



Big End

JOURNAL



The magazine of the Gay Classic Car Group Winter 2020/21



Classic Car Drive In, Rainbow Tour, a Member's Matchbox collection and much more...



Gay Classic Car Group - what you need to know

AREA ORGANISERS

Anglia

Martin Gillingham 07799 273725
email: anglia@gccg.org.uk

Chilterns

Darren Mitcham 07899 995287
email: chilterns@gccg.org.uk

West Midlands

Rob Gibson 07403 481439
email: westmidlands@gccg.org.uk
Chris Spreadbury 07855 045064

London

Richard Warrington 07488 566930
email: london@gccg.org.uk

North East

Stephen Duxbury 07970 555158
email: northeast@gccg.org.uk

Yorkshire

Mark Wells 07989 392974
email: yorkshire@gccg.org.uk

Northern Ireland

Deryck Brown 07903 239191
email: northernireland@gccg.org.uk

North West

Phil Dunster 07702 800304
email: northwest@gccg.org.uk

South Central

Paul Charlesworth 07778 218211
email: southcentral@gccg.org.uk

South East

Graham Davis 07973 951253
email: southeastgd@gccg.org.uk
Alan Webb-Moore 07967 661814
email: southeastawm@gccg.org.uk

South West

Jeremy Palmer 07885 400357
email: southwest@gccg.org.uk
Michael Jenkin 07768 636265

Scotland

David Greenleaf 07792 408527
email: scotland@gccg.org.uk

Wales

Len Smart 07725 100001
email: wales@gccg.org.uk
Tom Crooks 07808 700007

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Private adverts in this magazine from members wishing to buy or sell motor vehicles are FREE, as are personal advertisements from members. Trade adverts (non motor vehicle related) in connection with a member's business - Quarter page advert £20: Half page £30: Full page £50.

Contact editor@gccg.org.uk

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO BIG END JOURNAL

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All material will be considered, but the Editor reserves the right to reject or alter any material as appropriate. Ultimate responsibility remains with the author regarding appropriate content and copyright of material submitted. Photographs can be in digital format or print from film.

Articles for publication should be clearly hand-written, typed, on memory stick or sent by email. Either of the latter should be in Microsoft Word compatible format, .doc or .docx files.

Please provide a stamped self-addressed envelope for material you wish to have returned. Neither the Editor or GCCG can take responsibility for loss of or damage to material.

BRAND STYLE GUIDE

We welcome contributions from you! To help maintain a consistent format and writing style in the magazine please consult the style sheet guidelines at: www.gccg.org.uk/members/documents/



The Gay Classic Car Group (GCCG) is an association of gay and lesbian members who share a common interest and enthusiasm for classic cars. Although ownership of a classic car is not obligatory, the majority of members own at least one.

The group is run by committee and produces an interesting programme of events throughout the year, a quarterly magazine (Big End Journal) and monthly email bulletin (All Torque). The group has a number of area organisers throughout the UK to assist with and host local events and meetings. All club officials work for the GCCG in a voluntary capacity.

Strong links are maintained with similar organisations in Europe, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand.

Founder: Ian Roberts

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The views and opinions expressed in Big End Journal do not necessarily reflect those of the GCCG or its committee. Emails to any club officer should be sent to the mailbox address shown on the left. Officers' surnames and phone numbers are included at the individual's discretion.

AREA ORGANISER VACANCIES

THERE ARE VACANT POSITIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
- EAST MIDLANDS
- WESSEX

If you are interested in taking over as an Area Organiser in any of these regions please contact the Chairman:
email: chair@gccg.org.uk



As I write
this we are

mid-way through the second pandemic lockdown, which seems to be going on forever. I hope you, dear GCCG member, your family and friends are bearing up given the strange times we continue to live in. At the moment there is much talk about possible restrictions over the Christmas period. By the time you read this, however, we will all know what that might mean.

With so little to report on events and gatherings, past and forthcoming, I must admit it has been a struggle to fill the pages of this issue. But I hope you enjoy the diverse range of articles and I sincerely thank all those who have contributed to this magazine.

Regarding events, we have all written off 2020 as the year that didn't happen. But rest assured our enthusiastic Area Organisers are poised to put in place a fantastic programme for 2021. Once the chequered flag has been raised and restrictions lifted, they will be first off the grid to tell us about their plans. Already arrangements are in place for a Tour of Northumberland and the Borders in September. Before that, Dominique hopes to welcome you on the Sweet Trip in April. Details of these events and a few other happenings are listed on page 46 of this issue.

We welcome Tom Rooney, who has stepped into the role of Advertising Coordinator. Tom hopes to widen the scope of advertising in Big End Journal and would welcome ads from all kinds of different businesses and enterprises. Our magazine reaches a very targeted market and our members are from a broad age range with a variety of interests and backgrounds. Perhaps you would like to advertise in these pages? If so, why not get in touch with Tom at advertising@gccg.org.uk

Take care and all good wishes for 2021

Tony



Members' Rover SD1s on the GCCG stand at BL Day, Gaydon - pages 8-9



The model MG that ignited Steve Mariner's passion for Matchbox models - pages 24-25



In search of the perfect Daimler V8 250 - pages 30-31



Bessie, Gavin Whitwell's Rover 75, at the BMW Hochhaus - page 32



The last of the Midland Red S16 bus with Ashley Wakelin as conductor - pages 42-43

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Front cover

Some of Steve Mariner's classic model cars
See: A Member's Matchbox collection
- pages 24-25

Photos: Steve Mariner and Gert Vonhoff

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Chair's Chat

Peter Geake

This has been an eventful period for the

GCCG committee. As the second wave begins to bite, we have been trying to navigate our way through the various government 'requirements', as our country, along with the rest of the world, tries to mitigate the risks of Covid-19.

The Area Organisers and committee continue to try to arrange activities and make efforts to try and minimise the impact of the pandemic on the GCCG. I am delighted to say that everyone has responded very positively and inventively with a variety of virtual solutions, e.g. both local and national virtual pub meetings, fix-it weekend, etc. It would be very welcome if members could talk with their respective AOs about any ideas they may have as members are very welcome to do one-off events in association with their AOs, to help to add some more variety to the programme.

The committee will continue taking stock of the situation to see how we can further enhance the club's efforts to minimise the impact on the GCCG. But much more importantly, and to offer reassurance to the membership, when we emerge from the requirements of social distancing, the focus will be on reinvigorating the club activities. The expansion of the range of activities will be foremost in the minds of the committee and AOs.

While attending the Bicester Car show I was delighted to learn about the new Apprenticeship Standards for Heritage Engineering. In addition to apprenticeships for classic vehicles this new standard also includes Heritage Aviation, Heritage Marine and Heritage Steam. All apprentices undertaking an apprenticeship in any of these sectors will become a Heritage Engineering Technician when they successfully complete the training. This new standard was approved in September 2018 and will now be taught to all apprentices starting a Heritage Engineering apprenticeship. Heritage Engineering Technicians perform a vital role in the preservation, restoration, remanufacture, service and repair of historic UK and International engineering achievements.

I was particularly pleased to hear about this development, being a Consulting Engineer myself, but more importantly it helps to secure the long-term ownership and preservation of classic vehicles by helping young people become part of this world, a cheering thought for these times!

Meanwhile please take care and stay safe.

Peter

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Former club Chair Brian Palmer writes:

I was amazed to receive a large carefully wrapped package late morning on my birthday on 27th October.

Inside I was more than amazed, delighted and surprised to find a most beautiful assemblage of photographs taken over the years and all reproduced most artfully in a lovely bound volume. It must have been a real work of art garnering them and organising the whole thing in the first place, so thank you all for the original thought and especially for the diligence and patience in bringing everything together so magnificently in this book.

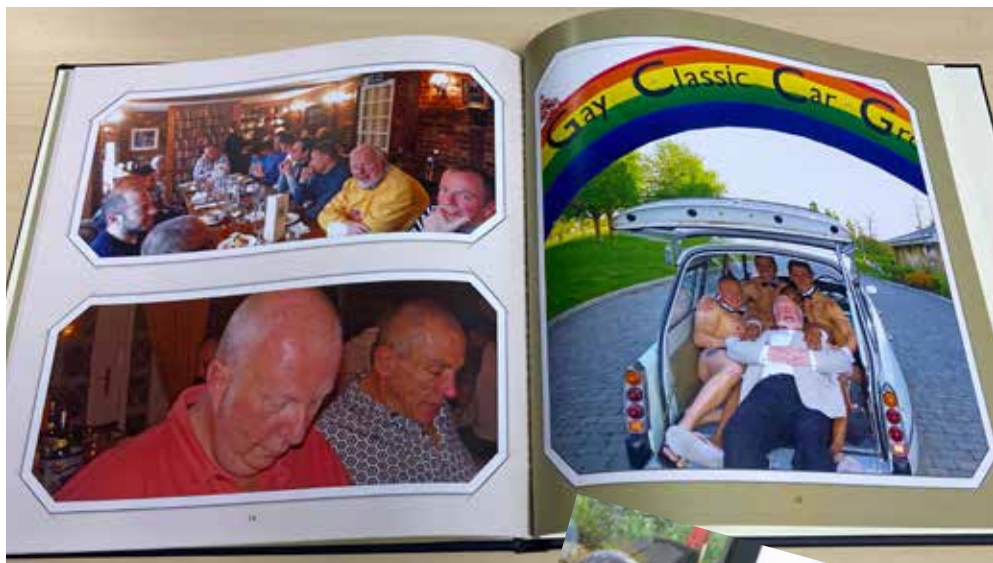
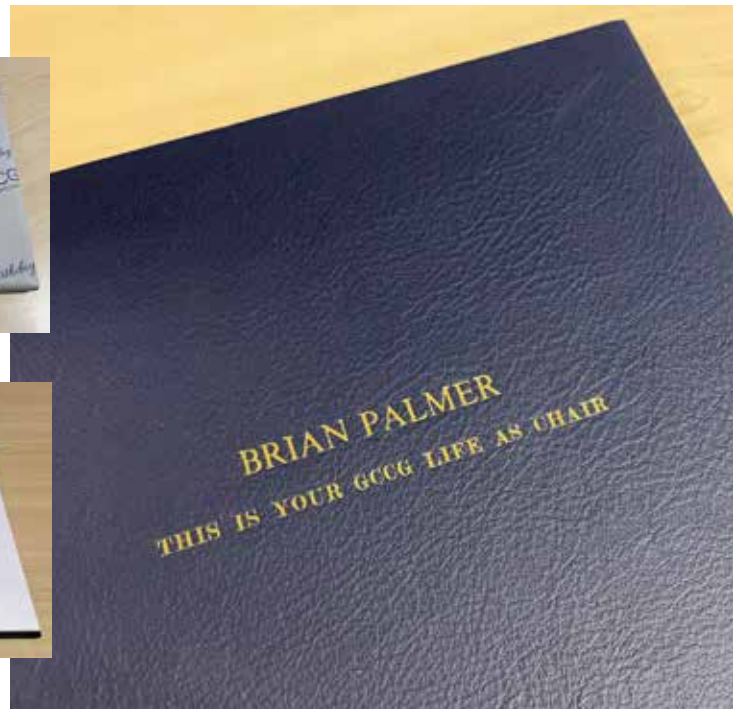
I'm glad to see that I appear to be smiling in most of the photographs, so the work of many champions of that particular art form must have worked some serious magic. And I'm glad to say that I can remember pretty much each and every occasion. With the notable exception, perhaps, of the one that appears to have me sprawling in the back of a large estate car cavorting with several near naked young men. This is clearly one of those photoshopped bits of fakery that those in the public eye have to put up with these days as I distinctly recall that I was studying the roof lining of Mr Stokoe's Citroën at the time and I note that my hands are folded demurely over my chest. Any suggestions to the contrary will be robustly defended.

At risk of sounding like a book review, this fabulous collection will be pored over many times and will be a constant and enchanting reminder of times past and of the many joyous occasions over the last twenty years. And in saying that it really does underscore that oft uttered phrase "My how time flies." I know that Keith and Ned are also delighted also to have been recognised as providing much-needed support to me over the years.

With so much else going on in our world at the moment and so much frustration and sadness putting added stresses and strains on organisations such as ours, it is so very kind and thoughtful of you all who have contributed to this and my very best wishes go out to you and the officers, area organisers and members past and present who have all contributed to this unique and so very special group of people we know collectively as the GCCG.

Yours most
affectionately,

Brian



Bicester Heritage Classic Car Drive In

Words: Jim Perriam

Photos: Jim Perriam, Iain Johncock, Richard Warrington



After such a barren period for classic car meets, I couldn't believe that this one would go ahead, but it did!

Originally editor Tony and his partner Brian had planned to stay at the nearby village of Quainton with Andrew and me, Iain and Bob.

Our abode was to be an ancient former post office located right next to a working windmill. While I had visions of being kept awake at night by the groaning and creaking of the windmill's sails, it did seem quite an idyllic setting.

However this was not to be as the owner decided at the last minute that as we were from three different households, this would be going against the latest guidelines and promptly returned our payment. So it was time for a rethink.

Andrew and I decided to stay with his brother in Chalfont St. Giles, which wasn't far from the event. Tony and Brian opted to head off for Cornwall in their Bongo and Iain and Bob would travel over from Dulwich for the day in their beautiful Bristol. So all was not lost

We arrived at about 10am on the Saturday. The sky was sunny and almost cloudless, but with a cool breeze.

The old airfield is a huge area, apparently 444 acres of well mown grass. The avenue in which we queued was lined with a brilliant display of the classic cars which people had arrived in, so lots to see as we joined them.

The main arena had a variety of club stands from the intriguing Afro Classics Register to the Bristol Owners Club and of course the GCCG stand which had a wonderful selection of members' cars.

Bonhams had a big collection of cars waiting to be auctioned on the Sunday in one of the old hangars which we viewed. The largest vehicle on offer was a 1931 Leyland Lioness Fire engine, but there were also many lovely cars including Rolls Royces, Bentleys, two Alvis coupes, Wolseleys, Jaguars and Daimlers.

After cups of good but pricey coffee we came across the race track, which is about a mile in long.



We were leaning over the railings of the paddock looking at the wonderful variety of ancient racing machinery, when we saw some people going in, so we followed on behind. After a while we realised that everyone else was wearing a pass, except us. We were pleased to get in undetected to get a really close look.

There were so many interesting racing cars there, waiting their turn to get out on the track and the owners were only

too pleased to to inform us about the mechanical niceties of their charges.

Amongst them was a much modified Mk 2 Jaguar, which appeared to have a very rudimentary exhaust system from the noise it made, drifting around around all the corners. There were also two Type 35 Bugattis - being driven really enthusiastically - and a 1911 racing Peugeot fitted with a 10 litre 4-cylinder aero engine.

The oldest entrant was a 1905 Pope-Toledo, with wooden artillery wheels and beaded edge tyres, driven with surprising gusto. There were also many rally cars and some more modern racers. It was amazing to see how perilously these valuable cars were raced around the track. By this time we had seen most things and decided to head home after an extremely enjoyable day .



British Leyland Day

British Motor Museum, Gaydon

Words: *Graham Davis*

Photos: *Graham Davis and Rob Gibson*

Sunday 6 September 2020:

A date that was pencilled into my diary way back in the spring, even before the gravity of Covid-19 hit us. The addition of a 1979 Austin Maxi HLS to my garage in the spring changed this from a pencilled-in event to one written in ink.

As the year went on and the pandemic decimated the classic car show calendar of events - as well as pretty much everything else - many of us had no doubt decided to write off the whole year as far as our hobby was concerned.

It was with hopeful incredulity that I realised that, even as late as the end of August, there had been no confirmation that this event was to be cancelled. On the contrary, all indications were that it would go ahead - and for me, the first Covid-safe car event of the year.

