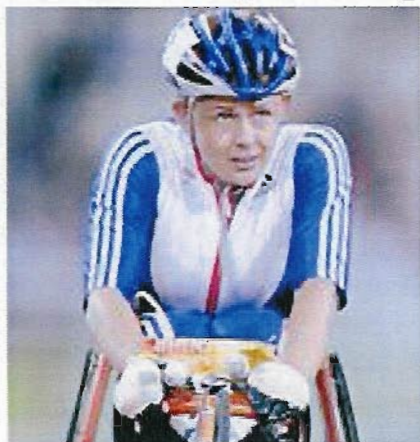


Friends

Grand opening by Dame Tanni

March 2010



For the first time in the history of British museums, a collection of vehicles designed to give independence to the disabled will be brought together under one roof. Working with 'Mobilise', a charity promoting mobility for disabled people, Coventry Transport Museum is all set to create a unique exhibition. 'Transport for Disabled People: Past - Present - Future', will cover the history of some remarkable and innovative vehicles from the last century to the present-day. Appropriately the exhibition will be opened by Welsh athlete and television presenter Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE.

Vehicles to be displayed have been sourced from a variety of places including the Science Museum, London, some private owners as well as the museum's own collection. From early bath chairs to models of the future, visitors can explore this unique range of vehicles and understand how the industry has taken great strides in design considerations. Attitudes of other road users towards these vehicles and the people who use them will not be forgotten.

'Transport for Disabled People: Past-Present-Future' opens on Thursday, April 1. Now turn to our feature on pages 2 and 3

•Dame Tanni, who was born with spina bifida and uses a wheelchair is considered to be one of the most successful disabled athletes in the UK having won 16 medals (11 gold, four silver and a bronze) in her paralympic career.

On display:
The bikes and support vehicle were captured on film in the museum yard before they were moved to a permanent corner in the museum



Annual General Meeting

Thursday, March 18 at 7.15 sharp

Lizzie Hazelhurst Curator, Archive and Information

will be speaking about her field of work during the evening

Chairman's Chat

This will be my last Chairman's Chat as I will not be standing as Chairman again at our upcoming AGM. Annette and I are buying a bungalow near Welshpool and we intend to retire there when our house in Ashow is sold. I have been Chairman for most of the last ten years and it is time someone else took over the reins. I would like to thank you all for your support since we started Friends in 1997 and I wish you all the very best for the future. Happy motoring!

Craft Fair March 20-21

It's time to put a spring in your step as the Craft Fair is back at CTM after huge success last Christmas. Homemade products include knitwear, paintings, jewellery, handmade cards and other crafts. Unique and interesting gifts.

LONG way down

You saw the BBC series of this epic trip from Scotland to Cape Town. Now you have the chance to examine at close hand the four bikes and support vehicle that Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman and their crew used. CTM is fortunate to have these crowd pullers on extended loan, and understand they will be found a prominent site in the commercial gallery. The trip started from John O'Groats on May 14, 2007. They travelled via Italy before hitting the sandy wastes of Tunisia and Libya. After Cairo and a cruise around the pyramids, the route continued through Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Cape Agulhas—South Africa.

April sees the staging of an exhibition showcasing the remarkable history of vehicles designed and built specifically for people with disabilities.

The show came about through working with Mobilise, a registered charity that 'Promotes Mobility for Disabled People'.

The early history of trikes is fascinating, a world apart from the modern day approach—an everyday saloon appropriately adapted for disabled use.

The invalid car often had little weather protection. It was hardly the most comfortable way to get around, especially in the rain. But it gave the thousands of wounded veterans and disabled one of the important facets of life—mobility. Trikes helped disabled Britons to shop for groceries, visit their doctor, call on friends. Invalid transport has a long history. In Victorian times they were steel and wicker Bath Chairs (pictured right), particularly common in Britain's spa towns, places like Cheltenham and Leamington. The first motorised tricycle was powered by a fan-cooled Villiers engine in 1922. Surrey firm Stanley Engineering was one of the first makers, and it produced the bulk of Britain's self-propelled invalid carriages through the thirties. They used the Argson brand name.



