

# Somerset Automobile Club

## Chairmans' Chat

### June 2024



## *SAC 120<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY LUNCH*

*SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JUNE*

*Leigh Court, Abbots Leigh.*

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

So, the Somerset Automobile Club has achieved 120 years of unbroken and active history, sometimes somewhat tenuously, but nevertheless a very notable achievement that is worthy of celebration.

I am pleased to report that our Celebration Lunch, to be held at Leigh Court, Abbots Leigh on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June will be very well supported with 56 members and guests currently booked. I very much look forward to welcoming each attendee from 12.15pm.

During May, Roger Perrin organised a most enjoyable Train Trip on the Gloucestershire to Warwickshire Railway and that is reported here together with Jim Lott's report and photographs of our March visit to the Boscombe Down Aviation Collection and our April AGM.

We can now look forward to our annual Picnic on 8<sup>th</sup> August, the visit to Thatchers Cider on 5<sup>th</sup> September and Andy Rigler's Social Run on Lunch on 17<sup>th</sup> October before our 24<sup>th</sup> November Lunch and visit(s) to the Urbaser Waste processing plant in December.

### **Future Events:**

#### **Sunday 16th June 2024: 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Lunch. Leigh Court, Abbots Leigh, Bristol BS8 3RA**

While you can be assured that the Lunch formalities will be straightforward, I am delighted to confirm that Nigel Wills, our immediate past President, has agreed to close the lunch with a 'Prosecco' toast to the SAC.

Given that the 16<sup>th</sup> June is a mid-summer date a 'smart casual' dress code will be very appropriate especially in the anticipation of a fine and dry day!

You will also, no doubt, recall that classic, 'toy' or favourite 'everyday' cars are very welcome and that they will be displayed in front of the Leigh Court Mansion House for all to enjoy. Please arrive in good time to allow our marshals to assist your parking.

In addition, we have a provisional booking, subject to availability, for Duncan Pittaway to display his 1911 FIAT S76 racing car known as 'The Beast of Turin' as the centre point of the display.

By way of a reminder the programme for the celebration will be:

- Arrival from 12.15 pm please.
- Cars will be displayed in front of the house.
- Prosecco reception or non-alcoholic alternative.
- 12.55pm. Brief welcome.
- 1.00pm: commence serving.
- End of dining:
- Distribution of Prosecco or alternative non-alcoholic drink
- Toast to the Somerset Automobile Club

Please also note that there will be a bar available during the pre-lunch Reception for the purchase of your selected drink for dining.

I very much look forward to greeting you at Leigh Court from 12.15pm on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August: *BYO Annual Picnic.***

In 2024, we will take a change of scene and a reservation has been made at Wyndcliffe Court, St Arvans, NP16 6EY 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 and gather from noon.



I am very pleased to confirm that **Arnold Denman** has agreed to assist **Matt Rumney** with the organisation of this event. Please let Matt ([mattrumney@btinternet.com](mailto:mattrumney@btinternet.com)) know if you intend to enjoy this very special venue.

The cost/head will be £10 which you may wish to pay into the SAC Account in advance.

Please note that on this occasion the venue will provide tables and chairs for our use.

For further Wyndcliffe Court information please see: <https://www.wyndcliffecourt.com/>

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September. *A Morning tour of Thatchers Cider Factory and Tasting, Sandford.***

**Ann Budd** has kindly agreed to organise this visit and lunch. We will gather in the car park of the Railway Inn, Sandford, BS25 2RA at 10.30am for a welcoming coffee when we will also choose our lunch menu. The Factory and Tasting tour will start at 11.00am and will last from 1 to 1.5 hours. Please note that there will be no facility to sit down during the tour. Please wear sensible walking shoes, no sandals or open toes and no dogs! We will return from the visit and dine in the adjacent Thatchers owned Railway Inn.

