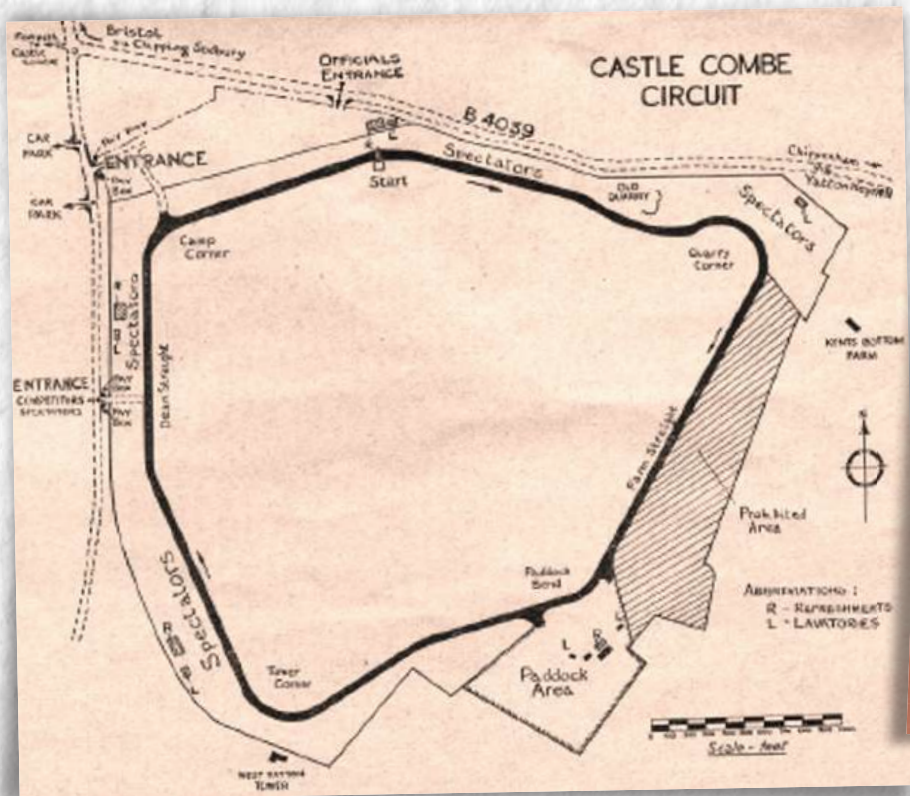
but the introductory notes in the event programme made clear that the Club had ambitious plans:

“Before any meeting open to the general public can be staged, much time and money will have to be expended on permanent fencing to comply with the requirements of the RAC regarding the safety and control of spectators. We intend to complete sufficient of this fencing to enable us to hold a National Race Meeting on October 7th”.

The National event took place as planned. An estimated 12,000 spectators



An estimated 12,000 spectators paid 5 shillings (25p) to attend Castle Combe’s first National



paid five shillings (25p) to see a thrilling programme of races, featuring celebrity drivers such as Stirling Moss and Peter Collins, which *Motor Sport* considered "some of the best we have seen this year".

The magazine confidently forecast that "Castle Combe looks like ranking as the 'Silverstone of the West' in 1951". As the 1951 season got underway, however, there were rumours that the RAC was about to pull the plug on Silverstone.

The Aston Martin Owners Club had planned to hold meetings at the Northamptonshire venue, but now faced considerable uncertainty. The Club decided to develop a 'Plan B' and Chairman, Dudley Coram, started looking for an alternative site.

By happy coincidence, member Oliver Sears lived near the former Snetterton Heath airfield and was also prominent within the Eastern Counties Motor Club. Sears owned Hamblyn House, a local country club, and had many contacts in the local business community.

He approached hauliers Ben and John Wyatt, who were keen to diversify their commercial interests. They negotiated a lease from Fred Riches, who owned and farmed the land. As the local churchwarden, Riches stipulated that there must be no racing between 10:45am and noon on Sundays and that all activity must finish by evensong!

Snetterton's first meeting therefore took place on a Saturday, the 27th October 1951.

Keen for the event to be a success, John Wyatt put up a generous prize fund.

Loudspeakers were installed and racing driver John Bolster provided a commentary whilst perched precariously on the roof of a furniture lorry! The BBC even sent a radio van, broadcasting interviews with George Abecassis and Duncan Hamilton.

Various Aston Martin luminaries volunteered as officials, with Dudley Coram acting as Clerk of the Course. One of the bends was named in his honour and this remains the case, despite numerous changes to the circuit layout.

The Wyatt brothers' investment seems to have paid off. Over fifty entries were received, and *Motor Sport* declared the meeting an unqualified success:

"The Aston-Martin O.C. deserves congratulations on an excellent event over an interesting new course with very generous prize money."

