

Hare & Hounds

Classic Vehicle Club



DECEMBER 2023 | EDITION 383



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H&H CVC Ltd

 hhcvc.com

 hhcvc1991@gmail.com

The Club meets at the Conservative Club, High Lane
on the **THIRD** Wednesday of each month @ **8.15pm**

Annual Club Subscription - £20

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Cheques Should be Made Payable to

H&HCVC Ltd.

Chairman & Director

Steve Divall

stephen_divall@hotmail.co.uk

0161 483 4475

Vice Chairman & Director

Mike Coffey

mick.coffey1@talktalk.net

01298 27424

Director & Committee Member

Richard Burnham

ric.burnham@sky.com

(Inc. photography and runs)

07770 533677

Treasurer & Director

Graham Knowles

graham.knowles@btinternet.com

19 Bath Crescent

Cheadle Hulme

Cheadle

Cheshire

SK8 7QU

0161 439 2106

Company Secretary & Director

Chris Parr

chris.parr67@ntlworld.com

4 Bramham Road

Marple

Stockport

SK6 7LJ

0161 427 1363

07512 783818

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Reg. Office - 2, Kings Drive, Marple, Stockport SK6 6NQ

Reg. N° 4999097

hhcvc1991@gmail.com

Printer: Frank Aspinall & Co. Ltd., Building 4, Unit 5,

Tameside Business Park, Denton, Manchester

M34 3QS Tel: 0161 480 2707; Mob: 07977 211213



December 2023

No planned club activities.

Have a great Christmas!!!

January 2024

Monday 1st January – Happy New Year!!! Reminder, your club subscription is due.

Weds 17th January – Club Night – Annual ‘Chairman’s Quiz Night’ (finger food to be on offer).

February 2024

Weds 21st February – Club Night – the Club’s Annual General Meeting (fingers crossed for a complimentary Hot-Pot supper).

March 2024

Weds 20th March – Club Night – Annual ‘Rocker Box Racing’ Event.

April 2024

Wednesday 17th April – Club Night.

Sunday 28th April – Drive It Day – The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs’ designated day to dust off your pride and joy, give it a polish and to drive it down the road(s).

May 2024

Wednesday 15th May – Club Night.

Wednesday 22nd May – 1st Evening Run of the year. Details to follow.

June 2024

Sunday 16th June – Peaks & Dales Annual Charity Run. Details to follow.

Wednesday 19th June – Club Night.

July 2024

Wednesday 17th July – Club Night. Annual Club BBQ & Impromptu Car Show.

Wednesday 24nd July – 2nd Evening Run of the year. Details to follow.

August 2024

Wednesday 21st August – Club Night.

Wednesday 28th August – Final Evening Run of the year. Details to follow.

September 2024

Sunday 1st September – Annual Club Show – Open to members and non-members.

Wednesday 18th September – Club Night.

October 2024

Wednesday 16th October – Club Night.

November 2024

Wednesday 20th November – Club Night.

December 2024

No Planned Activities At This Time.

..... is pretty self-explanatory really. David and I, as the editorial team, wish all H&HCVC members and readers of this magazine a very happy Christmas and our very best wishes for the New Year.

Keith Yates

I'd like to start this final editorial of 2023 with a reminder – the 2024 annual club subscriptions are due with effect from 1st January 2024. This subscription has been retained at the level of £20pa for 2024 and payment/banking details are provided towards the top of Page 3 of this magazine. Graham and Jean will be more than happy to accept your subscriptions from now on so, don't delay or forget and get the job done and sorted as soon as possible. There will be one more reminder in the January magazine but that will be it.

Next up, I'd like to say a big thank you to Ken Coxe for his presentation about the trials and tribulations of restoring his Austin Seven. Ken turned up at the November Social with a load of props that included some specially engineered (by Ken) tools and photographic evidence of his Austin, as bought, in pieces and slowly being brought back to full health. This event was not only very interesting but entertaining and well delivered too. Ken was also rewarded by a decent turn out of members so well done to those that attended – keep up the good work.

