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NOVEMBER 2023 | EDITION 382

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on the **THIRD** Wednesday of each month @ **8.15pm**

Annual Club Subscription - £20

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## Upcoming Events...

### November 2023

**Weds 15<sup>th</sup> November – Club Night – A** presentation by Ken Coxe – the restoration of Austin 7 cars.

### December 2023

No planned activities.

### January 2024

**Weds 17<sup>th</sup> January – Club Night – An-** annual 'Chairman's Quiz Night'.

### February 2024

**Weds 21<sup>st</sup> February – Annual General** Meeting.

### March 2024

**Weds 20<sup>th</sup> March – Club Night – Annual** 'Rocker Box Racing' Event.

### April 2024

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April – Club Night**  
**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April – Drive It Day – The** Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs' designated day to dust it off, give it a polish and to drive it down the road (s).

### June 2024

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June – Peaks & Dales Annu-** al Charity Run

### September 2024

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September – Annual Club** Show – Open to members and non-members.

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Keith Yates

Just in case there is a club member out there that hasn't been reading this magazine or attending our monthly Club Nights lately (surely not!), can I just reiterate that Steve Divall, Mike Coffey and founder member Chris Parr will not be seeking re-election to their current offices at the February 2024 AGM. Elsewhere, in this magazine edition, you will find more information about these resignations and an outline of the duties/responsibilities associated with the positions being vacated. All three gents will, pleasingly, remain as full members of the Club for the foreseeable future – it's a bit like politicians retiring to the backbenches and spending more time with their families. Anyway and between the three of them, they can account for well in excess of 60yrs service to H&HCVC and I, for one, would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for this. Also and certainly not forgetting, all of the work and support, mostly in the background, that Margaret Kenworthy has done for the Club over the years; a very big thank you to her too.

Linking in (sort of) to the Club's current state of affairs, it has to be said that the turnout for the last Club Night (Wednesday 18th October) was pretty pathetic. I did

n't do an actual headcount but it would be safe to say that there would have been enough empty seats to accommodate the High Lane Bowling Club and their families too. A shame really because Andy Robinson (who highlighted some very real issues in his recent "letter to the Editor" – see last month's issue) had set a very good quiz that was well received by attendees – many thanks for that Andy. Leading on from this and during the course of the evening, a number of concerned members were asking each other why the attendance at Club Night, Club Runs and club supported car shows etc had fallen away so much? Is this just a general feeling of apathy, can't members be bothered with Club Night, runs and car shows etc, is it perhaps the age profile of the Club or is there a feeling that the afore mentioned events should be stripped back, reduced in number or stopped altogether? There does seem to be an overwhelming consensus that some "new blood" is needed if the Club is to move forward and thrive. That's all well and good but what is actually meant by the term? Does it mean a need for new members, younger members, people with fresh ideas or a perm of all of these? Also, should we be

lucky enough to recruit some new members, what are we, as a club, offering them? If our established membership just can't be bothered to support events then why should a new member? There are no easy answers to any of these questions which, when added together, all really boil down to the one big one; how do we, as a collective membership, move our club on and give it a healthy future? One thing that I do know is that our membership has fallen from circa 130 not that long ago to, at a recent count, 103 members – clearly on the slide then. Perhaps a survey of members' thoughts, views and ideas would be beneficial if we are to get the "grass roots" involved(?). We can certainly use this magazine, our website and our collective emails to accomplish this but, like all surveys, what questions do we really need to ask to get meaningful answers? So, as Steve, Mike and Chris retire from the current Committee, H&HCVC will shortly have (fingers crossed) a new committee format, with some new people or perhaps existing ones with some new ideas springing from the reorganisation of duties and responsibilities – if nothing else, my personal plea is that you all give your fullest possible support to them and to our Club.

The forced implementation of an expanded Greater London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), across

what is basically the area covering the inside of the M25, has undoubtedly caused the owners of "young classics" (i.e. up and coming "classics" that are less than 40yrs old) an abundance of grief. For example, my Mini Cooper is now 30yrs old. If I lived within the Greater London ULEZ then I'd have to pay £12.50 per day to drive it. This, of course, would be on top of the already extortionate Road Fund Licence (RFL) tax that has to be paid and the cost of the annual MOT, that ironically includes nationally set emission tests that have to be passed, before I'd be in a position to drive it in the first place. So, what choices are open to you should you find yourself in this car-lovers nightmare? Well, you could just cough up £12.50 per day for every day you venture out onto the roads, you could sell your "young classic" for the best price you could get under the circumstances, you could store the car until it reaches 40yrs old (i.e. "historic vehicle" status) or you could simply scrap it – not one of these options is at all ideal. Anyway, why am I banging on about what is now old news? Well, unless you've been living under a rock for the last 18-24mths or so then you can't not have noticed the perfusion of Greater Manchester ULEZ signs and their accompanying "Under Review" signs. This signage has been hanging about

our roads like a lingering bad smell but it's now noticeable that there's been a slow and steady increase in the number of combined "speed" and Number Plate Recognition (NPR) cameras, all quite slim and tall and in a startling shade of vivid yellow. Now then, after being continually shafted by a procession of "here today, gone tomorrow" politicians, of all persuasions, I do wonder just how long it will be before Andy Burnham, our wonderful Mayor and El Presidente of Greater Manchester, turns these cameras into ULEZ "guardians" and reapers

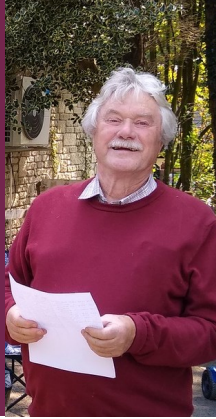
of lots of lovely cash. After all, his political chum in London has managed to get away with it so why not dump on the citizens of Greater Manchester too? As they say, just a thought.