AMOC and the ECMC were no doubt delighted with this outcome, although they may not have been as pleased as Oliver Sears. Legend has it that many of the competitors repaired to Hamblyn House after the meeting, where much of the prize fund passed over the bar!

Meanwhile, the rumours about Silverstone turned out to be true. The RAC decided in late Spring 1951 that it would not renew the lease at the end of the year, leaving Britain's ability to host a round of the recently created Formula One World Championship in considerable doubt.

Alarmed at this possibility the General Committee of the British Racing Drivers Club decided on 27th May that the club

should endeavour to take over the running of the circuit, with backing from the Daily Express. The Club Secretary was duly authorised to approach the Ministry of Agriculture, who owned the land.

After protracted negotiations, agreement in principle was reached in October for the BRDC to take a four-year lease on Silverstone. A few days later, Lord Howe (who was both Chair of the RAC Competitions Committee and BRDC President) met with representatives of the Daily Express, who committed to sponsor a meeting each year over the same timescale.

In December, the BRDC hosted a cocktail party at the Park Lane Hotel to woo potential trade supporters. This was well received, and plans were immediately drawn up for investment in protective banks, re-surfacing parts of the track and permanent toilet facilities.

While some in the RAC were feeling sniffy about the creeping commercialisation of motor racing, the two organisations reached an important understanding:

"The RAC agrees to delegate to the BRDC the organisation of the British Grand Prix (1952), the matter being the



subject of a formal agreement between the Club and the BRDC whereby the fact is acknowledged that the event is an RAC official race, delegated as regards the promotion and running to the BRDC and that the fact is not overweighted by any publicity matter put out by and on behalf of a national newspaper.”

The final pieces of the jigsaw were starting to fall into place.

Last minute legal problems delayed signing the lease for several weeks but Desmond Scammell, BRDC Secretary, made sure that builders were on site at the earliest opportunity. The project had acquired considerable momentum by May's Daily Express International Trophy meeting, as Motor Sport's race report acknowledged:

“The BRDC improvements to Silverstone were praiseworthy. The pits, new permanent brick structures with observation roof above, and the main grandstand properly roofed have been moved from Abbey straight to the straight beyond Woodcote...Full praise for proper lavatory accommodation. There was corner-to-corner television laid on in some of the enclosures and immense central towers for newsreel operators. From the Woodcote Stand a fine view of both corner and pits, and starts and finishes of races also, is obtainable. Moreover, Desmond

Scammell intends to get a lot more done before the British Grand Prix on July 19th.”

As expected, the Grand Prix was an unqualified success.

The magazine subsequently commented that *“the Daily Express can congratulate itself on a very well-run meeting, grandly organised”* which may have caused some embarrassment for the BRDC, given sensibilities about press sponsorship within the RAC!

Tensions about sponsorship rumbled on, but the change in Silverstone's management was undoubtedly a positive development for both organisations. The RAC could now focus on regulation and oversight, while the BRDC was able to develop Silverstone as an international venue.

By the mid-1950s it was becoming clear that airfield circuits were economically viable and here to stay. Their adoption unquestionably gave the sport a lifeline at a time when the economy was in the doldrums and traditional tracks like Brooklands and Donington were

unsuitable (or unavailable) for racing.

This would not have been possible without Earl Howe's leadership and the entrepreneurial flair of Freddie March, Kitty Maurice, the Wyatt brothers and many others. Ordinary car club members also played a vital role, whether it be cleaning up the military's mess or volunteering as a marshal on race-day.

However, the sport's grass roots did much more than simply provide local manpower. At their very first meeting with the RAC, on 28th September 1945, club representatives enthusiastically supported the 750 Motor Club's proposal that *“racing should be developed as a public spectacle”*.

In the years that followed, clubs collectively cajoled, barracked and lobbied the governing body until permits for racing on former airfields were finally granted. This radical development opened motor racing to completely new audiences, paving the way for it to become the immensely popular sport we enjoy today.



Mike Jones

Mike Jones is a keen student of automotive history and a past editor of AM Quarterly magazine. Author of numerous articles on Aston Martin, from the 1920's to the modern era, he is the proud owner of a DB7 GT.

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Welcome

We are delighted to report that the Federation continues to welcome new members.

This issue we offer a very warm welcome to our newest **Club Members**:

Citroën Specials Club - www.citroenspecialsclub.org

Supports those building, running or interested in specials and kits built on the Citroën 'A' series running gear, mainly Lomax and Falcon with some one-off specials.