I'm afraid that I'm feeling the need to have a bit of a moan now; just a second whilst I reach for my

Mr Grumpy hat. There we go, that's fitting quite well. Anyway, this is perhaps harping back to my grumble about over grown and seemingly out of any control foliage that covers signage from a driver's view. As I've no doubt made it abundantly clear before however, I find it difficult to relate the extortionate amounts of money that our glorious politicians milk from us motorists every year, to the very poor returns and "benefits" that we actually receive back. My latest complaint, in this respect, is the extremely poor standard of road marking maintenance. How many times do you approach road junctions, road hazards, roundabout and lines meant to distinguish specific lanes, for example, where the actual road-markings are almost or totally worn away? If these markings were important in the first place (and they certainly are very important from a road safety aspect) then why are they allowed to deteriorate so badly? The excuse always seems to be, usually from local authorities, that "we haven't got the money". Well, I am, for one motorist, here to tell you that I'm paying eye-watering amounts of car/motoring related taxes so, you politicians, what price road safety in your world? Surely, if authorities can find the money for

speed cameras, speed humps and junction “improvements” (that very rarely seem to improve anything) then they could rustle up a few quid to pay for road marking maintenance (?). And, whilst I’ve got the grumpy hat on, here’s another thing; if motorists have to endure the proliferation of (sometimes) confusing signage, why can’t local authorities take down old and redundant signs? They may even be able to make a few pounds on them if they put them up for sale! What do I mean? Well, how about “New Road Layout Ahead” or “Traffic Light Priorities Changed” or “Traffic Priorities Changed”. Problem is that these redundant signs seem to linger on for two, three, four or more years and that then leaves less time for motorists to take notice of the valid ones. Grump over!

With Steve, Mike and Chris retiring from the Committee in Feb-24, I’ve been giving some thought to the future of our Club and what direction we, as a collective membership, may want to take the H&HCVC as we move forward. Yes, we do, at this time, appear to have a fall in membership numbers and a difficulty recruiting new members. These factors, when put together, are clearly going to impact

upon our ability to fund day-to-day activities and expenses. That said, the Club still has circa 100 members, a magazine, social and motor-ing activities and therefore, a good platform upon which to build and, hopefully, prosper. There is a lot, I believe, that we can be happy about (certainly not complacent!) and positive too as any negatives are certainly not unique to H&HCVC. It is probably accurate to state that Covid changed everything. Many businesses and I would imagine clubs too, have had to change and to adapt as the new, post-Covid, priorities and social behaviours have taken root. I feel confident that the H&HCVC can take up the challenge and look to the future.

Well, that’s it for another month and another year too. David and I both hope that you enjoy this December issue and that 2023 has been a good year for you. Here’s also hoping that all members and our readers enjoy a great Christmas and that the New Year brings us all lots of enjoyable and trouble free ‘classic’ motoring.

Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year

NEW MEMBER

We have a new member of our club. A very warm welcome to Steven (Steve) O'Connor, the proud owner of a 2003 BMW M3 Convertible and very much a modern/young classic in the making. We all hope that you enjoy being a member of the Hare & Hounds CVC Steve.

FRED DEAN

Members of the H&HCVC will be sorry to learn that long-standing member of the Club, Fred Dean, passed away over the weekend 11th/12th November. Most will remember Fred as the proud owner of a Morris Oxford (Farina) that is now owned by Graham Knowles.

For those wishing to attend Fred's funeral, the details are:-

The funeral service will be on **Monday, 18th December** and will commence at **10:30** at **St Matthew's Church, Edgeley**. Then, at the **Rowan Chapel, Stockport Cemetery/Crematorium** and followed by food at the **Alma Lodge Hotel** (on the A6).

The family has asked for members to turn up in their classics (if possible) and to wear lots of colour rather than black.

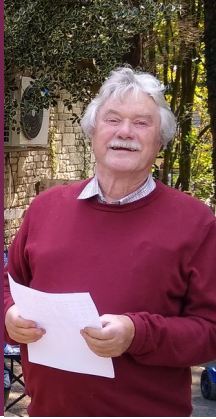
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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



HALL OF FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS

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

The front cover picture, for this issue, is from our editor and he says that it is “seasonal”. So, at this stage, I am in the dark but as always, it will be good.