The cost/head for the visit only will be £15.00 payable in advance to the SAC account. Please make your booking with Ann ([budd66@btinternet.com](mailto:budd66@btinternet.com)) or 01272 331299/07732 172 475. The party size is limited to 30 attendees.

For further information see: <https://www.thatcherscider.co.uk/myrtle-farm/cider-tours/>

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October: *Social Run and Lunch organised by Andy Rigler.***

Once again, we will return to the Severn Vale for a substantially revised route from Andy's severely Covid interrupted run of 2021.

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November: *Autumn Lunch.***

A booking has been made to ensure that we will return to The Batch Country Hotel at Lympsham.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> and/or Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> 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. Parties are of 15 maximum and there are still a few places remaining. Members will be given priority. **Please let me know** if you wish to join this visit. If you have a preference for either of the dates please let me know as soon as you are able.

If numbers exceed 30, and if necessary I will book a further visit in 2025.

## Past Events:

### Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March. Visit to Boscombe Down Aviation Collection.

A report by Jim Lott.

*I thank Jim for his fully illustrated report which is attached but here is a panoramic photo of the aircraft on display taken from the report:*



### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. AGM and Lunch.

Once again we returned to The Batch Country Hotel, Lympsham for our 2024 Annual General Meeting. As in recent years the business was completed promptly, there having been officer and financial reports circulated in advance.

The AGM Minutes will be circulated after approval at your Executive Committee meeting to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> June.

The Batch Hotel never disappoints either with the quality of the meals or the efficient, pleasant service. We will return again on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November for our Autumn Lunch.

**Your formally elected 2024-2025 Club Officers are:**

Chairman	Dick Craddy	craddyrichard@gmail.com
Secretary	Jim Lott	sac.secretary.24@gmail.com
Accounts Administrator	Trevor Postle	trevor.postle@btinternet.com
Membership Secretary	Robin Smith	rnbsmith@blueyonder.co.uk
Members	Pauline Gullick Phil Rumney Matt Rumney	pgrally@aol.com philiprumney194@btinternet.com mattrumney@btinternet.com

Once again I thank Jim Lott for taking these photos:



Judy Pearce, Arnold Denman



Mary Craddy, Pauline Gullick





**Liz Rowe, Tony Pow, John Harris**



**Susie Elmes, Deb Franklin, Terry Osborne**



**John Moore, Nigel Adkins**



**John Boddey, Graham Russell**







## **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May: Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Rail Trip. Organised by Roger Perrin.**

Our select party gathered at Cheltenham Racecourse in good time to board the 10.55 am Steam Drawn train departure to Broadway. Roger had arranged a 'first-class' compartment complete with a volunteer guide who regularly kept us informed with salient information en route. The leisurely trip, accompanied with nostalgic jerky starts, uneven track, squeaks and the delightful smokey smells, stopped at Gotherington, Winchcombe, Toddington where the railway has its maintenance depot before arriving in Broadway at 11.56 am.

Major features of the track are the 693 long Greet Tunnel, the second longest in the UK on an 'enthusiasts' railway and the recently repaired Stanway viaduct.

A leisurely 1 mile walk into Broadway allowed adequate time to have an equally leisurely lunch before walking back to the station for the diesel powered return journey which left promptly at 3.30pm.

The railway is staffed by volunteers who supplement a very small office of salaried staff. The enthusiasm of the cheerful and helpful uniformed volunteers is illustrated by the exceptionally clean and well-presented stations, cafes and properly maintained tracksides which, no doubt, is also reflected in the maintenance of the engines and rolling stock. It should be noted, given that the railway has no connection to British Rail mainline track, that all engines, rolling stock and other facilities have to be taken to the railway by road!

Thank you Roger. A great trip.



**Winchcombe Station**





## 7903 Foremarke Hall

Photo: Philip Moore

'Foremarke Hall' was designed by F W Hawksworth, the last Chief Mechanical Engineer of the GWR and is a Modified Hall class. Built at Swindon in 1949, its working weight is 122 tons (locomotive 75½ tons, tender 46½ tons). The tender holds 4,000 gallons of water and 6 tons of coal.

