

Somerset Automobile Club

Chairmans' Chat

December 2023



Your President, Chairman and Committee wish you a



Merry
Christmas



and a Happy New Year

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since publication of our September Chairmans Chat we have enjoyed three excellent events. Firstly, in September, there was a visit to the Coventry Transport Museum and, in October, a Social Run organised by Phil and Matt that finished at the excellent Old Ship in Luckington. On 26th November we returned to The Batch Country House Hotel in Lympsham where, once again, the food and dining room matched the high standards we now to expect. The Batch never disappoints.

Each of these events is reported below and I particularly thank Jim Lott for the most thorough report of our Coventry visit. I am particularly pleased to report that Jim's contribution is one of eight contributions from members that I am delighted to publish in this edition. This response is particularly pleasing in the light of my encouragement for all of us to consider how best we can ensure that the SAC thrives due to our shared efforts. In my following review of our planned 2024 events, I will offer suggestions of the type of help you may wish to offer in support of the forthcoming year.

In September you were not only invited to complete a straightforward survey about our current format of events but also you were given the opportunity to propose alternative events and activities. While the detailed responses are reported later in this Chat I can confirm that the strong messages received were of support for a 'steady as she goes' future. Support for non-motoring visits such as those to the Underfall Yard/M Shed and Hinkley Point 'C' power station were highlighted. Without becoming a 'tour operator' we will continue that theme.

Please do not rush your reading this 'bumper' Christmas issue. You will, hopefully, find that 'step by step' you will find much to interest you in the following pages.

So, what is planned for our 2024 Events?

Moving on, I am now pleased to outline our 2024 events calendar as agreed at the very recent meeting of your Committee. The basics are in place for 8 and possibly 9 events which, experience indicates is a manageable number.

Wednesday 6th March. Visit to the Boscombe Down Aviation Centre, near Salsbury, which has been the centre of Experimental Aviation in the UK from around 1940. A coach trip is planned given that a sensible route from Chipping Sodbury is 70 miles. Coach trips are sociable but require a subsidy and while we seek to minimise that cost, we can afford one each year.

Wednesday 3rd April. AGM and Lunch. We return to The Batch at Lympsham for this annual event. While the formalities are my responsibility, I would welcome a volunteer to co-ordinate the attendees menu choices. With this is an opportunity to contribute in a straightforward way. Please let me know if you can help.

Sunday 16th June: 120th Anniversary Celebration at Leigh Court, Leigh Woods. I have no doubt that this event is now firmly in your diary. Detailed planning will start in the New Year and more information to follow. This is an event where your assistance will be very welcome. Please let me know if you can help. It will be an occasion not to be missed.

Thursday 8th August: Annual Picnic. On 3 occasions have had the very good fortune to enjoy our annual Picnic at Camers, Old Sodbury courtesy of the Denman family. In 2024, however, we will take a change of scene and a reservation has been made at Wyndcliffe Court, St Arvans which is, as we know just adjacent to Chepstow Racecourse. Wyndcliffe Court is an Edwardian Manor House with sculptured gardens which, on occasion, hosts talks and lectures by notable UK gardening experts. We will have sole occupancy. In addition, the owner, Antony Clay, is 'kindred spirit' having been a recent competitor in the Historic London to Monte Carlo Rally run. See: <https://www.wyndcliffecourt.com/>

Thursday 5th September. A Morning tour of Thatchers Cider, Sandford followed by a lunch in a local pub. This is absolutely not a motoring event! Can you help?

Thursday 3rd October: Social Run and Lunch organised by Andy Rigler. Once again we will return to the Severn Vale for a substantially revised route from his severely Covid interrupted run of 2021.

Sunday 24th November: Autumn Lunch. We return to The Batch at Lympsham, on this occasion, it will not be the final event of the year because we are to visit on

Thursday 12th and/or Thursday 17th December a visit to the Urbaser 'Gloucestershire Energy from Waste' facility. This is the strangely shaped building to the side of the M5 motorway at Moreton Valance near Gloucester, which houses an electricity generating power Station fueled by non-recyclable domestic waste. Again, taking the theme of non-motoring visits this is an opportunity, interesting to all, that should not be missed. Bookings have to be made significantly in advance and these two dates were the earliest opportunity available to me. Parties are of 15 maximum and in anticipation of strong interest I have made two bookings.

While we have planned an adequately complete and well-balanced events calendar for 2024 addition, there is the opportunity for an optional additional event in early May. This could be a Social Run or Visit supported by a Lunch. Recently the organisation of Social Runs has been shared whereby one member has organised the Run and another the Lunch. This could be an additional opportunity to contribute should you wish. Please let me know if you have any ideas. I'm sure it will not be refused.

So, hopefully you can now understand why I retain my enthusiasm for the SAC and what it can provide for us. But please do not forget that these events will not be held without your support. Please don't look to others to act if you are able to help.

A 2024 Fixture Card is circulated with this edition.

Membership Renewals

Please do not forget that your membership renewal will be **due from 1st January**. Hopefully you are encouraged to continue your membership and have set up a Standing Order direct into the SAC Account: 00577513, Sort code: 30.00.01 to that effect. Please mark your transfer 'Membership'.

Past Events:

Social Run and Lunch. Thursday 21st September:

Organised by Phil Rumney, with Matt's support we gathered for coffee at The Compass Inn, Tormarton 15 cars and 25 members enjoyed an excellent 30-mile route in South Gloucestershire and adjacent Wiltshire before arriving at The Old Ship at Luckington. We had been allocated their delightful dining room for our equally fine and prompt, pre-ordered lunch serving.

My particular thanks are due to Phil who has been partially incapacitated following a recent operation on his right wrist.

A most enjoyable event as illustrated by the following photos.

September Social Run photos with thanks to Matt.



