

# Somerset Automobile Club

## Chairmans' Chat

### June 2023



**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Welcome to the June 2023 Chairmans Chat which, as you will see, contains a familiar 'look' with both a 'look back' at our recent events and our forthcoming calendar together with items which I hope will be of interest to you. One report covers our March visit to the M Shed which was written before the recent devastating, reportedly arson, fire. One of the attractions of the visit was the opportunity to view the continuing use of traditional craftsmanship which was practiced some now destroyed workshops. Will it return? Hopefully it will but without doubt not in the same format.

Also included is a report of the very successful visit to the Hinkley Point 'C' Nuclear Power Station construction site. While I was unable to attend, I know that each of you who were able to enjoy the visit wish to share with me our thanks to Pauline for an excellent day out.

The articles that follow cover a wide scope but I would highlight the story about the Lohner-Porsche car of 1900. Please take the time to read it because it illustrates just how much foresight Ferdinand Porsche had over 120 years ago.

Our next event is the annual Tea Party to be held at Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June. Attendance is very pleasing and it should prove to be a hospitable mid-summer occasion. In August we will hold two events both organised by Mat Rumney. Firstly on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> we will visit both the REME and Atwell-Wilson Museums. Matt has now identified a café at the REME Museum where we can purchase lunch. Later in the August, on Bank Holiday Monday, we have, once again, been allowed the good fortune to hold a picnic at Camers, Old Sodbury with the kind agreement of the Denman family. Our programme to the end of 2023 is, therefore:

#### **Future Events:**

##### **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June: Annual Tea Party. Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon.**

While 'final' attendee numbers for this well supported event have been submitted to the hotel I'm sure that 'late entries' will be accepted by Walton Park if received promptly in the next few days. Please let me know, without delay, if you wish to come along.

The subsidised cost/head for members and associates will be £19. The charge for guests will be £21. Payment to the SAC account please.

We will gather from 3.00pm for a Prosecco Reception prior to a 3.30pm start.

The Party will be held in the Somerset Room which has a Channel view and as a bonus the tide tables confirm that high tide will occur at 3.45pm! Hopefully, there will also be Channel traffic to observe.

##### **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August: Visit to the REME Museum, Lyneham followed by a visit to the Atwell- Wilson Museum, Calne.**

Organised by Matt Rumney this self-drive event will be held in 2 parts:

**Firstly, a morning visit to the REME Exhibition, Lyneham, Wiltshire, SN15 4XX** starting from 10.00 am. The Adult entry fee is £8. The Royal Mechanical and Electrical Engineers role is to keep the Army mobile. Working essentially behind the 'front line', the scope of the REME is very broad with tasks such as servicing a helicopter or tank, building bridges and dealing with a range of tasks requiring the trained skills of engineers. All is explained at: [www.rememuseum.org.uk](http://www.rememuseum.org.uk)

The journey between the two exhibitions is 7 miles and REME has a small Cafe suitable for refreshments and/or a light lunch before your onward journey to Atwells. Prebooking of meals will not be required.

**Following lunch we will visit the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum, Calne SN11 0NF.** The Adult entry fee is £9. The museum exhibits in excess of 100 Cars dating from 1920 onwards together with a collection of interesting Motorcycles, Mopeds and Bicycles and memorabilia. See: <https://atwellwilson.org.uk/index.html>

Please note: Attendees are to pay the entry fee at each venue direct on arrival thereby avoiding the need for prepayment into the SAC account.

**The event is now open** and Matt will be pleased to receive early notification of your wish to attend.

Email: [mattrumney@btinternet.com](mailto:mattrumney@btinternet.com)



**Typical views of the REME and the Atwell-Wilson Museums**

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August: Picnic at Camers, Old Sodbury.**

Initial details noted above. More information to follow.

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Social Run and Lunch.**

Phil Rumney has agreed to organise this event but offers to assist with the lunch arrangements will be welcome.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October: Coventry Transport Museum Visit.**

A coach trip visit with guided tour.