Horsham Historics Preservation Society -

www.horshamhistorics.co.uk

Founded in 1975, members are from all corners of the vintage scene - vintage transport, farming equipment/machinery and collections - with a wealth of knowledge ready to share.

Wessex Historic Tractor and Implement Club - www.whtic.co.uk

Joining the growing number of agricultural-based FBHVC member clubs, it caters for those with an interest in all tractors, stationary engines and all types of vintage farm implements.

West Coast Classic Car Club - www.westcoastccc.co.uk

A club of like-minded individuals who enjoy classic car ownership, primarily based in the Ayrshire/West of Scotland area.

Details of all FBHVC member clubs can be found in our searchable online directory at: www.fbhvc.co.uk/member-clubs

We also welcome our newest **trade supporters**:

Art Loss Register/Classic Car Register - www.artloss.com

Experts around the world use its services to check the provenance of items before they buy or handle them. Police, insurers, the trade and the public may record items that have been stolen – to maximise their chances of recovery – to record disputes or items within collections.

Heritage Parts Centre - www.heritagepartscentre.com

The biggest range of VW service and restoration parts for Beetle, Type 2, Golf Mk1/Mk2, T25, T4 and T5/T6. It also manufactures many tuning, camping, and restoration parts.

Master Auto Glass - www.master-auto-glass.com

Independent specialist stockist and distributor of replacement glass for classic cars, custom/kit cars, classic tractors and plant, along with rubbers, trims and chromes that would otherwise no longer be available.

RKD Futures - www.nlgta.co.uk

Part of North London Garages (NLG), at 50 years the oldest automotive apprenticeship training provider in London. NLG operates under the name of RKD Futures for its work with classic vehicles, TV and sales.

Seven Design Associates - www.seven-design.co.uk

Graphic design and marketing communication materials for automotive-related businesses and clubs.

WH Tildesley (Heritage Forgings) - www.heritageforgings.com

Established in 1874, it is one of the oldest remaining drop-forging companies in the UK. Its Heritage Division specialises in the replication and production of forged components for historic vehicles and projects.

Details of all **trade supporters** are in our interactive Trade Supporters Directory, which is searchable by name and type of product/service: www.fbhvc.co.uk/trade-supporters

Also very warm welcome also to our new **individual supporters**:

Kieran Abraham, Stephen Allen, Neville Bradshaw, Christopher Braun, Philip Clarke, Callum Cowie, Peter Garrett, John Hopkins, Martin Kerr, Daryl McMahon, Brian Potter, Tony Rogers, Frank Vautier and Paul Woodvine.

Do you know a historic-friendly MoT centre?

We receive many hundreds of enquiries in the FBHVC office each year about a variety of subjects to do with historic vehicles (mainly in relation to DVLA matters). A frequent enquiry is to locate a historic-friendly MoT station.

Typically, they are family run, located outside of major towns and often are part of a garage (and occasionally) filling station business.

As a result they understand the nature of historic vehicles and have a full understanding of the official DVLA MoT inspection manual (available in full to the public here: <https://www.gov.uk/transport/car-motorcycle-and-van-mot-tests>). That's not always the case with mainstream MoT centres that only see 'moderns' and don't have the knowledge of historics so can be left baffled and incorrectly fail your vehicle, due to the tester's lack of knowledge.

We already have an interactive online directory of classic-friendly MoT stations and we'd like your help to update and expand it.



Federation members have contributed to this list of MoT test stations that, in their experience, understand the special requirements of historic vehicles.

There's no charge for a site to be listed, and the garages are all based on personal recommendation – that means you!

Please visit our list and see if your preferred garage is on there – if not, please tell us (secretary@fbhvc.co.uk).

You'll notice from our online map, that the north of England, Wales and Scotland are under-represented, so please help us fill those gaps!

www.fbhvc.co.uk/historic-friendly-mot-stations

Vehicle Manufacturer Codes

For anyone interested in the potentially complex subject of vehicle manufacturer codes and their implications for the work of automotive historians, Anders Ditlev Cluasager has produced an article for the annual SAHB journal, Aspects of Motoring History.

The publication is available to non-SAHB members by emailing Richard Roberts (richard.roberts56@googlemail.com) or by ordering on-line through the website: www.thesahb.com

Car Spotting

If you fancy testing your classic car expertise on a daily basis, try visiting the website cardle.uk. It shows part of a car that you then have five chances, each with a different view of the same car, to guess/work out what it is. It's a bit of fun and there's no requirement to sign-up, etc.

2024 AGM and Conference

We were delighted to welcome almost 100 people to our AGM and conference at the British Motor Museum Gaydon on 19 October. This is the highest post-Covid attendance.

After Chairman David Whale introduced our new President, Sir Greg Knight (see elsewhere in this issue), the AGM's business also saw all nominated directors re-elected.