Well, that's it from me for yet another month. David and I both hope that you enjoy this November issue and, now that the nights are drawing in and classic machinery is getting tucked away in garages etc for the winter, if you do venture out then we also hope that you enjoy lots of trouble free 'classic' motor-ing.

## DREAM CAR: **FERRARI F50**



# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



## HALL OF FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS

2012 - Chris Parr  
2014 - Bob Plant  
2015 - Ray Etchells  
2016 - Fred Dean  
2020 - David Bowden  
2022 - Jane Harrop

Members and others should note the change to speed limits in Wales. The previous 30mph limit has now been reduced to 20mph and is being strictly enforced by the Police. They are well known for their tactics of hiding cameras in builders' trucks, farmyard vehicles and the like in lay-bys. I understand that a latitude of only 2mph is allowed so, after 22mph you will be liable to get done. This limit applies to all vehicles. The previous limit on vans, where VAT has not been paid, is also to be strictly adhered to. I understand this does not apply to vans with side windows fitted or, as I said before, VAT has been paid. I took the matter of speedometers up with my local MOT station and was told that they are only required to check that the speedometer is working, not in respect of its accuracy. In the case of my TR, the speedometer, when the car is run, varies between +or- 10mph before it settles down. The car is of course MOT exempt now.

In the last magazine I advised that Mike Coffey, Chris Parr

and myself will not be seeking re-election at the AGM of February next year. Keith has printed a list of the jobs undertaken by me and, as I have said before, anyone interested in taking on some of these jobs may do so and may, or not, be a committee member, as seen fit. Two of the jobs listed in the last magazine are, being responsible for the Club BBQ and helping to organise the Peaks & Dales Run. It occurs to me that both or either of these jobs could be handled by one person who, again, need not be a committee member and thus ease the burden on the Chairman. Regarding Mike Coffey (Vice Chairman), he stands in for me at meetings etc when, due to sickness or holidays, I am unable to attend. He has also said that the effort needed to produce Sunday and evening runs is huge and when only 3 cars turn up well, he gets very dismayed. Maybe someone taking over the role will get a better response with more cars turning up. Fortunately however, Peter Norbury has said that he will take over from Mike as Vice/



Assistant Chairman. With regards to the position of Club/Company Secretary, the good news is that Jane Harrop has volunteered to formally take over this role, a position which she almost holds now anyway. Both Mike and I will be carrying on as club members, giving help to our successors as required. Hopefully, the remaining jobs will be filled as it would be a great shame if the Club were to die. As an aside, I note that in some clubs, the position of Chairman and Deputy only stands for 3 years.

One of the reasons for my retirement is that I have now had my eightieth birthday (photos of the family event included in this issue) and feel that after 20yrs I have well and truly done my bit.

This month's front cover picture shows me handing over the Club's cheque to Christine Wright, supported by her dog Jessie, for £1220 as our 2023 charity. The charity for 2024 has yet to be decided upon. As I have said before we try to support charities run entirely by volunteers as we do not wish to be paying out someone's wages because of our efforts.

Something I meant to mention is the battery life of your classic when laid up. The best use is to put a small lamp across the terminals to let the battery discharge and then, when flat, charge it up again. We all

start out with the best of intentions but if you are like me, leave the battery unattended until the spring. Whatever you do, do not take it out and put it on the garage floor. The cold will seep in and wreck it. The RAC advise me that 4 out of 5 emergency calls they get for help over the winter period is for battery failure.

At one of our previous meetings we had a talk from DIGINO. They tell us that one of the things they are mostly involved in is scams. Look out for people who knock on your door offering services or the like, false on-line adverts or e-mails pretending to be from government or official companies. Do not give anyone bank details, just say goodbye, not interested or put the phone down as applicable. I have to admit being 'done' by a scammer many years ago to re-surface my drive. You can report any suspected scam to 7726 by phone or contact your bank fraud department on 159. A very useful leaflet with details entitled 'BE SCAM AWARE' is available from the citizens advice unit at [citizensadvice.org.uk/scamsadvice](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/scamsadvice). Just be aware and do not get caught.

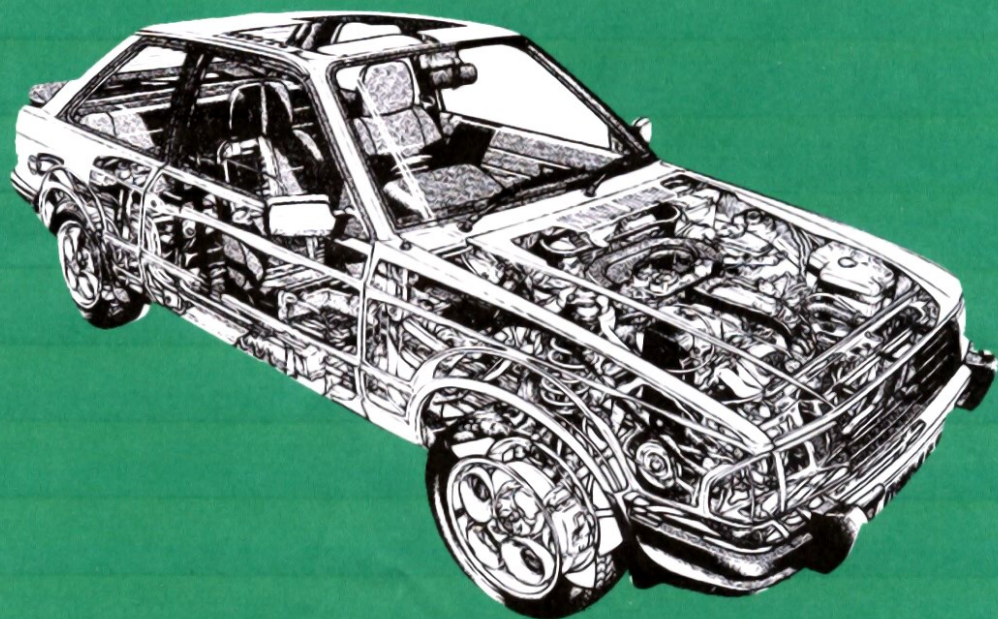
And so that is enough from me for this issue. Hopefully, someone will take over the mantles and we will be able to continue.