The Museum opened in 1980 and the collection has grown substantially since that time, due to generosity of individuals, such that the current collection of vehicles is acknowledged as being one of the finest in the world, and the largest in public ownership. See: <https://www.transport-museum.com>.

The museum visit has been booked and club funds will (partially) sponsor the coach hire cost in order to ensure that the cost of the visit is contained to a 'reasonable' level.

To be organised by Dick Craddy. Details to follow.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November: Autumn Lunch.**

A booking has been made at The Batch Country Hotel, Lympsham.

You will recall that our event there last November was particularly well supported. Assistance with the organisation of this event will be welcome. Please let Dick Craddy know if you are willing to help.

**And please do not forget:**

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024: 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Lunch.**

As described above this event has been booked at Leigh Court Abbots Leigh. An event not to be missed and a date for your diary.

Classic and toy cars are mandatory! The venue offers the most suitable opportunity for the display of our favourite cars.

## Past events:

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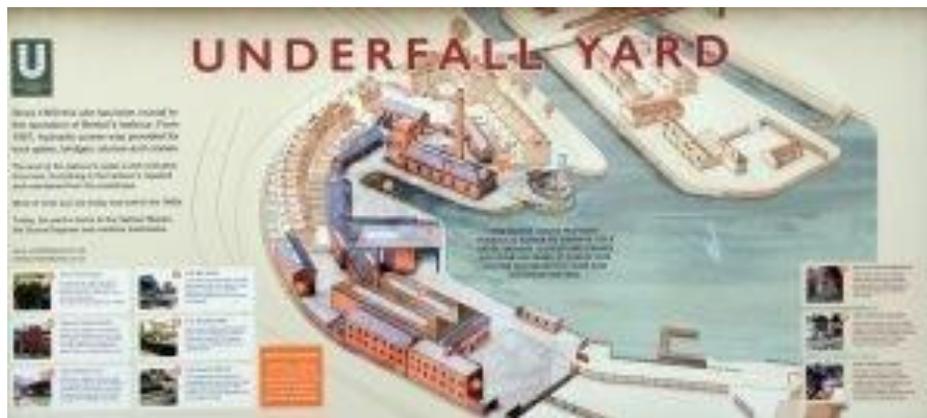
### Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March: *Visit to the Underfall Yard, Cumberland Basin and the M Shed Reserve collection.*

Organised by Robert Woolley. (Written before the recent destructive Arson Fire).

While a party of 20 members and guests had booked for this dual visit, regrettably an accident involving a tipper lorry that had collided, at around 2.30am, with an overhead gantry on the M5 near Avonmouth caused traffic chaos such that attendees travelling from the north were delayed or failed to arrive at the Underfall Yard.

**The Underfall Yard**, located on Spike Island, is designated as a listed building by English Heritage. We were met by our guide, Flex (Alexandra) Toomey a former astronomer, who subsequently gave a very strong impression of having been trained as an engineer, and her colleague Peter.

The Underfall Sluices are housed in buildings which are essential devices needed to achieve a constant water level, with minimal silt, in the Floating Harbour/Bristol Docks. While the Floating Harbour and 'The Cut', designed by William Jessop, completed in 1809, incorporated Overfall Sluices it suffered from excessive silting which accumulating within the docks did not flow onwards towards the Bristol Channel. Consequently, Brunel designed and installed a modification, known as the 'Underfall Sluices', which ensures that the outgoing water flows at low level thereby substantially alleviating the problem (along with constant dredging). The Sluice system incorporates 4 holding tanks, three of which are shallow, being designed to maintain the water level in the Harbour, and one deep Sluice tank through which the silt flows onwards to the River Avon under the influence of the undertow. Silt primarily enters the Floating Harbour with the incoming tide and from the Netham at St Annes.



The site has four individual elements:

- **The Underfall Sluices.** The photo illustrates the vertical electrically powered actuation jacks.
- **A Pump House**, providing Hydraulic water pressure that is still used to activate the adjacent swing Bridge and formerly powered dockside cranes etc. The electric motors that drive the pumps still run on 'Bristol 3 phase voltage' of 330 volts (the standard being 440 volts). A pump was 'run up' at our visit.