Thankfully the day was bright and sunny - always a bonus for an outdoors event. Not surprisingly for such an all-encompassing event with hundreds and hundreds of cars, possibly as many as a thousand, in attendance, there was a bit of a queue to get on site.

As the name suggests, the day is open to any car with a connection to British Leyland and its myriad brands (and, seemingly, a gaggle of Ford Consuls, Zephyrs and Zodiacs and even a rally-spec Audi Quattro).

It was also an event to mark the 50th anniversary of the launch of the Morris Marina and 40th of its Ital successor, along with the 40th anniversary of the launch of the Austin Metro and 30th of that car's "Roverisation", surely one of the most effective facelifts the British car industry has even seen.

The main display area was soon full and late arrivals were directed to the adjacent overflow areas.

Both the main museum buildings were open, with strict one-way systems and social distancing in force, which added to the many sights to be seen.

Photos:

This page, some GCCG members and their cars on the club stand.

Page 9, a variety of BMC, BL and Austin Rover vehicles on display at Gaydon.



The GCCG stand benefitted from a great location close to both these buildings and consequently we had many passing admirers, not surprisingly given the quality of our display which, in addition to the aforementioned Maxi, included a variety of classic Minis, Wolseley Six, three extremely sought-after derivatives of the Rover SD1 (a Vitesse and not one but two V8-S models), Rover 2000 P6, a brace of Rover 75s, Metros in Austin, MG and Rover 100 versions - the latter with 007 connections, Jaguar XJS convertible, Riley 1100, Morris Minor, Triumph TR7 and a Morris Ital.

Various GCCG members were displaying their cars elsewhere, including Phil Grant's Metro Clubman 1.3L which won a judge's award: the car is well-known in GCCG circles.

Needless to say there was a huge turnout of Marinas/Itals and Metros of all sorts. But beyond that there were such niceties as an Austin A90 Atlantic, Daimler SP250, Daimler Conquest, all manner of MGs (A, B, F), Rover P4s, P6s, SD1s, 200s, 400s, 800s and 75s, Triumph Dolomites, Princesses (including a very rare early Morris version and an Ambassador) and their forerunner Austin/Morris/Wolseley 1800/2200s, a strong showing of Triumph Acclaims, Austin Maestros and Montegos, ADO16 1100s and 1300s, Farina models, Triumph 2000/2500s, more Minis and Minors, Allegros, assorted Triumph TR models - more or less everything you could wish to see.

A number of us heading south down the M40 after the show called in for dinner at The Three Conies in Thorpe Mandeville, just east of Banbury. It's a delightful pub offering great food run by imminent GCCG members Rob and Darren, who have their own Rover history and have recently welcomed an MGF to the pub's car park.

[Here's to an easier 2021 show season.](#)



On Days Like These

by Andrew Cox and John Holmes

We all have songs which, for all sorts of reasons, carry special meaning for us, and for me one such song has always been "On Days Like These" by the late, great Matt Munro. Not that actually I remember him.... but because of the clear memory I have as a young lad, listening to this fabulous song as it accompanied the opening sequence of the classic 1969 film "The Italian Job".

The film starts with a beautiful Lamborghini Miura being driven through the Alps by an uber-cool Italian guy, the road twisting through majestic scenery with Matt's dulcet tones occasionally being interrupted by the Lambo's exhaust note. I remember being transfixed, and vowed that one day I would be that guy in the cool shades, arm out the window, driving through the Alps.

Fast forward a few decades to 2019 and I decided that the time had come to realise my boyhood dream. Of course in the real world few of us can afford a Lamborghini Miura, but I was more than happy to set off in my 4.2 litre Jaguar XK convertible.

After an overnight stop in Metz, the Swiss Alps beckoned. I had chosen to stay in the small Village of Wiesen, (about 30 miles from Davos), since it provides easy access to the stunning Albula Pass which crisscrosses the line of the UNESCO World Heritage Rhaetian railway.

Under cloudless skies and with mountains towering all around, I felt like a million Lira (now Euros!) As I pulled up to the Gasthaus Albula for a coffee at 2315 meters above sea level, I made sure that my shades were firmly on and that Matt was in full voice. After exchanging pleasantries with the owners of various classic cars, I continued down to St Moritz (where the roads are full of Lambos!) before then heading back up to Wiesen to reflect on a dream fulfilled. Perfect!

Of course such experiences are always better shared and after returning from my very own "Italian/Swiss Job", I met John - whose passion for cars is actually bigger than the Alps themselves.

One evening, and after enjoying a couple of bottles of fine red wine, we convinced ourselves that we needed to upscale from the XK to a XKR (but only if we could find one in the same metallic seafoam blue with navy roof!) And boy did we do the right thing!!! The five litre supercharged 503bhp engine transports what is a great car onto a different level, especially when in dynamic sports mode!

And so the summer has been spent driving through the Brecon Beacons and along the old military coast road of the Isle of Wight where the growl from the Jag's four pipes could be fully appreciated by all (well, by us at least!) However, the call of the Alps remains strong and so plans are being made for another drive down through the Albula Pass next year (Covid permitting).

Just me, John, and of course a certain Mr Munro!





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Out and About

Recent regional events and gatherings

YORKSHIRE

In search of captain caveman

Words & photos: Mark Wells



Taking advantage of a rare opportunity we had to meet up, the Yorkshire area decided to organise another drive out to a destination where we could have a socially distanced picnic. Fortunately for us, the weather was still quite good in early September, but where to go? Oddly it is very difficult to find somewhere that has suitable facilities and that is in an area where we can enjoy driving our cars. Surprisingly, the answer was literally on our doorstep.

If you mention South Yorkshire to most people, they think of coal mines, which have actually long since gone. The countryside is as remarkable in South Yorkshire as it is in the other Ridings and it was just a case of finding a route which best showed it off.

As is the tradition with all good drives, we met up in a salubrious location – a large layby just off the A1. It was rumoured that Steve, who arrived early, had someone flash their headlamps and turn on their interior mirror light for

his benefit several times. With that in mind and in haste, we set off and soon it became apparent that there were some really lovely sweeping roads that were made for the fast driver to enjoy. It transpired we were on something of a sight-seeing tour. We passed the long disused waiting room at Sprotbrough Station and The Old Rectory, once owned by a friend of mine. This is where Douglas Bader, the famous RAF flying ace immortalised in the film "Reach for the skies" grew up. My friend never replaced a piece of glass in one of the windows, saying the young Bader supposedly shot a pistol through it as a prank. We then went over the precarious crossing of the River Don at Sprotbrough Flash, where the Boat Inn (quite apt as it floods regularly) was where Walter Scott stayed when writing *Ivanhoe*. The hairpin up the other side of the valley is sublime!

We passed through some built up areas, but were soon out in open countryside once more, taking a route that showed off the best of the area and eventually coming into North Nottinghamshire.

From here we passed through pretty villages and open countryside until we came to our destination.

Cresswell Crags sounds, well, quite drab, but it isn't! Situated on the border between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, this now protected area is designated an area of outstanding beauty. The Limestone Gorge may seem pretty plain to the average person, however, the caves hold a special secret, dating back to pre-historic man. Paintings, carvings and evidence of ice age man mean this place has been nominated as a World Heritage site. We sampled the picnic area and the walks but not the caves, due to limited availability, but certainly it was a stunning location, worth preserving in its own right. We even came across a more modern cave, of an Ice Age man, and had time for a selfie or two.

In all it was a cracking day out, with good weather, good roads, good drives and good company! Here's to when we can do it all again!

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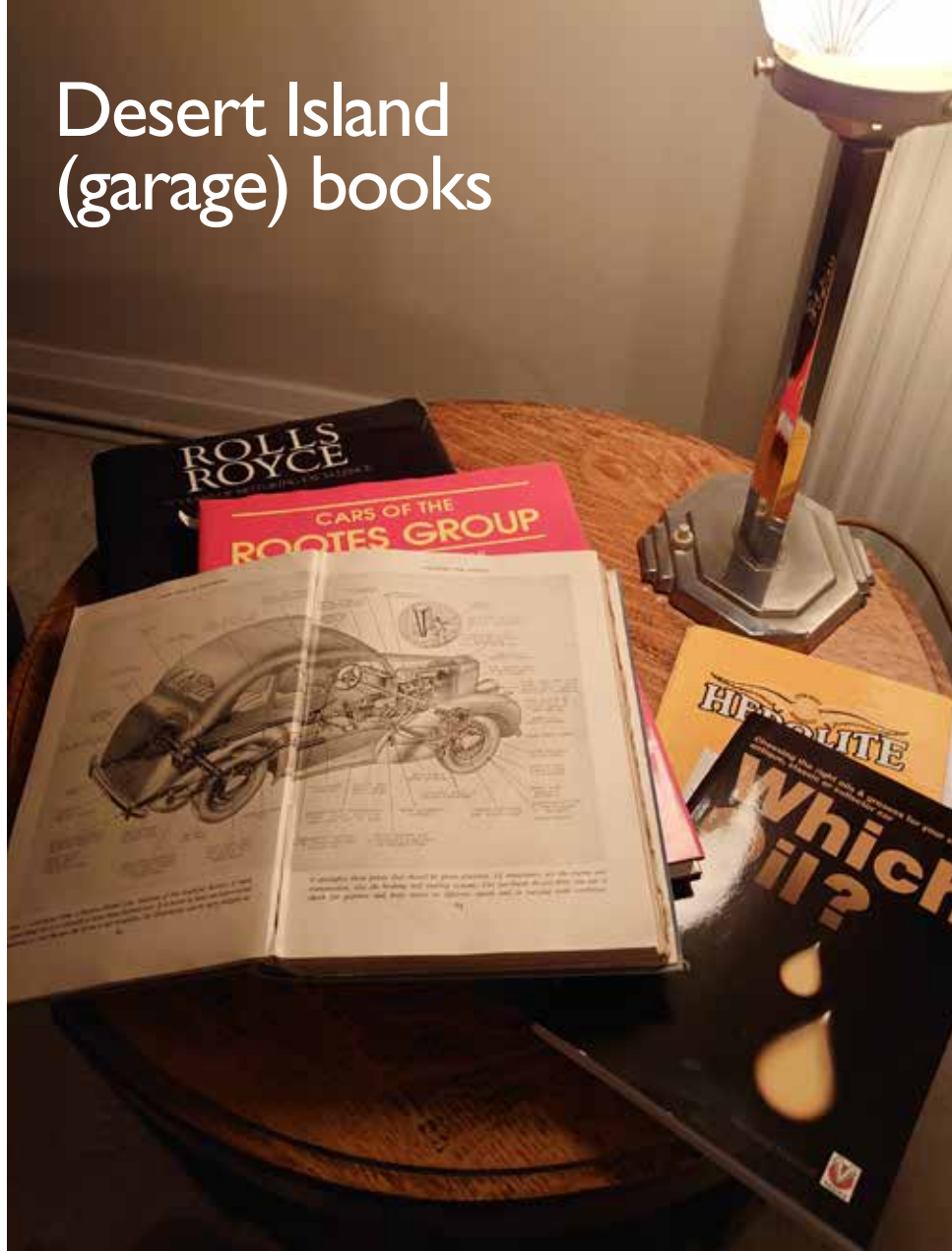
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Desert Island (garage) books



by Mark Wells

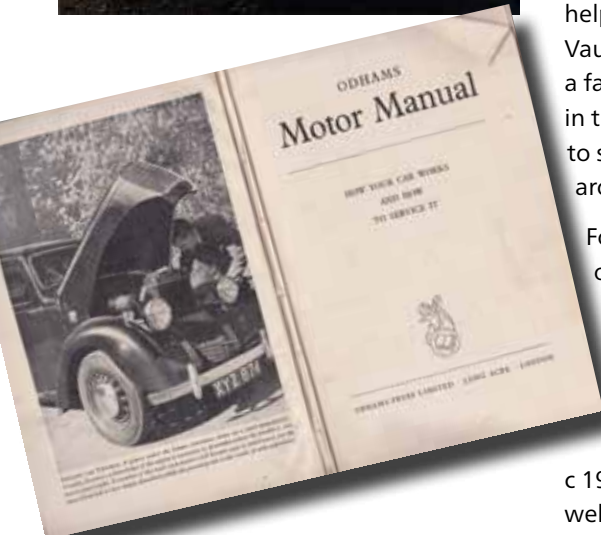
It is set out into very logical chapters including "The Motor Car Simply Explained" and "Learning to Drive". As one can imagine, some parts are a bit out of date, but the fundamentals are the same. My father gave me his copy when I was around 8 and I recall reading it under the sheets using a torch... I still refer to it today, especially when I need to remind myself on how to test old electrics, like control boxes. It's really clear the way it explains basic principles for diagnosing issues. Copies change hands on eBay for well under £10, so well worth getting hold of a one.

My second must have for this desert island is the Hepolite Service Manual. I'm not sure where I would be getting my parts on this secluded island I'm stranded on, but this is a definite must have for anyone contemplating rebuilding an engine. This manual is full of information gathered by Hepworth and Grandage



After being inspired by a new series of articles in my favourite classic car periodical, *The Automobile*, I thought it would be a great idea to share some of the "must have" books in my collection. The fact that I am quite handy with a set of spanners and a bodyfile comes from being inspired to repair and tinker from a very early age (about 5 to be exact) when helping my father rebuild the engine of a Vauxhall Viva HC (pictured left) that had a failed timing chain tensioner, that had in turn destroyed its sprockets. Needless to say I can still find my way happily around that engine to this day!

For anyone starting out on classic ownership, whether it be with a humble modern classic or something much older, I would suggest obtaining a copy of Odhams Motor Manual, shown left. This most helpful of books was first published c 1948, but was revised and reprinted well into the late 1960's.



of Bradford, who made pistons for most manufacturers around the globe, such as those shown above. It was made as a handy reference book for the trade and features a two legged piston character called King Hep! It goes through diagnosing wear and issues with engines, how bores and pistons are affected by wear and how to dismantle and refurbish an engine. This was invaluable when rebuilding my Austin 18 engine, as there is so much information that was so important, including the correct way to dismantle the connecting rod and gudgeon pin on a split type conrod. It also has torque data in the back section for many car and commercial vehicles,



which helps a lot, especially when there is no torque data available for your exact model. Again, there are many issues and revisions and easily available on eBay for a reasonable figure.

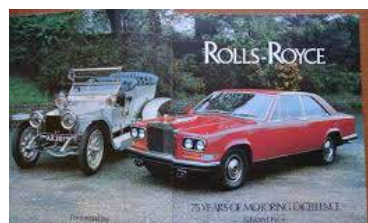
Another good read is a book that I reviewed in the pages of Big End some years ago, entitled Which Oil? By Richard Mitchell (ISBN 978-1-845843-65-6) I've lost count of the number of conversations I have been party to over the years, extolling the use of multigrade oils in pre-war vehicles, as well as discussions regarding ATF and GL rating of Extreme Pressure (EP) gearbox oils. This book really explains a lot about the properties of lubricants, as well as how they were developed and why something that is supposedly the latest technology in oil terms, may not be a good idea in our cherished vehicles. It really is a good buy and is available from Amazon and other sites, for about £14.00

Enough of uber technical stuff, how about a few books more for amusement and entertainment? My next recommendation is 'Rolls-Royce – 75 years of motoring excellence' written by Edward Eves. I recall purchasing this book with some vouchers given to me as a Christmas present from my Great Aunt when I was around 9! It's always been a fascinating read, giving a very concise history of the company, as well as featuring some interesting development vehicles. Of course, lots of pictures always is an attraction, and this doesn't disappoint. Being published in the early 1980's it stops at the Camargue, but gives detailed model sheets for all the chassis's produced. Some of the particular favourite images are of two famous vehicles. One, described as being one of the ugliest Rolls-Royces ever made, shown below, created for Mr Nubar Gulbenkian (known as Mr 10%). On a visit

It is odd, as many of my family worked for them either at Bedford Trucks or Vauxhall and the cars were everywhere, but it is forgotten that Rootes Group were also made in Dunstable and Luton too.