# HARRODS

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# MG

## CATCH UP

*Graham Scattergood*

Hi Gang.

Well, a very interesting Club Night as Andy Robinson played host for another of his quizzes. This one had a twist as, even though it was car related, all the answers were in alphabetical order. Answer 1 began with A, answer 2 began with B and so on; with some tricky car names to be sure. We didn't let the MG Section down as we came 2nd to the proverbial all time winners, The Limestone Cowboys, that are the two Dave's, Mike and Steve.

November's Club Night looks to be an interesting one too as Ken Coxey will again be stepping up to the challenge of providing a talk for us, this time on the restoration of the Austin 7 and all of its challenges. Ken will be providing pictures, via his projector and screen, and I am sure it will be delivered with his usual humour. He has assured me we should all be leaving with a smile on our faces SO COME ALONG and make it a good evening, like Club Nights of old.

This year, I will be giving the NEC Classic Car Show a miss but I am sure that some of you will be venturing to the biggest Classic Car Show of the year and could perhaps

regale us with this year's interesting, not to have been missed vehicles.

I am sure most people will know of MG owners, some famous and some not but here are ten famous MG owners I have heard mention of: -

Bill Wyman, of the Rolling Stones, once owned an MGB Roadster.

Sharon Stone, American movie star, owned an MGB Roadster that was sold by Bonham's in 2006.

Geri Halliwell, of Spice Girls fame, owned a 1965 MGB Roadster and so regretted selling it that her husband, Christian Horner of Red Bull Racing, tracked it down and bought it back saying it must be the most expensive MGB EVER!

Simon Cowell had a heavily modified MGB with a 2.5L Mazda Engine, producing 300BHP, with a white leather interior that had been produced by Frontline. It was sold in America in 2023 for \$68,000.

Valerie Singleton, of Blue Peter fame, had a White MGB Roadster that had been bought for her by her then boyfriend, Disc Jockey Pete Murray.

Peter Tork, of the Monkees, had an MGBGT that he even wrote a song about. (It must have been a slow one then!!! - Ed).

Margaret Thatcher reportedly owned an MGBGT.

Gordon Sumner (aka STING) owned an MGBGT.

George Best also once owned a red MGBGT before moving on to more exotic metal like the Jaguar E type, amongst others. (He also owned a very nice Lotus Europa too – Ed).

King Charles III was given an MCGT by his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, complete with, unheard of at the time, a CAR TELEPHONE.

I am sure you know others so let me know.

Toodle Pip and see you at the November Club Night...

Graham

*Roy Orbison, The Big 'O', owned a 1962 BRG MG Midget Roadster with wire wheels. (Ed)*

*The forever cool Steve McQueen bought an MG TC in 1952 – during his early days as a stage actor in New York. Perhaps it wasn't the best car for motoring around the streets of New York. McQueen reckoned that he sold the car after three broken axles and because the spokes kept shredding out of the wire wheels!!! (Ed)*

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*Das Bergrennen Europas*

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**6. 7. AUGUST 1932**

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# COOL CLASSIC



OPEL  
GT

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Once upon a time, way before the attack of the ugly SUV monsters from planet Bland, motor manufacturers actually had sporting pretensions and directed the car buying public's attention to these by marketing outright sports cars, sports saloons or, more latterly, "hot hatches". Not all of these cars were actually very "sporty" at all but they hinted at being so, they were that bit different and were therefore more desirable to the (mostly) younger market sector buyers. A Ford Capri is perhaps a good example of "sportiness" being marketed to an eager public – "the car that you always promised yourself" was

the strap-line and a whole lot of punters believed it was. To move out a little bit more left field and back to the early 1970s, how about a Hillman Avenger Tiger? The mere name, matt black bonnet bulge, distinctive rear/side stripes and boot wing all hinted at something a bit special and, to be fair, this attention grabber was far more of a true performance saloon than many of its posing rivals. So and whilst we're moving to left of field, let's look a little further and consider the subject of this article – the 1968/73 Opel GT.

Firstly, a question for you; when was the last time you saw, or even thought about, an Opel GT? I'm guessing the answer is a long time ago or, if you are of less mature years, you've probably no idea what I'm on about. Hopefully, the accompanying photos will provide an insight and/or bring back memories of just how pretty this very individual little GT was (and still is).