Starting with coffee at



- The Compass Inn, Tormarton



We were fortunate to enjoy super weather



Views of the 'Old Ship' at Luckington Dining Room



Visit to Coventry Museum of Transport 4th October 2023. Report and photos by Jim Lott

We arrived at the Museum after a trouble-free coach journey. We were in plenty of time to meet our guide, who started off with the history of cycle manufacture in Coventry. Pierre Michaux and his son Ernest presented their pedal-driven velocipede in the 1860s. The best evidence indicates that they built it in Paris in early 1864.

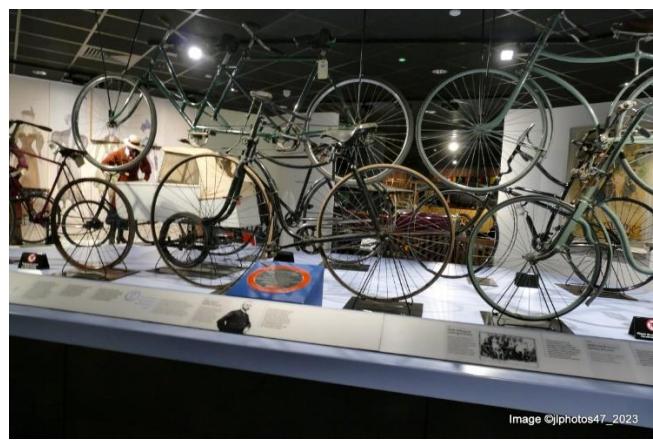
Major bicycle production in Britain began in 1868, when Rowley B. Turner took a Michaux bicycle to Britain and showed it to his uncle, Josiah Turner, manager of the Coventry Sewing Machine Company. Rowley Turner ordered 400 machines, which were to be manufactured and sold in Britain and France. Although the French sales were ultimately lost because of the war there, the British market easily absorbed the entire batch. These early bicycles were called boneshakers because it was uncomfortable to ride.



This is an early "Bone Shaker" like the one Rowley B Turner showed to his uncle, Josiah Turner. These Boneshakers evolved into the "Ordinary Bicycle" designed by James Starley, which we now refer to as the 'Penny Farthing', this is due to the 48" front wheel and a 30" rear wheel. Mounting and riding one of these machines is a fine skill that a few people still have.



A James Starley, Ordinary Bicycle (Penny Farthing)



Typical early Safety Bicycles.

Cycle development continued until the familiar "Safety Bicycle" was designed. The essential features of the safety bicycle were, spoked wheels roughly 30 inches in diameter, a chain-driven rear wheel with the front chainwheel roughly twice as large as the rear sprocket, a low centre of gravity, and direct front steering. Safety bicycles had decisive advantages in stability, braking, and ease of mounting over the Ordinary Bicycle.

The first bicycle to provide all these features and to achieve market acceptance was the 1885 Rover Safety, designed by John Kemp Starley (James Starley's nephew). After the Rover pattern took over the market in the late 1880s, safety bicycles were simply called bicycles.

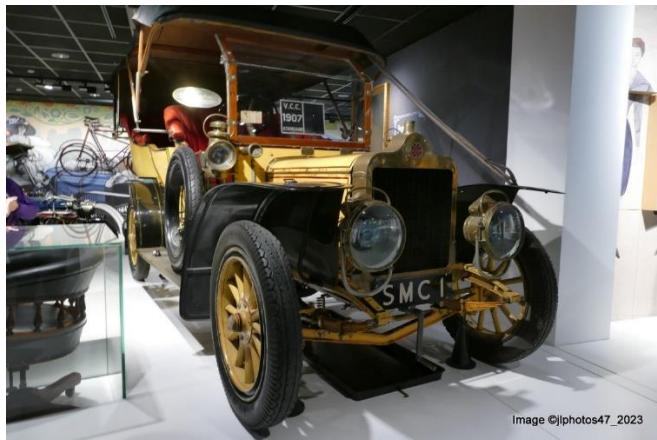
Coventry Car Production

The first motor car built in Coventry was an 1898 Daimler Phaeton. This was built at the first Car Factory in Britain, The Motor Mills in Drapers Field, Coventry. Set up by Harry Lawson in 1896.

After the Motor Mills factory was built, over 50 vehicle manufacturers have established production bases in Coventry between the start of the 20th century and the 1930s with names such as Jaguar, Armstrong Siddeley, Alvis, Hillman, Standard, Triumph, Singer, Humber, Lanchester and Rover, among many others.



1898 Daimler Phaeton



1906 Standard motor car, the oldest surviving Standard known.



1908 Riley Tourer 12/18



1920 Alvis 10/30 Tourer. This is oldest surviving Alvis



1921 Rover 12hp Tourer.



1935 Riley Kestrel.

The Riley Kestrel had a Wilson Pre-Selector gearbox and centrifugal flywheel. It is a special car to me as in 1959, my father bought one from a scrapyard for £20, for us (Mum, Dad, my 2 brothers, my sister and me) to go on holiday. After spending a couple of weeks painting the car and making it presentable, we duly set off to a caravan site in Norfolk (from Essex) where I was allowed to drive it around the site. I was 12 at the time. Although it was supposed to be just for the holiday, my dad kept the car on the road for several years after. The body panels were aluminium on an Ash frame, but the wings and rear mudguards were steel. I still remember that it had inflatable cushions under the leather covers on the seat bases.

Triumph started making motor-cycles in Coventry, this is a Model H, which when used in the first world war was so reliable it became known as the 'Trusty Triumph'.



Trusty Triumph (Model H)

During the second World War, car production switched to military vehicles.



1943 Daimler Armoured Car.

It weighs 7 tons and has a 4095cc straight 6 engine and with a top speed of 41mph uses 1 gallon every 4 miles.

After the war, car production started again.



1948 Standard Vanguard.



1960 Hillman Minx with an "Easidrive" automatic gearbox.

The Standard Vanguard was the 1st production car after the war, the design was based on the lines of American cars of that time.

The Hillman Minx is another nostalgic car for me as my first car was a 1953 Hillman Minx manual version (with a column change and bench front seat) which I traded in for one of these, a 1965, but a manual, rather than the 'Easidrive'.