The afternoon conference saw three presentations.

Tom Worthington of Tree-V presented an update about the Federation's carbon capture scheme, which is open to clubs and individuals.

Fuels Specialist Nigel Elliott went into detail about the 'fully green' fuels now available, such as the P1 Fuels and the Coryton Sustain products. He explained how they are made, their composition and crucially answered the question "Are they suitable for classics and historics?" In short, the answer is 'yes' and no vehicle modifications are required. The only caveat is that they are produced in small volume and as a consequence are much more expensive than E5 (Super Unleaded). But, they are available for those who wish to use them, with a number of historic rallying/racing bodies taking them up, such as this year's Goodwood Revival.

We were then delighted to welcome Dudley Ashford (Corporate Services Manager)

and Gareth Jones (Corporate Services Relationship Manager) from the DVLA. Having regaled the audience with the story (and pictures) of his Suzuki GS125 restoration, Dudley reviewed the last 12 months, before explaining the work the DVLA is doing at present and its plans for service launches.

Regarding the Call for Evidence and the consultation responses, Dudley explained that work continues on producing revised procedures in the light of the responses. However, DVLA has still to finalise this and obtain senior approval, before the outcome can be shared. He was clear that the DVLA understands the issues and is looking to produce a positive outcome.

Finally, new President Sir Greg Knight, (pictured) presented an entertaining and thought-provoking closing address, which was well received.

An audio recording of the AGM and Conference was made and this, along with the slides presented on the day, are available in the members area of the website www.fbhvc.co.uk/members-agm.



If you have already registered, log in with the email and password you created (you can reset the password if you've forgotten). Registration is free – and encouraged - for all committee and members of clubs and other bodies in the FBHVC here: <https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/register>

We are aware that October is a busy month, therefore to try to avoid event clashes, we have already set the date for the 2025 AGM – Saturday 18 October 2025 – once again at Gaydon. Please make a note in your diary!

Don't forget Club Expo!

Our big annual event for all clubs and supporters is fast approaching! Club Expo is where you can find out what's happening on the key topics of the day that matter to clubs. We are restricted on the number of spaces available, so please book now!

Being held at the British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, on Saturday 18 January 2025, we are currently putting the programme together. Full details will be sent nearer the time.

With a range of knowledgeable speakers, Q&A sessions and networking, you'll go away armed with practical actions, tips and more, that you can share with your members.

As usual, the day will inform future practice, examine what works well, and what gaps in learning may still exist that need to be revisited.

We will provide an extended lunchbreak to enable networking and

have lunch in the café. Also, during the day you'll have the opportunity to visit and meet some of our trade supporters to discuss any issues or ideas.

As ever, there's also the opportunity to visit the museum during lunch and after the event.

If you have any suggestions for topics, please contact us (via the Secretary). We will have a number of presentations updating important topics, plus some new ones.

We have also invited Dudley Ashford and Gareth Jones of the DVLA, and it is hoped that by then details of the outcome of the 'Call for Evidence' consultation will be available to be announced.

As well as enjoying the presentations, it's a great opportunity to meet other clubs and help build the community of like-minded historic vehicle enthusiasts. You never know, you may learn something invaluable for your club from another!



Book your place now

(it's first-come, first-served), by emailing secretary@fbhvc.co.uk stating your name, club and position.

Space in the Conference Hall is strictly limited.

Attendance is free of charge to FBHVC members and supporters, with two places available to each club/organisation.

Older readers may well remember those lonely looking men standing at the roadside clutching trade plates and indicating they would like a lift. These were the new car delivery drivers. I have never thought much about new car deliveries until I read an article in *Recalling*, the magazine of the **Morris Commercial Club**. Dealers were responsible for collecting new cars from the factory and each had its squad of very special drivers to do it and who must keep to the 'running in' instructions.

However, it was the factory that had to get cars to the docks for export and there is an incredible photo of no less than fifty Morris vehicles lined up on the road, supposedly running in convoy between Oxford and London docks. In 1949 B.J. Henry Ltd tried out a four-car transporter built by Brockhouse. The article concludes with the Carrimore trailer of the 1960s which could carry six cars. The article is to continue in the next issue of the club magazine.