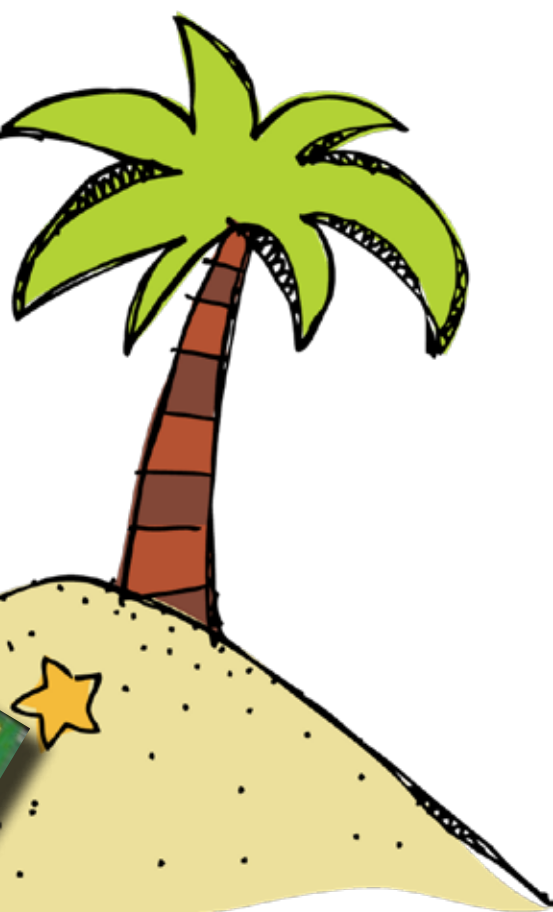
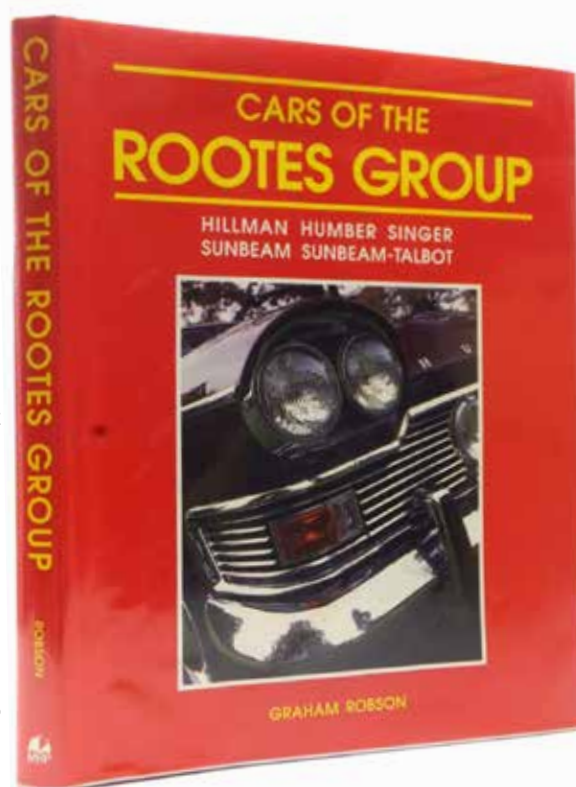
The book on Rootes is a fascinating read, telling the story of the Rootes brothers, their connections with other British manufacturers (they had shares in the Austin Motor Co.) and the important part they played in British Pressed Steel, as well as many other companies. Indeed, they originally set out to create a General Motors of the UK. There are fascinating facts about all the wonderful marques that made that empire, plus the sharp business acumen of Billy Rootes, the original badge engineering master. Owning a Super Snipe, I'm fortunate enough to appreciate the quality end of their product range. This book really does bring to life some of the ups and downs, along with how a combination of strikes and poor succession management can bring down such a giant. Well worth getting hold of a copy if you can.

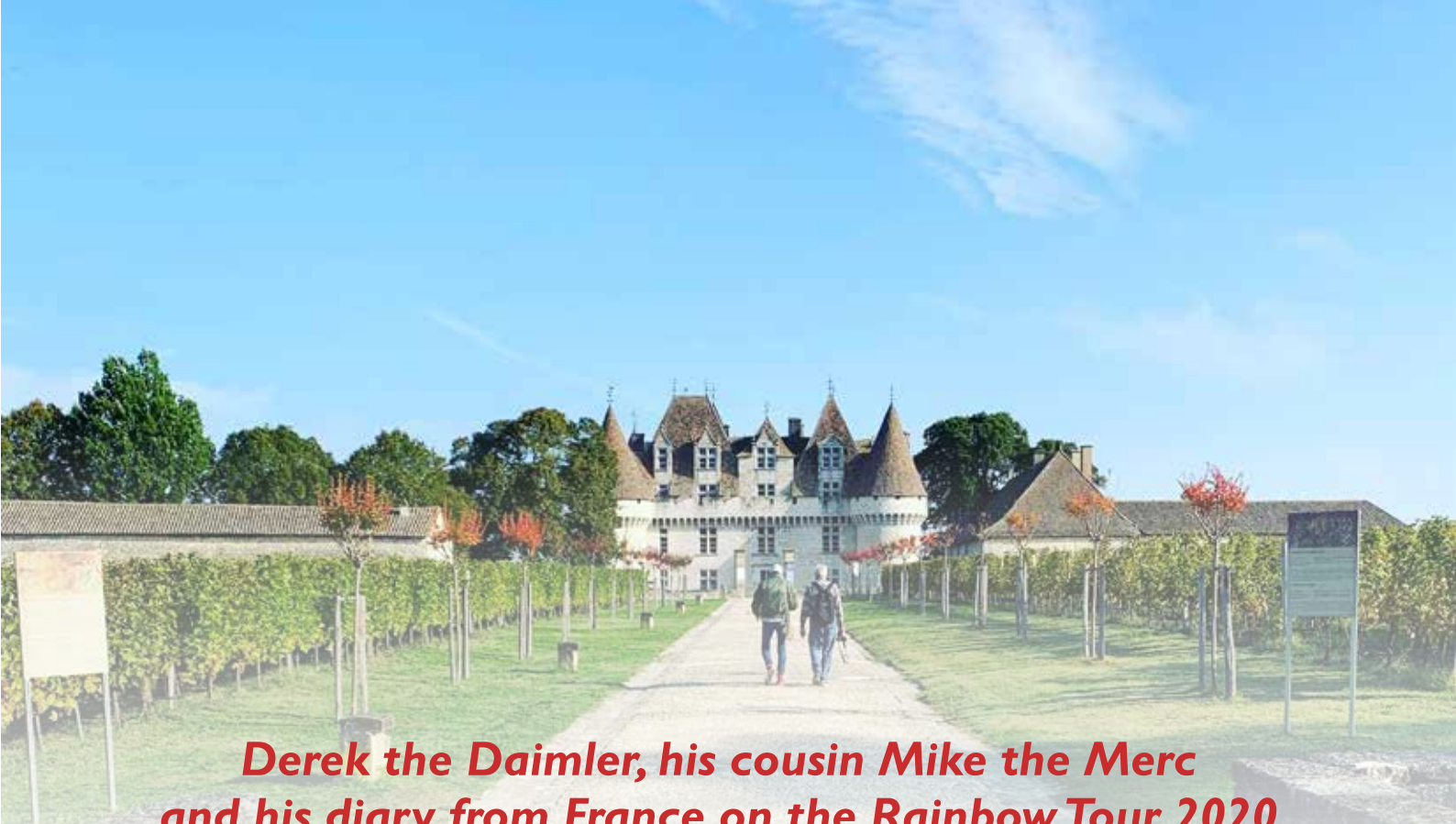
Of course, there are plenty other gems on my bookshelf, that I would never part with, but I need to save them for another day, especially as I bask in the sun on this desert island.



to one of the sites I covered in London, I was introduced to the remnants of Hoopers in the early noughties. From all accounts, I missed out on seeing this particular car the week before! The second image is of the famous Silver Ghost, AX201, pictured at S. C. Gordon Coachworks in Luton. Co-incidentally, I again missed out on seeing this car by around a week! I was at a job interview at S. C. Gordon as an apprentice. The vehicle was restored to its original body design at that site and had been up for some show preparations. I was offered the job but turned it down, which wasn't necessarily foolish as they went out of business around 18 months later...

The last book in my collection I would like to feature is 'Cars of the Rootes Group' by Graham Robson (ISBN-0-947981-35-7). I often get asked, being born in Luton and growing up around the GM empire in the UK, why I'm not so addicted to the Vauxhall product.





Derek the Daimler, his cousin Mike the Merc and his diary from France on the Rainbow Tour 2020

Thursday 1 October 2020

Hello, my name is Derek. I am a 1980 Daimler Sovereign 4.2 Vanden Plas. And I was looking forward to travelling across the English Channel to France for the Rainbow Tour of 2020. However, I was not feeling very well due to my exhaust pipe breaking and I made lot of noise about it. But sadly my new owner - Martin (I was a recent acquisition to the Gillingham stable of classic cars – I have 10 new siblings to get to know!) did not get round to sending me to hospital in time. And I was left in Intensive Care whilst a replacement was found. Unfortunately none of my siblings were in much better shape. All due to this Covid -19 pandemic, which has left lots of classic car enthusiasts in a similar situation, as they were not allowed to give us lots of runs out during the season.

As such, there was only one car up to the task and my cousin Mike the Mercedes, the 2019 C220D AMG Line was drafted in at the 11th hour to replace me. He did a sterling job and I am glad I was safely tucked in hospital as he didn't look too clean when he returned! And he was grumbling about how wet he got, I have not been out in bad weather for many years, I would have grumbled even more if I got that dirty and damp!

Friday 2 October 2020

Hello, Mike the Merc here. Gosh what a thrill to be allowed to go to the continent on such an important mission as to represent the whole of the UK GCCG contingent at the prestigious Rainbow Tour for 2020!

It started so wet and miserable when I was woken up at the ungodly hour of 06:00hrs, (I was packed the night before, but I didn't expect to leave so early, and no breakfast either!) to travel to Folkstone to catch the Eurotunnel to Calais for the first leg of the adventure.

We made good time on the way to Chartres for the second night as it's a long way to Limoges on one tank of diesel! What a place, the cathedral is stunning, and I felt very at home on the wrong side of the road.

Saturday 3 October

We left Chartres after a leisurely start and made our way to Limoges for the beginning of the tour. The weather was not particularly good, and I was glad of my automatic wipers and headlights as were my drivers Martin and Richard (one is slightly slower than the other!). I was very pleased to see my fellow European cousins (40 in all, Dutch French, German) had made the trip and I got to know my new friends (a few Citroëns, a couple

of Bentleys, a Rover P6, a Mazda MX 5, a BMW 318i cabriolet, a Mercedes SL 280, a Lincoln Town coupe, a couple of Peugeots, a Renault 19 convertible, a Porsche 928 S4 and not forgetting Dominique's BMW Z3) overnight as the humans settled in the Novotel for the night. Sadly the bar shut at 10pm. That was lucky, as it's a lot of driving, and they do like to have a tipple, my drivers!

Sunday 4 October 2020

In the morning we visited the Martyr Village of Oradour sur Glane, then to lunch at the Restaurant Le Milford in Oradour sur Glane and in the afternoon a visit to Châteaux du Fraise, top right.

After that it was off to the fortified church of Blond and dinner in Limoges

A busy day for some classics, but lucky I am a baby in comparison!

Monday 5 October 2020

We checked out of Novotel in Limoges and had a morning visit to the Jacques Pergay porcelain factory in Limoges (thankfully I have a capacious boot!).

Lunch was at La Tour Banche restaurant in Saint Yrieix la Perche (I am sure my suspension is getting used more!). This was followed by a tour of the prehistoric caves of Lascaux II in Montignac .



Tuesday 6 October 2020

A morning tour of the Proumeyssac chasm in Audrix followed by Foie Gras tasting and shopping at Foie Gras Groliere in Le Bugue (more shopping in my boot!).

Lunch was at Le Bistrot du Château in Campagne. pictured above left. Just how do they keep eating so much? I was left in the car park whilst they all walked around the Château in Campagne across the road from the restaurant (much needed after all that rich food methinks!)

Then we were free to visit of Beynac Castle (gosh the weather is not being kind at all!) and the Musée du Temps Qui Passe in Allas les Mines.

More food - dinner back at the Auberge de la petite Reine in Siorac en Perigord.

Wednesday 7 October 2020

We started with a guided tour and tasting of Caviar de Neuvic - you can see some of our group fishing for Sturgeon pictured above right. Then yet more food, a lunch at Le Château de Neuvic in Neuvic sur l'Isle.

Then a visit and tasting of Billeau biscuits in Saint Leon sur l'Isle (*I can see a gastronomic pattern emerging here - ed*)

The afternoon visit was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions, so a quick run back to the hotel for my passengers to go swimming, much needed I would say after all that food!

Thursday 8 October 2020

We started with a tour of Milandes Castle with a Raptor bird show at the Château des Milandes in Castelnau la Chapelle (I could live here, a very nice place to rest my tyres!), then lunch at the brasserie of the Château des Milandes.

Next up was a visit of the Museum of Agricultural and Automotive heritage in Salviac, pictured above centre. The owner is obviously someone who has more cars than Martin and most of them work!

Friday 9 October 2020

A visit to the beautiful Château de Monbazillac - pictured on page 16 - and a tasting of the wonderful regional wines (yet more shopping to bring home!). Then time for lunch at the restaurant Le Semillon in Monbazillac.

In the afternoon there was a tour of the private collection of automobiles at the Château de Sanxet (lots of storage available here - hey Martin?).

Our final visit was to the Château du Bidoire in Ribagnac, followed by our last dinner at the Auberge de la petite Reine in Siorac en Perigord. It was sad to be saying goodbye to my fellow classics on the trip. They have all been very friendly to a young whippersnapper like me!

Saturday 10 October 2020

Drive to Alençon as a stop over for the night, a chance to rest after a hectic drive of over 500 miles in 6 days.

Sunday 11 October 2020

The return journey to Colchester, and a total door to door mileage of 1722! No wonder I was so tired!



NAME

Paul Matthews

AREA WHERE YOU LIVE

Central Bedfordshire

FEATURED CAR

1963 Triumph Spitfire Mk.1

LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP

4 months

OTHER CARS YOU OWN

Jeep Grand Cherokee

YOUR NEXT

VEHICLE PURCHASE

Triumph TR4

After owning my classic Mini for the past eight years and it being my daily driver I always said that once it reached 100,000 miles I'd take the plunge and sell it for a Triumph Spitfire, a car I've always dreamt of owning.

The day came when my faithful Mini was collected and I started to look for my new car. After some searching I found a Spitfire Mk1, much older than I was expecting to find in my price range and decided to go for it and take the risk. The Spitfire had been kept in a shipping container for the last five years and before that had been owned by the same person for 25 years. The sales details stated that the car had done only 14,000 miles (although this cannot be verified), had an optional extra heater and had a 1300cc Mk2 engine fitted in the 70's.

I arrived to pick up the car 100 miles from home on one of the wettest days of summer! The seller said it probably hadn't been out in the rain for over 30 years! As I started to drive the car home I had that dreaded feeling, what have I done, this was the most difficult car I have ever driven. Fifteen minutes into the journey my worries disappeared, it was great fun to drive regardless of the weather and I couldn't wait for a sunny day.