I begin with the sad news about Fred Dean who has passed away. His funeral takes place on 18th December, at 10:30, at St Mathews Church, Edgeley, followed by a cremation service at Stockport crematorium and then followed by a light lunch at the Alma Lodge Hotel. More details are on the club’s website or in this magazine. Fred was always at club shows with his pristine Morris Oxford (Farina styled) but his poor eyesight caused him to stop driving and the car is now in the care of our Treasurer, Graham and his wife Jean. Up until his retirement at 65, he had a hairdressing business in Hazel Grove and I learned recently that a friend of mine used to go to the premises for Fred to cut his hair.

I understand that in Edinburgh parking on pavements is no longer allowed, except for deliveries. On a trip there, several years

ago, I found the traffic wardens to be very helpful when parking outside a hotel to take luggage out of the car boot. So, take care but in my recent experience, the train is the best option, that is if they are running of course due to strike action.

For the last club evening we were treated to an illustrated slide show and talk by Ken Coxey about his restoration of an Austin Seven. The car was extremely water damaged when he bought it but his considerable experience as an engineer helped in the manufacture of replica parts and tools. I am sure you will all join me in thanking Ken for his presentation. Again and as I have said previously, if any member feels able to come forward with a plan for an evening presentation then please come forward to any Committee member.

As previously stated, Mike Coffey, Chris Parr and myself will not be seeking re-election at the AGM in February 2024. However, I am now pleased to advise that all three positions have been filled by

Peter Norbury, Jane Harrop and Keith Yates respectively and so we are able to continue. As I have mentioned before, we could do with some young blood coming into the club so please try to encourage this. I was talking to a guy who owns a car accessory outlet and he said that whilst there are many younger people about with 40 year old vehicles, his sales to them are mainly of polishes etc. Also and on the same subject, if you decide to sell your vehicle, please tell the new owner about our club.

For the next meeting, in January, we have our annual Chairman's Quiz. As always, please bring a writing implement with you. Paper and questions will be provided and I will get four bottles of wine for the winners. If your team comprises of more than four members and you win, then it is your problem as to how you split the prize but, as I always ask, teams of no more than four please.

The February meeting will be our AGM with hopefully, a complimentary hot pot supper to follow. More of that in future ramblings. For the March meeting we have our

annual rocker box racing event courtesy of Ed Burke. It is well in hand and we look forward to an excellent showing of vehicles and attendance too. As I said in my chat last year, any one with an old wooden type block plane, suitably modified, will be more than welcome to take part. As before, awards will be made for the overall winner and the best turned-out machine.

Mentioned beforehand, make sure, over the winter period, that your batteries and oils are taken care of. Starting and moving your vehicle periodically, to give the tyres a break from standing in one place, is also a good idea.

We continue to collect postage stamps for the Guide Dogs organisation but, thanks to the Royal mail, only about 20% of the mail through your letter box comes with a stamp with the rest being delivered by other means. However and for now, any postage stamps continue to be well received so please continue to give them to me.

Once more, that is me finished for this issue so have a good Christmas and New Year to all members and families.