1976 Triumph Stag. V8 power.



1974 Rover P6 2200



Hillman Imp.



Lady Diana Spencer's 1980 Austin Mini Metro.

Imp. The Imp is another one from my past. My dad had one and sold it after a few years, then bought it back so my brother could learn to drive in it, then sold it again and bought it back again so my youngest brother could learn to drive in it. A proper yo-yo car.

Metro. As you probably know I have a liking for the Metro having had an Austin, an MG and now I have an MG Turbo. But this is a very special Metro as it belonged to Lady Diana Spencer, who was given the car as a present by Prince Charles after he took a test drive in one at the cars launch at Longbridge in 1980.

Jaguar Cars

There is a considerable collection of Jaguar cars in the museum due to the Coventry association. The company started as SS Cars (Swallow Special) part of the Swallow Sidecar Company founded in 1922 by William Lyons and William Walmsley. SS cars, wholly owned by Lyons after Walmsley sold out, manufactured special bodies for existing cars, such as the Austin 7 and had an association with Standard Cars, many of which bore the Jaguar name. The S.S. Cars shareholders in a 1945 general meeting agreed to change the company's name to Jaguar Cars Limited. Said chairman William Lyons "Unlike S. S. the name Jaguar is distinctive and cannot be connected or confused with any similar foreign name."



1929 Austin Seven Swallow



1930 Standard Swallow. This used a Chassis made by the Standard Company and coachwork by SS Cars Ltd.



I think this is my favourite car in the Jaguar collection, an XK120, just a beautiful looking car.

Autumn Lunch, held at the Batch Country Hotel, Lympsham. Sunday 26th November.

We returned to The Batch with the confidence that we would not be disappointed by either the lunch or service. The venue is very popular and suitable for our dining events and we have booked both our AGM on 4th April and Autumn Lunch on 24th November 2024. A pleasing gathering of 43 members supported this increasingly popular gathering.

After we had enjoyed our promptly served lunch I was pleased to be able to outline our 2024 Events Calendar.



June Smith, Trevor Postle, Robin Smith, Howard Pearce



Jane Harris, Phil Rumney, Sam Rumney



Arnold Denman, Terry Osborne, Bob Crabb



Jill Rumney, Julia Postle



John Moore, Robert Woolley



**Pauline Gullick, Roy Bird,
Harry and Pat Crowther**



**Mary Craddy, Sally Pearce,
Meinir Perrin**





Members Cars: Paul Sherlock.

I still remember, very clearly, seeing an engine block on the kitchen table at home when I was a boy and I also remember being taken to several National Car Shows in London. So, I guess, it's not surprising that I would grow up interested in cars.

When I was 16, I bought a 1934 Wolseley Hornet Special that I still own. It was not running so it went to my Dad's garage with plans to build it in the future. That future became when I retired and it's still only half built.

I was an apprenticed engineer at Rolls-Royce in Patchway and some of my friends there had an interest in cars. One of my friends had a 1932 Lagonda (one of his father's cars I think) and some are still friends. I also knew John Harris when he bought his 1926 Bentley. We had planned that the Lagonda was going to be our means of transport to climb the 3 highest peaks in the UK but in the end, we only managed to go to the Lakes and go up Scafell Pike-twice!

The first car that was mine to own and drive was a 1955 TR2 (JBW 808). My girlfriend, now Jackie my wife, and I drove it to Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy on a camping holiday. The car went like a dream. I got very attached to TR's and had this one on the road for 10 years. After that it deteriorated in a garage as my job took me more and more overseas.

After we were married, we went, for 2 years, on a Voluntary Service Overseas scheme to Sierra Leone in West Africa and when we returned the Red TR2, which had been stored, was still running. I used it for another 5 years. We also became interested in Austin 7's and we bought a Light Blue 1934 car. It was this car that my son became very interested in and he now has three Austin 7's including a 1927 car that he still drives.

My career progressed and I became employed as an Engineer with Oxfam for 37 years and by UNICEF for 7 years. During that time the TR ended up in a friends garage the fell on it! The car rusted away but I still have the steering wheel, gearbox and dashboard of that car.



My transport while overseas was almost always in Land Rovers. I had a selection in many of the countries in which I worked. The photo shows one on my favorites in the Sudan.

When I came back from the second Middle East Gulf war my sons suggested that I should buy another TR as I was always saying that when I retire I will but one. They said that retirement will be too late to enjoy it. So, I bought a nice British Racing Green TR3A (GSU 319) that is the one I still have and use.



The 1934 Wolseley Hornet was moved from my Dad's garage to one that I rented. I have been a member of the Wolseley Hornet Special Club for at least 40 years but given that the car was still not roadworthy, I felt that I needed a Hornet that I could drive to meetings instead of going as a spectator. So, after I retired, I bought another 1934 Hornet Special which is shown here.



My second Wolseley Hornet Special



Enjoying driving John Harris's 1926 3 Litre Bentley

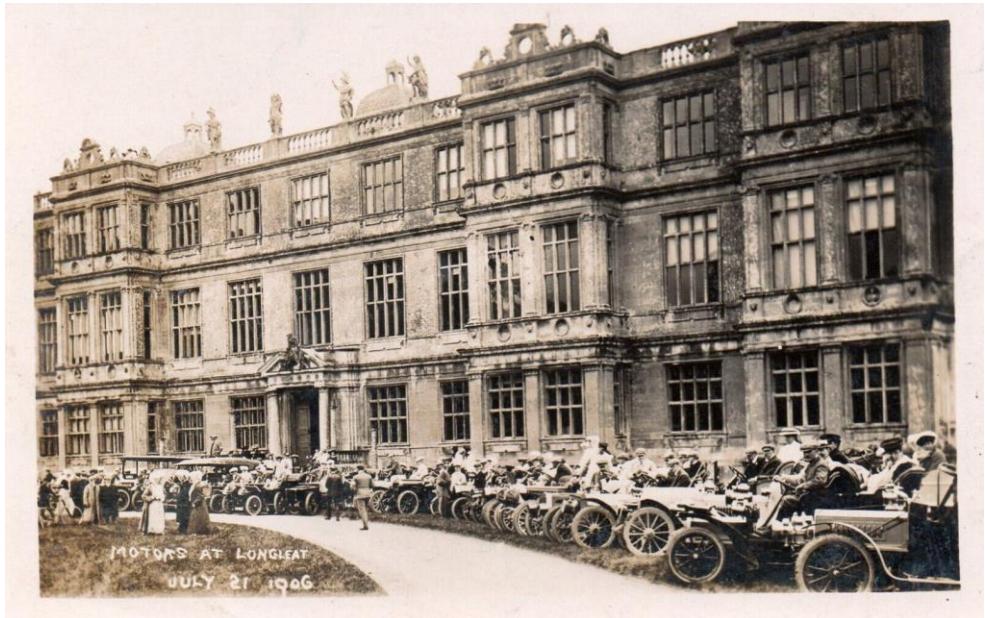
Keeping two cars going, the TR and the Hornet, takes a lot of time so I tend to keep both running cars on the road and 'do a bit' on the other Hornet when I have time.

