



Colne Valley Classic and Vintage Club Newsletter

The CVCVC was formed in 1989 to encourage interest in Historic, Vintage, Classic Cars and Motorcycles



March 2021



2018 CVCVC Classic Car Show. Held in the Grounds of the Thatcher's Arms, Mount Bures

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Editor's Intro

Optimistic news on the Coronavirus front, with millions receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, including many of our members of a certain age. There now seems a real possibility that within a few months, there might be a return to normality. Meanwhile with the social restrictions still in place, I hope you and your families and friends are keeping safe.

Our Events Co-ordinator Stuart Black is adjusting the future CVCVC events programme accordingly and updates will be provided through the Weekly Parish Notices and Monthly Newsletters.

A splendid variety of articles in this month's Newsletter, however my "Future Copy" file is practically empty, I do try to achieve at least 8 pages, so your articles will be most welcome. With spring approaching, I imagine many of you are carrying out additional maintenance and remedial work on your respective classics, in which case why not write an article for the Newsletter and let other members know the details. Your projects could be an inspiration to others. Here is a further idea, have you owned a particular vehicle that you regret parting with, or do you have fond memories for your first car, from my experience there tends to be a learning curve to drive and maintain them.

Sad news to hear that Captain Tom Moore had died in Bedford Hospital earlier this month. His autobiography, "Tomorrow Will be a Good Day," is a monument to Sir Tom's courage and determination through life and perhaps should be standard reading in schools as an antidote to today's "Woke" captivated society.

Stay Safe Chris Sharman.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with our Government's lockdown restrictions, the Committee have reluctantly decided to cancel all club activities until further notice. The Committee are monitoring the Coronavirus situation and will keep members informed through the CVCVC Newsletter, Parish Notices and Website as to when the Authorities confirm normal activities can be resumed.

Club Information

The CVCVC is open to all enthusiasts with an interest in vintage and classic cars and motorcycles

The CVCVC Committee

Chairman	John Goodman
Treasurer	Martin Brown
Secretary	Geoff Broad
Membership Sec.	Roger Martin
Newsletter Editor	Chris Sharman
Webmaster	David Singer
Events Co-ordinator	Stuart Black
Committee	Chris Harman
Members	Bob Chaplin

CVCVC Membership

Club Membership is open to enthusiasts with an interest in vintage and classic cars and motorbikes. Membership details can be obtained from Roger Martin

The CVCVC and Electronic Media

eNewsletters

The majority of members now receive this newsletter, on a monthly basis, by email. If you receive the black and white copy by post and would like to receive the full colour edition by email, for home printing, then please contact Roger Martin.

Electronic mailings

Regular updates are sent out with reminders of lunch meetings and information on our evening speakers. Additionally, these include more details of forthcoming club events and activities.

To receive these, please make sure Roger Martin has an up-to-date email address for you.

Club Articles

There is always space for articles, so please forward details to the editor, on your vehicle's motoring experiences, event reviews, or restoration and technical stories. New feature ideas are always welcomed.

April Newsletter

Would you please forward articles by email or post before Monday 15th Marc

DISCLAIMER

The views, opinions and any technical advice printed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Committee or Editor and should not be taken as such. The CVCVC accepts no responsibility for the results of following contributor's advice.

Editor's Space Filler (Until normal services are resumed)

First Car

I enjoyed reading John Goodman's article **50 Not Out (in duplicate!)** – published in the January Newsletter.

The section on John owning a MG Midget MK1 and visiting Southend seafront, plus Radio Caroline, brought back memories for me, searching for an early Sprite/Midget sports car in 1966.

Having passed my test in October 1965, I started looking for my first car, no immediate hurry, I had access to my parent's cars, a Zephyr Six and Popular !00E, but I wanted a sports car. I had read an article in Autocar, saying that while most enthusiasts would like to own a "T" type MG, unless you were "prepared to spend more time repairing than driving, go for the most modern sports car you can afford, so an early sixties Austin Healey Sprite/MG Midget was the top choice.