Back in 1965, Opel's own sporting pretensions were on display at the Frankfurt Motor Show and took the form of the concept Opel GT that appeared on their stand. The reception was very encouraging but Opel didn't have any spare production capacity at that time. However, the decision was made to take the GT into production and for the bodies to be built in France. The car was based on the Opel Kadett floorpan, it had a classic front/longitudinal located engine and rear wheel drive layout, that engine is an 1897cc, four cylinder, OHC, 90BHP unit (a very few 1078cc units were sold), the car had a top speed of circa 115MPH and it first appeared in 1968 as part

of Opel's 1969 model year. Just over 103,000 Opel GT cars were made and an estimated 60% of them found their way to the USA where it was well received.

It has been said that the Opel GT resembles a Ferrari "Daytona" 365 GTB but I don't really subscribe to that view. I feel that the car's body shape has far more design similarities with a C3 Corvette Stingray and, being a GM product, that would make far more sense. A unique (I think) feature of the GT is that its headlights are in front-apron mounted pods. These look as though they're pop-up lights but, in fact, they spin to the open position and back to the closed again on a longitudinal pivot and are actually activated mechanically by way of push-pull lever in the cockpit.

So, the Opel GT was always a rare car and now very rare indeed. It was a very good looking (nee pretty) car that hasn't aged badly at all and which still looks desirable today. It also has adequate performance to give credence to those sporty lines, oh, and by the way, it's so cool too.





CC Image: Andrew Stawarz: <https://flic.kr/p/gZC1fQ>

THE

MINI

AND THE

MONTE

THOMAS  
WARDLE





On 26th January 1964, twenty million viewers sat in their living rooms to watch “Sunday Night at the London Palladium”, one of the most watched shows on British T V. Only three months earlier The Beatles had made an appearance amidst the Beatlemania that was crossing the country in waves. If you appeared on this

show, you had made it! However, that night was different. As the giant turntable, set into the floor of the stage, slowly revolved at the end of the show, Bruce Forsyth first introduced Kathy Kirby, who had entered the top ten with “Let me go lover”, then Tommy Cooper, followed by a small red and white car with two men in

suits, one either side. Those men were Paddy Hopkirk (Driver) and Henry Liddon (Navigator/Co-driver) and the car was the winner of the just completed Monte Carlo rally, the Mini Cooper. The orchestra played 'Rule Britannia' and the audience applauded. Paddy Hopkirk read out two telegrams, one from 10 Downing Street and one which said "it's nice to be number one, isn't it" from Ringo Starr. The little car was famous.

On the rally itself there was the usual plethora of Lancias and Citroens whilst Ford of America had entered eight Falcons with large V8 engines. BMC, for the publicity, had decided to start the rally from Minsk, the first time a starting point in Russia had been included in the regulations. On the snow covered roads in the Alps, the Mini, with a lot less horse-power, came into its own with an amount of grip that other cars could only dream of. This, combined with Hopkirk's driving style of left foot braking, meant that the diminutive little car left competitors in its wake. The Mini Cooper had come of age.

During the Second World War and wanting to keep peoples enthusiasm in motor racing, the Bristol Aeroplane Company invited speakers to meetings to talk about the "good old days" of racing at Brooklands. In order to aid enthusiasts in creating racing cars for the future, they also came up with a set of rules for a cheap form of motor racing

when peace arrived. It was called the 500 formula because the maximum size of engine was 500cc and a minimum weight of 500lbs. Fuel tanks were to have a maximum capacity of one gallon and bodywork was "optional but desirable". Amongst these attendees was a certain John Cooper, he was poor but very enthusiastic.

Behind Cooper's father's garage was a rag-tag collection of various wrecks of cars and, amongst these, a Fiat Topolino took his eye. It had received a rear end shunt but the rest of it seemed OK. It's engine was too big for the formula but the front suspension was light weight and with an ingenious independent design. The rear axle was however, a solid bar mounted on cart springs; exactly what he didn't want. Fortunately, and whilst on a crawl round the local scrap yards, he found another Topolino. It belonged to a certain John Heath, a Fiat dealer, who let John have the front end. Back at his father's garage, he stripped the cars and butt welded the two front ends together to create a chassis with four independently sprung wheels. All he needed now was an engine. It had to be light and the one that he found was a 500cc, single cylinder, J A P motor cycle engine. This gave him another problem though. As motor bike engines drive a chain, he could not fit it in the usual place, between the front wheels,

so his only choice was to fit it behind the driver's seat and ahead of the rear axle. He did not realise it at the time but, through necessity, he had just created the basic design of future Formula 1 race cars – Colin Chapman was the first to use the same format for his own Lotus race cars after seeing it. John put a set of trade plates on his creation and, taking it down the local by-pass, got close to 90MPH. It handled like a dream.

Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis, born 1906 in Turkey, was the son of a Greek railway engineer. He had come to England with his widowed mother in 1923 and they both lived in London. His mother, Hulda, sold her rings so that he could buy himself an Austin Seven and in which he frequented Brooklands. Being privately tutored he spoke with a bit of an accent, allowing him to mix easily with the crowd. He quickly made friends with Jeremy Fry, heir to the Fry's chocolate empire. He got a job as a draughtsman at Humber Cars and Alex and his mother moved to the Midlands. It was only on minor components but it was a start. What really helped him was, with the help of his friend George Dowson, designing and building his own racing car. His approach was meticulous, every part was drilled and filed by hand until it was perfect. Power tools were not available and the whole process took him five years. The engine from his Austin Seven provided the power but the rest of the car was pure inspiration. There was no chassis, just a rigid aluminium covered plywood hull and he used rubber for the four independently sprung wheels. The body was left bare, paint would just add weight. The whole car did not compromise on design or time, it was built on pure engineering principles.