H&HCVC Club Regalia

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

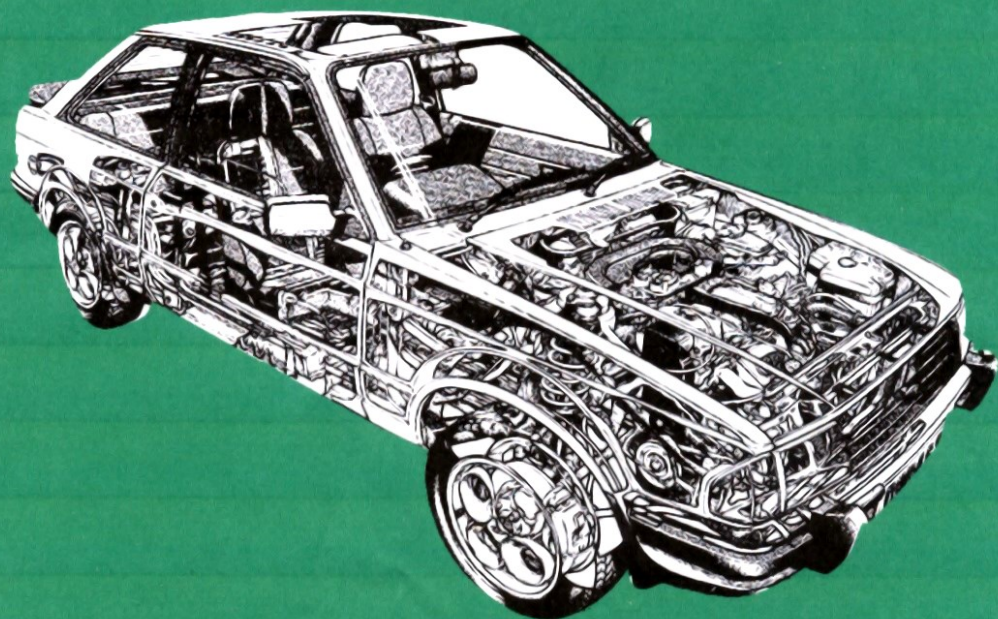
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MG

CATCH UP

Graham Scattergood

Hi everybody. Let me start by wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I assume that most of you will have covered your cherished and trusty steed with tinsel, just to set the Yuletide scene.

Well, I for one, really enjoyed the talk and slide show at our last Club Night. It was given by Ken Coxe and it was on the trials and tribulations of owning and renovating an Austin 7. WELL DONE Ken!

As most of you will know by now, there is to be a change at the top table of the Club hierarchy. Our Editor in chief has offered his services as Chairman and, if the magazine is anything to go by, I am sure he will prove to be a great success. He will be ably supported by Peter Norbury as his deputy and in the

Vice Chairman roll and with Jane Harrop volunteering to formally take over the position as Club Secretary. My hearty congratulations to you all (subject to AGM approval of course).

As members of H&HCVC I am sure, like me, you will want to see the club continue and prosper and, to this end and as previously mentioned, your support is really a vital ingredient. Therefore, I am appealing for your help in letting me, or any committee member, know what activities you would like to see during 2024. Maybe more or less talks, car shows, car runs etc. maybe say, a 3day car trip away or something completely different to get more members involved in club nights and the wider activities of the club. COME ON MEMBERS IT IS YOUR CLUB!!!

Don't forget that there will be no Club Night in December so toodle pip for now and I hope to see you all in January, for the Steve's last Quiz as Chairman, and *throughout 2024*.

Letters to the Editor

After reading the letters from Andy and Ken, I was reminded of the basis for H&H CVC which was set out at the very first meeting in November 1991.

1. To become a member, one is not required to own such a device, but merely to have a desire to become involved.
2. Basically, we all want to have a bit of fun and the committee hope to organise different events through the year.

All clubs, of any sort, have had a decline in membership and interest due to Covid. However, H&H CVC has such strong foundations, so let's build on that and look forward to an enjoyable 2024 and beyond.

Thank you to the present committee for all the activities they have organised this year and an extra special thanks to those retiring – Chris, Margaret, Steve & Mike.

Jane Harrop

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THREE WHEELS

STEVE DIVALL

ON MY WAGON

I was born in the dark days of 1943 when severe petrol rationing was in place. In 1945 and immediately after World War Two had ended, petrol rationing was “sort of” lifted but not greatly. At that time, anyone with a motorcycle and particularly an economical one (a Prince for example), had an advantage. A great number of motorcycles started to appear and these were both new or put away during the conflict. Many of these were fitted with sidecars and the “three-wheel car” was reinvented for people wanting mobility. Loads of sidecars were made by differing companies, many of

them now lost forever.