Robert Woolley. Remote Filling Station: Taken in Spitzbergen where they evidently can't spell!



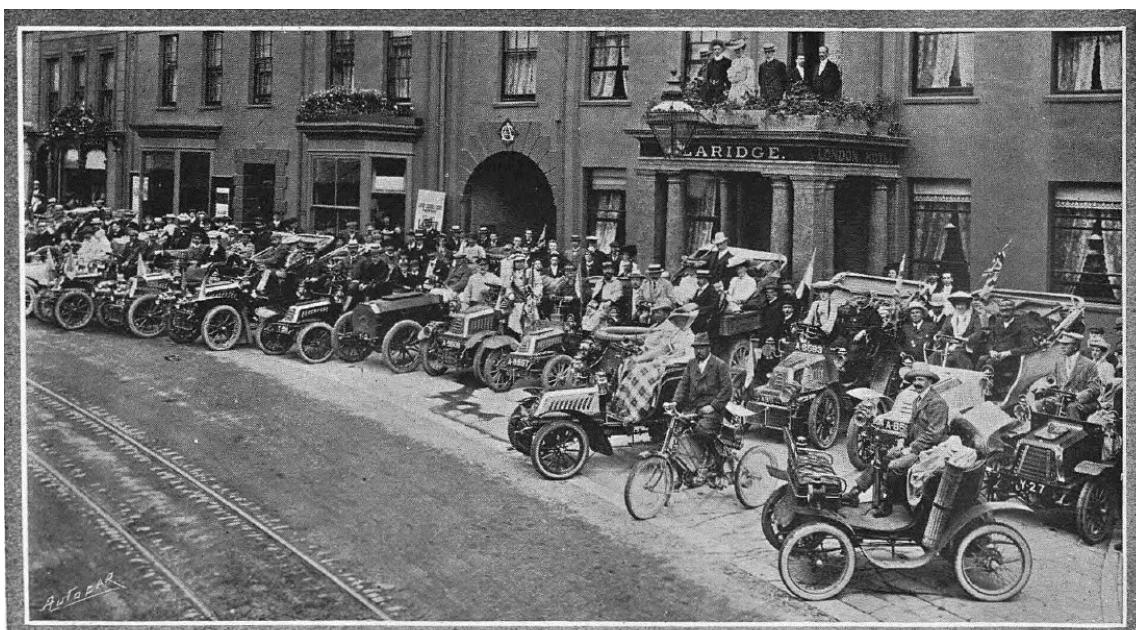
Somerset Automobile Club at Longleat in 1906. A Mystery?

I thank Pete Stowe for making me aware that a postcard claiming to illustrate a gathering of the SAC at Longleat on 21st July 1906 became available on eBay recently. I bid £12 but it was eventually purchased for £25.50.



As you can see I was able to 'cut and paste' the image as shown here. This is the second time that an image of SAC activities has been purchased recently. Killens, the Auctioneers, who disposed of the contents of Ston Easton Manor a few months ago, catalogued a framed copy of the 'well known' 1904 image, claimed to be of the inaugural SAC gathering, taken of 'the visit by French Tourists' taken in front of Claridge's Hotel, Taunton on 21st July 1904. Is there a mystery buyer?

The framed 1904 photo, below, was presented to the then owners of Ston Easton by John Roland-Hosbonds a former SAC President.



Photograph by

The meeting of the Somerset A.C. and the De Dion tourists at Taunton.

Montague Cooper.

It should not be a surprise that at least one car illustrated in the 1906 photo appears in the 1904 photo and that, in itself, need not cast doubt on coincidence of the 21st July date. Perhaps the SAC had a policy of meeting that date being close to the anniversary of its foundation.

As a corollary to this coincidence David Webber recently produced the 1904 photo from a contemporary Taunton publication which claimed it was of a Taunton District Motor-Cycle Club gathering in 1906! Once again my thanks to Pete Stowe for clarifying that the Taunton Club was not formed until 1911!

The 21st July 1904 gathering was reported by The Autocar on 30th July 1904.

The Original Horsepower.

A report by John Harris.

This year the British National Ploughing Championship took place at Bishops Lydeard near Taunton at a beautiful venue with far reaching views of the Quantock Hills and trees resplendent in the glory of Autumn colours.

My interest is to watch and admire the ploughing teams which came from all parts of the UK. To see the docile, enormous Clydesdale and Shire horses silently and almost without instruction plod tirelessly up and down a perfectly straight furrow is a wonderful ancient sight.



There is great competition between the teams to be the best working pair and the best decorated pair – this needs a lot of Brasso, elbow grease and a very early start to prepare the brasses and fine shining harnesses. A team of two horses can plough about 2 acres a day, whereas a giant 600 horsepower modern tractor will plough 20 acres an hour!



Early mechanised equipment shared the showground



Which was somewhat waterlogged!