Memories of a lost motorsport venue was the title of an article in *Viva Lancia*, the magazine of the **Lancia Motor Club**. Written by David Madgwick who had marshalled at the last two meetings, in 1973 and 1974, at Great Auclum Speed Hill Climb at Burghfield Common. It was the private driveway of Neil W. Gardiner who was a Director of Huntley and Palmer Biscuits in nearby Reading. Pre-war he had raced at Brooklands and thought it would be fun to add banked bends to his front drive. Legend had it that he would go out of his way to frighten his guests on the way up to his house at the top of the hill. One speed event was held there before the war and in 1946 The Hants and Berks Motor Club took it on. In 1950 the first banked corner was given several feet of more height. Rivers Fletcher was heard to remark: "I liked to use the banking as it made a far better photograph and made the effort in creating it the more worthwhile." With the death of Neil Gardiner in 1973 the estate was sold and 1974 was the last year of hill climbing there.

A piece appeared in *Start Line*, the magazine of the **Wigton Motor Club**. "I was parked in the Octavia Estate the other day when an identical car parked next to me. Only it was an Audi A4 Avant, in the same colour. On closer inspection, every panel, light, handle and trim were slightly different but perhaps not noticeable from 20 metres away. A bit of research showed badge engineering is alive and well in the VAG empire. You can buy the same car in the same spec as an Audi, VW, Cupra, Skoda and SEAT. Priced in that order with a difference of £13k from Audi to SEAT. Shades of Morris, Austin, Riley, Wolseley, MG and Vanden Plas in the sixties".

Debbie Cooke, writing in *Transverse Torque*, the magazine of the **East Yorkshire Thoroughbred Car Club**, writes a short history of the Trabant. "The first model, the Trabant P50, rolled off the assembly line in 1957... What set the Trabant apart was its construction – the body was made of Duroplast, a type of plastic reinforced with recycled materials like cotton and wood fibres. This was a clever solution to the shortage of steel in East Germany, though it did earn the Trabant some less-than-flattering nicknames like 'the cardboard car'". She goes on with a technical description of the car. "The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the beginning of the end for the Trabant. As East and West Germany reunified, East Germans eagerly traded in their Trabants for more modern Western cars. Production ceased in 1991.... For those who lived through the Cold War, the Trabant is a poignant reminder of a bygone era. For younger enthusiasts, it's a charming relic, that stands out in the world of modern, cookie-cutter cars."

The Conrod is the magazine of the **Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Societies Road Transport Museum**. One item which has recently been taken out of storage and restored is a 1968 Raleigh Wisp. Mike Camm tells us: "The Wisp was produced from 1967 to 1969 and was based on the Raleigh RSW 16 bicycle, fitted with a 1.4 bhp engine, 12-inch wheels, drum brakes, single-speed transmission and best of all, a large shopping bag. It cost 57 guineas (£59.85). It was very much one of the style icons of the swinging 60s, a sort of Mini with two wheels."



He goes on to recount what was involved in the bike's preservation. It's now back and on show in the museum. He concluded with:

"This has been an interesting journey for both myself and the Museum's little Raleigh Wisp. Although it might seem a quirky little moped, historically it played a significant part in Raleigh's and moped history".

A full-page advertisement in *Buzzing*, the magazine of the **National Autocycle and Cyclomotor Club** caught my eye, it was for the 'Ariel 3 Museum and Motorcycle Model collection'. A museum of which I had never heard. Within the ad was a description: "In July 1970 the Ariel 3 was launched by the BSA Group. Strange though it may seem, it was a three-wheeled motorcycle with an amazing ability to tilt sideways on its front wheel when cornering, not to mention a top speed of 30mph and a fuel consumption of 125mpg. It cost £100.



Stranger still, the Ariel was the creation on the back of a powerful market research programme and predicted to have a brilliant future, and yet failed to catch on with the public. Sales soon petered out and, sad as it seems, this strange little trike played a big part in the final collapse of the once great British motorcycle industry". This small museum is situated in Brislington, Bristol. Set up by an enthusiast whose job is that of a dental technician, the museum is at the back of his work premises. For more details look on: www.ariel3.com

[As an aside, in 1972 when Lord Montagu was fundraising for the new National Motor Museum building, he approached BSA for some financial assistance. They could not help with money but donated three Ariel 3s for use by the staff for running around the grounds of Palace House and the museum.]

A sad epitaph appears in *Jaguar Enthusiast*, the magazine of the club with the same name. "Jaguar will bid farewell to its iconic saloons and sports cars as the Castle Bromwich factory in Birmingham prepares to wind down production in June. The decision to end the production of the XE, XF and F-Type marks a significant shift in Jaguar's strategy, as the brand transitions towards their 're-imagined' all-electric future.

“The Castle Bromwich plant... originally used to build Spitfires and Lancaster bombers during World War II, has produced some of Jaguar’s most iconic models including the XK, XJ and the S-type. The discontinuation of the XE and XF saloons, along with the flagship F-Type sports car, signifies the end of an era for the current line-up of models... Castle Bromwich will transition to producing body panels for Jaguar’s new electric vehicles”.