Villiers produced a revised 200cc engine, latterly replaced with a 250cc version, which was to become the basic engine for many a three-wheeled “mini-car” or three-wheeler (car) as we now know them. Generally, these were made with the single wheel at the front but there were also the well known Morgan three-wheelers and similar vehicles. These were made with the single wheel at the rear and of course, much more powerful engines.

In about 1958 I went on holiday, with my parents, in a 1955

Ford Consul, the height of luxury and sophistication at the time, to Southbourne, near Bournemouth. One couple staying there had travelled about 60 miles or so, from South London, in a Bond three-wheeler. After a lot of nagging, I was taken for a ride in this machine one day and memories of a very noisy, uncomfortable 'car' remain; I do not know how they ever made the trip. Sometime later however, a colleague, who had previously owned a Matchless motorcycle, bought a Reliant three-wheeler car and to be honest, I was reasonably impressed after having driven it.

A three-wheeled truck (designed by Tom Karen of Ogle Design) was produced by Reliant in 1967 and was named the TW9 (Three-Wheeler 9) or, subsequently, the Ant. It was popular with and used by many Councils for collecting rubbish and the like – a Snow Plough version was also made but how that coped with snow and ice is a mystery. The TW9/Ant was also made, under licence and in LHD form, in Greece and under the name of MEBEA. A friend of mine has one in Kefalonia. This was, initially, used by him, in truck form, as his business mainstay and whilst he still has it – all his family learned to drive on it – he now uses much larger vehicles for his work. Production of the Reliant TW9/Ant ran from

1967 to 1987 (I produced an article on the Ant several issues ago) and when Reliant died so did the Ant.

The Piaggio Ape three-wheeled truck has been in production since 1948 and is still made today in a number of forms – a picture of one, seen when on holiday earlier this year in Ibiza, was shown in the last issue. The basic machine is sold in various forms (including a car version) and last year, in Madeira, I saw many of them in open taxi form. Production of the Ape began with a 50cc two-stroke engine which, as the saying goes, could not pull the skin off a rice pudding. The two-stroke engine was increased in capacity over the years but eventually changed to four-stroke, then becoming a diesel unit and is now available with an electric motor. The vehicle is available as a four-seater saloon type car, as a closed van, as a flat bed or open truck or, as I mentioned earlier, an open taxi vehicle. An extremely versatile machine for everyday use but, alas, not widely available. I have not seen an Ape used as a snow plough, like the Ant, but snow is probably not an issue in Southern Europe.

BMC win Monte and no doubt about it!



1964, 1965, 1966(?) Now definitely 1967!

When you judge a car, this is the evidence you judge it by: reliability, safety, performance, road holding, economy, quality of finish. And these are the very things we prove when we're successful in a great International rally. The priceless experience we gain in the mud, snow and ice, against a relentless clock, we pour back into all BMC cars. Whenever you see 'BMC win', remember it's a win for you. BMC creative engineering is yours in Austin, Austin-Healey, MG, Morris, Riley, Vanden Plas and Wolseley

BMC SCOREBOARD: MONTE CARLO RALLY

OUTRIGHT WINNER **MINI-COOPER S**

Rauno Aaltonen - Henry Liddon

6th **MINI-COOPER S**

OVERALL Paddy Hopkirk - Ron Crellin

*Subject to
official confirmation*



FIASCO

ON THE

MONTE

THOMAS
WARDLE

The controversy that surrounded the 1966 Monte Carlo Rally started long before the ceremonial flag was dropped to wave off the first cars. The Royal Automobile Club's Appendix J regulations hinted at the trouble that was to come.

These stated that Group One cars has to be standard, except for certain limited changes that could be made to the competing cars. These stated that no less than 5000 examples had to be produced within one year and that seats, facia, steering wheel, engine and wheels all had to be standard production items. Two axle ratios and two sets of gearbox ratios were allowed and brake linings and/or pads could be changed. Two extra lights were also allowed to be fitted. So far, so simple you would think; except that these rules were a transcript of the originals that were in French and nuances could be present in the translation or missing in the rules given to the British entries.