**The Sluice Room illustrating the Tanks and Actuators**



**The Pump House.**

- **A Maintenance Workshop.** This is a 'step back in time' that incorporates overhead belt driven machine tools from a single power shaft source. Those of us who are aware of the absolutely necessity for modern workshop Health and Safety requirements, especially as applied for machine guarding, forges, equipment storage, clear working spaces and floors struggle to understand how this environment complies.
- **The Slipway** which incorporates a cradle onto which vessels are floated before being hauled up a slope to provide maintenance access. The 'Matthew' recreation of John Cabot's ship is maintained there.



Having enjoyed lunch at the various cafés on the dockside we gathered at the M Shed at 2.00pm for a tour of the:

**M Shed Reserve collection.** Our party was divided into two groups being hosted by Martin and David respectively. Both guides are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic such that our tours, planned to last for one hour, in one instance lasted for two!

While designated as the M Shed Reserve collection the store contains many items being stored for the linked Bristol Museum and Art Gallery located adjacent to the University Wills Building. It would not be sensible to attempt to describe the contents in detail but suffice to report that the items are diverse such that a relevant link to Bristol is tenuous. However, for those of us with a 'Bristol' background it was a trip down memory lane.

The most recent addition to the reserve store, and probably the most notorious, is the statue of Edward Colston which is to be placed on display in the main exhibition hall exactly in the unfettled state in which it was recovered from the docks after the 'Black Lives' riot in June 2020.



It is interesting to note that the head and upper body are disproportionately large, no doubt being a feature necessary to balance the 'view' from ground level.

For transport enthusiasts the museum contains a Bristol Bus Chassis as prepared for delivery to a coach builder. These usually incorporated rudimentary driver protection and were a frequent sight on the roads in Bristol, usually enroute to Eastern Coachbuilders of Lowestoft.

See left with a Bristol Britannia Proteus turbo prop powerplant in the background.

The museum also contains a comprehensive display of Douglas Motorcycles which should not be hidden away. Can you identify them? Regrettably photography was difficult given the cramped nature of the store.



### A pictorial record of the 119<sup>th</sup> AGM and Lunch held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April at Lympsham.

You will recall that the AGM, attended by 35 members and associates was fully reported in the April 2023 Chairmans Bulletin. As promised, here is a selection of the excellent photos taken by Jim Lott.





## **A visit to the Hinkley Point 'C' Nuclear Power Station Construction Site on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.**

Very many thanks are due to Pauline for having arranged our visit to the Hinkley Point 'C' construction site on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The visit was supported by 29 members and guests being 4 less than the original booking due to illness.

The project is probably the most ambitious and complex project currently being undertaken in Europe.

In summary, HPC, it is the first new nuclear power station to be built in the UK in over 20 years. Powered by two 1630 MWe pressurised water Evolutionary Power Reactors, the construction and operation of Hinkley Point 'C' will provide low-carbon electricity for around 6 million homes, bring lasting benefits to the UK economy. It will have created 25,000 employment opportunities, up to 1,000 apprenticeships and 64% of the project's construction value is predicted to go to UK companies.

Financed by the French nationalised utility, EDF and the China General Nuclear Power Group (CGN) the current cost estimate for the project is £26 Billion. Marking a significant milestone in the revitalisation of our nuclear power industry, Hinkley Point 'C' will make a major contribution to the UK's move to reduce carbon emissions. The electricity generated by its two EPR reactors will offset 9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year, or 600 million tonnes over its 60-year lifespan.



The site is visually dominated by the Sarens SGC-250 tracked crane designed and manufactured in Belgium. Known as 'Big Carl' it is the biggest land-based crane in the world.

- Capable of lifting 5,00 tonnes at a 40metre radius.
- 250 metres tall at its tallest configuration.
- Supported by 52 Counterweights each of 100 tonnes.
- Powered by 12 engines.
- Travels on 96 wheels between 3 lift positions.
- Will be employed to lift 700 individual items.

The current predicted date for the first of the two reactors to commence generating power is June 2027 although a 'longstop' date of November 2036 has been agreed for full operation.