Enthusiasts when rebuilding their vehicles will always find there are skills they just do not have and turn to the professional. Writing in *Tansha*, the magazine of the **Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club**, Rob Neal describes his attempt at wheel rebuilding. He was building himself a ‘bitsa’ from piles of parts he had bought previously. He writes: “For previous projects I had always had the wheels rebuilt by professionals; half the fun of rebuilding bikes though is the opportunity to pick up new skills and expand your knowledge base. So, in a rush of blood to the head, I decided to have a go at rebuilding the wheels. What could possibly go wrong?” The article explains in detail what

is involved and points out what went wrong as well as what went right. I am sure the club would supply a scan of the article for anyone wanting the details.



In *Triple*, the magazine of the **Motor Cycling Club**, there was a most interesting article by Fred Spaven. He recounts his adventures of building and riding an electric motorcycle on the very testing Land’s End Trial. This event started out in 1908 purely as a reliability trial and he thought it would

be the ideal trial for his latest creation. “The final design was built into a humble Enfield Bullet frame housing a 45kg, 8.5kWh battery fed from a 6kW on-board charger giving a kerb weight of about 182kg, a bit over the 170kg target”. The bike was finished in time for the 2023 Land’s End, but an electrical fault precluded it actually taking part. Since then, with a year’s road running and a trial or two, he was ready for the 2024 Land’s End. The bike needed a charge at roughly 100-mile intervals, but in practice, 80 miles due to worry about finding a charging point that worked, and many of them did not. He concludes with: “Four hours late at the finish [due almost entirely to broken charging points] I collected a finisher certificate... The Charging Bullet arrived home in Hereford on Sunday evening after a 640-mile round trip in 56 hours, as the first EV to finish the historic Land’s End Trial”.

Derek Seward writing in *Marques and Sparks*, the newsletter of the **Lakeland Historic Car Club**, has a dilemma. He is about to restore a 1950 Lea Francis 2.5 sports. This was an abandoned project started 52 years ago.



AUCTION CATALOGUES WANTED

We are looking to complete our reference collection of classic and historic car auction catalogues from the UK, Europe, and the US. If you have any of the following, we’d love to hear from you:

- Bonhams: Any catalogues pre-2002
- Christie’s: Any catalogues pre-1988 or from 2001 and 2002
- Sotheby’s: Any catalogues pre-1980
- For Brooks and Coys, please contact us directly—we have a specific list of numbered auctions we’re missing.

If you can help, contact hugh.pinney@outlook.com. We can arrange pick-up from anywhere on the UK mainland.

Your contribution will help preserve automotive history!

It would appear the last owner bought at that time a new set of Pirelli Cinturato tyres. These have been stored unused away from the car in a dark place and are visually as new. He wonders if he can use them on his car. He has asked a number of people such as the AA, Halfords, etc. and all say tyres should be changed every ten years. He writes “No-one seems to distinguish between quality and cheapest budget tyres.” He put the question to a Lea Francis forum, and everyone said: “Throw them away”. He concludes his piece: “The general feeling is that different criteria should apply to tyres on modern cars that may spend their life motorway cruising at high speeds compared to low-mileage classics that potter around country lanes”. [Some years ago, when I was writing an article on tyres for classic and earlier cars, I seem to remember that Chris Marchant of Vintage Tyre Supplies said that it should be ten years maximum.]

Old Faithful, the magazine of the **Post Vintage Humber Club**, carried a sad item that I had completely missed elsewhere: “The last tyres came off the production line at Cooper Tyres last week. In a poignant moment for staff and the town [Melksham], as the factory closes as of Wednesday 20th December. Formerly Avon Tyres, the site had been producing tyres in the town for 112 years... One of the last tyres made was for a vintage motorbike from the 1950s. Alan Yates explained that he had carried on with his task (as a mould changer) whilst other staff went to sign their final contracts. He is quoted as saying: “I might as well keep the last few tyres going through, and it just so happens, they did not get back until I was putting the last tyre in, it is quite weird really, quite an historic moment.”

Bruce Hoard writing in *Invicta*, the magazine of the **The Invicta Military Vehicle Preservation Society**, tells of problems importing a Dodge Power Wagon from Denmark. He brought it home himself via Dover. “When I came to make the Notification of Vehicles Arrival (NOVA) declaration, which I have done several times before, I was told that I could not do it myself anymore and that I needed to appoint an agent to obtain an Advanced Tariff Ruling (ATaR) and pay any necessary import charges – in this case just 5% import VAT. Only once this had been done could a NOVA declaration be made and the necessary clearance given by HMRC to apply to the DVLA for first registration.”