Farming and ploughing is perhaps the oldest industry in the world dating back tens of thousands of years, when man discovered crops would grow in soil that had been disturbed. We know that 4000 years ago the Greeks and Egyptians developed primitive ploughs pulled by camels, oxen and even elephants.

Is there a future for the ancient art of ploughing? The practice of 'no plough' arable farming is gaining momentum with the modern powerful tractors capable of preparing seed beds and planting a crop in just one operation.

The Westland Lysander.

The Lysander played a significant role during WW2 but not when deployed in a role for which it was initially intended.

It was designed against an Operational Requirement, issued in 1934, which specified an aircraft that could provide 2 seat observation and photo reconnaissance duties behind enemy lines. Operation from rough terrain and improvised runways was a necessary additional requirement.

Designed in Yeovil by Arthur Davenport and W E W (Teddy) Petter (subsequently noted for his design leadership of the English Electric Canberra bomber and the P1 Lightning interceptor prototype, and the Folland Midge and Gnat fighters) the Lysander was selected in preference to proposals from the Bristol, Avro and Hawker companies. It initially flew in June 1936 and entered RAF service in 1938.

The design approach employed by Davenport and Petter commenced by seeking and ranking service pilots preferred handling and flying characteristics. That survey indicated that short take-off and landing, stable and predictable handling at low flying speeds combined with good visibility were essential elements if the design was to be successful.

The construction of the Lysander was innovative. It was lightweight, 6,330lbs, if bulky. A fabric covered tubular fuselage incorporating a light alloy (duralumin) forward fuselage, high mounted wings, constructed from wood, and a fixed undercarriage comprised the basic elements. The 50-foot span wings incorporated automatically deployed inner and outer slats. Slats, fitted to the leading edge of wings and when extended, allow the aircraft to operate at an increased 'angle of attack' which in turn lowers the stall speed and provides improved short take off capability.

Power was provided by a Bristol Mercury nine Cylinder Radial engine equipped with 4 valves/cylinder and a 3 bladed propellor. The aircraft was thus considered to be 'powerful' which complimented the STOL capability requirement.

Basic performance provided a maximum speed of 212 mph and a 600-mile range. The stall speed was 65mph. The ceiling height was 21,500 feet.



The aircraft was developed during its service life as operational experience was gained. In the early stages of WW2, it was deployed with the British Expeditionary Force, operating in France, when it operated over enemy territory in France and Belgium. Regrettably, while being adjudged to be an effective observation plane it was vulnerable to the Luftwaffe due to its slow speed and bulk. Statistics record that 175 aircraft were sent to France of which 88 were shot down. In addition, during the May/June 1940 Dunkirk evacuation 14 of the 16 deployed in support were also shot down.

The Lysander was therefore deemed to be 'not fit for purpose' and was promptly relegated to light transport, search and rescue and target towing duties.

However, in July 1940 the British 'Special Operations executive' was formed with the remit to execute espionage and intelligence gathering missions in France. Specially recruited agents were employed and initially deployed by parachute drops. However, the rugged and STOL capability of the Lysander was readily recognised given its ability to land and take-off from small and improvised rough fields adapted and designated for the purpose. A developed Mk3 version was specifically designed for the purpose of delivering SOE personnel (spies) and returning British aircrew and other military personnel back to the UK. Given that these operations were undertaken at night the flights were scheduled to be on or around full moon. (The book 'We landed by moonlight' is a worthwhile read).

While those operations were very risky, they were equally very effective in delivering 101 SOE agents, ammunition, radio equipment and other essential supplies to Resistance personnel and returning 128 from German occupied France from 1942 to 1944 when France was liberated.

The Lysander was also operated by Free French forces, in Canada, where subcontract of 225 examples were manufactured, Finland and Burma.

The Lysander was 'struck off charge' in 1946 when 1,786 examples had been built.

As you can see it played a very successful and significant role in clandestine activity in support of the success of Resistance forces in frustrating Nazi operations in occupied France.

The Graham Hill Memorabilia Auction.

On 4th November, Sotheby's auctioned a collection of 59 items of memorabilia released by Graham Hill's family. The auction raised £470,000.

As we know Graham was the F1 World Champion 2 times, in 1962 and 1968 and uniquely he also won the Le Mans 24 Hour race and the Indianapolis 500. A feat that has not been repeated. He won the prestigious Monaco Grand Prix 5 times. Hill was killed in an air crash, when piloting his private Piper plane, in 1975. The it is reported that the aircraft was unregistered and that Hill's pilots licence is also reported to have expired.

The top-selling lot of the auction was a Formula 1 Bell manufactured helmet used by Graham Hill in the latter period of his racing career. It made £138,000.

The first-place trophy awarded following his victory in the 1969 Monaco Grand Prix made £81,600.



Interestingly, the collection included a letter from Lord Mountbatten regarding a posthumous Knighthood.

I thank John Harris for providing the catalogue illustrated here.

 | Sotheby's
**THE
GRAHAM HILL COLLECTION**

The AMZ 'Mythen' Electric Speed Record Breaking Car.

The Academic Sports Car Club of Zurich (AMZ), which takes its membership from two Swiss Universities (ETH Zurich and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts), has a strong history in the field of record breaking with electric cars.

On 1st September 2023, the 'Mythen' became the third AMZ car to hold the 0-100 km/h electric car elapsed time record when it achieved the first sub-one second time of 0.956 seconds. The distance covered was 12.3 meters, which for comparison is 50% of the length of a cricket pitch. The 'Mythen' benefitted from the characteristic provided by electric –

motors which provide instantaneous 'high' torque from the start. An internal combustion engine powered car could not match that performance characteristic and would, therefore, be unable to challenge this result.

Previous AMZ designs had set the record in 2014 and 2016. However, during that period the AMZ group has been in competition with the University of Stuttgart's 'Greenteam' which set challenging records of 1.779 seconds in 2015 and 1.460 seconds in September 2022. The Greenteam is supported by Bosch and has undertaken its record breaking on the test track of the Robert Bosch Research Campus in Renningen.