The visiting party gathered at the Bridgwater Cannington Park and Ride for an introductory talk followed by a coach tour of the site. Given the immense logistical need, the project has its own Bus Company 'Somerset Passenger Solutions' that operates 160 busses.

One of our party guests was Allan Taylor a former senior manager at the Hinkley Point 'A' and 'B' stations. Afterwards Allan wrote:

*Perhaps you would pass on my thanks to Pauline and your colleagues in the SAC for allowing me to join them at HPC today. It was an informative, enjoyable and extremely well organised day, helped in no small part by the weather, and for me quite nostalgic with the A and B stations where I spent my latter years alongside a long overdue development of what has long been an important, if often undervalued, part of the UK infrastructure. It's just a pity that with all the restrictions that society have forced on the industry, future visitors will not be able to get close enough to really appreciate the high standards of engineering involved in construction and operation of this key part of the Electricity Supply Industry.*

At the end of our visit Pauline was able to hand over a cheque for £315 as a donation to EDF's nominated Prostate Cancer Charity which is doubled in value by a matching grant from the company. An excellent outcome.

## Members Cars: Mike and Julie Sanders 1960 Bentley Continental Park Ward Convertible.



JFO 161 (BC11 7AR) was built in 1960 at the Rolls-Royce factory in Crewe, and originally finished in Alice Blue with grey upholstery. Listed as sold to the Marcus Construction Company, the MD a Mr John Victor Marcus of Park Lane, London took delivery on the last day of 1960. Extras included a power hood and windows, heavy duty chassis and a Phillips under dash record player!

Through the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts Club, I have a complete list of correspondence and invoices from Jack Barclay and the owner, one of which was a complaint about some missing record discs. John Marcus kept the car for over 10 years, but between then and when we acquired it, information is sketchy. It has been used in Germany and was sold back in the UK to someone called Rigby.

It was then used by a TV company as Alan B'Stards car in The New Statesman



We bought JFO 161 in May 2001 from The Real Car Company in North Wales. Initially I had gone there to look at another Bentley (which turned out to have issues). Fortunately, I had taken my good friend Richard Welsh with me as an expert guide, it was he who persuaded me to buy this one instead.

The Bentley Continental was (and still is) designed to carry two people and their luggage to the South of France in comfort, in one day. So, we decided to put her to the test. Therefore, her first serious trip with us was to Bordeaux, (near enough to the South of France) and she made it there and back with no serious issues.

Over the years Julie and I have had great fun and apart from regular trips to France, she has also been to Italy, Switzerland, Belgium and Ireland.

Most memorable times were cruising down the Amalfi Coast in Italy listening to Dean Marti, and the worst time was when we broke down with a faulty fuel pump on a busy French Motorway.

As time went by I was pleased to notice the value of the car appreciating to the point where I decided it would be worth having her resprayed.



I went to various local companies to get quotes for the work but found that it was just too big and complicated for most workshops. So, in the end I went to Fiennes of Lechlade who specialise in classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley, indeed they were already working on a similar hardtop version of the very car, also, with a renowned restorer doing the works this would add to its attraction in later years rather throw doubt on its quality/condition under the paint.

As the work began it quickly became apparent that the more paint and filler they removed the bigger the problems became.

Every Bentley body of that era it seems is carefully designed to store as much rainwater and cause as much rust as possible. There are no less than three sills on each side (inner, middle and outer) and all six were rotted through as well as both A posts, both rear wheel arches, under the boot and above the headlight on the right front wing.



The car had to be carefully braced so it could be welded back together accurately, I have to say I was very impressed by the skill of the craftsmen recreating the various panels. Thought was given to extra drain holes in the A posts to prevent more rust in the future.



When the time came to repaint her, I wanted her to get back her original Alice Blue colour but the paint was difficult to find and only available in France to French companies. On seeing a sample, it looked more grey than blue, so because I preferred it, and in order to make future repairs easier to match we decided to change the colour to the more available Bentley/Rolls-Royce Caribbean Blue.