Built to haul express passenger and freight trains, in 1951 Foremarke Hall was the first locomotive to travel from London to Plymouth in under four hours. Its base was mostly London's Old Oak Common. Its final shed was Cardiff East Dock and it was withdrawn in 1964. It was moved to Barry Scrapyard and was rescued in 1981 by Foremarke Hall Transport Group.

Visit [www.7903foremarkehall.co.uk](http://www.7903foremarkehall.co.uk) for more information.





Roger and Trevor in 1<sup>st</sup> Class!



Mary, Catherine, Andy and John



Awaiting the return train at Broadway



John and Mary

## From the bookshelf.

### Formula 1's Unsung Pioneers. Author Ian Wagstaff.

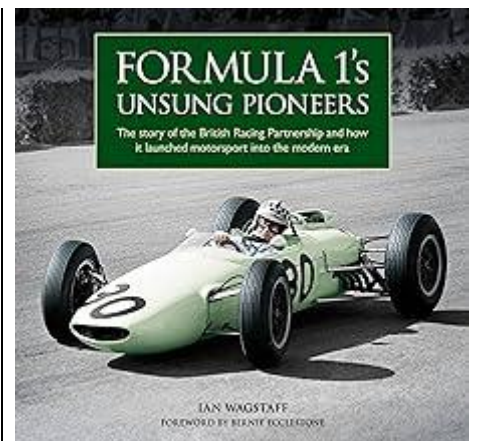
**This is the story of the British Racing Partnership and how it launched motorsport into the modern era.**

The British Racing Partnership (BRP) was founded in 1958, as a private entrant, by Alfred Moss, Stirling's father, and Stirling's entrepreneurial manager, Ken Gregory. The team was disbanded in 1964 but in the meantime had made a worthy and permanent place in international and national motor racing history. It was an ambitious project.

This book traces the history of BRP, year by year, personality by personality, race by race, in an easy-read but detailed style.

Motor racing was a part of the Moss heritage given that Alfred had driven and finished 16th in the 1924 Indianapolis 500 and was a competitor at Brooklands in the same period. In 1954, prior to the foundation of BRP, the Moss family had purchased and entered a 'state of the art' Maserati 250F in Grand Prix races for Stirling to drive.

As is well known, in 1955 and as a result of his achievements, Stirling was selected as a member of the Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix team alongside Fangio.



**1958.** The team was not necessarily founded for Stirling's benefit and consequently, in 1958, BRP initially entered Formula 2 races with a Cooper Climax T45. Ken Gregory, being a perfectionist, had been able to secure the services of Tony Robinson, who having been trained by the notable Alf Francis, was an equally highly respected racing mechanic of the era. Gregory insisted that Robinson built the 1958 BRP cars at the Cooper factory in Surbiton in order to ensure that the quality of build and preparation was of the highest standard.



The 1958 drivers were Stuart Lewis-Evans and Tommy Bridger with Lewis-Evans being able to achieve a few top 3 placings. The presentation, in a distinctive light green colour, of both the racing cars and transporters was also considered by Gregory as a high priority. It became the envy of others, and this influence was present until the demise of the team.

**1959.** For 1959 BRP installed the complex Borgward 155bhp, 4-cylinder, twin cam, 16 valve/cylinder engine in their two F2 Cooper T51 chassis. The experiment was not a success and by the end of the year one of the cars had been re-engined with a Coventry Climax engine.

Stirling was entered in the re-engined Cooper at the Watkins Glen Formula Libre race in October and achieved first place and fastest lap. The drivers for 1959, in addition to Stirling Moss, were Ivor Bueb, Chris Wicken and Chris Bristow (above right). Very regrettably Ivor Bueb died from injuries sustained when racing a Cooper Borgward T51 at Clermont Ferrand in July.