By 1938 Issigonis had moved to Cowley and was working for Morris. His boss, Vic Oak and Miles Thomas both noticed his peculiar talent for thinking outside the box and placed him with experienced draughtsmen. At the end of the war he was put to work on Morris's new small car, code named Mosquito. Every part of the car had to be perfect and as the car was taking shape, Issigonis decided it was too narrow. He suggested that the prototype be sawn in half and the car widened by four inches. This happened so late in the day that some parts had already been ordered from suppliers but he convinced the others. William Morris was not a fan of innovation and Miles Thomas managed to keep Morris away from this "newfangled" design – William Morris referred to Issigonis as "Issy-wassiwats his bloody name". When Morris eventually saw the new car he took an instant dislike to it and tried to kill it. This, of course, did not hap-

pen but Morris insisted that it be called the Minor, after a previous model. A few years later it was part of the landscape of Britain.

John Cooper and Alex Issigonis met at the Brighton Speed Trials in 1946 after being pitched together in a race down the seafront. Cooper, in his 500cc car, won the race against Issigonis's 750cc engined car but only just. They both admired each others handiwork and remained good friends. John Cooper was mostly self taught and, apart from guidance from his father, his thinking did not follow the conventional rules of an engineer, if it didn't work then think of something different. Issigonis however, thought in a more logical way but by way of a more illogical route.

The Suez crisis happened in 1956 and petrol was in short supply. Bubble cars were starting to appear more and more regularly in this country. Leonard Lord, the blunt talking boss of BMC was incensed by this German invasion. The year before, Lord had heard that Issigonis was not happy at Alvis and had summoned him to "The Kremlin", as his office was referred to. He offered him the job of Deputy Technical Director for BMC, pushing Gerald Palmer and Jim Stanfield to the side. Lord knew what he needed and would not allow anybody to get in his way. Suez was a crisis for Britain so Lord summoned Issigonis to his of-

fice and told him we need to "drive those bloody bubble cars off the road". Issigonis returned to his office grinning from ear to ear. His brief was simple, design a car that is 10 foot long, 4 foot high and 4 foot wide, has 4 seats, 4 wheels and a 4 stroke engine and do it quick using an existing engine.

A short while later, Issigonis and John Cooper were having dinner together and getting more and more involved with design. By the time the meal was over, the tablecloth was covered in drawings. Issigonis summoned the manager and apologised but also said that he would take the tablecloth with him and to put it on the bill. Back at the office, Issigonis attached the tablecloth to the wall, drew a rectangle on the floor 10 foot by 4 foot and placed four chairs in it. There wasn't much room left so his only solution was to turn the engine sideways, putting the gearbox under the engine and in the sump. The radiator was mounted on one side with the fan pushing the air into the low pressure area in the wheel arch. Tiny, 10 inch wheels were used to take up less room than conventional sizes whilst rubber cones, designed by his friend Alex Moulton, were used as they took up less room than conventional steel springs. The body seams were put on the outside so as not to steal any passenger space, the side windows were the sliding type so to allow spa-

cious pockets below and the instruments were placed in the middle of a full width shelf. Five months after being given the brief they had a running prototype ready. Issigonis took Leonard Lord for a run round the Longbridge works roads. Shaken, Lord exited the car when Issigonis stopped at his office and said "you'd better build the bloody thing". This was only the start of many problems for the team. Constructing an unconventional body with an unconventional mechanical layout was problematic to say the least. Sales of the car got off to a sluggish start when it was launched in 1959. Suez was over and McMillan said "you have never had it so good". Gone were the austerity days of the fifties and even rationing, on some products, (continuing until the mid fifties) was over – Elvis and Marilyn Monroe were adding glamour to everyday life.

Shortly after the launch, Issigonis arrived home one evening to be told by his mother that Anthony Armstrong-Jones, whom he knew, and Princess Margaret had announced their engagement. Being a somewhat unconventional couple they were not seen in the usual mode of royal conveyance, a Rolls-Royce, but a mini. Very soon, the little shopping car was the car of choice. It was "cool" to be seen in a mini. The Beatles, Peter Sellers, Marianne Faithfull and Christine Keeler

all owned one. Some had them fitted out inside with plush upholstery etc., etc. When Mary Quant called her short skirt "The Mini", they seemed to fit together perfectly.

Alex Issigonis saw his creation as a no frills, small shopping/going to work car; when John Cooper saw it for the first time he saw a racing car! Tuning BMC "A series" engines was easy to Cooper, it was how he made a living, and he realised that this little car could be made to go quickly, in fact, very quickly. His friend, Jack Knight, knew gearboxes and Cooper also knew that Lockheed were experimenting with small disc brakes – if he could pull them all together (??). Subsequently, Cooper had a meeting with the then BMC MD, George Harriman, who listened with both interest and disbelief when Cooper suggesting that BMC could sell 1000 of these little flying machines. Issigonis was not overjoyed with what Cooper was proposing to do with his little car but did not object. In the end, Harriman said "take a car and do it", music to Cooper's ears. He calculated that 55BHP would get the car up to 85MPH. He increased the capacity of the engine from 850cc to 997cc, added another SU carb', increased the gearing, changed the gearbox ratios to a more close ratio set and added a remote control gear lever. Two tone trim, a 100MPH speedo and, together with a roof of a contrasting colour,

that completed the go faster part. Lockheed made a set of disc brakes to fit into the ten inch wheels and with a set of wider wheels and tyres, the car was ready. In the first year of sales between six and seven thousand were sold with John Cooper receiving two pounds per car for the use of his name.