Since then I've spent every opportunity driving round the town and countryside with many people stopping me for a chat to admire the car. I've been on longer trips with no issues whatsoever. I have given it a service, fitted a new radiator and pump and an electric fan just to be on the safe side! I'm looking forward to bringing it along to some of the group shows and meeting other members.



NAME

David Young

AREA WHERE YOU LIVE

Wiltshire

FEATURED CAR

1976 Bristol 411

LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP

5 Years

OTHER CARS YOU OWN

1985 Mercedes 500SL

1994 Bentley Continental R

2000 Jaguar XK8

2002 Mercedes 500SL

2002 Ford Ka Collection

2020 Mercedes 300 AMG

YOUR NEXT VEHICLE PURCHASE

Porsche 928

*T*ribute to a great car – Bertie the Bristol.

Bertie arrived in October 2005, the fulfillment of a long held ambition I had since driving my Uncle's Bristol 411 at the age of 17, as a reward for passing my driving test.

As chance would have it when out on a shopping trip to Lidl in Warminster I noticed the workshop of Bristol specialists Spencer Lane Jones with a wrecked 411 sitting outside. On further investigation SLJ helped me realise my dream of owning a 411 and I was able to become the owner of TBU 151R. Finished in Maroon, the racing colour choice of Anthony Crook, and sitting on Avon Safety wheels, he arrived looking very presentable with a recent engine rebuild but a rather tatty interior.

I launched into a full interior restoration with enthusiasm using the good services of David Nightingale Coach trimming. After five years of attention, care and consideration the car was finally as he should be. After this lengthy project we took a trip to the Haynes Motor Museum and in the concours competition held there I was gratified to have the Bristol voted 4th best.

I decided this was the time to use the services of Andrew Blow, a broker introduced to me by Spencer Lane Jones and after a short stay with Dr Blow he received an offer from Bertie's previous owner who wanted to buy him back and ship him to the Cayman Islands Motor Museum! A deal was done and I said farewell to Bertie.



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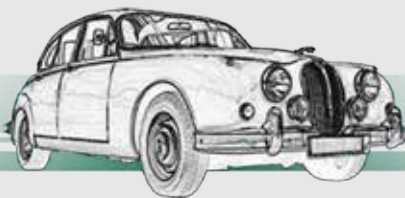
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NAME

Len Smart

AREA WHERE YOU LIVE

Wales

FEATURED CAR

My Farina Journey

LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP

An ongoing affair...

OTHER CARS YOU OWN

2003 Honda NSX NA2 Targa
2 x 2015 Range Rovers

YOUR NEXT VEHICLE

PURCHASE

A new Range Rover
Maybe an Aston Martin
Lagonda and a new shape
Honda NSX

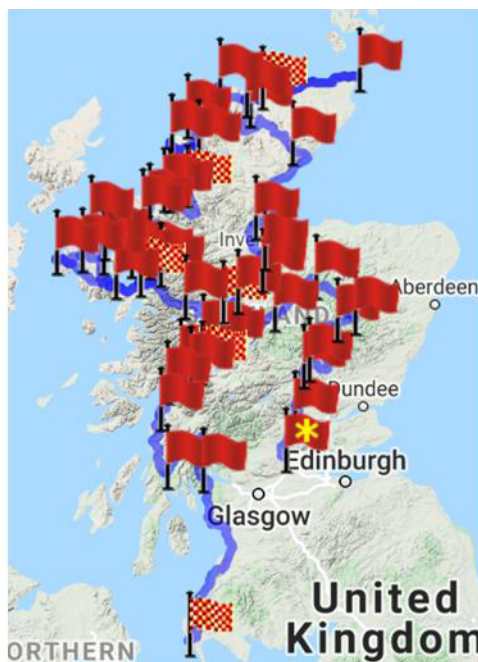
I have grown up with Farinas. As a child, my family had the oldest bangers in school. These were, in order, a Grampian Grey A55 Mark 2, 535 BUC, a 1964 Austin A60, - Cyril - ENN 894C in Cumulus Grey with a Old English White stripe, and a 1965 Morris Oxford Mark 6 in Almond Green with OEW roof, FNX 533C.

After I learned to drive, I purchased an A60 – Mouka - HTH 973F with more filler than metal but it helped me refine my skills with shaping plastic for my career in dentistry. I then purchased a Morris Oxford Mark 6, also in Almond Green – Cecily – 811 CCY with 18,000 miles and was pleased I could no longer see the tarmac through the floor whilst I was driving.

In my twenties, I ventured back into classic cars with a black 1962 A60, 83 TKR, again with a very low mileage, and won some awards at a few shows. Then I lost my garage and I sold the car to a man in Guernsey.

Tom and I then bought two Riley 4/72s as we had set up a wedding car business, an excuse for more Farinas. However we soon realised that like the Boom Town Rats who didn't like Mondays, we didn't like working on Saturdays. The Almond Green Riley went to Bristol to a dealer and the OEW Riley went to Australia for a life in the sun.

Jumping forward a few years and wanting a cheapish stop gap car due to the embarrassment of turning up at GCCG events with no classic, what better than another Farina? We recently purchased at auction a beautiful MG Magnette Mark 3 in Cherry Red, 1887 NX, with only 18,000 miles. Original panels and paint and the 1489cc version of BMC's robust B series engine which ran from 1954 to 1986. I think it's beautiful. Tom still needs persuading (as he does with the joys of Honda ownership). I've still a Wolseley to own and an estate version...



Rally route laid out with flag way-markers. Starting in Sterling and ending in Girvan.

Scottish North West Coast Rally—Revisited

(Scottish DIY Rally event reviewed in Big End Journal Aug 2019)

The North Coast brings together a route of miles of stunning coastal scenery in the far north of Scotland. The route may be new but the raw and magnificent landscape it traverses has been shaped over thousands of years by geological forces, glaciers and the weather systems of the North Atlantic. It is not always an easy ride; the roads can be thin and winding, and the clouds will descend faster than you thought possible will. Yet, experience a glorious sunset that turns a sea loch gold or stumble across yet another empty white-powder beach, and you'll discover the romance of the place, too. Whether you explore opulent castles, sample a dram (or two) of whisky or take to the water on an exhilarating wildlife safari, the North Coast offers a truly unique touring experience, quite unlike anywhere else in the world.

Mon 20/09/21 to Mon 27/09/21



Information pack and application form on the GCCG web site events page

ON THE ROAD -again

Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.3-16

Brian Palmer recalls testing the Q-car of 190 range back in the day...

Mercedes-Benz introduced the 190 series of cars to the UK market way back in 1983 it now pains me to recall. It was a rather revolutionary small to medium-sized saloon that quickly became one of the most successful cars of its generation - and I dare say one or two of you may have owned one or maybe still do as a reliable and affordable classic.

What made the 190 series so successful was that, unusually, it stood out from the crowd for its superb chassis offering an inherent balance and excellent road behaviour well in excess of its performance. These highly civilised traits endeared the car to many owner/drivers who valued the compact size of this car, its dependability and its finesse. It was worlds away from some of its stodgier forebears. So much so that it soon transpired the Stuttgart factory couldn't keep up with worldwide demand.

Eventually customers called for something a bit hairier. Mercedes-Benz would never produce a Boy Racer. They would always make a carefully considered response before injecting any form of stimulus to nudge the red corpuscles in the blood-stream. So no hot-shot turbo nor fashionably flashy decals, then.

The model that ensued and which I recall here was developed under the watchful eye of the UK's Cosworth Engineering. Quite a fillip for them. The 2.3-litre over-square engine benefited from a specially-made light-alloy cylinder head featuring twin overhead camshafts and two inlet and two outlet valves per cylinder. Power was boosted to 185bhp at 6,200rpm.



The Mercedes-Benz suspension set-up of front struts and a multi-link independent rear was stiffened-up for the purpose. The bodywork sat 15mm lower while, to ensure a constant ride-height and beautifully-poised handling, hydropneumatic self-levelling was introduced at the rear. A limited-slip differential came as standard and the power steering given more bite. Brakes were uprated and came with ABS of course. Handsome alloy wheels with low profile Pirelli P6 rubber kept the show on the road.

Clever body addenda and a discreet rear boot spoiler brought the cd down to 0.32 and drew admiring comments from onlookers who felt the car now had a lean and mean demeanour without the more lairy appurtenances that afflicted many a car especially in the after market.

I was keen to try this £21,000 beauty out on the road - pricy then but absurdly cheap today. I commented how from the moment that you slipped into the heavily bolstered chairs, felt the alert steering response or agitated the revs through the Porsche-pattern Getrag five-speed gear box you felt like you were pulling-on a pair of superbly fitting racing gloves.

The engine, free-revving though it was, still managed to be fat on torque - yet the close ratios of the gearbox encouraged you to change gear just for the hell of it. I suggested that owners of 'softer' Benz machines might be shocked by the transformation but concluded that the factory was not looking to poach 300SE owners but drivers of more overtly sporty machines.

The only flaw, I felt, was that the generously bolstered front seats when set for my six foot frame left precious little room for passengers behind.

Maybe such practical concerns would not have worried someone seduced by the 143mph top speed and a 0-60mph time in a blistering seven and a half seconds. Two pre-eminent engineering concerns like Mercedes-Benz and Cosworth Engineering - neither strangers to top end race-bred competition - gave the car an instant pedigree that few could match. That thoroughbred parentage probably also ensured that these cars would not fall to bits in a fortnight.

Such longevity and copper-bottomed detailing mean that this car would be a much-prized classic today.





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A Member's Matchbox models

Words and photos: *Steve Mariner*



Several years ago my Mercedes 190E and Mazda MX5 left me for new homes. This was mainly due to a lack of garage space. Along came a newer MX5 Mk 3.5 with folding hard top which lives outside as the garage is and always has been the home of my motorbike.

I had been thinking of how I could contribute to the club magazine when a light bulb went off in my brain.

While many of you have wonderful classic cars I could only dream about, it occurred to me that I might have something many of you hadn't. In fact I might even go as far to say that I might well have more classic cars than anyone else in GCCG.

My love of matchbox cars goes back to 1954 when my mother bought me a cream model MG sports car with driver. Sadly as the years led into adulthood these cars would disappear. Like most mothers who thought their children had grown out of their toys they went off to jumble sales. Charity shops had not been invented at that time.

So much later in life I decided to track down some of the cars I had had and more. The design of some of the models deserved shelf space due to their brilliant miniature detail and modelling. These would come from antique shops, auctions and yes! charity shops. One even came from a visit to New York.

For dog lovers the 1100 MG and American Mercury estate even have our canine friends looking out of the windows - shown left.

So here they are together with a few Dinky cars which were saved from Mum. You might even be interested to know that they get a polish with proper car polish from time to time.

There is even a web site that shows you how you can disassemble and restore them should you have been rough with them as children and decided to keep them and return them to their former glory.



A glimpse at the work the FBHVC does for us. For the full picture go to fbhvc.co.uk

Editorial - Wayne Scott Communications Director

There is no doubt, challenging times are here to stay, for the time being at least. But don't let that discourage you from doing what you can for your club or other historic vehicle related organisation.

More than ever, if you are a volunteer, you are needed. You are needed because we all know that clubs in particular are finding themselves having to justify their existence in order to retain those all-important membership numbers. Whilst we are unable to have our local meets and events, many clubs are using digital methods to stay in touch.

Video calls, WhatsApp, Social Media, Websites and Forums are all becoming an essential part of the club landscape. Then there are the more 'traditional' communication methods, such as club magazines. All these outlets are crucial. We know that communication is the key to membership retention and that, thanks to the diverse range of ages we have within the community, you need to be across all of them in a way that means each different platform compliments the other. Those club magazines need to be the best they can be, take this opportunity to share your knowledge to research a part of history pertinent to your vehicles. Promote your other activities online and encourage members to get involved, even if it means venturing into the digital world for the very first time. Hold virtual gatherings and events and try to include those who might find the digital world challenging.

Whilst member discounts, insurance schemes, club merchandise and other elements of club life are important, by far and away the most crucial is keeping in touch. It is, after all, people that make clubs great. People like you – so keep at it. Don't be discouraged by the challenging world around us, we are all right behind you in support.



DVLA - Ian Edmunds

The continuing restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 precautions mean that DVLA still only have a proportion of their staff working in the office. Even so from the reports we have received it seems that the majority of transactions are taking place as normal even if with extended turnaround times. Similarly, the unavoidable backlog from the period when DVLA could not accept incoming mail is being cleared.

The Federation does of course respect these necessary safeguards although it does mean that unfortunately our new contact has not yet been able to address our more major issues but has helped us with answers to one or two simple queries.

My thanks to the member club who drew my attention to changes in the NOVA procedure. It appears that HMRC now require a NOVA to be completed for any vehicle, imported or not, if it is unregistered or has had a break in its registration. As before DVLA will not register the vehicle until they receive confirmation from HMRC that no tax is due. We can only assume this change in procedure is to close a loophole that is being exploited somewhere in the system. At the time of writing we are awaiting clarification from HMRC of the implications for historic vehicles. I hope to be able to report more fully in the next edition of News.

Technical & Events - Malcolm Grubb

Smartphone Rally App

Although some smartphone apps have been available for a while, have you considered using one of these for your club events?



Supporting the use of all Historic Vehicles

In the Covid restricted world these make a lot of sense as the 'crew' can stay in their car, the need for human marshals to man a control is reduced or eliminated, as can be the roadbook for a Touring or Regularity event. They may also enable electronic signing-on and scrutineering without any human interaction, e.g. pens and paper.

If you want more information, then please email me at events@fbhvc.co.uk.

SORN - are these vehicles forgotten historics?

The Federation has been working on the 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey for some months.

Preparatory work for the Survey suggests that there are around 1.5 million historic vehicles registered with the DVLA and over 700,000 enthusiast owners. However, an interesting fact is just beginning to surface; there is a significant number of historic vehicles that are registered as on SORN. Are these vehicles under restoration, stored awaiting restoration or in a garage or barn waiting for Prince (or Mechanic) Charming to come along?

The Federation's 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey touches on SORN vehicles but not on the intentions of owners and prospects for the vehicles.

If you know of vehicles on SORN or indeed have vehicles of your own, tucked away, waiting for time to restore them, please get in touch, email us on research@fbhvc.co.uk

The Federation is hoping to undertake future research into vehicles on SORN and in particular the prospects for these vehicles returning to the road. Your input will help with the planning of that research. Please contact Paul Chasney, Research Director via research@fbhvc.co.uk or forward your information via post to FBHVC, PO Box 295, Upminster, Essex, RM14 9DG. We look forward to hearing from you.