BRP's reputation for excellent preparation attracted the attention of BRM who made available a type P25 for Stirling to race in 1959. Stirling was contracted to race for Rob Walker's team in that year but raced the BRM in the French and British Grand Prix for BRP. The P25 was a front engined car that featured a single rear gearbox mounted disc brake. A controversial feature!

Ivor Bueb had been selected to drive the BRM at the German GP in August and his place was taken by Hans Hermann who crashed the car in a spectacular manner (pictured right).



**1960.** At the end of 1959 BRP was approached by the Yeoman Credit finance house and a deal was agreed whereby they would sponsor a two-car entry in each round of the 1960 World Championship and other selected non-championship races. While sponsorship of motor racing has been taken for granted for all subsequent years this was the first example of advertising sponsorship such that BRP raced under the title of the 'Yeoman Credit Racing Team'. Ken Gregory's entrepreneurial business style convinced the Samengo-Turner Brothers who were owners of the finance company of the benefits of growing interest in top level motor racing. This sponsorship was groundbreaking and as the title of the book states it launched the modern motor sport era.

As a result to the Yeoman Credit sponsorship, BRP faced a busy year in 1960, but regrettably it was a year of tragedy and setbacks. The first race was the South African Formula 1 and Formula 2 meeting at East London. The Cooper Borgwards' were entered for the last time for Stirling and Chris Bristow. During the remainder of the year BRP employed a wide selection of well-known drivers including Harry Schell, Tony Brooks and Olivier Gendebien (pictured right).



The team reverted to Climax power for the remaining races and top five placings were achieved albeit a level of SNF unreliability was notable. However, tragedy was not far away and Harry Schell was killed during practice for the British International Trophy in May and Chris Bristow died in the Belgian Grand Prix, held at Spa-Francorchamps in June. In 1960 BRP expanded its activities beyond F1 when it purchased a Lotus-Climax 19 sports car which heralded strong results in that category in 1961.

**1961.** However, 1961 was another year of change, success and injury. Firstly, the Yeoman Credit sponsorship was taken to a new F1 team to be run by Reg Parnell but being ever resourceful, Gregory obtained sponsorship from the United Dominions Trust and Laystall, the engineering company with links to motorsport. Laystall specialised in the manufacture of 'clever' engine components. The team had changed allegiance from Cooper cars to the superior Lotus 18/21 single seaters and continued to campaign their Lotus 19 sports car. Selected drivers were Cliff Allison and Henry Taylor. However, continuing to illustrate how dangerous motor sport was in that era, Cliff Allison crashed in practice for the Belgian GP in mid-June, sustaining injuries that ended his career and Henry Taylor received severe chest injuries in a crash at British GP held in July at Aintree. The percentage of DNF's continued to be quite high and the only significant 1<sup>st</sup> place success came when Stirling Moss made a rare appearance for BRP at a non-championship F1 race held at Brands Hatch in June. That said, the team was viewed as a true competitor by the 'works' teams. Lucian Bianchi,

Masten Gregory (no relation) and Dan Gurney substituted for Allison. During 1961 BRP travelled to all international grand prix meetings and domestically the Lotus 19 Sports Car was 'the class of the field' on many occasions.



**1962.** Regrettably 1962 is the year for which the team is most remembered. Innes Ireland had joined the team as number 1 driver with Masten Gregory as No2. Ireland had been sacked by Colin Chapman, owner and engineering motivating force behind Lotus, after winning the 1961 October US Grand Prix. This after having been seriously injured at the earlier Monaco GP. He was replaced at Lotus by Jim Clark in 1962.

However, at the Easter Monday Goodwood meeting Stirling Moss crashed, sustaining injuries which ended his top line career. Stirling was driving a Lotus Climax owned by Rob Walker but presented in BRP colours. The injuries sustained by Stirling were extensive and regrettable photographs were circulated worldwide. In recognition of respect for Stirling's prominence, Ferrari sent a type 156/61 F1 car for Ireland to race at the Silverstone International Trophy race in May. Ireland finished 4<sup>th</sup>.