Living in Ilford and working in Hackney, my journey would take me along the Romford Road through Ilford Hill and Manor Park. Wall to wall car dealers lined the road and there were normally a few Midgets & Sprites for sale but outside my price range. I even went to John Britten Sports Cars in Arkley, they were even more expensive! Come March, I saw a 1961 cherry red "Frog Eye" Sprite for sale £295 with 45,000 miles on the clock which appeared genuine, not my first choice, but £100 pounds less expensive than a Sprite MK 2/MG Midget MK1, plus the rear bodywork had been cut away like a MK2 to accommodate a person sitting sideways although rather cramped. In addition, there was a lockable hatch to the internal boot space. The "Arthur Daley" dealer just gave me the keys and said "Take the car out mate". You can imagine I was sold on the car. I brought my dad back the following day for a second opinion, negotiated new tyres and with part borrowed money the Sprite was mine.

And yes, a couple of weeks after owning the car, I too would frequent Southend on Sea seafront, plus the Kursaal. Who could forget the Wall of Death! Great motoring days. During an eventful six years travelling the UK, France, Spain and Ireland; the Frogeye was replaced with a Midget MK3 followed by a MGB GT followed by an increase in family!

Continual Maintenance – 1936 Singer

Following the fitting of the replacement front brake shoes last November. I detected a slight knocking in the offside hub, systematically checking the king pin, steering ball joints, wire-wheel abutment with the hub etc, the culprit was the hub requiring tightening on the stub axle. Easy fix turning the castellated nut "two flats" to take up the slack. I can only assume after approximately 20,000 miles there was slight wear in the stub axle inner and outer ball-bearings.

However, the grease looked dirty and rather rancid, so I decided to split the hub carrier to remove the bearings to clean then and re-pack with Castrol LM grease. The handbook states – remove the hub from the stub axle, remove the two setscrews

and rear felt seal washer and remove the bearings; if only! The handbook obviously assumed you were an experienced clairvoyant mechanic!



With my limited knowledge I gained access to the front bearing, but there were no clues to remove the rear bearing. As a stop gap, I used a blowtorch to heat up the rear bearing in situ to melt the old grease, fortunately the grease had a low melting point, so no damage to the seal. I re-packed both bearings with grease, reassembled the hub, gently hammered the hub back on to the stub axle, fully tightened the castellated nut and just backed off one flat, inserted the split-pin, refitted the brake drum and wheel, vigorously shook the wheel and to my relief, no knocking sound so removed the jack, job done.

Changing Attitudes

Strange how your likes and dislikes change/mellow with age, when I first started motoring in the mid-sixties, my idea of a sports car was an MG T-type, MGA, early Spidget, Big Healey, TR2,3 & 3A and of course a Morgan. Triumph Spitfires and Sunbeam Alpines never came up on the radar and considered rather soft.

Fast forward 50 years, my son Richard and I were viewing the winning classic cars at the Battlesbridge Spring Show and one of the outstanding cars was a concours original Triumph MK2 Spitfire, deep blue with silver wire wheels. From a minus the Spitfire became a positive. Wind-up windows, slightly larger and with more elbow and legroom than a Midget. a few more bhp too. Unless driven on the limit, handling and road roading was probably on par with a Midget or MGB. In fact, my son considered buying a Spitfire, but while in Australia he met the girl of his dreams and returning to the UK his priorities changed.

Later in the year Richard and I were at the Stoneleigh Restoration Show and a restored Sunbeam Alpine caught my attention. OK, not quite a sports car in the old fashion sense, more of a tourer. A comfortable car, reasonably spacious, enough engine power, plus overdrive to see 100mph on the speedo. Useful boot and room behind the seats. All in all, a good long-distance tourer. The Sunbeam was introduced in 1959, mainly for the American market. Based on the Hillman Husky floor pan, with improved suspension, front disc brakes, a more refined interior than its rivals. (wind up windows three years before the MGB and TR4).