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1,538,927

683,967

(UP FROM 493,000 IN 2016)

£7.2BN



(UP FROM £5.5BN IN 2016)

4,000 & 34,113

BUSINESSES

JOBS



Driver & Vehicle
Licensing
Agency

43,000,000



44%

THE PROPORTION OF HISTORIC VEHICLES THAT ARE LICENSED AND ON THE ROAD, THE REMAINDER ARE ON SORN

1,200

MILES PER ANNUM

AVERAGE DISTANCE TRAVELLED BY A HISTORIC VEHICLE



44%

THE PROPORTION OF HISTORIC VEHICLES THAT ARE LICENSED AND ON THE ROAD, THE REMAINDER ARE ON SORN

1,200

MILES PER ANNUM

AVERAGE DISTANCE TRAVELLED BY A HISTORIC VEHICLE

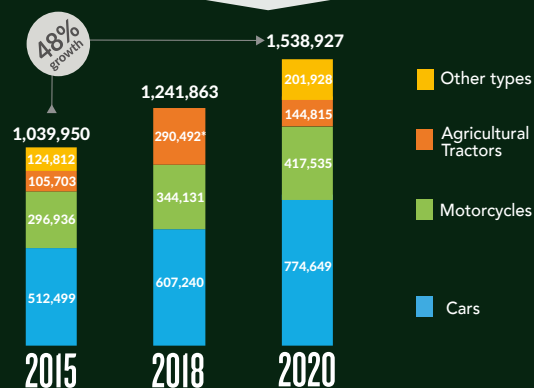
16

TIMES PER ANNUM
AVERAGE NUMBER OF TIMES
HISTORIC VEHICLES ARE
TAKEN OUT A YEAR

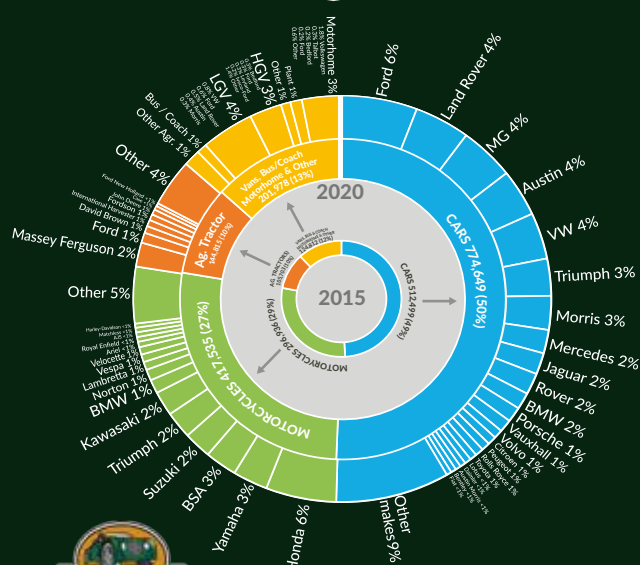
800 MILLION

THE ESTIMATED TOTAL MILES COVERED BY HISTORIC VEHICLES PER ANNUM (0.2% OF 356.5BN THE TOTAL MILEAGE DRIVEN IN THE UK)

HISTORIC VEHICLES



MAKES



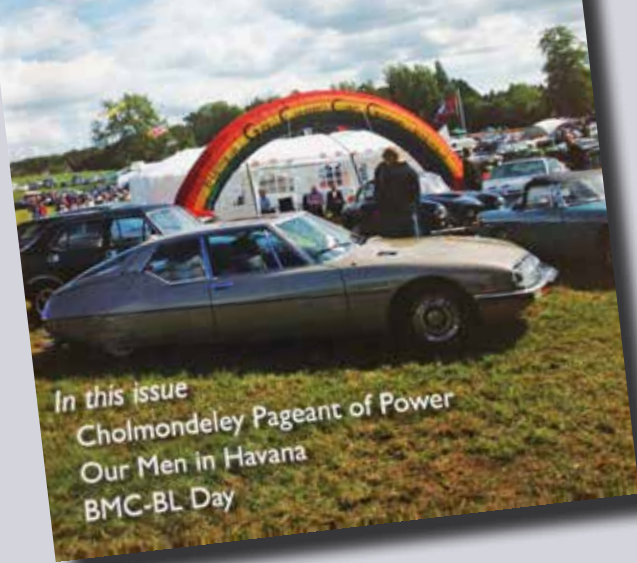
Note: The results presented above are taken from the 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey conducted by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs during the summer and autumn of 2020. Other figures are from DVLA published statistics.



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The GCCG 10 years ago...

Big End Autumn 2010



In this issue
Cholmondeley Pageant of Power
Our Men in Havana
BMC-BL Day

The restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic this year have meant that there was a paucity of events to feature in the pages of Big End Journal, as you will have noticed in this issue. So, here are a few snaps taken of our magazine from 10 years ago. It looks like we had an eventful summer!

In the editorial column, editor Jim Westwell showed off his new baby, a Peugeot 304 Cabrio and looked forward to a summer of top down motoring.

The Cholmondeley Pageant of Power is billed as our first 'National' event, the start of a tradition of bigger GCCG countrywide gatherings.

Pascal and Clifford-Angelo, intrepid GCCG members from Southampton, report on a trip to Cuba, and capture the look and flavour of that island at a time when President Fidel Castro was still in power.

Closer to home, the GCCG had the biggest club stand at the annual BMC/BL Day, with 20 cars squeezed on to the site. The south west contingent took a trip on the cute Seaton Tramway and visited (the now defunct) Motoring Memories museum in nearby Colyford.

Happy memories from 10 years ago – lets hope we have lots to report on 2021 by this time next year...

Tony Stokoe Editor



A large mural of Che Guevara is displayed on a wall. The text "Our Men In Havana" is written in white on the left side of the mural. Below the mural, the text "By: Ponce & Chikara/Artista" is visible.

By the way, there is a difference between the way in which we would like to live and the way in which we actually live. (1965: 22) There are not only two living states, but also two ways of thinking about them: the way in which we would like to live and the way in which we actually live.

[illegible]

The House passed a single bill, and the House took 390 votes, as recorded in H.R. 1000. On the Senate side, the bill passed by a 50-47 vote, with the Senate passing the bill by a 50-47 vote. The bill was then sent to the President for his signature. The President signed the bill on September 12, 1994, and it became law.

[illegible]

knowing and were taken off the map, were taken over by the hands of the state, depriving of every right as effective, namely, as 2 & right to come with that but how much and the "single" such as the "idea & one year" is the state of the country with the intent is a very good and important in these parts. The power of the state is to be seen.



...and began to take the
 over a Miami LAMBORGHINI
 is a great of Spanish tropical
 architecture. As an other strike
 of Coahuila, Vera Cruz and
 Yucatan, of course, there are
 many of warm filled glory but
 says, "We also had a trip to the
 City of Pape" the where local
 City was not so warm; finding
 and for the first time. There are
 and of a certain kind, and
 was several years on the
 first private homes and green
 buildings. You that you are
 the, the state comes of old
 and members, but you are
 and looking to protect them
 wanting we take north a big
 of temple time of the

...and, in fact, the only way to ensure that the system is not abused is to have a system of checks and balances. The system must be able to detect and prevent abuse, and it must be able to respond to it. The system must be able to detect and prevent abuse, and it must be able to respond to it. The system must be able to detect and prevent abuse, and it must be able to respond to it.

After a week on the road a new bus built by Volvo and a new night train from Oslo to Hønefoss, a coastal town 100 miles from Oslo, will be added. The new Volvo bus will have 40 seats, and the new night train will have 100 seats. The new Volvo bus will be used for the Oslo-Hønefoss route, and the new night train will be used for the Oslo-Hønefoss route.

Close a huge metal back window or roll a retractable balcony door. Invented by a garage in the early 1950s, the device still remains the only thing that can open, but the door is still there.

[illegible]

The highlight of the end of our honeymoon and was to take a cottage for dinner. 1991 Chevy with top and he takes around the main area of the city for a one hour drive which costs only \$20. The Chevy only did a 1000 miles in one hour and had less than 1000 of one week the period



...where he has been charged with both old and new Honduran crimes. He is charged by the Honduran justice system with the murder of other Honduran citizens and other Honduran citizens who were arrested in

[illegible]

After all the gathering, Joseph the Priest and covering a great 7000 Chevrolet's a week, we were off heading toward the relaxing hot tub three days on the Caribbean beach resort. At last, "The Living Color" USA Home video 10 min. copy of said hotel complex report has been done from Hollywood. We are now online in the New York and other cities.

[illegible]

So after Christopher Columbus found the island in 1492, it was Spain for Florida, where a 1565 treaty for a year or so gave them Cuba. That group of 17 English people on our boat thought it was pretty much all gone! Even being in the 1960s, I have very little for much longer than 43 years! Even being in our personal political area and discussions, not all of the Republic of Cuba that don't want to be in the Government. So we arrive in an all of experience that was not perfect.



As the sun in the country, we're still
looking forward to all your news. We
are looking forward to all your news.

is the current Spanish street culture would represent. It is something that has to be a pretty rare at a young age where children are. Our group of three go, go, go to school with one hand up, like these groups and we are not the only one with the other.

was enthusiastic that producers in the Soviet Union in 1976 had been put to Spies: the dissemination of homosexuality and crime was done in Cold War of the Soviet Union from an anti-dual view of the United States. In fact, before going into the Soviet Union, he was in the United States to see how the Soviet Union was doing in the area of homosexuality and crime. He was in the Soviet Union to see how the Soviet Union was doing in the area of homosexuality and crime. He was in the Soviet Union to see how the Soviet Union was doing in the area of homosexuality and crime.



A photograph showing three shirtless men from behind, standing in a row outdoors. They are wearing patterned swim trunks. To the left, the rear of a blue car is visible. The background is a bright, possibly overexposed outdoor setting.

[illegible]

of 30 days, says K. J. Thompson, the GCOG's director. The GCOG itself has only four full-time staff members, says Thompson. The GCOG itself has only four full-time staff members, says Thompson. The GCOG itself has only four full-time staff members, says Thompson.

...the night before, when I was
...the night before, when I was
...the night before, when I was

On Sunday 23rd of July the south-west branch of the GCCG embarked on a nostalgic day out to visit Devon We all gathered in the chocolate box picture village of Colyton in the northern hinterland of the famous Jurassic Trugway.

At sundown lined up their creased-up cars beside the train station in the car park, amongst them were - Jon & Andrew with car 10 (grey) & Michael in their Rover 14, Tony & Brian in their Citroen Big 6, Graham in his Mercedes 190E & Andy in his...

A red and yellow double-decker tram, the 'Spirit of 1935', is shown traveling on a track. The tram is decorated with colorful graffiti and the number 12. It is a replica of a 1935 tram, built to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first tram in London. The tram is shown from a side-on perspective, moving towards the left. The background is slightly blurred, showing trees and a building.

As we rounded our way along the track to Ironton, the journey was mainly along the river artery with unobstructed views of the next Dawson country mile and visible. The train track occupies part of the former Southern Railway branch line which until closure in 1966 ran from Searles Junction (on the Val Verde - Ironton main line) to Searles Creek Union station. We had about 100 miles to go.

prerogative and enjoy a Devon Cream tea or an ice cream before we headed back to Colyton. Once at Colyton the friendly staff ushered us into a private marquee where we tucked into a well-served buffet kitchen.

As this junction our organizer Tony Haskins issued us all with a detailed map and itinerary of the afternoon route we should take through some of the quieter country roads and visit some places of interest. As soon as everyone was simply fed and watered we all set off in convoy to our first port of call - The Mating Men.

A group of men, including the author, are sitting in a golf cart on a golf course. The author is in the foreground, wearing a red and white checkered shirt and a white cap. Other men are visible in the background, some wearing golf attire and others in casual clothing. The setting is a lush green golf course with trees in the distance.

Plumet at Cotyford. Opened especially for our group that day this was truly a step back in time to the 1960s and beyond, as the museum was founded in a vintage petrol station car. The museum was housed in a vintage petrol station car, more memorabilia than old cars, open up and down. The museum was founded in a vintage petrol station car, more memorabilia than old cars, open up and down. The museum was founded in a vintage petrol station car, more memorabilia than old cars, open up and down.

... were left at leisure to have a good look
take in many photos as indeed necessary to study the
the figures etc. The museum staff were very helpful
about all of the exhibits and a very good selection of

...to water was all pressed out in common along the A.S.G.
...each with its own driver's horizon, crossing a line before
...there. A demand was taken up the machine and

In search of the perfect...

Jim Perriam recounts his search for the ideal Daimler V8 250

I had been keen to own one of these cars ever since I worked at a large garage in Taunton, called Somerset Motors, in the early 1970s. Their franchises included Daimler, Bentley, Jaguar, Rolls Royce, Rover and Triumph, and their stock included a lot of interesting used cars.

While working there, aged 20, I was able to drive all sorts of wonderful cars. My favourites were the MK10 Jaguar, Rover P5B and Daimler V8, and these models were almost new back then.

Fast forward to 2015 and I went to the Dorset Vintage car auctions to bid on a maroon V8. This car had good history and the bodywork was pretty good too, unfortunately the bidding went a bit higher than I wanted to go, so I came home without it.

In 2016 we travelled all the way to Shawbury, near Shrewsbury, about 200 miles, and bought a Golden Sand



1968 Daimler V8. Unfortunately this car developed a nasty habit of smoking quite badly. I removed the heads and fitted new guides with seals, but it didn't improve matters much. On one occasion I was travelling to a car rally with a friend when another motorist stopped us and told me that he thought that I must have a serious problem with the engine, as it was smoking like a mobile bonfire! I kept it for a year and then sold it at an auction. Time to start looking for replacement.

I had been checking ads on the Daimler and Lanchester owners club magazine, car and classic and eBay for about nine months without finding what I wanted. At one stage we drove 250 miles to Kent to look at an S-Type Jaguar, which, although looking very smart, had the most terrible shake and vibration at speed, so I politely declined that one. A better option was a Mk2 Jaguar 3.4 automatic in pale blue metallic near Taunton, but we couldn't quite agree on the price. This was partly because

the panels were slightly different shades, although it was a close call, I nearly bought it.

I viewed another Mk2 Jaguar, this time a manual 3.8, in Buckinghamshire, but it didn't drive well having an exhaust leak, juddering clutch, it was leaking petrol and was a bit scruffy, so thumbs down to that one too.

Then I saw a maroon V8 250 on eBay, which seemed to tick all of the right boxes, apart from being 260 miles away, near Rochdale. I checked it on the HPI register and was surprised to learn that I had already done this on a previous date. Of course I then realised that this car was the very same one that I had been outbid at the Dorset auction.

I phoned the owner, Bob Woodward, a Daimler and Lanchester owners club member, who told me that the eBay bidding was very close to the reserve price and he thought that it would be sold soon. I decided to take the plunge and as soon as I bid, was informed that mine was the winning hand. The auction was scheduled to end at 8.53 the following morning.

The next day we got up at the crack of dawn to watch the results with great excitement. It was quite nerve racking watching as the minutes ticked by, to



see whether anyone would increase the stakes. Although nine people had been in the running, amazingly there were no further bids and the car was down to me!

We decided to travel up to Littleborough, near Rochdale, the same morning, planning to stay overnight. However due to problems with the sat nav and heavy traffic the journey took us about 7 hours and it was beginning to get dark when we arrived. Bob showed us over the car, which looked lovely, then we had a look at the huge history file and the rest of the paperwork. We decided to return in the morning to have a better look.

We had booked a room at a Victorian Hotel in Rochdale, as it turned out in a very quiet spot next to a park overlooking the town. As we were booking in, the receptionist asked us if we had come far to which we replied Exeter, surprisingly she said that she had gone to university there, what a small world it is.

Bob had suggested Wetherspoons in Rochdale for a meal, which is in an elaborate 1930s former cinema called the Regal Moon, pictured above top. It was very original and interesting, with lots of art deco features and the food was good. In the morning we went back to Littleborough to see the car in daylight and Bob kindly let us have a drive in it



on our own. After having a careful check over, everything seemed really good, so I paid up and we started the long journey home to Devon.

All seemed well until we got near Manchester where there were signs saying that two junctions on the M6 were closed. The sat nav took us through two pretty Cheshire villages to avoid the jams, but lots of other people had been directed the same way so progress was at a snail's pace.

We decided to stop at the next pub for lunch and were extremely lucky to find the brilliant Fox and Hounds at Sproston, near Middlewich, pictured above. The staff were very welcoming, it was spotlessly clean and the food was excellent. Well recommended if you are in the area!

All in all we enjoyed our trip, had a good look around Rochdale with its amazing Victorian Gothic town hall, but most importantly we now have a great Daimler V8 250.

We eventually got back on the M6 and arrived home in Exeter in the dark after a 9-hour journey.