The competition evolved from the UK I.MechE Formula Student programme, being deemed to be the most established European engineering competition, which seeks to encourage students to develop enterprising and innovative solutions to complex technical challenges. Conventional internal combustion engines power Formula Student cars. The scope of the programme develops an understanding of design and technical analysis, construction and development together with project management and budgetary control within strict timescales prior to a final demonstration in a competition environment.

With the challenge of 1.779 seconds having been set, the AMZ club members regrouped to design and construct an entirely new car. It was a major and demanding challenge for the students given it required concentrated technical and time commitment which had to be undertaken in addition to their studies.



With the likely exception of the tyres, the AMZ students designed all of the component parts of the vehicle. As you can see from the photo, the car is not equipped with aerodynamic front and rear wings which have become 'the norm' for single seat competition vehicles. The reason for this apparent omission is because the car incorporates an efficient vacuum pump system which provides an equally distributed suction force across the underside of the chassis thereby providing the necessary downforce.

The scope of the items designed by the AMZ team incorporated:

- A lightweight carbon fibre and aluminium chassis, bodywork and suspension.
- The powertrain comprising the AMZ designed electric hub motors and control electronics. The motors installed on each wheel axle develop a total of 240 kilowatts/326 hp.
- The battery-pack.
- The vacuum pump and associated piping system.

The total weight of the widely sponsored car is 140kgs/310lbs.

Kate Maggetti, being one of the team, was selected to drive the car on the 1stSeptember record setting run which was held at the Swiss Innovation Park at Duebendorf, Zurich.

In a competition where marginal improvements are difficult to achieve the 0.956 second time beat the previous record by a margin of one-third. This impressive performance has deservedly been recognised by the Guiness Book of Records.

Seen at the 'Classic Motor Hub', Bibury, in November.



1938 Delahaye 135 MS
Figoni et Falaschi style body



1931 Talbot 90.
First owned by Goldie Gardner



1949 MG TC
Gammon Special



Maserati A6GCS Monofaro
Restored. As raced by Fangio



1933 Alvis Speed 20 SA
Cross and Ellis Long Wing Tourer



1956 OSCA MT4
1.5 litre, 110 hp twin cam engine

Le Raid des Barouders: Rallye des Balkans 2023.

At a cost of 7,900 euros/person, with a minimum of 2 occupants/car, the 2023 Rallye des Balkans' was advertised as providing a route where the participants would enjoy the 'Splendeurs et Joyaux des Balkans'. It was organised by Le Raid des Barouders, being a French motoring tour operator base in the Sarthe, around 15 miles north-west of Le Mans. It is the equivalent of the British HERO (Historic Endurance Rally Organisation)/ERA who are, *inter alia*, organisers of Le Jog. Both organisations provide entries into common events such as Pekin/Paris. The Rallye des Balkans was a solely a 'Barodeurs' event. In addition, in 2023, the 'Barodeurs' offered endurance rallies in the USA (New York to Key West), France, Portugal, Pekin/Paris, and the Andes.

When enjoying a Small Yacht Cruise on the Aegean in May, the opportunity to visit Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, was not to be missed. We will recall that the famous 'Stari Most' town bridge, that spans the river Neretva River in the centre of Mostar (constructed, by the Ottomans, in the 16th and 17th centuries), was destroyed in the national conflict in the 1990's. It has now been reconstructed and was 'reopened' by the then Prince of Wales in July 2004. The area is a tourist favourite given the environment and buildings of Ottoman/Turkish origin. The bridge is a 'cliff diving' site!



Lasting from 13th May to 2nd June and covering 5,000 kms, the rally started and finished in Lyon. En route it visited Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro then a return to Croatia allowed the day visit to Bosnia before returning via Italy to return to Lyon.

The entrants cars were 'regular' modern classic road going vehicles as can be seen from these few photos taken in the town car park.



The Unibus Scooter

In common with all companies directly or indirectly contracted to support the 'war effort', at the end of WW1 the Gloster Aircraft Company was faced with an abrupt decline in orders. For companies to survive and eventually thrive there was a need to ensure the maintenance of their skill base by looking beyond aviation.

To meet this challenge, the Gloster company decided to embark on a programme to design and manufacture a motor scooter. Harold Dalton Boutlbee*, a senior designer at the GAC as given the task and the result was an attractively styled machine that employed a steel chassis clad in an aluminium body. Powered by a 269cc Villiers 2-stroke engine, fitted with a 2-speed gearbox and leaf spring suspension, both front and rear, it could achieve a top speed of 24mph.



Regrettably at a price of 90 guineas, later reduced to 75 pounds, the Unibus was too expensive and only a 'handful' were manufactured before the project was abandoned.

One of 3 surviving examples can be seen at the Jet Age Museum, Staverton, Cheltenham.

E-Scooters. Use and ownership.

Simple guidance with acknowledgement to the Lifeskills Training Centre, Hotwells, Bristol:

Privately owned scooters:

- Anybody can own an E-Scooter.
- Private E-Scooters can be used only on private land.
- It is illegal to ride privately owned E-Scooters on public roads and paths.

Hired E-Scooters:

- To hire an E-Scooter you should be over 16 (Avon 18) and hold a full or provisional driving licence.
- Only authorised hire scooters can be used on public roads.

Passengers are not allowed.

E-Scooter batteries.

- Follow storage instructions.
- Don't charge overnight or leave the charging unattended.
- Use the correct charger.

September Mystery Cars.

In the September Chairmans Chat I published two Mystery Car challenges.

Mystery Car 1 one was.

The MGS-VR



I thank Edward Kirkland for not only responding with the correct answer but also with a succinct history.

I suspect I will not be alone amongst the club's MG fraternity in identifying Mystery Car no. 1 as the MG SV- R. I think it differs externally from its sister MG SV by its large rear spoiler although I stand to be corrected on this detail.