There must be like-minded enthusiasts out there because prices for good Spitfires and Alpines now equal BL rivals.

Chris Sharman

The Sabra Sports Car

Leigh Sabba came up with a particularly good guess, albeit incorrect for the January "Guess the Car" feature – **A Sabra**, similar styling to the Saab Sonett.

The Sabra is an extremely rare car and the brainchild of Yizhak Shubinsky the owner of Autocars Co Ltd. He wanted a sports car to supplement the utilitarian vehicles his company was manufacturing in Haifa Israel.

In 1960 he came over to the UK and arranged for Ashley Laminates to provide "1172 style" fibreglass bodies, LMB Components were to supply their "Special" chassis with semi-

swing hinged beam independent front suspension and watt located coil rear suspension, with rack and pinion steering. Braking consisted of BMC front discs and rear drums. The chosen power unit was the Ford Consul 1703cc 4-cylinder engine developing 61bhp, there was an optional tuned Alexandra version boosting power to 90bhp and 100mph. Transmission was though a four-speed ZF gearbox. Convertible and coupe models were available.



The "adaptable" Ashley 1172 glass-fibre body shell

The Autocars factory didn't have the capacity to initially assemble the Sabra sports cars and in 1961 an agreement was reached with Reliant, who were already supplying components to Autocars, to manufacture a batch of 162 Sabras and export them mainly to the United States. The following patch of 171 cars were shipped in kit-form to Haifa for exporting, mainly to Belgium and for the Israeli home market.



Convertible Sabra with period white wall tyres



Sabra Coupe version

Sales were moderate due to the high cost, MGs & TRs were less expensive, plus the unusual styling wasn't to everyone's taste. Production ceased following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. There are probably 100 Sabras still in existence



Beautifully restored Sabra Coupe fetched \$78,400, at the Scottsdale Auction in January 2019



The story doesn't end there. In 1962 Ray Wiggin Reliant's MD decided to manufacture and market their own version, renamed Sabre and in addition offered a more potent alternative, the Sabre-Six. Powered with a Ford Zodiac 2553cc 6-cylinder engine producing 109 bhp, top speed increased to 110mph with 0-60 mph in 10seconds. The front suspension was changed to a superior TR4 set up with Herald rack & pinon steering.



Reliant Sabre-Six



Motor magazine were rather critical of their "road test" Sabre-Six GT, *their adverse comments were common really to all low volume specialist manufacturers, who never had the finance of facilities to build numerous prototypes to obtain the perfect post production model.* Sales were slow with 77 cars produce over two years. In 1964 the Sabre-Six cost £1,136, while for similar money you could purchase an Austin Healey 3000 MK2, or a TR4 for £958. The styling was also of personal taste. However Reliant's next model, the Ogle SX250 styled Scimitar SE4 was a vast improvemet leading to the acclaimed Scimitar GTE, that set the blueprint in the seventies for GT Estates.

Chris Sharman

Insider Dealing - A Quartet of Big Cats

No, not Jaguars. The Blue Oval has had a long fascination with big cats that's lasted to the present day. This is the tale of four Pumas that have spanned over forty years of Ford history.

Let's start here and travel backwards... the latest incumbent of the Puma badge is a small sporty crossover based on the Fiesta. Despite some initial grumbings about recycling the name, it's been very well received by the motoring press including What Car awarding it Car of the Year 2020. It's a

nimble handling car which I really do enjoy driving – we have one on our driveway at the moment.