But the launch of the NHS in 1948 moved the trike up a gear as Ministry of Health contracts were given to eight companies.

Dingwall & Son brought out a flat twin Coventry Climax go-cart styled carriage—the Invacar. Other companies that were granted work included Harding Ltd, Barrett, AC Cars and George Fitt Motors. Locally there was Tippen & Son of Shakespeare Street. Early efforts were crude open-air affairs designed by committees. After some dubious two-seated versions in the fifties, the Ministry standardised its requirements - 147cc Villiers, single seating and steel pressed wheels. There would be single front wheel drive, hydraulic braking and eventually electric Dyna starting. Designs evolved into enclosed cars, more akin to the minicars of the fifties, like the Bond.

During the 1960's and 70's the Invacar ruled with its modern fibreglass shell, ice blue colouring and belt drive. Earlier models had a Villiers engine but in the early '70's after their production came to an end, the Invacar utilised Steyr-Puch 500cc & 600cc units. This model went right through to the end of the final DHSS contract in 1977.

There were still around 200 Invacars in daily use around Britain just prior to the March 2003 recall and scrapping programme.

They were all owned by the Government and leased to disabled drivers as part of their disability benefit, if they so wished. Incidentally, it is now illegal to drive one on the British highway.

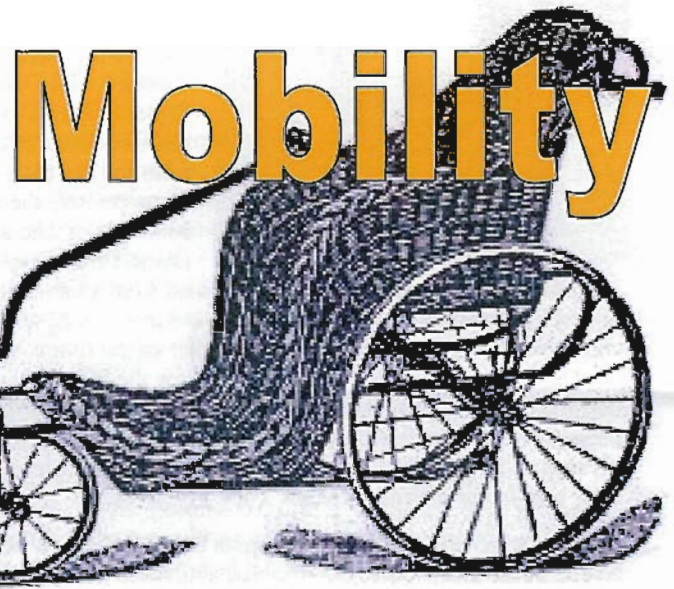
From web information by Jon Curley of Birmingham

Pictures:

A. Ex-Service Men and Women on parade just after the Second World War. Notice the trike front left with an illegal passenger about to be challenged by a marshal.

B. Invacar was established in 1948 by Oscar Greves after having built a three-wheeler for his paralysed cousin. A production car followed after realising the need for casualties of the war. This is the 1977 model 70.

C. Barrett Midget Invalid Carriage. The Bristol-based company of W & F Barrett Ltd had built open invalid tricycles in the 1940s, but in the 1950s and 1960s were contracted to build two 'special-case' vehicles for the Ministry of Health. The first, introduced in 1956, was the Barrett Minor, a very small vehicle at 8ft long and 3ft 2in wide, which was issued to "small persons with short arm reach". In 1959, the Minor was replaced by the only-slightly-larger Barrett Midget, developed for "persons up to 4ft 6in tall". As with the Minor, a rear-mounted 197cc Villiers Mk 9E engine provided the power, but for the Midget a new design of fibreglass body, finished in green was fitted. With all production purchased by the Ministry



of Health, the W & F Barrett Ltd supply contracts were cancelled in 1968, following the formation of the Department of Health & Social Security. It decided that most users of Barrett machines could be catered for just as well by the Coventry-built Tippen Delta.