After all the bodywork was completed she had a complete mechanical service and Fiennes proudly displayed her on their stand at the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts Club's main event at Burley House.



I think we may have been their best customers that year!

She's not done many miles since then I'm ashamed to say, other than SAC outings and trips down the sea front to keep her from getting under use problems. The most recent works being brand new rear suspension leaf springs and new leather gators carried out by Ben Marshall who maintains her on an as needed basis.

Our next big trip with her will be up the Atlantic Coast of Ireland in September on the Jim Gavin Memorial Run.

## **The Museum of Berkshire Aviation**

A recent caravanning break in Henley on Thames gave the opportunity for a brief visit to The Museum of Berkshire Aviation located on the periphery of the former Woodley Airfield, Reading. The Museum is essentially run by volunteers and is housed in a hangar type building that is inadequately sized for the quantity of items on display.

Initially, the site was the base of the Phillips and Powis Aircraft from 1928 – 1943 when the business was renamed as Miles Aircraft Ltd, reflecting the fact that the company's designs had been marketed as 'Miles' products for many years. In 1947 the Miles company was declared bankrupt, albeit it was reformed, in 1948, as F G Miles Ltd, based in Redhill and Shoreham. The Miles companies were very much 'family affair' lead by Frederick G Miles, his wife 'Blossom' Miles (a former socialite) who was 'Chief Draughtsman' and brother George H Miles. The company focussed on light civilian and military aircraft. It was a notably 'inventive' organisation as evidenced by its work on a number government funded or privately/self-funded concepts. One such was the mid 1940's M52 supersonic development aircraft (previously reviewed in a 'Chat') being a world leading concept that was cancelled, then revived by Government vacillation before the Intellectual Property of the design was handed over to the USA in 1946, before a full-scale aircraft flew.

The Museum houses Miles products from its pre and post 1947 bankruptcy periods. Well known military Miles products were the Martinet, target towing aircraft, Master and Magister Trainers and civilian products Gemini twin engined small aircraft, Messenger light aircraft and the Aerovan, a small Short Take Off and Landing transport.

Following the 1947 bankruptcy the assets of the original company were purchased by the Handley-Page company who continued production of the Marathon (Miles M60) a four engined, 20 seat civilian post small airliner and developed the Marathon concept into the marginally successful Handley Page Herald airliner.

The one off 1957 Miles 100 Student single jet powered trainer, which was constructed and evaluated for RAF use but losing out to the Hunting Percival Jet Provost, is also on display.

In addition to single examples of individual aircraft the museum contains extensive archive material.

Additionally, the museum houses products and information from two further aviation businesses that were based in Berkshire, those being Fairey Aviation (Flight Test centre) and ML Engineering both of whom were based at White Waltham Airfield. The experimental Fairey Jet Gyrodyne, being a composite helicopter and autogyro aircraft incorporating propulsive jets at the blade tips (being the precursor of the prototype Fairey Rotodyne commuter transport) is displayed as is an example of a naval Fairey Gannet carrier based Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) aircraft of the 1950/60's.

ML Aviation, founded in the 1930's, was essentially a specialist aviation design business that undertook 'special' projects and subcontract activities. The history of the company is to be found in the book 'ML Aviation A Secret World' the title of which accurately describes its activities. A few examples of ML Aviation output are to be found on display.



**Miles Student**



**prototype**

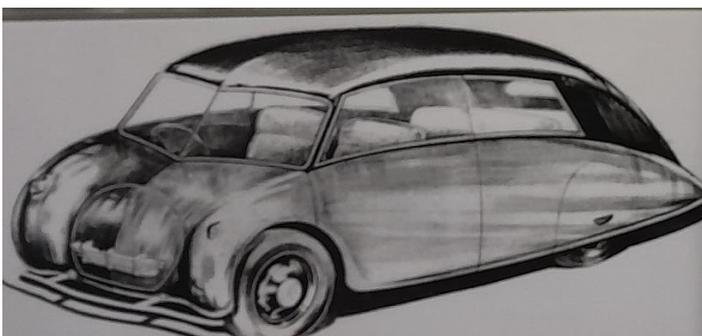


**Fairey Gyrodyne**



**Miles Aerovan**

The Museum archives also contained a sketch and specification of an unbuilt 4-seater post, WW2, Miles passenger car.