Also in May, BRP took delivery of two spaceframe Lotus 24 F1 cars fitted with Coventry Climax V8 engines. (pictured right at Monaco).

The team understood that they had purchased the very latest designs, an illusion which was swiftly dispelled when Lotus introduced the monocoque Lotus 25 at the same Dutch GP meeting. It was a significant incident in the future direction of development of BRP.



In addition, the team also owned a Ferrari 250 GTO which was entered at Le Mans 24 hours with a DNF result and at the Goodwood TT race in August (right), which Ireland won against international competition. Further success was obtained with the two Lotus 19 sports cars when they were entered in a series of meetings in Canada and the USA in October.



**1963.** For the 1963 season BRP retained Innes Ireland who was joined by the American, Jim Hall, latterly the constructor of the innovative and successful Chaparral sports cars. The team entered a reduced scope of international events, being mainly focussed on Europe with additional October visits to Watkins Glen in the USA and Mexico.

Again, the Lotus 19 provided wins for both Innes Ireland (right) at Oulton Park and for Graham Hill in Canada.



Three significant developments occurred in 1963. Firstly, the UDT/Laystall sponsorship had been withdrawn, secondly BRP announced that it would retain its Lotus 24 chassis but that they will be powered by BRM V8 engines, initially in carburettor form. The third announcement was that the team was to construct its own monocoque chassis using Lotus suspension components. The chassis construction was influenced by the Lotus 25 design albeit it was absolutely not a copy given that Lotus closely guarded the construction of the '25'. However, it was known that Robinson chose to use a thicker gauge aluminium alloy sheet in his design. The BRP car was debuted at the Dutch GP in June when it achieved a 4<sup>th</sup> place followed in the same month by Reims (9<sup>th</sup> place), Silverstone in July when it was disqualified and at Solitude (3<sup>rd</sup> place), and finally Monza in September (4<sup>th</sup> place). Ireland drove the BRP on each of its outings. Otherwise, the Lotus 24's were entered for both Ireland and Hall with the highlight being 1<sup>st</sup> place at the Goodwood trophy in March.

**1964.** Being funded by BP, the team focussed solely on F1. The drivers were Ireland and Trevor Taylor (BRP F1 right) who had effectively replaced Ireland at Lotus in 1962. They 'did not get on'. In March, Ireland scored the only victory for the BRP BRM when he won a rain soaked Lombank sponsored non championship Trophy race at Snetterton against works, Lotus, Cooper, BRM, competition.



Early in 1964 Robinson had started the construction of a second BRP monocoque and having analysed his original design selectively introduced thinner chassis sheet components. In addition, the suspension components were of BRP design and not purchased from Lotus. The year was not a notably successful one with a notable number of Did not Finish (DNF's) and Did not start (DNS's). the year ended in Mexico City. It also marked the end of BRP's F1 ambitions.

**Demise:** The reasons behind the demise of BRP were complex but a favoured explanation is that by being the first to introduce commercial sponsorship it was seen by the established British teams, Lotus, Cooper, Brabham and BRM, (who had signed the Paris Agreement thereby forming the Formula 1 Constructors Association (F1CA)), that it gave his team an unfair advantage. In fact, as we now know, sponsorship was to be the business model that ensured the sustainability of those teams in future years. BRP was not invited to join F1CA which in turn denied it access and a share of the 'starting money', paid to members, which was the lifeline by which those teams were partly financed. The 'flimsy' reason given was that F1CA considered that the BRP car was not adequately constructed by the entrant! An invitation to examine the BRP BRM was not accepted by F1CA who, had they done so, could not have denied BRP the right to join. The consequence was that BRP had to close its racing team.