I have been very pleased with my purchase, which is a big improvement in so many ways on the previous car.



GCCG All Torque

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The GCCG is in the process of changing providers for our All Torque emails. Along with Big End Journal, the local and national All Torque emails are the preferred method of communication to GCCG Members, including notice of official events such as the AGM. We would be very grateful if you could ensure that your details are correct on your profile of the GCCG website. To do this please log in and select 'My Profile'. Please ensure your email address is current and that your chosen Region and optional Second Region are correct along with your postal address.

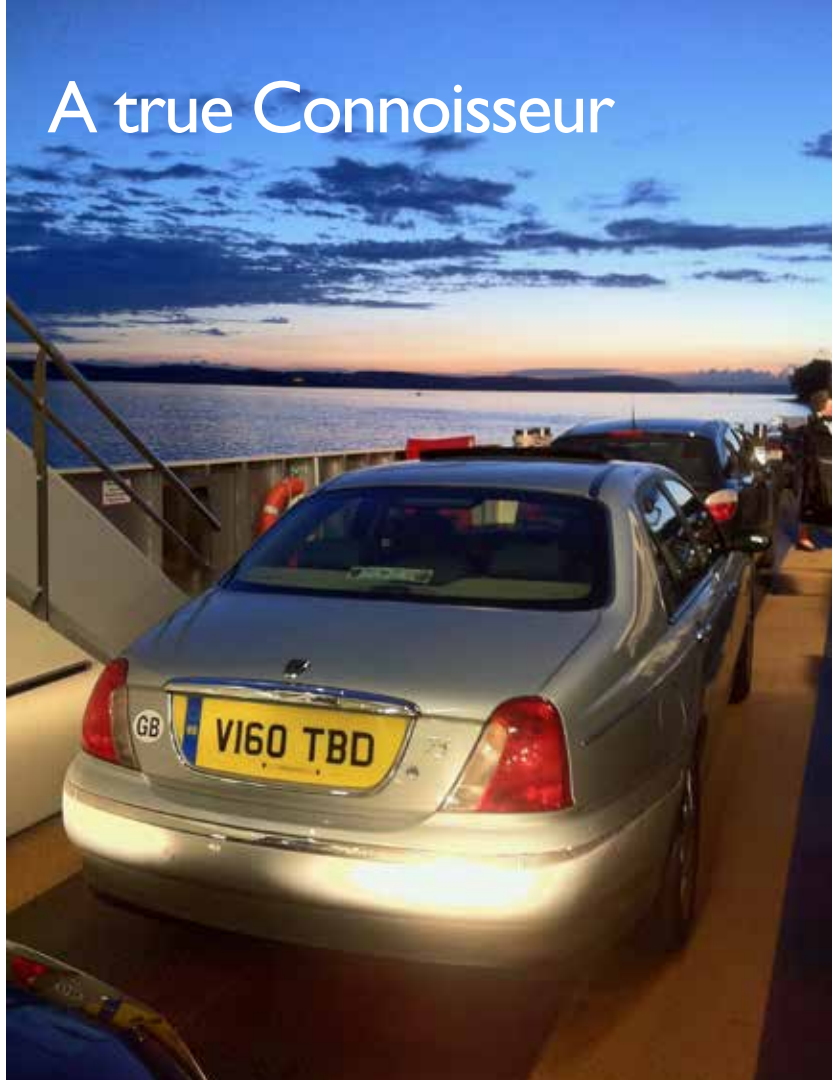
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A true Connoisseur

Words and photos *Gavin Whitwell*



I'm a man of eclectic tastes. Obsessed with BMWs since age 14, I blagged my way into a job at BMW UK by my mid-twenties. My weekend Freude am Fahren is a BMW 1M Coupe. I've never had more fun on four wheels, yet my favourite car developed by BMW is quite a contrast - the Rover 75.

At the NEC Motor Show launch in 1998 I was smitten at first glance. I flashed my BMW business card to stand staff. My son and I were then treated like royalty, led onto the rotating turn-table and invited to immerse ourselves in the luxurious Personal Line Interior. The modern take on traditional British walnut and leather was simply beautiful. Always one to follow my passion, one year later I transferred to Rover Group as a Product Manager.

Luckily, I escaped before the MG Rover collapse, but I really missed driving the 75. In 2009, after a careful search, I found a 10-year-old 2.5V6 Connoisseur. With only 58,000 miles on the clock, it had every option including the gorgeous Neptune Blue interior of the launch car. Residuals had dropped through the floor. I paid less for my car than the original option price for its magnificent Harman-Kardon HiFi!

I named her Bessie in honour of my mum, Betty. Any derivative of Elizabeth seems suitably regal for the brand once known as 'the poor man's Rolls-Royce'. Eleven years on, I can honestly say I have never derived more pleasure from car ownership. Yet 89,000 miles later, amidst the chaos of 2020 I have created a dilemma.

In 2016 my Rover 75 'sanctuary' rescued a 1999 2.0V6 Connoisseur from a local used car lot. I christened this one Babs after my mum's best mate from Glasgow, where I grew up. Her hubby owned the first Rover I ever rode in - a P5 3.0 litre Coupe. Wafting along at 100mph en-route to the Edinburgh Tattoo left an impression on 10-year-old me.

An Autotrader listing in 2018 also proved irresistible. A 1999 2.5V6 Connoisseur in the perfect launch colour combination that had driven only 28,000 miles in 19 years! I seized the opportunity to future-proof my Rover 75 enjoyment and preserve at least one of these fine cars for posterity. Her name is Betsie - I knew one day she would inherit Bessie's crown.



Now Bessie needs money spent on her and I don't have space for three Rovers. She still looks and drives beautifully and I will be gutted if she ends up in the great Recycling Centre in the sky. If you might be up for taking over her running costs please get in touch. Bessie owes me nothing so I will donate her to anyone who legitimately wants to keep her running and has a budget of £1.5k+ to keep her on the road.

Just get in touch via the editor@gccg.org.uk at Big End Journal

OR

email me at gavin@gavinwhitwell.com if you'd like further details



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Would you vote left or right?

David Jensen looks at the arguments for driving on the left or right...

Oh come on! You didn't think I was going to write an article about THAT vote did you? This is a car mag, not a manifesto – so for starters, this gets read! There are a variety of theories about why we Brits drive on the left.

The Geneva Convention on Road Traffic (1949) requires its signatories to have consistent rules for their country. It's a matter of law which side a country chooses. It was only in 1752 that Russian Empress Elizabeth officially issued an edict for traffic to keep to the right. Just over a century later in 1858 an Imperial Russian decree made its neighbour Finland swap sides. The first US law requiring drivers to keep right was passed in Pennsylvania in 1792, and similar laws were passed in New York in 1804 and New Jersey in 1813, with Canada standardising driving on the right in the 1920's not only to be compatible with their US southern neighbour, but also to iron out the anomaly of the old French provinces following the 'drive right' rule, whilst the English speaking provinces had followed a 'drive left' tradition – very confusing in one country.

I was always told it went back to the days of swordmanship and jousting when most people, being right-handed, carried their weapon in their right hand, so opponents passed right-to-right.



Now as luck would have it, my great grandfather, Sgt. David Bailey, was the World Champion Swordsman about the time the motor car was being invented by Karl Benz who built his first automobile in 1885 in Mannheim. Somewhat unluckily, David Bailey died in 1901 at the young age of 49, so he's long gone and we cannot ask his view, but this seems the most logical explanation to me. If I was brandishing my weapon in public it would certainly be in my right hand.

In fact, from the layout of cart tracks on Roman roads, it appears they too drove on the left. Given that most people are right-handed, holding your sword or steering wheel in your stronger right hand, whilst your left hand is free to fiddle with your knobs, makes sense. *(Tony the editor adds - it is one of the reasons I have had a Citroën SM automatic for over 30 years, I never got on with the manual one I had before it. When changing gear in a car with such sensitive steering I usually found I had changed lanes too!)*

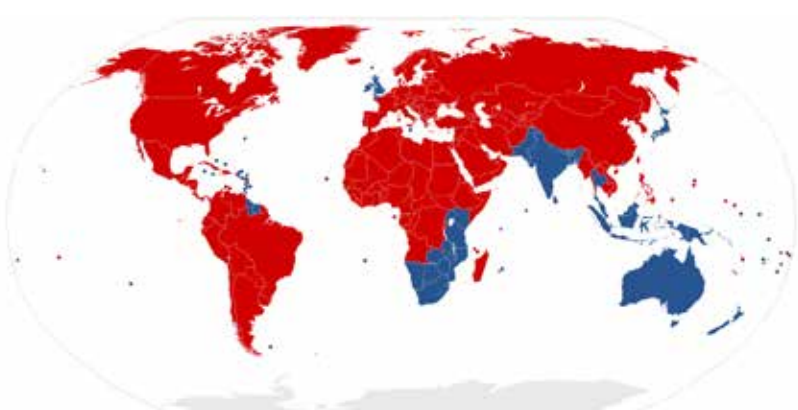
Our choice of driving on the left also means one's right eye, which tends to be stronger, is closer to the centre of the road so safer.

Apart from the British Isles, a lot of the old Commonwealth drive like us, including the West Indies, southern Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Hong Kong and Australasia. We have no historical connection with Thailand, Indonesia, Japan and Macau, but they drive on the left too.

My better half asserts that we drive on the left because a coach driver would carry his whip in his stronger right hand, and it would get caught up in overhanging vegetation were we to have driven coaches on the right hand side of the road. I have never driven a coach and horses, and frankly, rarely use a whip and nor does he, so I'm not convinced. There are so many theories it sounds like 50 shades of grey to me. Very unclear.

Some people improbably allege that Napoleon, being left-handed, preferred riding on the right, or after the storming of the Bastille, the disgruntled populace decided to ride on the right because the aristocracy used to ride on the left. There is scant evidence for this although some people swear blind it is the reason.

We are non the wiser why 65 per cent of the world's population drive on the right, the other 35 per cent, on the left.





See the world map below left, where the blue countries drive on the left. Some have switched from left to right as the evidence for our system being safer is rather tenuous and they wanted a system that was compatible with their geographical neighbours.

The most recent country to make a switch was Samoa, which is all but unique in actually going from right to left. The former German colony made the decision so it could import cheap vehicles from the left-leaning New Zealand and Australia. In preparation, roads were widened; new signage, speed bumps and road markings introduced; the speed limit was slashed, and alcohol sales were banned altogether for three days.

The shift faced a legal challenge by a protest group, People Against Switching Sides, and even a new political party ("The People's Party"), all of which warned of chaos. But all to no avail. At 5.50am on Monday 7 September, a radio announcement was made and all traffic stopped. Ten minutes later, when the traffic re-started, all the rules had changed, and Samoans now drove on the left. It all went off very smoothly.

Dagen H, today usually called 'Högertrafikomläggningen (I suspect this means 'potential for a complete cock-up' in Swedish), was the day on 3 September 1967, in which the traffic in Sweden switched from driving on the left-hand side of the road to the right, pictured above. In May 1963 the Swedish Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of implementing the switch to right-side driving. With all of Sweden's neighbouring countries driving on the right, it made sense for Sweden to do the same. Also, despite the left-hand driving rule, cars in Sweden typically had the steering wheel on the left as so many were European imports, leading to many accidents, especially on narrow roads.

Preparing the country for the change was a costly and complicated endeavour. Traffic lights had to be reversed, road signs changed, intersections redesigned, lines on the road repainted, buses modified, and bus stops moved. A massive PR campaign was conducted to reconcile the public to the change and educate them about how it would be implemented. At 4:50 a.m. on 3 September, 1967, as crowds of people gathered to watch, all vehicles on the road were instructed to come to a halt.

Images, below from far left:

These Roman Charioteers certainly look to be steering to the left - the the majority of the crowd of soldiers behind them?

A world map, showing left hand driving countries in blue, right hand in red.

Napoleon doesn't look inclined to follow any rules other than of his own making...



They were then directed to move carefully from the left side of the road to the right and wait.

At the stroke of 5:00, following a radio countdown, an announcement was made "Sweden now has right-hand driving" and traffic could resume. Time Magazine called the event "a brief but monumental traffic jam."

Overall, the change went smoothly. For about two years after Dagen H the number of traffic accidents dropped, perhaps partly as a result of increased caution on the part of drivers still getting used to the new rules.

Was it all worth it? From a safety standpoint, it's hard to say. A couple of years after the switch, accident levels returned to their earlier levels, despite the hopes that bringing vehicle design and road rules into harmony would improve matters. But given the ever-increasing number of cars on the road, it's possible today's accident levels would be even higher if the change had not been made. And given the numbers of travellers driving across borders these days, not having to switch to the other side of the road when entering and leaving Sweden must surely be a good thing.

As the tragic death of the UK teenage motorcyclist Harry Dunn proved in 2019, when an American diplomat's wife accidentally drove on the wrong side of the road, making this mistake can be fatal. Over the years I have driven thousands of miles across the Continent and USA and cannot deny there has been the odd occasion I have made the same error in a momentary lack of concentration, fortunately with no further consequences.

And here is your Trivial Pursuit question: Where in the UK is the only road where you drive on the right? Answer: Savoy Court approaching the Savoy Hotel off the Strand. Why? So your chauffeur can hop out and open your door for you at the hotel entrance.

With credit to Annika Hipple and John Elledge for some of the copy.





Spotlight on

ALVIS

Brian Palmer recalls a forgotten British car that led by example



I suppose that anyone with even an inkling of history today will point to the Mini as having pioneered the front-wheel drive car. But that would be wrong. We can easily point across the channel to the earlier Citroën DS or even its pre-war cousin the Traction Avant.

Delve a little deeper and the names of DKW and Adler in Germany crop up. In the USA, Cord was a notable adherent and he got his ideas from the Miller race cars. Miller might well have taken the hint from the vast 1904 19-litre transverse-engined FWD racer of J Walter Christie. And as we go back to the dawn of the motor car there were others who daringly suggested that a car dragged along from the front was preferable to being pushed from behind.

Yet the one name that even British classic car enthusiasts tend to overlook in this context is that of Coventry-made Alvis. Thomas George John from Pembroke Dock founded the firm in 1919. Geoffrey de Freville who founded Aluminium Alloy Pistons Ltd of Wandsworth, South London designed the first Alvis engine which used his light alloy pistons stamped Alvis - a name he devised as it was easy to pronounce in various languages.

In 1922 Captain George Thomas Smith-Clarke joined the team as Chief Engineer from Daimler and during his time at Alvis made it a watchword for innovation and engineering quality. As well as front-wheel drive, Alvis championed independent front suspension, marketed the world's first all-synchromesh gearbox and quickly followed this with servo-assisted brakes. Smith-Clarke is also credited with numerous medical advances and inventions including the iron-lung respirator and improved X-ray machines. He also built an observatory with 18" reflector telescope in his garden and later advised on the 100" Newton reflector for the Astronomer Royal at Herstmonceux. Quite a man.

Alvis quickly established a reputation as a producer of light cars with a sporting disposition and soon they were competing in various hill climbs. Smith-Clark's first project improved the inaugural model with an overhead-valve cylinder head. The new car lapped Brooklands at over 80mph. The 1 1/2-litre 12/50 model became an instant hit with the public especially when fitted with a lightweight alloy body with dickey seat known familiarly as the Duck's Back.

Smith-Clark knew that success in competition required a lightweight chassis with good power output combined with low centre of gravity and while the spectators loved lurid tail-slides this wasted energy - which is how he came up with FWD as the solution to most of the problems. By arranging the important bits of a car at one end, there was no need for a prop-shaft so the whole chassis could be lower, reducing the centre of gravity. Driven front wheels helped cornering, too, as this set-up dragged the car round.