In November 1959 Pat Moss and Stuart Turner took a Mini to its first victory on a competitive event. They won the Knowldale Car Club's Mille Miglia rally by ten minutes, upsetting a few Triumph TR drivers. Then, in late 1961, Stuart Turner became competitions manager at BMC, just in time for the new format RAC Rally – 24 stages, running through the forests of Britain and with road penalties. BMC had entered six cars, three MG Midgets and three Austin Healey 3000s; not ideal cars for charging down forest tracks but if it hadn't have been for Erik Carlsson spoiling things, Pat Moss would have taken overall victory in her Austin Healey 3000. However, Stuart Turner was looking to the future and the future was the Mini. The Mini Cooper was now in the competition pipeline. Both John Cooper and Ken Tyrrell were both involved with saloon car racing and the preparation of these cars was rubbing off onto the rally team.

For the 1962 Monte Carlo Rally there was a plethora of BMC cars entered. There were eight cars in a

total that included three Minis (one an 850cc), an MG Midget, an Austin Healey 3000, an MGA 1600, a Riley one point five and an Austin Westminster; quite a mixed bag and especially so when you have to carry spares for all eventualities. Stuart Turner referred to this motley collection as "deranged"! Up until this time, BMC's policy had been to employ British drivers but this was about to change and not by design.

Paddy Hopkirk, knowing that the Rootes Group were to pull out of rallying, wrote to Stuart Turner hoping to get his hands on a big Healey, even though they frightened him. His letter said that he wanted to drive a car that could win, even if he wasn't 100% sure of his own abilities. He had learned his driving skills as a child in an old bath chair that had a 500cc JAP engine, one wheel drive and tiller steering. The brake only worked on the rear wheels so every time you wanted to slow down it was like doing a handbrake turn – Paddy said it was how he'd learned to drive, flat out, sideways! He eventually became a star in the Minis.

Raoul Falin, a Morris dealer in Helsinki, visited Abingdon and told Turner about a young Finnish driver to whom he had lent cars to. "He is quick" he said. "Can you find a car for him in the up and coming RAC Rally?". Turner put him in a 997cc Mini Cooper (407ARX) and told him to plod around and try for a class win

whilst partnered with a co-driver that he had never met. He finished seventh overall and first in class. His name was Timo Makinen.

Rauno Aaltonen was next on the scene. Turner had met him on the 1961 Tulip rally. However, he made his mark on the Polish Rally when he was co-driving for Eugen Bohringer in a Mercedes 220SE. On one of the loose stages, Bohringer let Aatonen drive and was immediately impressed with his speed, as were others on the rally, including Turner. He was signed to BMC at the start of 1962. So, with various other drivers joining at various times, Turner's team was taking shape.

The Mini Cooper was proving to be good but, so far as Turner was concerned, not yet good enough; he wanted something better. Even Issigonis agreed and wanted to be involved this time. Daniel Richmond, of Downton Engineering fame, created an engine of 1100cc that could be shortened to 1000cc or stretched to 1300cc to suit the sport. The quality was second to none, it was strong and dependable and was capable of practically any amount of punishment. The crankshaft was made of extremely hard steel, the valves were of a material "borrowed" from gas turbines. Bigger wheels meant more substantial brake discs and the steering ratio was reduced to 2.3 turns, lock-to-lock. This was a sports car that could carry it's "S" badge

with pride. In 1965 Timo Makinen won the Monte Carlo Rally in a Mini Cooper S, beating Bohringer's Porsche 904 by eight minutes. Pat Moss was third (Saab 96 Sport) and Roger Clark was sixth in a Rover 2000.

In 1966 BMC wanted to win the Monte Carlo Rally to make it three in a row. However, the French organisers were going to do anything they could to stop them and even changed the rules, from previous years, to give the bigger Citroens a better chance of success. The results at the end of the Rally were:-

1st Mini Cooper S – Timo Makinen & P. Easter

2nd Mini Cooper S – Rauno Aaltonen & A. Ambrose

3rd Mini Cooper S – Paddy Hopkirk & H. Liddon

4th Ford Cortina Lotus – Roger Clark & Jim Porter

5th Citroen DS21 – P. Toivonen & E. Mikander

6th Lancia Fulvia Coupe – R. Trautmann & J. Hanriound

Firstly, the organisers challenged the number of cars that had been produced under the homologation rules. With no luck there they dismantled the cars, looking for any small infringement of the rules – even the twin fuel tanks and oil cooler were

deemed OK. After every objection had been answered, they eventually disqualified the cars on an electrical infringement that Stuart Turner had clarified as being within the rules BEFORE the rally. They had used a single filament, halogen headlight bulb, which most rally cars were then using, with dipped beam being taken up by the spot-lamps. The French were against the halogen bulbs because they wanted to keep the established yellow headlamp beams which were not compatible with halogens. However, even the French Citroens used white bulbs in their headlamps! This rule also affected the fourth place Ford Cortina thus catapulting the fifth placed Citroen to first. The Paris based governing body, who had approved the bulbs beforehand, were over-ruled by the organisers and the three minis and the Cortina were all disqualified.