He goes on to say he was recommended to an agent who dealt with the whole process and kept him in touch with every

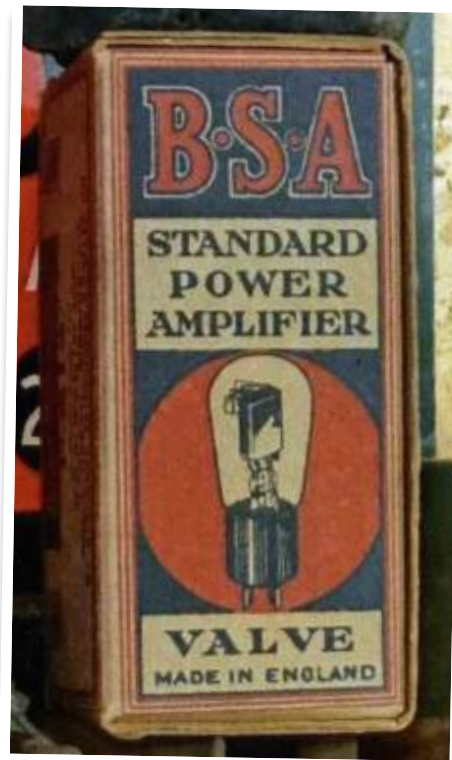
stage of the process. Her details are: Lidia McLeod of Simple Solutions (Brexit). lidia@simplesolutionsbrexit.co.uk.

Morris Monthly, the magazine of the **Morris Register**, carries a most interesting article on Nuffield Place, Lord Nuffield’s residence from 1933 until his death in 1963. “This four-bedroomed residence remained far from opulent, reflecting Morris’s frugal nature by employing a local builder instead of an architect for alterations... it has an air of understated elegance with its blend of high-quality reproduction furniture and a hint of antique pieces... The ambience of Nuffield Place is reminiscent of a cosy inviting home rather than a grand display of opulence”. The article gives details of many of the extraordinary pieces, such as an electric exercise horse “crafted exclusively at the Morris car factory”. Under the heading of The Curious Cabinet: “Lord Nuffield...had a peculiar way of dealing with his sleepless nights. Instead of tossing and turning... he would immerse himself in the world of mechanics. It is no wonder, then, that an extra-ordinary mini workshop found its place within the confines of his sleeping quarters. Amidst the array of well-worn spanners, screwdrivers, saws, files, pliers and pinchers, one can also find a collection of unexpected treasures. A packet of luxurious Philips stick-on soles, a relic from the second World War in the form of a hooded torch, a whimsical toy bear and even Lord Nuffield’s own preserved appendix, serves as intriguing reminders of his fascination with the field of medicine.” On that latter subject one must not forget his “steadfast commitment to aiding those with polio” and that he developed an iron lung to help polio sufferers, over 5,000 of these were made in the Morris factory and donated to hospitals world-wide. One is on display in the house. Full details for visiting from: www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

The editor of the **Vintage Austin** magazine, Bob Kendall, gives us an insight into an Austin product we may never have known about. Bob had access to a 1926 brochure entitled ‘Austinlite electricity for all’ which had been found by member Barry Davis. It promoted ‘Austin Lighting sets’. Austin had purchased Walter Horrocks and Co lighting plant manufacturers in 1915. In 1925, a new firm, Austin Electric Co., was formed in which Austin only had a part share. Such generating plants went on until the 1930s for use particularly in rural areas. The National Grid faced the gargantuan task of connecting the whole of the country to a supply of electricity. [Sounds familiar!] He illustrates an advertisement for these products which is headed by a picture of men laying heavy electric cables. It read: “Don’t wait for this.

If you have a house in the country, there is no need for you to wait for the electric mains to be laid near it. You can have an Austinlite electric light installed in your house now. Cheap, compact, absolutely reliable, you will not find a better set anywhere”. Larger generating plant was available for entire villages. Austin’s main interest in this latter firm was to supply them with the engines for driving the generators.

Another product made by a car and motorcycle company that I had never heard of was briefly written up in *Front Wheels*, the Bulletin of the **BSA Front Wheel Drive Club**. Jonathan Lines writes a short piece entitled ‘BSA Radio Ltd 1926 -1927’. He says: “BSA Radio Ltd was announced at the end of 1925. They formed part of the Birmingham Small Arms Company Ltd. It was the intention to develop sales of radio broadcast receiving equipment. I believe there were seven models of radio sold but are extremely rare. The one that I have is a table-top model of 1926. It requires an external speaker like the horn style seen on gramophones.”