Images left, from bottom:

A 1930 Tracta model E

A 1929 Corde L-29 Coupe

The editor's 1949 Citroën Traction Big 6

John Walter Christie racing in 1915

Above, left to right

The Alvis Front Wheel Drive model showing two different body styles and the chassis and drive train layout

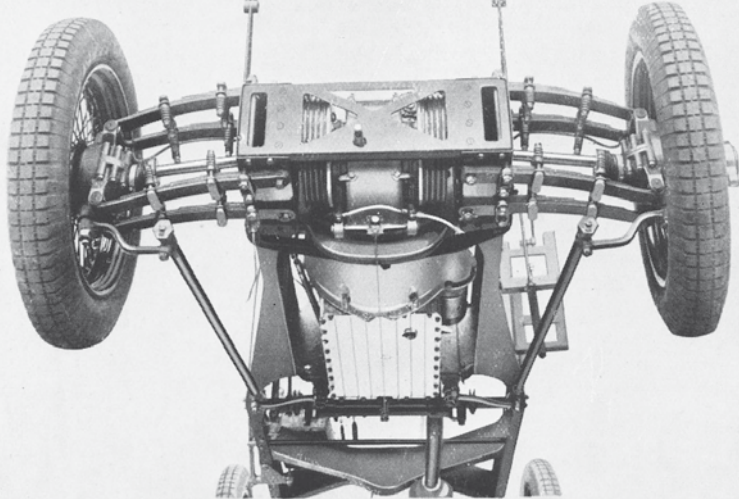


Fig. 6.
General view of the underneath of the front end of the front wheel drive Alvis chassis. Anchorage to the springs can be seen and the method employed to steer each wheel by independent pull and push rods.



Our car then vanished until unearthed under piles of rubbish in a Cardiff garage in the late sixties. It was barely recognised as the important survivor that it was as someone had re-bodied it as a hideous 'special'. This pioneer was lovingly restored to 1928 TT spec with a two-seater body with pointed tail.

The car has a lean and hungry demeanour - low set with a long bonnet in polished aluminium nicely offset by fire-engine red wings and rear body. Closer inspection shows that oddly for a 1920s car there are no dumb-irons reaching forward - instead the chassis is cut-off and two pairs of quarter-elliptic springs reach out to the wheels with drive-shafts between, shown above. Ball-ended joints were used as constant velocity joints which was pretty much unheard of at the time. And inboard drum brakes were mounted either side of the differential. The whole shebang was rigidly-mounted in the chassis eliminating twisting loads under braking.

The steering track-rod lies behind the engine as the steering box is high up on the bulkhead with four foot-long rods to the steered wheels and sundry other linkages connecting everything together. The turning circle on left lock was 48ft while there was no castor-return action given limited knowledge of steering geometry at the time on front wheel drive cars. Perhaps not an ideal car for one's driving test.

The rear of the car is similarly truncated with a stout leading radius arm locating each wheel while a reversed quarter-elliptic spring provided cushioning. The chassis is highly unusual having eight inch rails at the forward end with

cross-bracing fore and aft of the engine. Behind the scuttle the chassis is half as deep but employs cruciform bracing.

The engine was a single overhead camshaft unit of 1481cc capacity delivering 50bhp or 75bhp when supercharged. Top speed was 85mph, the blower only improving acceleration. The power train was reversed but little weight was over or ahead of the front wheels in the way that we now know they should be today.

So, quite a box of tricks. And if truth be told I would rather have had longer to acclimatise before embarking on car to car photography, which can be tricky, but bad weather was closing-in. The seats were fixed and the owner obviously had longer legs than me so I had to stretch for the clutch and the accelerator being centrally located. The cockpit is snug - perhaps no bad thing for the deluge that was to follow.

Not only the steering strikes as odd, the gearbox operates from long linkages from a selector to the driver's right down to the box itself with externally-selected forks. A guard protects the driver from selecting two at once - I was concentrating like mad getting them right one at a time.

It is only when behind the wheel that you realise that you sit roughly in-line with the rear wheels with six feet of bonnet ahead. This can be problematic when cresting a hill at speed, say, when you lose all sight of the road. The steering was surprisingly good and direct given its tortuous path. The ultra-stiff chassis another surprise making the car feel more modern than its years.

There is none of the normal writhing beneath you nor creaking from the bodywork. It feels all of a piece.

The ride, too, is of a high order despite iron stiff springing to benefit the handling of this pioneering car. Only the lack of conventional damping raised its ugly head over a series of ridges when some bounce was experienced. When the camera car stopped rather too abruptly my own braking reaction caused the rear end to rise up like a bucking bronco.

Like others of its ilk, the harder the Alvis was powered into corners the sweeter things became. The engine produced thrilling sounds and felt lustier than its capacity. The unit really comes into its own at 3,000rpm and above when the engine note becomes harder as camshaft and straight-cut gears scream and exit fruitily from a copper exhaust pipe.

This was probably one of the most intriguing cars that I ever got to drive and I would have dearly loved more time to really extend it. I also wonder whether Sir Alec Issigonis ever drove one - I've no evidence that he did - but he certainly absorbed engineering ideas like a sponge. When he left Morris, he turned to Alvis to design magnificent and technologically advanced cars.

His ideas proved too costly for Alvis, however, who were increasingly sinking their funds into their Leonides helicopter engines (power-source for Christopher Cockerell's amazing new Hovercraft) and their renowned military vehicles. Sadly cars had become a side-line.

'This was probably one of the most intriguing cars that I ever got to drive'.

Why Sherlock Holmes would have made a good solicitor

Sometimes being a solicitor can be much more like being a detective. At its basic it can be something as simple as trying to find the spare set of keys for the deceased's car. You would be amazed where some people store spare car keys - desk drawers, tea pots or believe it or not magnetic key holders in the wheel arch of the actual car! You would also be surprised at what we find in people's cars after their death: spare Barbour jackets in spare wheel voids are common, even with reserve cash in the pockets but my favourite has to be the loaded Second World War service revolver in the glove box of the maroon Citroën Visa owned by the 87 year old spinster in rural Cumbria.

However beyond that it can get even more difficult. Being an executor when someone dies is a very responsible task and failure to get it right can lead to the executor becoming personally liable for all sorts of claims either from beneficiaries or from HMRC. One huge area of risk concerns valuing or selling the personal possessions of the person who

has died. Executors are under a duty to get the best price possible and it is often the case with classic cars - as with art, medals, memorabilia - that provenance is exceptionally important.

If the item has a direct connection with someone famous then even better. I was sorely tempted recently by the ex-Fred Trueman Rolls Royce MPW 2 door coupe which came up for sale at Tennants auctioneers. Its past history - reasonably well documented - added to the appeal and I very nearly bought it because of that added history.

Often when I am faced with a classic car to value or sell it can be so much better if there is a file of supporting documentation, invoices, and period brochures. It just adds to the appeal of the car and can affect its value, because it appeals to more buyers. So I was fascinated to read recently in 'Classic and Sports Car' that two Swiss enthusiasts have created a digital depository for all documents relating to your car's history. Advertised as a simple efficient and intuitive platform to allow collectors to

easily build up the historical heritage of the cars this sounds perfect.

Nowadays it also amazes me just how much past history of a specific car or the generic model can be obtained from a cursory search of the internet. The digitisation of so many archives has opened up the ability to tell your car's story in much greater detail.

I cannot stress that however important such documentation can be (whether commercial app or simply the Cloud) it must be able to be accessed. I increasingly find that whilst many people do store huge amounts of vital information on their devices they rarely tell anybody how to access those devices after their death! In the last few months I have had to send 10 different devices off to computer experts to access personal information because the deceased didn't leave passwords with a trusted friend or locked in one of the many new digital password vaults.

And so we are back with the same detective problem ... hunt the (spare) key!

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EMAIL info@gedye.co.uk



Hi Tony,

Bob Roeper, one of our Great Autos members has owned a '57 Imperial Crown coupe for several years now. He recently got in touch with me about another '57 Imperial, a four door 'Southampton' (pillarless hardtop).

It turns out a mutual friend had just bought the four-door at auction. The new owner, on investigating his purchase found deep in the door armrest some interesting documents. It looks like this car was owned and driven by Lauren Bacall (Mrs Humphrey Bogart)!

As it says on the California Cars website: *The '57 Imperial is a special car in it's own right. Designed by the legendary Virgil Exner, this was his absolute best work.*

It is known that this design was the one he was most proud of during his career.

It truly set the pace for all automakers in the US in the day. And the Imperial Crown was the absolute top of the line that Chrysler produced. These cars were built on their own assembly line for those that desired and could afford exclusivity.

It was a special model then, and it is truly impressive today.

So quite a delightful tidbit; one can easily see Mrs. Bogart in the revolutionary new '57 Imperial, especially a coupe.

Some photos attached.

Jim





Introducing Tom Rooney

Our new Advertising Coordinator shares his enthusiasms and ideas

I think my interest in classic cars was probably triggered by the elderly lady who lived in the cottage next to our house when I was growing up. The sounds, smells and (slow) speed of her rose taupe Morris Minor, along with the exhilaration of not wearing a seat belt, led to a fascination with all things automotive and old which has stayed with me ever since. As a child, my parents always drove very old cars also, most of which were enthusiastically maintained by my Dad at weekends.

Inspired by those experiences, I bought my first Morris Minor aged 16 and spent the summer dismantling it with my Dad. Sadly, it was too far gone to be saved and had to be scrapped. Another Morris Minor ensued, this time a traveller who I named Bob. Bob and I passed my driving test together and enjoyed 11 years of motoring before I traded up for a more motorway friendly Saab 900. The Saab has taken me the length and breadth of the country, as well as a long trip across the Alps a few summers back.



Spurred on by a renewed enthusiasm for cars after joining the GCCG, I now have another Morris Minor in my garage along with the Saab, this time a 1956 series II saloon. With the recent introduction of the ULEZ where I live, the Morris Minor benefits from the historic vehicle exemption which conveniently enables me to drive to the shops without having to pay any fees. Other cars I've owned over the years include a Rover P4 105S (brief), a Rover Metro GS (dream car) and a Mk3 Golf (dependable).

Since attending my first GCCG London pub meet around Christmas 2018, the various rallies, events and personalities have very quickly become a large part of my social life. It has been fantastic to find such a lively and friendly bunch of people with a shared passion, and I very much look forward to more fun to come in 2021 when we are able to meet up.

Advertising in Big End and launching the Pink Pages!

Outside of the classic car world, I'm a Senior Board Account Director at a post production agency in London.

I was therefore delighted to have been able to take up the opportunity of the advertising role in Big End Journal. Advertisements represent an important contribution toward the publication costs of BEJ and I look forward to working with Tony and Darren to continue the relationships we have with our current advertisers, whilst reaching out and singing the praises of the club to those who may not have heard about us yet.

In addition to the advertising which we currently run, we are also considering launching a new 'pink pages' section in the magazine. This would be a collection of small ads from our wide ranging and multi-talented GCCG membership base.

Perhaps you run a small business which may be of interest to members?

This could be anything from a holiday home to a ceramics specialist, or maybe you have something car related you would like to sell...

I am hoping to capture an expression of interest before we try this, so please email me at advertising@gccg.org.uk and we can work out how we can include you in the next edition of the magazine. We are able to help with designing a small ad.





INSIDE MIDLAND RED

Ashley Wakelin, author of the new book "INSIDE MIDLAND RED" writes:

Having enjoyed a lifetime in the bus industry, and realising that it had dramatically changed from the calmer 1960s to the stresses of modern times, I decided to put pen to paper to recall the story of my passion for, and work-life with Midland Red, once the country's biggest independent bus company.

Some of the colleagues that I worked with in the early days were at retirement age when I was just 18 years old. These industry professionals, whether drivers and conductors, engineers or managers, told me their stories of life with Midland Red in the 1930s and beyond, and how the job and the vehicles had changed over the years. It is interesting that they all thought that the job was better in the earlier days, and that in turn has become true for me, now that I am looking back over my career.

Agnes was one of the bus cleaners working in Birmingham, who worked nights from 1924. When I met her in 1969 she told me that the job was hard, but it was more enjoyable in the earlier years. She and her fellow cleaners spent hours on hands and knees polishing the brass floor treads, door handles, and side runners on Midland Red's early charabancs, while singing hymns at 3am and getting into trouble when the neighbours living near the garage complained about the noise keeping them awake!

Those early charabancs - like the one pictured below - developed through the thirties into stately luxury tourers, and by the late fifties had evolved into 85mph motorway expresses - like the example shown above - tearing down the outside lane of the M1. Timetabled journeys from Birmingham to London took 5hrs 29mins in the 1950s, but with Midland Red's motorway expresses it was reduced to an astonishing 2hrs 15minutes!

There are lots of other engineering achievements covered in the book, including a look at the "Birmingham Routemaster" which of course is known to us Midland Red fans as the D9 - shown on the book cover, to the right.

Midland Red was no ordinary bus company. They designed and built their own vehicles from 1923 until 1970. They had an operating territory of over 12,000 square miles of the Midlands, and operated daily coach services and coach cruise holidays over the length and breadth of the United Kingdom; and they had an enviable reputation for speed, reliability, comfort and service which over the years gave them their reputation of "The friendly Midland Red".

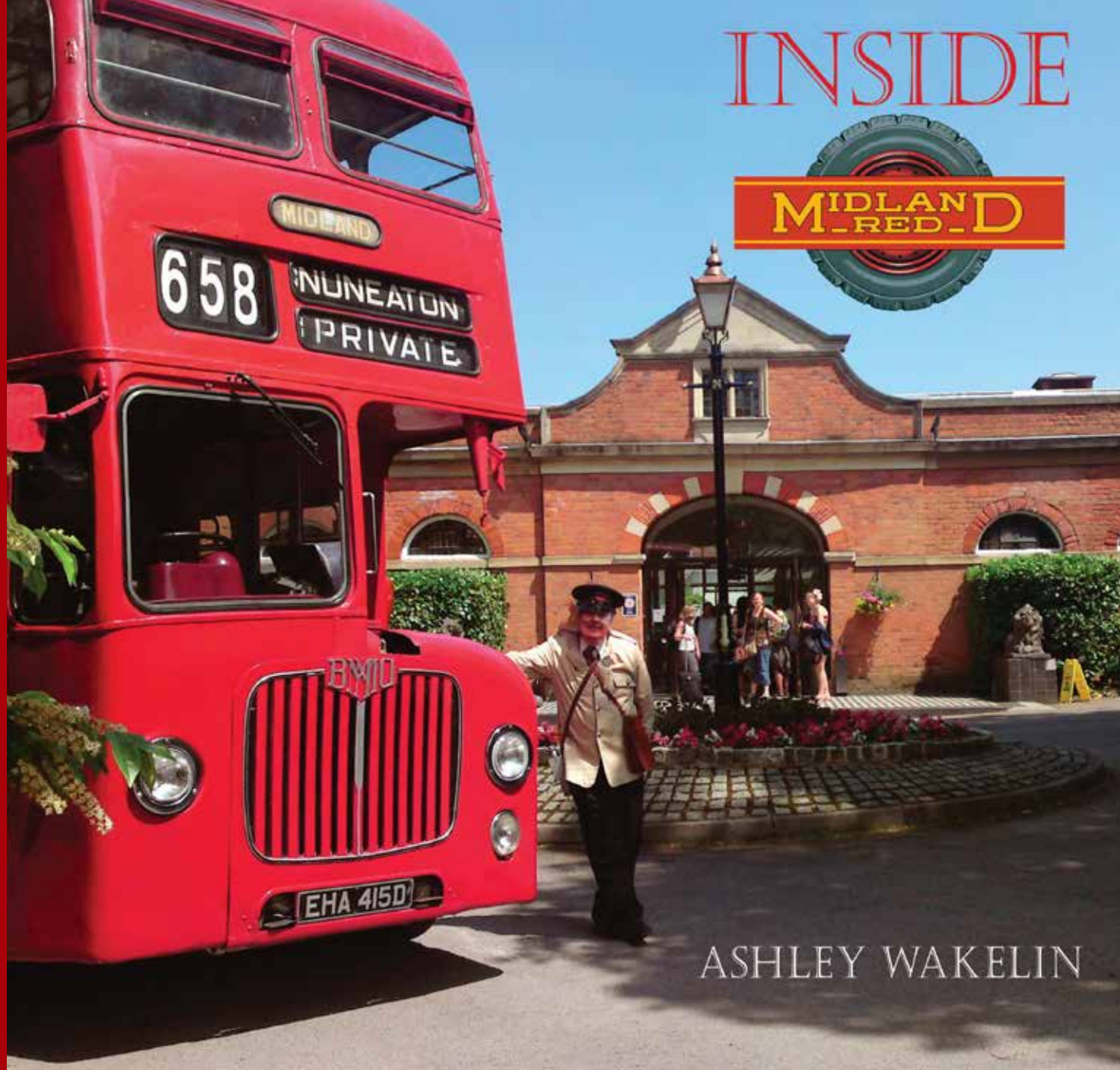
Many of the management were ex-military and the company was run along similar lines, but then an organisation of 8,000 staff, with its Headquarters and Central Works in Birmingham, and 35 garages spread across the Midlands, operating services while building and maintaining a fleet of almost 2000 vehicles had to be well oiled!