The official results were now:-

1st Citroen DS21 – P. Toivonen & E. Mikander

2nd Lancia Fulvia Coupe – R. Trautmann & J. Hanrioud

3rd Lancia Fulvia Coupe – O. Anderson & O. Dahlgren

4th Citroen DS21 – R. Neyret & J. Terramorsi

5th Lancia Fulvia – L. Cella & L. Lombardini

6th BMW 2000 – R. Slotemaker & R. Gorris.

BMC's Public Relations Dept. went to town, all of this had given them more column inches than they could have dreamed of and a large number of European papers put it on their front pages. Toivonen, the winning Citroen driver, refused to accept his prize and never drove for Citroen again. He didn't want to win any more rallies that way. Prince Rainier, who was due to present the prizes, boycotted the celebrations and the TV Company flew the whole BMC team back to England so that they could appear on the following Sunday's Palladium show.

The following year, the 1967 Monte Carlo Rally was won by Rauno Aaltonen in a Mini Cooper S; it was his turn!

## **H&HCVC Club Regalia**

H&HCVC Car Badges for Grille/Badge Bar (quality stainless steel) - £9.00

H&HCVC Embroidered Sew-on Badges - £3.00



# Letters to the Editor

Following publication (in last month's issue) of Andy Robinson's "letter to the editor", I asked for members' opinions and feedback. Unfortunately and not unexpectedly, I was underwhelmed by the lack of any response to the matters raised by Andy. However, there was one member that was prepared to take the time and the trouble to respond, stick his head up and to express an opinion.

From Ken Coxe

I found Andy Robinson's letter (October issue 381) well presented and he did hit the nail on the head. Hard truths are not always welcome but they have to be addressed, not by "somebody" but by us all as members. I agree that there is nothing more demoralising than to produce a run, organise a show, map out a programme or even organise/present a talk when the response is poor from members. It is easy to pick and choose but then forget to consider the impact of not attending on those who have spent their time trying to make our club worthwhile. In the past, I've been there as a chairman, served on committees and worn the T shirt; it is difficult to ponder where to go next when things are perhaps going in the wrong direction. Perhaps it's good for clubs to revisit the past and to understand that what was good yesterday is not necessarily good today and for members to be then asked what they would like for tomorrow. I've experienced the standard answer – we have always done it this way and why change. Managing change is not easy, as many will have experienced in their working environment. Maybe we should be asking all club members to answer the question "what do you want from the Club?" and "what can you offer the Club?". Maybe we could dedicate part of a club night to address these important questions and in an open forum.

Andy is absolutely right, failure to address the issues will ultimately lead to the demise of the club and then it will be too late to be sorry. Once membership falls it's a devil of a job to recruit and attract new members and stop the spiralling downwards.

Ken has raised some interesting points here, particularly so as they are based on his own experiences. Personally, I substantially agree with what Ken and Andy have both highlighted about member's involvement and the Club's forward direction – it certainly needs careful consideration if the Club is to thrive. No doubt any new committee members/supporters will have their own views and ideas in those particular respects. (Ed)

# This & That, Bits & Bobs and a few Odds & Sods

## **The National Motor Museum – Beau- lieu**

Judith and I recently made a return visit to the National Motor Museum at Beau-lieu. Over the years I must have visited the museum on 5-6 different occasions, each time was thoroughly enjoyable and a day well spent. This time however, I was disappointed. I came away with a feeling that the museum was looking a bit tired and rather stale and that I could have spent a lot less money at a better motor museum (Lakeland Motor Museum for example). The biggest disappointment was the “collection” of Top Gear project cars. This basically amounted to a collection of abandoned, uncared for vehicles that had been dumped next door to the museum’s main building after being systematically wrecked by a succession of overpaid, puerile, overgrown school boy BBC presenters – can anybody tell me how an ex-cricketer and a professional “Northerner” ever became associated

with a car related TV programme? Most of these vehicles have been parked up for years and don’t look as though anyone, visitor or staff, could give a toss – really not a good look for a National museum.

## **A belated but very Happy Birthday to...**

... our retiring Chairman, Steve Divall. Yes, believe it or not, Steve reached the grand age of 80yrs during October. If David and I have got our editing sorted, there should be a couple of accompanying photos showing Steve enjoying his birthday celebrations, with family and friends, at Franco Agrisani’s marvellous Benvenuti Italian restaurant in Hazel Grove – well worth a visit if you want a warm Italian welcome and some good food.

## **And now for something completely different .....**

..... A man takes his Rottweiler dog to see the vet.

Man – ‘My dog’s cross-eyed, is there anything that you can do for him?’

Vet – ‘Well, let’s have a good look at him’.

So the Vet picks up the dog and closely examines his eyes, teeth and facial muscles. Finally.....

Vet – ‘I’m going to have to put him

down’.

Man – ‘What!!? Because he’s cross-eyed!!?’

Vet – ‘No, because he’s really heavy!’

### **British Leyland – Another “What Could’ve Been”**

Last month’s magazine (Issue 381) had Rob Salter’s Austin Allegro Super Estate on its front cover, a model that I believe was badly let down and which could have been made a whole lot better than that finally presented to the buying public. So, why am I bringing this point up again? Well, I was recently reading an article in “Classic Car Buyer” about BL’s use of its O-Series engine from 1978. Amongst others, this engine was used in the Morris Marina/Ital, Austin Princess/Ambassador and, eventually, in the MG Maestro too. It was this latter car, the MG, that piqued my interest as Judith and I knew someone that bought a brand new one when they were first introduced. Unfortunately and like so many BL stories of that era, it was not a happy one but rather, a tale of a car that had been rushed out, underdeveloped and, particularly so with the range topping MG brand, sold to willing buyers who seemed to be seen as nothing more than unpaid “test dummies”.