**Construction:** Welded tubular chassis and body framework clad in plastic panels.

**Engine:** 850cc, 25hp flat four. Rear mounted.

**Gearbox:** 4 speeds (with reverse).

**Suspension:** Coil springs all round with Oleo legs or coil springs incorporating hydraulic dampers.

**Dimensions:** Wheelbase 6'6", Width 4'7" Weight 10 cwt.

## The March Mystery Car.

The March Mystery Car was a 'continuation' Alvis TD21 Graber Super Coupe manufactured by the Alvis Car Company, based in Kenilworth. The TD 21 was originally manufactured in both Coupe and Drophead form and the 'continuation' versions will also be available in both styles.

Founded in 1927, Carrosserie Hermann Graber, based in Wichtrach, Switzerland provided coachbuilt styling for European small batch car manufacturers until the founders' death in 1970. Between 1955 and 1967 all Alvis cars were built to Graber designs. The TD21, et seq, series was introduced in 1958 and the cars were developed on an incremental basis until production ceased in 1967. Hand crafted bodies were produced not only by Graber but also by Park Ward/Mulliner Park Ward in the UK. In total 1531 similarly styled cars were produced.



By 1967 the cost of an Alvis car had become uncompetitive in the market given that, typically, it was approximately twice that of a comparable Jaguar. The 'continuation' series is closely based on a special body style manufactured, in small quantity, only by Graber from around 1961. It is identifiable by the distinctive elongated grille in place of the more traditional 'perpendicular' Alvis styling otherwise employed.

The car is powered by 3 litre straight six engine of original design updated to ensure compliance current emission standards. The engines come from Alvis stock manufactured in the 1960's. The body construction consists of an ash frame clad in mounted aluminium alloy paneling mounted on a galvanised space frame chassis. Each car takes one year to manufacture using 'traditional' craft skills.

When Alvis car production ceased in 1967, Rover Cars owned the company. In 1968, with the agreement of Rover, a group of former employees formed the 'Red Triangle' Company as a specialist business created to service existing Alvis cars. All Alvis intellectual property and stock components were transferred to Red Triangle at that time.

Also in 1967, production of Alvis 'Leonides' 9 and 14-cylinder Radial Aero engines also ceased after a production span of 20 years. The significant remaining Alvis Military Vehicle business became a part of and was disposed of by British Leyland, and via subsequent mergers with and acquisitions of defence business owned by Vickers and GKN it traded as Alvis Vickers until 2004 when it was acquired by BAE Systems. The Alvis trading name was dropped and in 2009 Red Triangle negotiated the legal transfer of the Alvis trademark which allowed the current Alvis Car Company to be formed.

The original Alvis Company was founded in 1919 and it produced its first car in 1922. The current Alvis Car Company offers three continuation models fitted with the (remanufactured) 4.3 litre fuel injected Alvis engine being the Vanden Plas Tourer, the Bertelli Sports Coupe and the Lancefield Concealed Coupe and two 3.0 litre engines models the Park Ward Drop Head Coupe and the Super Graber featured here.

Production of each continuation model, shown below, will be limited to 25. A typical cost for each is £250,000.



**Alvis Vanden Plas Tourer**



**Alvis Bertelli**



**Alvis Lancefield**



**Alvis Park Ward**



I thank Jim Lott, Andy Rigler, David Webber and Terry Osborne for correctly identifying the March Mystery Alvis car.

### **The June Mystery Car**



A popular 1960's 'entry level' British sports car modified and restyled by a successful Racing driver.

Identity answers to Dick Craddy please: [craddyrichard@gmail.com](mailto:craddyrichard@gmail.com)

### **Vintage Sports Car Club/Historic Sporting Trials Association Wessex Trial.**

With acknowledgement to a report published in June edition of 'The Automobile' magazine, it is pleasing to report that this co-promoted trial event, was held 'on our patch' on 15<sup>th</sup> April.