With this in mind, the R A C,

along with representatives from BMC, Ford, Rootes and possibly others, took a trip to the FIA, the motor sports governing body, in Paris to clarify a number of points. Questions raised were answered in "a straight forward way" that was satisfactory and homologation issues regarding the Mini Cooper S, Lotus Cortina, Lancia Fulvia, Citroen DS21, and the Mustang 289 were all accepted. The Renault Gordini and the Alfa Romeo GTA could not reach the homologation criteria and were therefore put into Group Two. This meant that they would be competing with an 18% handicap, giving them little chance of winning.

Rally drivers, being a little finicky, wanted the smaller controls (i.e. switches) where they could be reached whilst wearing a seat belt and lawyers and interpreters had to clarify the rules before things could be moved. The FIA took the opportunity to advise all interested parties about the rule clarifications that had

taken place. Unfortunately, these were published in French. This was done with good intentions but the problem of interpreting the rules, in more than one way, continued and, adding insult to injury, not all interested parties were made aware of the "clarified" rules. Is it possible to believe that BMC, Fords and Rootes would spend thousands of pounds preparing and entering cars that did not follow the rules to the letter? The rules for Group Two entrants, the previous year, allowed the use of any number of axillary lamps. The revised rules, for 1966, restricted the number to four. This was in the amended/clarified rules, issued after the Paris meeting, which failed to reach British shores.

At the first "arrival point" the Group Two cars that had more than six lamps were, following inspections, excluded from the rally. At the second "arrival point" all cars had their lights checked so as to make sure competitors complied with the rules. If the British were subsequently found to be breaking the rules, why were they not excluded there and then? The British cars were no faster in the dark when compared to the daylight times they recorded. It could be argued that standard headlamp units should have been used but BMC, Ford and Rootes all built cars which they thought were within the rules and improved safety.

The French were determined that the British were not going to make it three wins on the trot and this was their goal, determined at Monaco Auto Club meetings long before Christmas. When they stripped the Minis they even counted the number of teeth on the gears, such was their determination to find something wrong and exclude us. If you read my report in the previous club magazine (November 2023 Issue 382) then another victim of the French bias was Rosemary Smith who had "won" the Coupe des Dames (Ladies Cup) by finishing "sixth" in a Hillman Imp. She was also excluded for the same reason.

The none motoring press had a field day, mentioning Waterloo and Trafalgar.

My opinion:- WE WUZ ROBBED!!!

Racing and rallying improves the breed and we all benefit. When Ford brought out the Escort it did not handle well at all and fuel consumption, in the road cars, was in the low twenties. Over the years, handling, with McPherson struts and cart springs, improved dramatically because of lessons learnt in motor sport. Winning the World Rally Championship eight years in succession in the 1980s speaks for itself. On the road cars fuel consumption steadily rose over the years to the high thirties.



Keith yates **HONDA S800**

Historically but perhaps less so these days, volume car manufacturers have tried to include what might be called a “halo” car in their range; a car that will grab the buying public’s attention. In the case of Honda, in the 1960s, they wanted to show the world that they weren’t just producers of very good motorcycles but that they could also produce pretty good cars too. Previous cars had been aimed squarely at the Japanese home market and took the form of what are known as (in Japan) “Kei” cars; these are ultra-mini compact cars with small engines and which are designed to take advantage of low car taxation rates.

The S800’s immediate prede-

cessor had been the successful S600, a 606cc roadster and coupe that had a chain drive, rather than what would have been seen as a more conventional differential, and which owed a lot to Honda’s advanced motorcycle technology. The S800 was a definite step up and perhaps started Honda on the road of becoming a true global brand.

To start with the obvious, the S800 (again in both roadster and coupe form) was given a bigger 791cc aluminium, double overhead camshaft and water-cooled engine that was fed by two twin-choke carburettors. It produced 70bhp and, again looking to Honda’s motorcycle knowledge, it was very high-revving – maximum power was de-

livered at 8,500rpm and it was red-lined at an incredible 9,500/10,000rpm. The 0-60mph time was quoted as being 13.5secs and with fuel consumption of 37mpg overall. Interestingly, I have an original 1967 Honda S800 sales brochure in my collection and it quotes the maximum speed of both the roadster and the coupe cars as being, rather coyly, "over 90mph". In fact, the S800 was Honda's first true 100mph car and was subsequently advertised as being "built with Grand Prix precision", alluding to Honda's successful entry into Formula 1 Grand Prix racing; John Surtees being just one of the team's drivers.