However, most people who have been out of school for a while will picture this car when the name Puma is mentioned:



This was Project SE161 which was a specialist coupe based on the BE91 Fiesta platform. Developed by SVE, it was intended to be a low volume image boosting car of 20,000 total units that used short life tooling to keep investment down. By the mid-80s, specialist coupes tended to have brief periods of being in vogue and then sales quickly fell away – the days of Capri had gone. Despite the planned low volumes, Engineering Chief Richard Parry-Jones pushed hard for the sportiness to be more than skin deep and SE161 would have a bespoke 1.7 version of the Yamaha designed Ford Sigma engine that included variable valve timing. This was a bold decision but the car was received with huge enthusiasm and exceeded expectations after its launch in 1997 – it remained in production for four years and achieved 133,000 sales, requiring the tooling life to be extended. The pinnacle was the rare and highly collectable Racing Puma version:



It could have been named after a different cat. During SE161's development, the name Lynx was owned by Ford US and considered briefly. The fact that Britain was one of SE161's biggest markets meant that the potential association with a certain youth targeted aftershave was judged undesirable!

Many of you will remember the TV advert for the Puma shot in San Francisco on the streets featured in the film Bullitt. It used ground breaking CGI to give the impression that the late Steve McQueen was driving the Puma back to his garage that included the famous green Bullitt Mustang and Great Escape Triumph Trophy motorbike (disguised as a WW2 BMW). In my view, one of the best car adverts of all time.



Moving further backwards in time, we uncover the next Puma which you may not be aware of. The first car that could have carried the Puma badge was a rather surprising one. This is a 1971 studio model of what would be the Mk1 Escort RS2000, but if you look very closely at the wing badge:



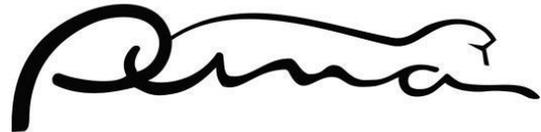
This was the name preferred by Marketing, but Motorsport boss Stuart Turner pushed back since he saw RS2000 as a logical sibling to the RS1600. Acknowledgements to Steve Saxty for revealing this in his excellent book "Secret Fords".

So... three cats are out of the bag. How about number four?

Not a car, but an engine. Ford really expanded the big cat zoo with its diesel engine codenames.

- Cub - 1.4 four cyl.(Fiesta/PSA = Peugeot Citroen)
- Tiger - 1.6 four cyl (Fiesta/Focus/PSA)
- Lynx - 1.8 four cylinder (Focus/Mondeo/Connect)
- PUMA** - 2.0/2.4 four cyl.
(Transit/Mondeo/Ranger/Jaguar/Land Rover/
LTX/LDV/PSA/Fiat)
- Lion - 2.7/3.0 V6 (Jaguar/Land Rover/PSA/F Series truck)

As an aside, when I was working on engineering the 1997 Mondeo, I visited the design studios frequently. This car was due to be the launch vehicle for the new Puma diesel. As it turned out, it was deferred to the new Transit introduction. Whilst looking at the Mondeo clay models, my eye was drawn to a board of design logos to one side of the studio. It included this:



Wow, I thought. I had worked with Design on "engine beautification" a few years earlier and was surprised by such a racy logo for the cam cover of a diesel engine! It was of course nothing of the kind, but the first sight of the name and badge proposed for the little SE161 coupe.

The Puma diesel retired in 2016 to be replaced by yet another big cat that prowls the motorways under thousands of Transit bonnets.... named Panther!

Stuart Black

Another Ride or an Adventure Peter Sprot – concluding part



Next morning, I was up at 6am and by the time Graham appeared I was starting the engine after having removed the exhaust system and the timing cover and taken out the advance and retard unit and had found all five of the broken teeth from the drive gear, put on my newly refurbished spare and put everything back together and retimed the engine. We paid our bill, put our sheets and towels down into the laundry room, packed the bikes and without breakfast we were off. The engine was running better than it had before the ATD failed so I must have got the ignition timing a bit closer to where it should be.