Rolling is the magazine of the **Road Roller Association**. Vice Chairman Derek Rayner had been researching engines owned by John Knowles of Wickersley near Rotherham. He had been in touch with his daughter, Janet, who had proudly showed Derek an original logbook for a Barford and Perkins roller A21/2. The petrol-engine machine, registered FL5821, the first owner of which was no less a person than HM The King, at Windsor, where the roller was used in Windsor Great Park. The actual entry read:

'H.M. The King, [and under address] C. Lloyd Esq., Crown Estates Office, The Great Park, Windsor.' Sadly, it had not been signed by the King!)



The roller was in use throughout the war, when of course petrol was rationed. The buff logbook also contains many stamps made by the authorities at the various times when it was necessary for petrol to be issued.

Quite by chance Derek talked to fellow enthusiast, Andrew Eye, and mentioned this logbook. He went on to say: "Somewhat amazingly, he almost immediately came back with an image of the same motor roller, which had been used, quite understandably knowing of its owner, for the firm's publicity purposes in a contemporary Barford and Perkins catalogue." The picture shows a roller with the FL 5821 registration with Windsor Castle in the background.



I often think the bicycle is forgotten as one of the precursors of the motor car. In the magazine of the **Talbot Owners Club** there is an account by Howard Day of a visit to the Cycle Museum at Walton Hall, near Warrington. "The Cycle Museum, located in the former laundry rooms adjacent to the main hall, is the private collection of

Paul Adams. It is much more than just a collection of cycles, with related ephemera of advertising signs and posters, oil and acetylene lamps and all sorts of period items which have caught Paul's attention over the years. Paul has had a life-long interest in cycles from the earliest machine to modern". For the club outing Paul had selected five machines from the collection for the members to try out. The writer ends with: "So ended several hours of great fun in fantastic surroundings".

Graeme Forrester, writing in *Start Line*, the magazine of the **Wigton Motor Club** makes some interesting observations in his 'Talking Point' section: "It is so sad that people in general do not seem to socialise in the ways they did in the past. This, apparently, leads to mental health issues and thus we have the growth of 'Andy Mans' clubs when men can go and chat. Something they used to do at the pub, club nights or at the village hall. I read recently that rugby clubs are suffering due to the decline in the post-match gatherings at the bar, which provides important income to keep the club going. It was also the place where future committee members and officials were recruited. Much the same as motor clubs' club nights."

Ian Dussek is the editor of *The Gazette*, the magazine of the **HRG Association**. He writes: "It is apparent that we are in danger of losing membership, notably because cars are being sold and we do not know who the new owners are, or how we can make ourselves known to them. When and if you sell, please tell us to whom... One proposal being considered is the issuing of a card, to be left in the car after sale, giving details of the association." [On a personal note, I am often baffled by enthusiasts who have loved a car for many years, and when it comes time to sell, rush off to an on-line auction company or similar. Surely the best place to advertise your car is in the club magazine. There is then a good chance it could be bought by someone who has good knowledge of the make and would continue your love for it.]

Revcounter, the magazine of the **Austin Healey Club**, carried a short piece by Mell Ward who was not a club member. He had been watching 'Talking Pictures' on TV and one of the films watched was 'The man who was nobody'. Besides featuring Hazel Court, an Austin Healey 3000 registered 3703 HX,

appeared a few times. Mell checked with the DVLA and found that it was still on the road. He contacted the Austin Healey Club asking to be put in touch with the owner he presumed would be a member. It turned out it was owned by Colin who replied. "That is wonderful I had no idea I was the owner of a film star. I will most certainly track the film down." I wonder how many other film star cars are still around, their past unknown to the present owners?

To end on a sombre note, a short anonymous item appeared in the weekly digital news sheet of **The Motor Cycling Club**. "One Sunday afternoon on my way home from the pub I dropped in to see an old pal, who had been trying to get to the bottom of his recently restored 'Bergerac' Triumph's overheating problems... I queried the ignition he said, no way, listen how easily it starts, and it runs beautifully. So, he starts it up and it bursts into flames...WHOOSH, less than two feet from us and not small flames, three foot high completely engulfing the engine bay. He leaped for the huge foam fire extinguisher, which was very quickly exhausted, and the flames were getting even bigger.... He turns the fuel pump off and then I find a powder extinguisher under a ton of rubbish, and the fire is out instantly. Three learnings. Always check that the fuel lines are fuel tight. Always fit an electrical isolation switch – turning off the ignition is not good enough if the pump is not wired separately. Have a POWDER extinguisher to hand, better still, have two."



Michael E Ware

Trained as a professional photographer, Michael started his own motor racing photography business in 1959. In 2001 he retired from his role as curator of the National Motor Museum after nearly 40 years. Since then, he has been an author and freelance motoring writer. He has also written books on British Canals and British Fairgrounds.



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