The S800 was first introduced at the 1965 Tokyo Motor Show and went on to be launched during 1966. It still had the carried forward (from the S600) chain drive to the rear wheels and rear independent suspension. Whilst this setup gave very good performance and handling it was also seen as too complicated for most of Honda's potential overseas markets. Remember that this little car would be competing with very conventional cars like the British MG Midget, Austin Healey Sprite and Triumph Spitfire and European cars like the FIAT 850 Spider/Coupe. So, Honda ditched the rear end setup and replaced it with the much more conventional propshaft/live-axle setup.

This is how the car was presented when it arrived in the UK during 1967 – it was, in fact, Honda's first car to be sold in the UK.

There we have it then, the Honda S800. This little gem of a car (the roadster and coupe are both gorgeous in their own ways) with its cracking, very high revving engine and excellent handling introduced Honda cars to the world, showed it what it was capable of and, also, put a marker down for the future. The S800 was Honda's last car to be granted the honour of the "S" designation; that is, of course, until the introduction of one of the greatest sportscars ever, the mighty Honda S2000 (1999-2009) – a car that featured in the March 2023 (374) edition of this magazine.

Finally, can a tiny, 1960s Japanese "buzz-box" really be considered as being cool? Well, I think that it can be and that there isn't really any question about it. I'll put it this way, you take your Honda S800 (Roadster or Coupe and preferably a red one) to a car show that has loads of the usual sportscar classics on display – MGBs, MGBGTs, Mazda MX5s, the odd Spitfire or Lotus Elans etc, etc. What car is going to attract the greatest amount of interest? The Honda – its quirky, unusual, a technical masterpiece, very rare and so cool that it makes your teeth ache.

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

Some TV Car Trivia – Adam Adamant Lives!

If you're of a certain age then you may well recall a BBC TV production (two series shown between June 1966 and March 1967) called 'Adam Adamant Lives!' - if you're not of that certain age then you'll have no idea what I'm on about so feel free to skip to the next piece. The real 'star' of this show was the handsome and dashing Gerald Harper, aided and abetted by his female co-star, Juliet Harmer. Sadly, this very stylish production is very rarely seen these days as, unfortunately, it was shot entirely in black-and-white during a time when everybody wanted to see colour. Even Talking Pictures TV (TPTV) – aka Old Gits TV – hasn't yet been able to take up Adam's cause. Anyway, I won't bore you with an explanation of this fantastical and pacey concept programme, about a Victorian, time travelling detective turning up in the fab/groovy 1960s, but just cut to the chase and highlight the 'car'. My recollection is that most 1960s, 70s or 80s cop/adventure shows had to have a 'star car' (or cars) that possibly became more strongly associated with the show itself than its actual 'stars' – I give you, as ex-

amples, John Stead's Bentley and Emma Peel's Lotus Elan (The Avengers), Jack Regan's Ford Consul/Granada Mk1s (The Sweeney), the Triumph 1800 Roadster seen every week in Bergerac and perhaps the most famous of all TV cars, the series of white Volvo 1800S cars that Roger Moore/Simon Templar drove in The Saint from 1962-68. The Adam Adamant 'car' was a very tasty Mini Cooper S (registration AA 1000). In the swinging 1960s, every 'celebrity' worth their salt wanted to be seen in a Mini but the real 'I've made it' stars wanted the status symbol of a Radford Conversion Mini – George Harrison, Paul McCartney and Peter Sellers to name but three. The character, Adam Adamant, also favoured the luxury of one of these Radford Mini Cooper S cars; in fact, the particular car was a Radford owned demo car that was hired by the BBC and then returned after filming ceased. So now you know.