In 2020 the Historic Sporting Trial Association (HSTA) announced it would develop a new concept called 'Heritage Sporting Trials'. The aim is to attract entries from owners of early post war (pre-1956) trials cars NOT fitted with fiddle brakes, such as the Dellow. These cars are no longer competitive in current historic trials against the Cannons and as the modern classic trials are generally too rough for 60/70-year-old fairly fragile machinery it was felt they should have their own trial.

The event demanded strong navigational skills given that the HSTA events cover more road miles than traditional VSCC events and consequently provide more hill challenges.

Starting with a straightforward challenge at Becks Folly the route used the Burlidge section, an unsurfaced road above Chew Valley Lake, field sections at Shipham, and the well-known Shute Shelve Serpent amongst others. Great views were a feature of the route with the finish at the Crossways Inn, West Huntspill providing a panoramic vista of 'The Levels'.

The winner was Martin Halliday, pictured below in 2022, with his Lotus 6 being the only '6' built for trials.



## **Bentley State Limousines.**

The recent Coronation of King Charles 111 highlighted the unique and immaculate Bentley Limousines frequently seen at Royal ceremonial occasions.



It is known that two of these special vehicles were built by Bentley Motors, Mulliner Coachworks in 2002 as a gift to HM Queen Elizabeth to coincide with her Golden Jubilee. The special body styling is based on the extant Arnage R model albeit with a length of 3,844 mm, a width of 2,000 mm and a height of 1,770 mm the cars are notably larger than the base model and heavier at 3.4 tonnes. The Limousine retains the R-R Bentley the 6,75 litre V8 twin turbo charged petrol engine that produces 400 bhp and provides a top speed of 130 mph via a General Motors Automatic Transmission. The engines run on Biofuel.

The access doors are of the centre closing 'coach style' that open to 90 degrees thereby giving easy access. At the instigation of Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the rear side windows are positioned such that the occupants can be seen without interference of door pillars. The rear panoramic window can be covered to create an opaque effect should that be required.

The body and glass are both armoured, blast resistant and the special Goodyear tyres are Kevlar strengthened. In the event of a gas attack the cabin can be air-tight sealed.

The vehicles are unregistered and always accompanied by a Mercedes V Class that transport 'staff and aides'.

## The Vienna Technical Museum.

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With the good fortune to have an Austrian son in law, the opportunity to visit the Vienna Technical Museum is a highlight. Opened in 1918 the museum contains both traditional historic exhibits but also extensive interactive educational opportunities for visitors.

The museum focusses on major categories that include Nature and Knowledge, Heavy industry, Mass production, Communications, Musical instruments and Transport.

In the latter category the highlights of the exhibition include the Lohner-Porsche electric vehicle, which was awarded the gold medal at the Exposition Universelle of 1900 in Paris, as well as the Siegfried-Marcus car, which, for many years, was considered to be the world's first automobile. On display are also what is probably the world's first fuel cell motorcycle and the last existing coach of a horse-drawn tram as well as the wooden predecessors of the bicycle. Also on display is a recreation of the original Mercedes W196 "Silver Arrow", with which Stirling Moss won the British Grand Prix in 1955 and a scale model of a pre-WW2 Auto-Union type 'C' (designed by Ferdinand Porsche). A display gallery contains indigenous cycles, motorcycles and motor scooters.



**Mercedes W196 recreation**



**Auto-Union 1937 type 'C' scale model.**



The aviation highlights include one of the five Lilienthal gliders that have been preserved worldwide as well as recent lightweight aeroplanes.

## The Siegfried Marcus Car 1875.

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Siegfried Marcus (1833-1898), engineer and manufacturer, lived most of his life in and died in Vienna, leaving his most important legacy — an experimental automobile resembling today's modern car and the oldest extant automobile known worldwide. Marcus' second car, built circa 1875 is believed to be the first vehicle powered by a four-cycle engine and the first to use gasoline as a fuel. It incorporated the first carburettor and the first use of magneto ignition. Marcus' second car, still operable, is now owned by the Austrian Automobile, Motorcycle and Touring Club in Vienna and now on display at the Vienna Technical Museum.