Midland Red played a big part in the lives of the people of the Midlands for most of the twentieth century, and still retains a fiercely loyal following of enthusiasts, which is why it is important that stories of "The Red", such as those in this book, should be retold for future generations.

When I retired, I realised that my own working life with Midland Red from office lad, conductor and driver, and into management had accumulated a number of escapades, and entertaining and sometimes shocking stories that were worthy of recalling.

INSIDE MIDLAND RED brings them to life again, along with some of the history of how Midland Red grew from humble beginnings into a company of empire-like proportions. Whether you are new to Midland Red, or a seasoned enthusiast you should find some interesting stories and pictures that you can return to when you need a Midland Red fix!





About the Author:

Ashley has seen the bus and coach industry evolve over fifty years of change. He has worked in manual and managerial roles, has been an enthusiast, preservationist and operator, and has worked in both the private and public sectors with national and small independent operators.

Besides having a collection of Midland Red memorabilia and models, he has had over sixty full sized buses and coaches, some passing through his hands and others staying for either work or pleasure - all between his sixteenth and sixtieth birthdays.

Ashley was instrumental in purchasing and saving two significant BMMO Midland Red buses - the only running Midland Red CM6T motorway express coach (surely the swansong of their coach production), and the last built Midland Red S16 single-decker service bus.

But it was his passionate enthusiasm for, and his career with Midland Red, and the association he had with staff at all levels which has provided the content for this book as he takes you INSIDE MIDLAND RED.

INSIDE MIDLAND RED is a hardback book by author Ashley Wakelin. GCCG Area Organiser and All Torque Editor Stephen Duxbury typeset the book. Printed in Great Britain, it has 128 pages with over 250 colour and black and white images, some not previously published. Available at £35 plus £4.95 UK mainland p&p online from www.midlandred.co.uk

Special Offer: A £5 GCCG member discount is available until the end of February 2021 (subject to availability) email Ashley at: ashley@midlandred.co.uk for details.





COMMITTEE

Chair

Peter Geake
07711 018860
email: chair@gccg.org.uk



General Secretary

Iain Johncock
020 8299 1670
email: gensec@gccg.org.uk



Membership Secretary

David Birkett
020 7722 3094
email: membership@gccg.org.uk



Treasurer

Jeremy Lindon
020 7278 8250
email: treasurer@gccg.org.uk



Webmaster

Rob Dewing
023 8028 3452
email: webmaster@gccg.org.uk



Press & Publicity

Darren Mitcham
07899 995287
email: press@gccg.org.uk



Liaison Officer

Rob Gibson
07403 481439
email: liaison@gccg.org.uk



Big End Editor

Tony Stokoe
07711 204004
email: editor@gccg.org.uk

Proof & Copy Editors Graham Davis & Tim Griggs



All Torque Editor

Stephen Duxbury
07970 555158
email: news@gccg.org.uk



Eurotour Organiser

Mark Wells
07989 392974
email: yorkshire@gccg.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

David Birkett

Roll on 2021 and PLEASE may it be some improvement on 2020!

I do hope you have stayed safe and well and can enjoy something of a Christmas and New Year celebration during these very difficult times...

Membership has again remained fairly level since the autumn with some additional sign ups – we have 1084 members currently (739 lead members with 345 partners).

Recently we have welcomed: Ian & David from Birmingham; Kevin & Tom from Reigate; Ian & Adam from Cambridge; Paul & Darren from Bromley; David from Chichester; James & Luke from Birmingham; Ben & Oliver from Barnsley; Joshua from Hampshire; Anthony from Whitley Bay; Ollie from Burgess Hill; Keith & John from Birmingham; Lorenzo & Carl from Swindon; Jonathan from London; Andrew from Cambridgeshire; Jason & Shaun from Dorset; Ryan from London.

David



KEEPING IN TOUCH AND UP TO DATE:

All Members should note that Big End, the GCCG website and the emailed 'All Torque' bulletins are the Club's preferred, most flexible, cost-effective and quickest method of communicating events.

Any problems you have with email bulletins should be queried with the webmaster at webmaster@gccg.org.uk

Any members without IT facilities are asked to refer to the latest edition of Big End and may contact their Area Organiser for information on events. Contact details can be found on page 2.

Don't forget to keep your personal details up to date on the GCCG website

Just go to www.gccg.org.uk and use your Member log-in and password to enter the Members' area. Click on 'my profile' and make changes as required - or reset your password using the 'Forgot Password' link. This information needs to be up to date to ensure you receive your copy of Big End and All Torque bulletins.

Regional Monthly Meetings

AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS ALL MEETINGS REMAIN UNDER REVIEW - CHECK ONLINE FOR UPDATES

Scotland

3rd Thursday of the month at The Ferrybridge Hotel, 1 Main Street, North Queensferry, KY11 1JG from 6.45-9pm.

David Greenleaf 07792 408527

scotland@gccg.org.uk

South Yorkshire

1st Wednesday of the month at The Red Lion, Todwick, S26 1DJ from 7.30pm onwards.

Mark Wells 07989 392974

yorkshire@gccg.org.uk

North West

7-10pm last Thursday the month at The Bridge Inn, Dane Road, Sale, M33 7QH

This venue may change from month to month so please check for updates online or contact

Phil Dunster 07702 800304

northwest@gccg.org.uk

North West Midlands

From 7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday the month at the Rising Sun, Middlewich Road, Wistaston, Crewe CW2 8SB.

Rob Gibson 07403 481439

westmidlands@gccg.org.uk

Anglia & Norfolk

1st Tuesday of the month at The Swan Inn, The Street, Woolpit, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9QN from 7.30pm. Martin Gillingham 07799273725 anglia@gccg.org.uk

3rd Friday of the month, Lollards Pit, Norwich NR1 1SR.

John Kneller 07455 94179

norfolk@gccg.org.uk

West Midlands

Until April, 1st Weds. of the month a roving meeting (see website or email for details).

1st Sunday of the month, at The Oak, Coventry Road, Baginton, Coventry, CV8 3AU - Chris Spreadbury 07855 045064

westmidlands@gccg.org.uk

London (North)

2nd Tuesday of the month at the Ace Cafe on the North Circular, NW10 7UD. Robin Edwards 07796 921188 or Darren Mitcham 07899 995287

London (South) 3rd Saturday of the month Waterloo Classic Car Show between 12pm-4pm www.waterlooclassics.com.

3rd Wednesday of the month from 7:00pm, Prince of Wales, Cleaver Square SE11 4EA. Darren Sullivan 07426 903970

london@gccg.org.uk

Chilterns

1st Weds. of the month from 6.30pm at The Firecrest, London Road, Wendover, HP22 6QG

Darren Mitcham 07899 995287

chilterns@gccg.org.uk

South Central

4th Tue. of the month from 6pm, at the The Rose and Crown Green Road, Thorpe, TW20 8QL

Paul Charlesworth 07778 218211

southcentral@gccg.org.uk

South Central

3rd Tues. of the month at The Luzborough, Romsey, SO51 9AA

From 7pm. Paul Charlesworth

07778 218211 southcentral@gccg.org.uk

South East

1st Weds. of the month from 7pm at The Cock Inn, Old Uckfield Road, Ringmer, BN8 5RX.

Graham Davis 07973 951253

Alan Webb-Moore 07967 661814

southeast@gccg.org.uk

South West

4th Saturday of the month from 12 noon alternating between Worlds End, Bradford on Tone, TA4 1ET and the Ley Arms, Kenn, EX6 7UW.

Jeremy Palmer 07885 400357

southwest@gccg.org.uk

Events - some highlights

You are welcome to attend
any event in **any** region
Full details at gccg.org.uk

E. MIDLANDS/YORKS/N. EAST 6 January 2021 (Virtual) Monthly Meet



Join us for a virtual pub meet – we are using the Jitsi platform, which is usable on your smart phone, tablet or your pc.

Just follow this link or copy and paste into your browser <https://meet.jit.si/GCCG-Yorkshire-pub-meet-01-04>

Starting at 7.30pm so time for your tea beforehand!

Contact: Mark Wells
07989 392974
yorkshire@gccg.org.uk

NORTH EAST/NATIONAL 17-21 Sept: **Northumberland & the Borders Tour**



Northumberland is one of England's most magnificent counties with an ancient heritage. This vast county is one of contrasts ranging from wild hills and fells to the amazing golden sandy beaches. The history of Northumberland spans thousands of years from the earliest iron age settlements, the world heritage site of Hadrian's wall, and a vast range of castles and fortifications from the centuries of border wars with Scotland. It was home to political reformers and some of the greatest industrialists of the Victorian era.

Our stay is based around the luxury of Doxford Hall, a magnificent country house hotel and spa, set in the heart of the county. The original Hall, built in 1818, stands within its own private 10 acre estate. Though secluded, the hotel is easily reached from the A1 and the perfect base to explore this amazing county. Facilities include a fine dining restaurant and the highest levels of accommodation as well as an extensive spa and leisure club.

We will be visiting some of the most magnificent buildings, whilst experiencing amazing roads in some beautiful landscapes.

Already confirmed is our visit to Manderson, (pictured above) one of the finest houses in the Borders. We will be confirming other venues as soon as we can.

**Cost £365per person
(based on two people sharing)**

**Single occupancy supplement £70
per night per room.**

Prices subject to final confirmation
The cost of the tour covers all meals from your arrival to departure.

Contact: Mark Wells
07989 392974
yorkshire@gccg.org.uk

FRANCE & SPAIN 26 June - 5 July 2021 **Pyrenees to Le Mans**



The Le Mans Classic is a biennial vintage sports car event held on the grounds of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. This rally to the event takes in routes between southern France and northern Spain then the Pyrenees Mountains.

More information online.

Contact: Peter Geake
07711 018860
pjgeake@gmail.com

GERMANY/INTERNATIONAL 21-24 May 2021 **Eurotour**



Eurotour 2021 is now confirmed for the Pentecost weekend, 21-24 May 2021. All bookings and monies paid for Eurotour 2020 can either be returned or carried forward.

The organisers will be in touch with everyone who has booked, but you will need to let both Queerlenker and the hotel know your decision.

The subsequent Eurotour in the Netherlands moved forward to 2022. The GCCG will host Eurotour 2023 in the UK.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING ANY EVENT:

In line with the COVID-19 restrictions and at the time of writing all events are cancelled or postponed.

Some areas are having 'Virtual Pub Meets'. Check the online calendar to join in - you don't have to normally attend that area to pop into another area's meet!

Hopefully by the time you get this copy of Big End Journal GCCG physical events will be beginning to restart following social distance guidelines. Please see the calendar in the Events section of the website or check All Torque emails.

Have fun with a quiz whilst in lockdown - ideal to complete during a 'Virtual Pub Meet' - go to the link on the events page of the GCCG website.



With pleasure we present to you the 8th SWEET TRIP.

The gay classic car rally organised by Dominique Leherre.

For 2021, the SWEET TRIP will take place in the Nord department around Valenciennes. This department of France about 200 kilometres north of Paris is very close to Belgium and with easy access for all participants. For this SWEET TRIP, you will enjoy a weekend of relaxation with walks, picturesque roads, convivial meals and visits to historic sites.



In short, the idea of this weekend is simple and remains the same as previous trips: come, discover, enjoy and relax with your classic car!

For your convenience, the road book will be available in English as well as in French and the programme is available in 3 languages: Dutch, English and French.

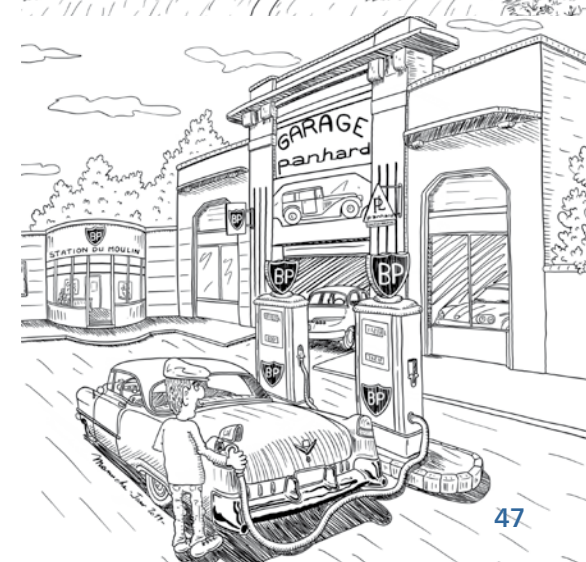
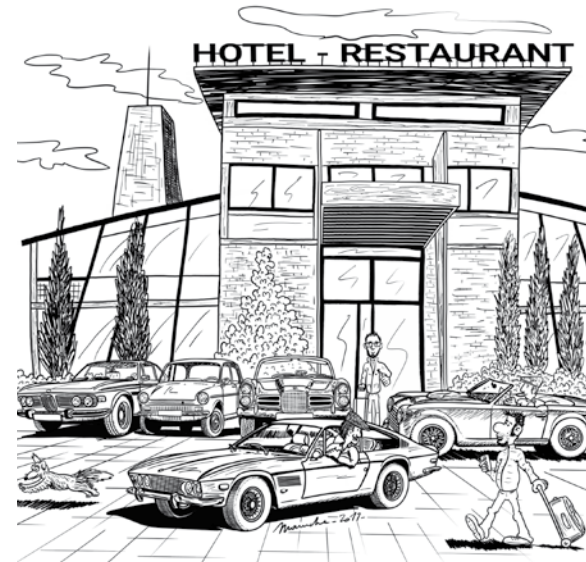
Please note that this event is specifically intended for classic (older than 25 years) and/or exceptional vehicles (rare examples/produced in limited numbers).

I am counting on you to support this new event and hope to welcome you all on the 23 April 2020.

Accommodation :

For 3 nights, you will stay at the four star Novotel Valenciennes. As we know from known previous events, these hotels are comfortable and offer a good quality of service. This property is located 10 kms south of the centre of Valenciennes. All spacious rooms have TV, telephone, wifi and bathroom with shower or bathtub. This hotel has a restaurant where we will eat each evening. Also, the exclusive bar reserved for the occupants of the hotel only will remain open late into the evening. Importantly the hotel parking is private and closed.

For the full programme and to book the event go to ledorga.fr



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