If I had known what a long day this was to be, I might have stayed in bed. We found the motorway and just sat there for hours and hours totalling 750km or 470miles. Why, well there were two things which influenced the sudden urge to get home the first was a phone call from my wife who wasn't feeling well and although she didn't ask me to cut short the trip, she is not one to complain so I thought I should make an effort, the second was a text message to Graham from his wife reminding him that it is Sunday and Tuesday is his twenty fifth wedding anniversary which because of what we were doing had completely slipped his mind. We got as far as Enghien in Belgium which is close enough to know we could get to Calais by lunch time the next day. We were too tired to even consider finding a reasonable hotel so at the mercy of the sat nav we found what was to be the most expensive hotel of the entire trip and had a nice meal as the skies darkened and the rain began.



The storm which lasted most of the night was one of the worst I can remember and being one of those unfortunate people who have been struck by lightning I tend to remember them. I was counting four flashes per second at its height.

Thankfully, the next morning the rain had stopped but the sky was grey and gloomy. I dressed for the bike as I had every day from day one with just a tee

shirt under my jacket without its lining and over trousers without jeans underneath expecting the sun to come out on our last day of riding. How wrong I was, as we passed over the border crossing into France, I noticed that the road was dry on the Belgian side and wet on the French side. Within a minute it began to rain and the sky became very black indeed. The rain got harder and harder and the temperature dropped to 11c from what had been 36c the day before. I lost Graham and had trouble seeing where I was going; the rain was so hard that my visor had steamed on the inside, so I had to ride with it up. I decided the safest option was to slow right down and stay in the

5

inside lane. I settled a safe distance behind a big truck which had bright rear lights and I was travelling at about 60kph staying far enough behind him so his lights could show me where the road was, because of all the spray I couldn't see the truck, only the lights and I was very wet and cold. I heard later that Graham had worse problems as the rain also got inside his visor and as he wears glasses, they got on those as well. At least he had bright lights; mine had all but failed by then. When we reached the Eurotunnel and pressed the buttons on the pad in the pouring rain to check in, I realised my fingers were numb so once I had checked in, I rode straight up to the terminal and onto the footpath under the canopy near the big double doors. I stopped the engine and went inside and headed for the toilet to put my hands under the warm water tap. Graham came into the loo looking very worried and quite frankly I can't blame him this had to have been the worst weather he had experienced on a bike. His hands were okay due to his fairing and his heated grips. Just as some feeling began to come to my fingers, I heard our train being called so I put on my soggy gloves and zipped up my wet jacket over my wet tee shirt and went out to the bike. As usual it started first kick, so I just sat listening to it tick over for a few seconds which seemed to lift my spirits and I remember shouting Yee Ha as I kicked it into gear and rode out into the downpour.

I lost Graham in the queue for the train as they opened another gate, so I shot forward going from near the end to first at the new gate. I thought Graham was with me, but he had stayed in the original queue. Once on the train I started talking to the four other bikers. They were all soaked through. The train moved and there was no Graham, so I sent him a text message. He was on the same train but at the rear. Thankfully I had wrapped the contents of my plastic saddle bags in a bin liner, so it was dry and as the train rolled out of Calais out came the lining for my jacket and trousers and my jumper. So, by the time we reached England I was warm as toast and the rain had stayed in France.

I phoned Mandy my wife, as we came out of the tunnel, she had had an appointment in hospital and all was going to be well. I waited for Graham who was last off the train then we filled up with Europe's cheapest petrol together with about twenty foreign registered Ferraris which had been on the train and set off together in relative warmth towards home.

As she had on my last trip, my wife had had her hair done and had cooked a nice meal to welcome me home. I have always said that home is my favourite destination and this was no exception.

Our last trip to the Arctic circle had been less than a year ago so I suppose it is fair to say that in less than a year my Vincent Rapide, together with my good friend Graham on his BMW 800 had been to 28 different countries and travelled around 13000 miles. I suppose it is also fair to say that it was all done in two trips each of three and a half weeks.

What next I hear people say. I don't know, I think Graham has had enough for now and I'm not sure. I met this chap called Nick Sanders at the Copdock Show in October. He is going to ride from Argentina to Alaska next year, but it is horrendously expensive so every week I've bought a lottery ticket and I live in hope. Failing that there is still that trip around New Zealand which I'd love to do.