The MG SV-R was an evolutionary car having started life as the De Tomaso Bigua in 1996, evolving then into the Mangusta, then owned by Qvale Automotive and was finally acquired by MG Rover in 2003. The car then underwent a significant redesign by Peter Stevens, best known as the designer of the McLaren F1. Sadly, with MG Rover going into administration in 2005, production of the MGSV ended with only 40 SVs and 42 SV-Rs having been built. It has been suggested that a very small number of cars were built after the demise of MG Rover using parts remaining after official production ended.

The slow decline of the substantial British motor industry, from the troubles of BMC (Austin/Morris) formed in 1952, continued during subsequent ownership by British Leyland (1968 to 1986), British Aerospace and BMW, is admirably told by/at the Coventry Transport Museum.

The infamous Phoenix consortium, led by former Perkins Engines graduate trainee John Towers, purchased, for £10, the unretained parts of the BMW UK business in May 2000 when BMW focussed solely on the design/development and production of the 'new' Mini at their Cowley, Oxford facility. It is important to note that the MG Rover company was formed as a 'volume' car production business. Regrettably, it did not have adequate engineering design capability, and possibly cash, to introduce new models in a timely manner. These difficulties contributed to the decision to import, from India, a small from Tata styled as the City Rover and a failure to bring a Rover 200 replacement car to the market. The latter is variously reported to have subsequently appeared, under Chinese ownership, as the MG 6 which was initially built at Longbridge, Birmingham.

The MG Rover company entered administration in April 2005.

This collapse sealed the demise and the MG SV-R. Regrettably the decision to purchase the Qvale Mangusta project is an illustration of questionable strategic thinking on the part of MG Rover. With limited cash and capability to produce 'volume' cars, for which it was formed, the focus on the 'high end' MG SV/SVR appears, in retrospect, to be flawed. The opportunity may have appeared to have provided an economic entry into a market segment defined in MG's long-term plan but the timing was unfortunate. Perhaps the opportunity to purchase the project should have been declined. The MG SV project became a complex multi-national endeavour with prototyping being undertaken in Sweden, component manufacture in both Italy and the UK, assembly in Italy and finishing/trimming in the UK. The body was innovative and incorporated carbon fibre panels.

The basic specification of the two models was:

	Engine	Capacity	Power output	0-60 mph	Top speed
MG SV	Ford V8	4.6 litres	320 bhp	5.3 secs	165 mph
MG SV-R	Ford V8 tuned	5.0 litres	385 bhp	4.9 secs	175 mph

Both had the option of either manual or automatic transmission.

Regrettably accurate records are in doubt total sales of 82 models of which 9 were the SV model are generally accepted.

While due to timing the true potential of the car was never realised perhaps it was a case of 'how if not when not to do it'.

Mystery car 2 was:

The AC Ace.

The space frame mystery car was the AC Ace. The 'mystery' photograph was taken in the workshop yard of Redditch Shotblasting in March when I visited in order to have the wire wheels of my MGB GT renovated. In the yard, alongside was the body shell of a Ford Escort Mk2.



The AC Ace was introduced onto the market in 1953 along with, in 1954, the AC Aceca being a coupe version with hatch back styling. Designed by the notable chassis engineer, John Tojeiro, the Ace was a 2-seat sports car built, as pictured, on the tubular space frame chassis which featured two distinctive longitudinal round tubes. The Ace was innovative given the adoption of transverse leaf spring independent suspension and was initially equipped with drum brakes front and rear. However, in 1960 front disc brakes were standardised, having previously been an optional fitting.



Tim Pearce racing his AC Ace Bristol

Initially, the car was powered by the aged 85/100bhp AC 6-cylinder engine which provided 100mph+ capability. The engine was subsequently substituted by either a 6-cylinder 129 bhp 2.0 litre or 2.2 litre Bristol engine giving increased performance with a claimed maximum of 116 mph. The Bristol engines were based on the pre-war BMW M328 engine. Towards the end of production, a Ruddspeed tuned 170bhp in-line 6-cylinder Ford (Dagenham) 2.6 litre engine was fitted. Some of those were fitted with the desirable 'Raymond Mays (BRM) cylinder head. Production ceased in 1963 by which time the car had been developed into the Shelby American inspired Cobra which was initially fitted with a 4.7 litre Ford 8 before the 7-litre version was also made available in 1965.

In 1957, 1958 and 1959 the AC Ace was entered into the 24 hour Le Mans race. In 1959 the Bristol engined entry achieved 1st place in the 2.0 litre GT class and 7th overall behind six 3.0 litre cars. This being considered a major success.

John Tojerio (1923 – 2005) was born in Estoril having a Portuguese father and a British mother but moved to the UK following the death of his father when 1 year old. Having initially served in the Fleet Air Arm, his lasting legacy is the AC Ace design. Tojerio produced a number of varying and successful competition designs with the mid-engined Ecurie Ecosse Tojeiro EE being the most notable.

My thanks Nigel Wills, Terry Osborne and Jim Lott for also identifying the MG SV and Tim Pearce the AC Ace.

December Mystery Car:

This is a 'sporty' version of a British saloon that initially became available in 1951. Produced with ambitions for success in the USA, production ceased in 1953.



Answers to Dick Craddy: craddyrichard@gmail.com please.

Coincidentally with the September Mystery Car AC Ace space frame quiz, Tim Pearce has kindly allowed me to publish this report of his recent trip to the Algarve, initially prepared for the AC Owners Club Magazine.

Ace to the Algarve by Tim Pearce.

Last September Judy and I drove the Ace Bristol down to our house on the Algarve with four other cars. Departing from Bristol we drove to Plymouth for the ferry crossing to Santander driving a scenic route down to Seville across into Portugal along the coast to our house at Ferragudo a short distance from the Portimao Race Circuit where the Algarve Classis is held each year. Spending four nights four nights then back via Lisbon, the Douro back to Santander for our return crossing. We were away 20 days and travelled 2300 miles.

I thought it may be of interested to describe our preparation, spares taken, and issues experienced on our trip.

Preparation.

A full service including a grease, changing all the oils, antifreeze, new brake and clutch fluids. Checking front disc pads, rear drums off etc.