As a postscript, BRP was commissioned, following influence from former driver Masten Gregory, to build two cars for the 1966 Indianapolis 500 race. The cars performed commendably, which was a creditable achievement given that nobody from BRP had visited the race beforehand.

On completion of that project the doors of the Highgate premises were finally closed. A sad end to a proud innovative and much respected motor racing team.

Other books:

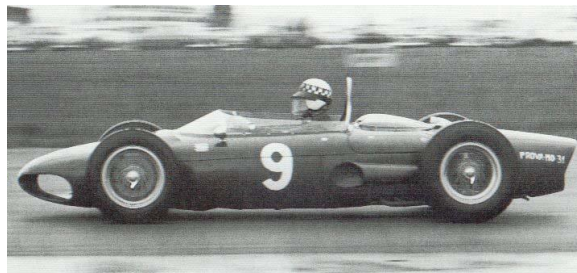
Biography: Ken Gregory: *Managing a Legend*, Stirling Moss and the British Racing Partnership.

Autobiography: Innes Ireland: *All Arms and Elbows*.

Just a few more pictures.



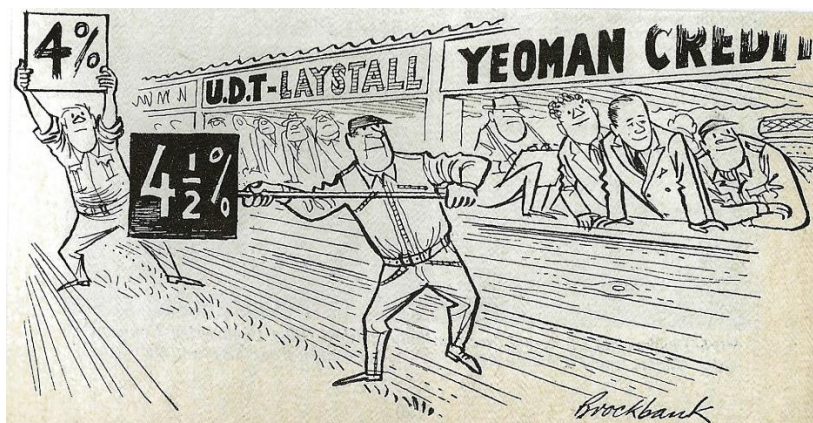
Innes Ireland



Innes Ireland Ferrari 156/61  
1962 Silverstone International Trophy



1963 Tony Robinson, Jim Hall,  
Innes Ireland



The programme for the 1961 Goodwood March meeting published this cartoon by Russell Brockbank that captured the rivalry between the Yeoman Credit and UDT Credit Houses in typically humorous style.  
(acknowledgement Brockbank Trust)

*F1's Unsung Pioneers* is available from Amazon for the reduced cost of £68.



## March Mystery Car

The March Mystery car was an Allard Palm Beach.

Manufactured between 1952 and 1958 in Mk1 and Mk2 form, only 80 were constructed. The illustration was of a Mk2 (shown here) of which 6 were built.



**Allard Palm Beach Mark 2**

The chassis frame conformed to the 'traditional' Allard design, having twin tubular side members braced with box and tubular cross members. The suspension incorporated telescopic shock absorbers with coil springs both front and rear. For the Mk1 the front suspension employed radius rods but for the Mk2 that somewhat conventional system was changed to a lower wishbone, with an upper sliding bush, and laminated torsion bars being adopted. At the rear a 'live' Salisbury axle with twin trailing arms and a Panhard rod was installed. Braking was by 12-inch Lockheed drums.



**Allard Palm Beach Mark 1**

The body of the Mk1 was glass fibre and for the Mk2, a restyled aluminium version was produced.