The Maestro, as a model, was yet an-

other car, in a long line of BMC, British Leyland, BL, Austin Rover et al offerings, that had been a very good concept but which was, yet again, let down by a rushed and penny pinching development and which would eventually be seen as a bit of a “pig-in-a-poke” when it finally got into the hands of the buying public. It was a very roomy car for its class and, as a “family” type car, was quite practical too. The MG was set apart from its siblings by good looking alloy wheels, the addition of meaningful spoilers, red highlights/details and a very modern digital dashboard that shouted at you in an annoying synthesised voice and which always seemed to be going wrong. The problem was that the sporty looks were not backed up by a well-matched sporty engine or, for that matter, a particularly good engine.

The planned introduction (in the Maestro) of the S-Series engine was, typically, still in development and therefore not ready for the car’s launch. Almost, it would seem, in desperation, Austin Rover engineers turned to the Austin Maxi’s E-Series engine, altered it to a 1600cc unit, bolted on twin Weber carbs and then coupled it to a VW gearbox. It was claimed to produce 103bhp but, on the downside, was prone to crankshaft problems and, as the carbs were at the front of the engine, above the manifold,

they were prone to icing up and, ironically, hot-start trouble as well.

When the S-Series engine was finally put into the Maestro, moving the carbs to the back of that engine, it was considered an improvement but it still had the annoying hot-start problem. The engineers then turned their attention to and fitted, a 2.0ltr, fuel injected version of the O-Series engine that they mated to a Honda gearbox. It produced a claimed 115bhp and totally transformed the MG into the Maestro that it always should have been. It was too late however, the car never recovered from the bad reputation that the earlier cars had saddled it with. This is such a shame because the MG Maestro was very capable and could quite easily live with a contemporary Ford XR3i, VW Golf GTi, Vauxhall GTE or the like.

The car was steadily developed during the mid/late 1980s and then, in early 1989, Austin Rover hit the streets with an absolute cracker – the MG Maestro Turbo. This very rare car (only circa 500 were ever made) produced a claimed 152bhp and could hit 0-60mph in only 6.7 seconds.

### **Ape to be in Ibiza**

Everybody loves a Piaggio Ape (why would you not?) so here's a photo of one that Steve Divall spotted whilst on

holiday on the isle of Ibiza. These little "chariots" have been buzzing about Italy and the wider Mediterranean area for as long as I can remember – long may that continue. Steve is very much into these machines and has promised to write an article about them for a future magazine – should be interesting.

### **And finally .....**

Following my photographic challenge to Graham and the MG "Gang" (see last month's issue 381) things have remained very quiet, not a peep from any of them. However, a gentle enquiry revealed that there is a cunning plan in the "planning stage" and that it may well come to fruition at, or around, Springtime. To quote Graham, 'watch this space'. So, we await developments.





### **For Sale**

Triumph Spitfire MK1 engine, dismantled requires overhaul. Includes starter motor, dynamo, clutch, water pump etc. Engine number FC88993

Also a number of Triumph Herald parts including a full set of unused wheel cylinders and a 1200 gearbox and bell housing.

£125. Purchasers will need to collect from Cheadle Hulme.  
Contact Eddie Partington 0161 485 3407 for more details.

# Attention All H&HCVC Members

Steve Divall (Chairman & Director), Mike Coffey (Vice Chairman & Director) & Chris Parr (Company/Club Secretary & Director) have all declared to the Committee that they will not be seeking nominations for re-election to their posts. All three have confirmed their resignations with effect from the Club's AGM on Wednesday 21st February 2024.

Clearly, there is now a need for member volunteers to fill vacancies on the committee and/or to take up duties/responsibilities associated with the posts and the upcoming vacancies. The following is a generalised list of those duties/responsibilities:

- Chair committee meetings based on an agreed agenda. Liaise with High Lane Con' Club regarding availability of function room for club meetings.
- Assist with any Club Night raffles.
- Assist the Committee with obtaining available speakers for Club Nights.
- Organise the February AGM and any food for it.
- Complete a monthly article for the Club's magazine.
- Organise the annual (January) Chairman's Quiz Night with prizes.
- Liaise with Ed Burke regarding the organisation of the annual Rocker Box Race (March) with prizes.
- Assist in the organisation and successful running of the annual Peaks & Dales charity run (June).
- Liaise and help organise the annual club BBQ (July).
- Liaise with Poynton Show Committee regarding the Club's attendance. Assist with vehicle announcements and organise presentation of a prize.
- Assist with organisation of annual Club Show including raffle, prizes and presentations.
- Storage of certain pieces of club equipment (eg tables/tombola drum).
- Arrange and organise club stands at agreed car shows (eg Tatton Park).
- Arrange, organise and/or assist with club runs and routes (eg 'Drive it Day').

Should a member wish to be nominated for election to the Committee, in respect of any one of the three (to be) vacant posts, then please let Steve Divall (or any of the existing Committee members) know prior to the AGM on Wednesday 21st February 2024. Alternatively, should a member wish to offer their services/expertise and/or assistance/help with regards to any of the above duties/responsibilities, but without actually becoming a full member of the Committee, then please discuss what it is that you would like to do with Steve Divall (or any of the existing Committee members) and again, prior to the AGM.

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**Disclaimer**

Please note that the opinions of the Editor and any Contributors are not necessarily those of the Chairman or Directors of the Club.

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