Peter Sprot

A History of Roll-Royce - part 7

Post War Rolls-Royce Models

When the Second World War ended in 1945, It took a year before Rolls-Royce where in a position to commence car production. Although during this barren period, several pre-war R-R Wraiths based originally on the 25/30 hp, plus the larger R-R Phantom III were manufactured from components stored away during wartime activities.



Rolls-Royce Wraith

The Phantom III had a 7338cc V8 engine, independent front suspension and the gearbox had synchromesh on 3 of the 4 speeds. The rolling chassis alone cost £1,850.



Rolls-Royce Phantom III

In 1946 the Wraith was superseded by the Silver Wraith with a 6-cylinder in line 4257cc engine with overhead inlet valves and side exhaust valves. The gearbox also had synchromesh on 2nd, 3rd and top gears and cost £1,100 for the rolling chassis. It featured a hydraulic jack at each corner and each jack could be lowered independently by a detachable handle with access to four pumps accessed via a removable panel in the floor of the front passenger side. The Silver Wraith was in production until 1959, gradually gaining more power weight and size.



Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith

1949 Saw the introduction of the R-R Silver Dawn, almost identical to the Bentley MK VI launched in 1946. Initially with the 4257cc engines. Both models kept their distinctive radiator grilles. Because the steel available in 1949 was of such poor quality, only the Bentley badged versions was exported to the USA. In 1952 the models were improved with 4566cc engines, longer bodies with the Bentley version rebranded as the R-type.



Roll-Royce Silver Dawn



Bentley R-Type

The Silver Dawn and R-type Bentley were the first Rolls-Royce/Bentley models to be offered either as a rolling chassis to be delivered to Mulliner Park Ward, to be fitted with a bespoke bodywork, or buying a complete car fitted with a standard steel body and available directly from a Rolls-Royce dealer.

In 1950 the Phantom IV was produced to special order for royalty and heads of state. including one gifted to Princess Elizabeth. The only Roll-Royce powered by a 5675cc straight-8 engine. Only 18 models were produced, until the MKV model appeared in 1959 with a V8 6230cc engine, with a 12ft wheelbase and a length of 20ft, the limousine weighted over 2.5 tons.



Rolls Royce Phantom IV

In 1956 the Silver Dawn and R-type Bentley were replaced by the Silver Cloud and S-type Bentley. Both had the same in line 6-cylinder engine of 4887cc and automatic transmission, new front and rear suspension, smaller diameter wheels but larger brake drum areas.



Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud I

The Silver Cloud II and the S-type Bentley were fitted with the 6238 cc V8 engine, but externally there was very little difference in appearance from the previous Cloud and S-type models. Both had single headlights and the only way to tell them apart was the Rolls-Royce's flat vertical styled radiator grille and the



Bentley's curved vee styled radiator grille, plus the Silver Cloud II had Silver Cloud II in chromium plated letters on the boot lid. The same applied to the S II Bentley.

Bentley S-Type

The Silver Cloud III and the S-type Bentley III both had twin headlights, so were instantly distinguishable from the Cloud II and S-type II. The Silver Cloud III and S-type Bentley were the last models to have a separate chassis.



Roll-Royce Silver Cloud III



Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow

Their successors, the Silver Shadow and T-type Bentley both had monocoque construction, as have subsequent Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars, so apart from the Corniche and Continental models, individual body styles were no longer possible for the Silver Shadow or T-type Bentley.

Mike Crees

It seemed a good idea at the time (but it had a flaw)

I know that many members come up with ideas often following on from a problem that they wish to overcome. Most of those ideas work well but some of them seem good at the time but then have an unforeseen impact or side-effect that wasn't obvious until later.