The Siegfried-Marcus car on display in Vienna

## The Lohner-Porsche Electromobile 1900.

From an early age Ferdinand Porsche was fascinated with the potential provided by electrical power. In 1893, when aged 18 years, he joined Vereinigte Elektrizitäts-AG Béla Egger in Vienna and by the age of 22 he had been appointed as head of the testing department.

In 1898, in conjunction with Lohner, an Austrian coachbuilding business, Ferdinand Porsche designed the Egger-Lohner C.2 Phaeton. The vehicle was powered by an octagonal electric motor and with an output of 3 HP it reached a top speed of 25 km/hr. As a career progression, in 1899 he then moved to Lohner where in 1900 he developed an electric wheel hub motor which was incorporated in the first Lohner-Porsche Electromobile. With 2 motors each providing 2.5 HP it reached a top speed of 37 km/h. This innovative vehicle was presented at the Expo in Paris. The Lohner/Porsche justification for the need for a vehicle with an electric motor drive was based on a realisation that petrol driven vehicles were creating excessive pollution!

Then, in 1900, Porsche designed the world's first functional hybrid car, the “Semper Vivus” (Latin for “always alive”). Porsche extended the car's range by not using a battery as an energy source, but instead by using a combustion engine to drive a generator thus supplying the wheel hub motor with electrical energy. The concept was not progressed given that inadequate coachbuilding technology available at the time resulted in an impractical 2 tonne vehicle.

It goes without stating that Porsche was a visionary engineer.



The 1900 Lohner-Porsche Electromobile

## A pictorial insight into Race Retro 2023 -17-

The Annual Race Retro exhibition was held at its traditional venue of the Stoneleigh Agricultural Show Ground, Warwickshire on 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> February. Being 3 years since the last event, the widely held view is that ‘things aren’t not what they were’. The main exhibition hall was familiar but whereas in previous years each stand was aligned with the ‘Race Retro’ theme there was ample evidence that exhibitor ‘take up’ had diminished. Stands were larger and Burger stalls were in evidence which would have otherwise been sited elsewhere. Hall 2, previously a trade stand exhibition, was dominated by a ‘Silverstone Auctions’ event. For many years the Autojumble was housed in a (cold) cattle trading barn but in 2023 was now tented outside – in February! That said there were a number of ‘interesting’ cars and engines etc to enjoy even if some racing cars are now ‘over prepared’. Will I go back next year? Probably ‘yes’ because it is a place for meeting friends and acquaintances but with not too much expectation that the event will recover its former interest. Let’s hope it will. P.S The route to/from car parking was unsigned!



1963 BRM P261. 1.5 Litre F1



1974 Lotus Ford 76. Cosworth 3 litre.



Lancia Delta Integrale



Sunbeam Talbot Lotus



Left: MG K3 supercharged Magnette

Right: 1947 BRM 1.5 litre V16 Mark 1



## SAC Shop

A recent demand for Baseball Hats has prompted the purchase of a new quantity of our popular Navy Blue baseball hats. The current price is £10.20 plus P&P if required. Sweatshirts, in a multiplicity of colours, are also available to individual order.

Please let me know if you wish to make a purchase. I will take some hats to the Tea Party for those interested in acquiring one.



## And finally

With a range of differing events planned I trust that you will find one or other of interest and worthy of your support.

As you are aware I view our 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch to be held at Leigh Court, Abbots Leigh on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to be a particularly important milestone and one which, I hope you will seek to attend. The venue has all the attributes required for a major celebration, especially given that we will be able to display our cars in front of the mansion house.

Please put the date in your diaries.

So, with a reminder that I welcome suggestions for future events and offers of assistance I very much look forward to meeting in the near future.

Best wishes,

*Dick*

Email: [craddyrichard@gmail.com](mailto:craddyrichard@gmail.com)

### SAC Bank Account:

Bank: Lloyds, Account number: 00577513, Sort code: 30.00.01.