Having totally rebuilt the car a few years earlier I thought it worth checking the tightness of every nut and bolt on the car while the car was on the ramp. Surprising how many you could give a small tweak. I did not check any terminals or switches under the dashboard, which I regretted later.



One issue which concerned me was a very faint emulsification of the oil on the dipstick and on the radiator filler cap. Removed the radiator and our local radiator guy dipped it flushed it through.

Still not happy and felt I could not risk having a problem so asked my good friend Tony Byford to come down and investigate. We did a compression check which was a little bit suspect, so we pulled the head off and found a potential small crack on the head arranged for it to be repaired. I then took the head to Utraseal at Slough to have the head vacuum impregnated. I have used them before they claim a 90 % success rate on aluminium heads to eliminate porosity which old Bristol heads are prone to .

After refitting the head all mechanical preparation was complete.



Trial pack before departure

Spares and Tools

We used the entire rear boot shelf for storage of spares tools etc. A 9-litre plastic storage box of spares, canvas tool bag, spare dynamo, 5 litres of oil, octane booster, battery booster, roll of paper towel.

The storage box included spare petrol pump, coil, points, condenser, distributor cap, rotor arm, solenoid, exhaust gaskets, carb gaskets, three sets plugs, few plug leads and suppressors ,inlet gaskets ,fuses ,BSF nuts bolts , a few Whitworth bolts, split pins, gasket cement ,exhaust cement, araldite, cable ties, PTF and insulation tape. Voltmeter. Bits of wire and connectors brake fluid'.

A length of rubber fuel hose and spare fan belts and inner tube stored under the spare wheel. Plus, jack, Thor hammer, wooden base plate for jack packed around the spare wheel.

I forgot to pack the vital roll of black duct tape which I regretted!

This left the remainder of the boot free for our two sailing bags a his and hers and overnight bag for the ferry crossing alongside the spare wheel. All fitted in very snuggly.

The Issues we experienced.

The first day after getting off the ferry was a disaster we experienced terrible petrol fumes driving with the hood up due to the rain with my wife with a flannel over her nose not looking happy with the thought of another 19 days.

Then I noticed the fuel gauge was showing empty. After stopping and investigating we had blown a 35-amp fuse which was the power supply to the cooling fan, wipers, fuel gauge, overdrive. Initially I thought it was the fan after blowing several fuses but I discovered it was a loose wire on the overdrive switch which was shorting out through the dashboard. At the Parador that evening I found the breather pipe from the fuel tank was positioned high in the boot creating the petrol fumes in the cockpit.

I used the spare rubber fuel hose and joined them using a short piece of Bic biro as a straight connector and insulation tape and joined the two hoses long enough for the breather to exit through a hole in the boot floor, problem solved. Hoping for a better day tomorrow!

My experience with many failures is the non-original modification which often cause the problems. The tank was a new aluminium foam filled tank with a breather outlet not like the original breathing through the filler cap.

A couple of days later at a filling station the attendant over filled the tank. We drove about 100 metres and the engine stopped due to a vapour lock and had to discharge some petrol down the gutter!

Another minor issue we broke the rev counter drive not a major issue but always useful driving at 3500 / 4000 rpm tending to drive on the rev counter rather than the Speedo. The inner cable broke about 150 mm from the distributor tower on LHD cars you need a S bend from the distributor to the rev counter. In hindsight the bend was a bit tight at the distributor end probably causing the failure.

We also experienced a bit of misfire finding number 1 plug oiled and number 2 slightly oiled we changed all six plugs, it happened a few days later plugs 1 and 2 suspect again. So changed just the two plugs and weakened the mixture control on number one carb which solved the problem.

Another day of heavy rain the front of the hood came unglued to the steel channel that clips over the top of the windscreen directly in front of the drivers vision but only about 150mm, I feared losing the whole hood .Interesting experience driving one handed holding the hood on in the rain but quickly rectified with duct tape once the rain stopped.



Arrival in Ferragudo

The Ace went really well without any major issues other than the minor points above.

An almost unbelievable tale by Phil Rumney.

A couple of months ago when we were at Castle Combe, Jim Gaisford, the photographer mentioned to Matt he did not want an old trials Bike that his boys had outgrown, bit of a wreck, needs bump starting but fun when it goes. Matt went up to Colerne to Jims and collected it in my old Pick up. Jim told him he didn't want it back and if it couldn't be mended, take it to the tip.

Matt and Sam had a good 'tinker' 'but it was beyond repair. It then sat in my garage for a couple of weeks. I got fed up with it being there and asked Matt to take it to the Yate Sort it dump and loose it.

As Matt pulled into the tip, he was followed in by another Pick up that parked next to him in the 'Metals' bay. They pulled the cover off the truck and were just going to throw the bike into the bin when the driver of the other truck stopped them. Could he have the bike and take it home? Matt explained it was a non-runner but the chap said it didn't matter.

He had sold the bike to Jim 10 years before and to prove a point showed Matt where he had modified the exhaust pipe when he owned it. They both left the tip and parked up tail to tail and swapped the bike from one truck to the other. The new owner was 'chuffed to bits'.

Now the chances of that happening must be millions to one. The chap lived 15 miles away, Matt just decided to go when he did and then was followed into the tip by the other pickup that parked next to him.

I should have gone and bought a Lottery Ticket that day!

Wayside Cafes: Community Shop and Café: Oldbury on Severn.

Situated in the centre of the village the shop and café provides a meeting place for local inhabitants and visitors. A car park is adjacent and there is easy access to the banks of the Severn which provides good, flat, walking. The Anchor Pub is close by.



SAC Shop

Our popular Navy-Blue baseball hats are currently in stock. They cost £10.20 plus P&P if required. Sweatshirts, in a multiplicity of colours, are also available for individual order. Please contact me. An ideal Christmas present.

And Finally.

Hopefully you have found some items of interest in this 'Bumper' edition.

So, it simply remains for me to send Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes for a Healthy New Year from Mary and I.

Dick Email: craddyrichard@gmail.com

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