As an example of one of my 'It seemed a good idea at the time (but it had a flaw),' the recent snow fall reminded me of my 'bright (?)' idea in the late 1970's. It was during one of those winters when we had quite a lot of snow that lingered for quite a long time. At the time I owned an Austin Maxi that I used for the daily commute from Halstead to Colchester. It was a typical 1970's BLMC car colour being painted in a tasteful burnt orange, with dark brown seats and a brown carpet; Niiiccce!

After a day or so of slipping and sliding on compacted snow in the Max, I came up with my 'bright' idea to help me drive through the next fresh fall of snow that was promised.

I had taken to carrying pieces of old carpet that I could put under the front driving wheels so that if I got stuck, I could drive more easily forward and hopefully get on my way to / from work. I had already used the 'carpet under the wheels' trick and once moving then had to stop the car, run back down the road, collect the carpet, run back to the car with it, start the car etc. etc. and thought that there must be a better way. 'Aha, why not keep the carpet attached to the car? I won't have to stop to pick it up so can keep going' I thought.

That evening I cut a hole in each piece of carpet, tied a nice long length of nylon rope through it, tied the other end to the rear bumper, put the whole 'kit' into the boot of the faithful Maxi and slammed the boot.

Next day. Freshly fallen snow. I set out for Colchester and made good progress until I got to Chappel. The road seemed particularly bad with compacted snow causing lots of problems to drivers. Time for my 'good idea'. I took the two pieces of

carpet out of the boot and round to the front of the car where I placed one piece under each wheel. Back in the car, into first gear, easy on the throttle then each front tyre bit onto the carpet I drove the car forward and just kept going. I knew that the carpet would follow me and be ready for the next time. That part worked well but the flaw was evident from the puzzled looks (or was it horror?) of drivers coming from the other direction who saw an orange car followed by two pieces of flapping carpet on long bits of rope! Oh well: my 'good idea' wasn't road tested again!

Have you had what seemed a good idea at the time (but it had a flaw)? Please write to our Editor with your story. We all need to have 'smiles for miles in 2021'.

Chris Harman

Guess the Car



Not a bad looking sport car, extremely rare, powerful and very much a product from the late sixties. Any ideas? Answers to the editor.

Vanishing Country Garages

Seeing our Chairman's Christmas Greeting picture in the January Newsletter depicting a pre-war small country garage, reminded me of the time every district had a similar garage where any vehicle would be serviced, even down to mending punctures, brake shoes relined, batteries recharged, etc.

Sadly, due to economics, many have disappeared, change of use, or redeveloped into residential properties. Back in the nineties I used to have my 1936 Singer MOTd in the local garage "Great Waltham Garage", owned since the war by the Jenkins family. The premises consisted of several buildings and the two brothers serviced all manner of vehicles and also specialised in Italian cars. I always enjoyed visiting on MOT day. The aging brothers retired in the late nineties and sold the premises to a developer for bespoke housing.



Great Waltham Garage - on the left, now three dwellings

Fortunately, a few miles west of Chelmsford in the village of Blackmore, there is a pre-war rambling garage "Wakelin's Garage", owned by Ron Wakelin and his brother-in-law, probably both as old as the business. Waiting in the workshop while the Singer is MOTd. is like stepping back decades. The garage externally looked rather tatty, but you could eat your dinner off the workshop floor, with no modern diagnostic equipment, they can only service/repair 20 year and older vehicles.



A step back in time – Blackmore Village

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that Wakelin's Garage and the elderly owners can survive the Coronavirus epidemic.

Chris Sharman

Bits & Pieces

How good is your vehicle recognition -
Guess the cars from the headlights –
Answers to the Editor



A



B



C



D

Mainly Technical

Concerning the Problem of Sticking Valves

Unless the trouble is very severe it may be eliminated by the use of a mixture consisting 2/3rd thin oil such as "Redex" and 1/3rd colloidal graphite compound such as "Filtrate". If about half a pint of this is rapidly poured into the rocker box whilst the engine is running, the graphite finds its way into the guides and prevents sticking valves. Graphite in the engine oil is not adequate because the camshaft lubrication does not raise the oil level in the rocker box above the lips of the guides.