..... and now for something completely different

A man has been found drowned in a large bowl of muesli

Police believe he was pulled in by a strong currant.

The local ice cream seller has been found on the floor of his van, covered with hundreds and thousands, crushed nuts and strawberry sauce

Police believe that he'd topped himself.

Fashionable Austin Allegro?The October issue (381) had Rob Salter's Austin Allegro Super Estate on the front cover. I pointed out that the Allegro was, fundamentally, a good car but, like so many British Leyland cars of its period, it had suffered from underfunding, inadequate development, design/engineering interference and, subsequently, serious derision from several quarters. Looking back, the Allegro could be viewed as a sort of overblown Mini – it was a roomy car for its size/class and, when viewed objectively, had driving characteristics that were quite similar to those of a Mini. And? So what? I hear you calling. Well, I was reading an article recently that was looking at classic car trends, the cars that had hit rock-bottom in terms of prices/values and that were strongly predicted to be on the way up – the Austin Allegro is now being seen as a “fashionable” classic, a car that people are now looking for, looking after and looking to be seen in too – perhaps it's those 1970s British Leyland colours. Who would have thought it?

Book Review

**“Under the Bonnet” –
“Confessions of a 1970s & 80s
Car Mechanic”**

By Brian Cunningham – Published by The History Press 2021

ISBN 978 0 75099566 5

“These days, a nice original Vauxhall Viva costs an arm and a leg, but back in the 1970s, £100 bought a ‘good runner’, with the rust, bald tyres and dodgy MOT thrown in for free. All you needed was someone who knew how to fix it when it broke down!

Brian Cunningham is that someone – or at least, he used to be. Under the Bonnet is the totally true (some tales may be taller than others) story of being a car mechanic in the old days, when fixing a car was one thing, but keeping it fixed was something else entirely. These are the tales of a bygone age, full of secret scams, chaotic characters and cars almost bursting with personality”.

A thoroughly entertaining, humorous and nostalgic read – well worth the money (Ed)

And Finally A Car To Have A Punt On?

Remember, that you've heard it here first. Whilst thinking about “fashionable” Austin Allegros (above), I started to ponder what might be a car to have a punt on as a solid, future “classic”; a car that's perhaps hit the bottom of its price/value curve, that's relatively cheap to buy (even for a gud un) cheap to run and great fun to own and drive.

How about a Mazda MX5 NC (Series 3)? Price wise, these cars have now bottomed out and if you can't stretch to a good NA or NB model then these are very afforda-

ble. Get yourself a rust free, well sorted and looked after example (there are plenty out there), keep it well, have some great fun with it and watch its value rise.

COOL CAR

Not the most popular of the sporty Escort series; the Escort GTi was an incredibly rare sight in its short tenure as a model.

This holds a clam to fame as not only the last sporty Escort, but Ford's one and only European entry using the GTi badge. The engine wasn't all up to much, retaining the same 115-PS Zetec-E engine, which wasn't rare among the other variants of

the series by this point.

The bodykit was really what made this more special, borrowed directly from the RS2000 Escort, upon which this final generation shared an architecture.

This particular Escort remains somewhat lonely, being the only image within the Ford Heritage Vault!

Dep. Ed.

FORD ESCORT GTi



Financial Administrator

Jean Knowles

judojean@btinternet.com

Magazine Editor

Keith Yates

keith.yates1957@outlook.com

07762 568849

Motorcycle Section

Steve Divall

See page 2

MG Section & Advertising

Graham Scattergood

scatt911@outlook.com

Publicity

Helen Bowden

01614273584

Vehicle Valuations for Insurance

Club Stands

Mike Coffey

01298 27424

Website Administrator

Jane Harrop

janeharrop148@outlook.com

Deputy Magazine Editor

David Bresnahan

dwbresnahan@outlook.com

Commercials Section

Dave Rawson

davidrawson54@yahoo.co.uk

Minutes

Jill Dewsnap

dewsap35@gmail.com

0161 3382098

Charity Co-ordinator

Eric Dewsnap

dewsap35@gmail.com

Associate member (Auditor)

David Rainsbury

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