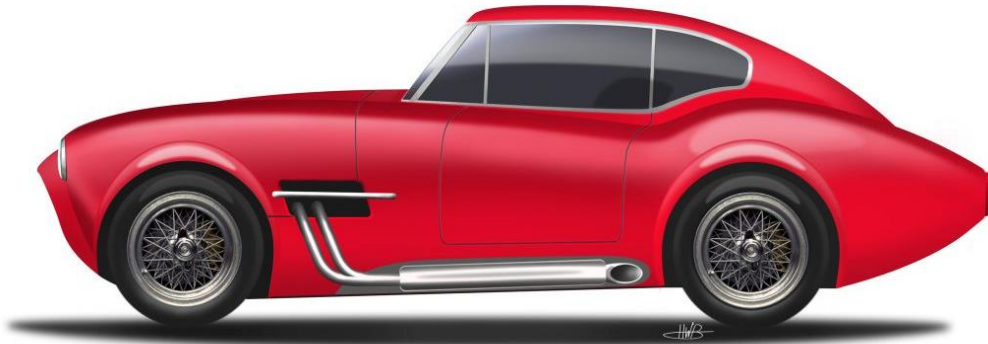
Engine options for the Mk1 were either a 4-cylinder Ford 'Consul' 1.5 litre, 47 hp or a 6-cylinder Ford Zephyr 2.3 litre, producing 68 hp. For the Mk2 the sole option was the 6-cylinder 3.4 litre 190 hp engine. A single car was produced with a Dodge 4.0 litre V8 for an Argentinian customer.

Sydney Allard (1910-1966), founder and owner of the Allard Motor company (1945-1975), was a dominant, entrepreneurial, personality who not only designed and constructed a broad range of cars but who also achieved wide success in motor sport in many of the disciplines when driving his own vehicles.

Internationally Sydney won the 1952 Monte Carlo Rally in P1 Saloon and came 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the 1953 Le Mans 24-hour race in a type J2. He was also the UK National Hill Climb Champion and was the first UK constructor of a dragster, Sydney was also a regular competitor in classic trials.



In 2012 Alan, Sydney's son formed a new company, Allard Motor Co which now occupies premises at the Science and Business Park, Berkeley, Gloucestershire with the intention of constructing a batch of Mk3 Palm Beach cars. with both open and coupe body styles, these are currently advertised as being made to bespoke orders with a PoA price tag.



**Artists impression of the Allard Mark 3 Palm Beach**

### **June Mystery 'Car'.**



This utilitarian vehicle was manufactured mainly for military use in the 1950's.

Answers to me please: [craddyrichard@gmail.com](mailto:craddyrichard@gmail.com)

### **Driving Test: Acceptable Cars.**

To be acceptable for use as a driving test car the vehicle should:

- have no dashboard warning lights showing
- have no tyre damage and meet the legal tread depth on each tyre
- be roadworthy
- be fitted with an extra interior rear-view mirror for the examiner
- be fitted with a passenger seatbelt and a passenger head restraint for the examiner (slip-on types are not allowed)
- be able to reach at least 62mph and have an mph speedometer
- be fitted with L-plates on the front and rear
- have four wheels and weight not more than 3,500kg

The following cars are not deemed suitable for driving tests because they do not allow adequate all round vision.

- BMW Mini convertible
- Ford KA convertible
- Smart Fortwo (2-door)
- Toyota iQ
- VW Beetle convertible



## From Robert Woolley.

Knowing that Roger Perrin planned our May Rail Trip Robert sent this photo taken in India!



## 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. A super present.

## A reminder of our very 'early days'.

In preparation for our 120<sup>th</sup> Celebration on 16<sup>th</sup> June this photo depicts the visit made to the 'headquarters' of the SAC by French Tourists in 1904 being our foundation year.



## And finally,

Once again I trust that you have found items of interest in this edition. Please don't forget that I welcome your contributions and with the prospect of holidays in view you may have some interesting stories and photos to share.

We look forward to our 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lunch which will be reported in our next Chairmans Chat to be published in September.

**Dick**

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

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