Sticking Clutch Plate

After a car has been laid up – especially in a damp garage – it is possible for the floating plate in the clutch to stick to the flywheel. This sound incredible but it is not funny when the gearbox is removed all to no purpose. The fault which gives the impression of a "used-up" clutch adjustment, can be cured by putting the car into first gear (ignoring all horrible noises and remembering that first gear is square cut and therefore relatively indestructible) doing normal clutchless changes up to 3rd gear and then operating the clutch vigorously with the car doing about 20 mph. The services of a towing vehicle or a steep hill are useful aids. Note that success will be marked by a sudden decompression of clutch springs – this results in a bruised ankle if the foot is not firmly on the pedal so have a care!

The above article was published in the May 1957 Singer Owners' Club Magazine. The remedies relate to the over-head camshaft engined Singer cars, but the information could be of use to similar cars from the thirties to the fifties.

Gordon's Goings On March 2021

There is a bit of "déjà vu" about 2021 so far. With things not looking much like improving in the short term, all clubs like ours have little prospect of getting together in the short term, even if the majority of us elderly will have had our first jab! And with all the prevarication about travellers from around the world isolating on entering our country and the general level of disobedience among the population, it could be a while before things get back to some sort of normal. With the large number of "essential journeys", illegal gatherings and people being allowed to fly around the world, I think we should make a case for allowing classic vehicles to be driven for an hour or so once a week! I am finding it quite a nuisance keeping my small collection up and running without being able to take them for a regular drive. We know that will never happen, but there is a lot of traffic on the roads, despite the stay-at-home message. And why isn't ANPR being used more to highlight people driving a long way from home?

Of course, there are a lot of people having to work and we shouldn't take their courage for granted. And as I watch the snow falling, their jobs do not get any easier.

It's interesting that, despite the devastation to the countryside already, there is a realisation that perhaps HS2 is not such an essential project after all and should be abandoned. Not an opinion held by some minor politicians from the North, trying to resurrect their political careers!

If this pandemic has demonstrated two things quite clearly is that working at home is quite practical for lots of people and that public transport isn't as necessary as we are all held to believe! It's hard to understand that some people feel they are so important that they have to make decisions face to face, especially if they live in London and work in Leeds, or indeed anywhere in the world! It begs the question about any logistical decision they might make about anything else.

Smart motorways are proving not to be so smart after all. Having driven extensively in several other countries over the years, I have always thought the lack of a hard shoulder was dangerous and so far, thirty-eight people have been killed in this country because of it. Clearly the people keeping an eye on what's actually happening on the smart sections aren't quite smart enough, despite all the technology at their disposal. Surely CCTV cameras spotting a stationary vehicle could trigger a lane closed sign immediately. It's not the first thing called smart, that has proved to be anything but!

Smart meters, advertised as saving you energy, do in fact do not save you anything at all, unless you switch something off! The only good thing about them is that your energy provider can no longer use estimated bills to bump up your payments to keep their bank accounts in the black!

Interesting that the EU have made a bit of a miscalculation regarding the vaccines and the Irish border issue. Perhaps it's a good thing we left. The disruption over the last few weeks doesn't bode well for a drive into Europe any time soon, even if we are allowed to.

It's good to know that despite the pandemic, space exploration has been unaffected. Let's hope the probe to Mars comes back with some details of how to defeat this virus. And I wonder how much CO2 was released when the USA tested their latest rocket motors. And how much the Virgin space visits cost, especially after they asked the UK government to bail out the airline.

Motor sport spectating is not looking very promising even if the racing does take place. All the major series have announced their calendars for the year, but it must all be a bit speculative with what's going on worldwide.

The television licence has just been renewed and I just can't wait to see the depth of motorsport coverage on the BBC in the coming year. Am I alone in getting just a bit fed up with David Attenborough?

Keep safe and look after those vehicles!

Gordon Levett