Three Barrett Midgets but no Barrett Minors are known to survive.

D. Stanley Argson Electric Trike dating from 1949. manufactured by an engineering company in Egham. A fully operational Argson Electric Trike has been restored and is currently on display at the Egham Museum.

E. AC All weather was a market leader in invalid cars. With its tapered nose, single headlight and bifold door, it was the first of Britain's mass-produced invalid cars to protect drivers from the elements.

F. The Tippen. Frank Tippen & Sons was established at Shakespeare Street, Stoke Heath, Coventry in 1935 originally making variable speed gears for machine drives, sold under the name of 'Heterospeed'. By 1948, under specifications laid down by the Ministry of Pensions, Tippen adapted production to that of motorised invalid carriages. The company achieved this by buying used hand-propelled three-wheeled open carriages such as those made by Dingwall & Sons, and converting them to be powered by a 147cc engine, and marketed as the 'Coventry Chair'.

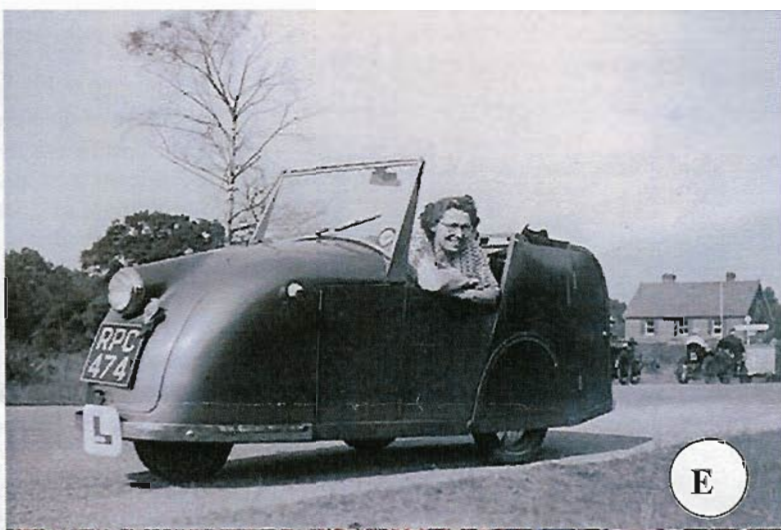
The Tippen 'Delta' was later developed by the firm from 1956, built with a fibreglass body and a Villiers 9E engine, complete with 'Siba' dynostart with reverse ignition for reverse gear. These types of carriages could be adapted by Tippen to suit the disability of the customer.

Coventry initiative

In 1951 the Coventry Group of the Disabled Drivers Association was formed. Many of these Coventry disabled members were involved in the new historic moves to see the first invalid three wheel, open at all weathers, trikes introduced. Later these were replaced by covered in trikes. Then Coventry members were involved in the campaign of meeting the Prime Minister at that time, Mr Edward Heath at No.10 Downing Street and the Coventry M.P. Mr Dick Crossman, to get the unreliable trikes replaced by cars.

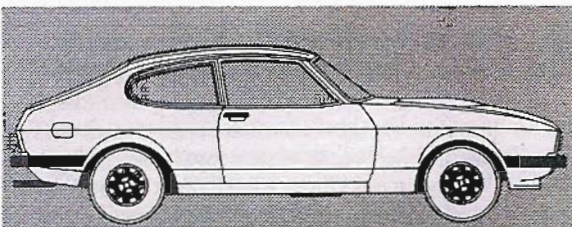
This campaign was a great success and the Government introduced the now highly successful Motability Scheme which enables the severely disabled to surrender their Motability allowance and hire or purchase a converted car to suit their particular disability.

This opened the door to the outside world for thousands of disabled who had previously been housebound. Another remarkable pioneering step forward in the 20th Century by the disabled for the disabled, and in which many Coventry people had been actively involved.



G. Elswick 2SM, a derivative of the Minissima and produced by GKN had several possible driving configurations: allowing an able-bodied driver, or wheelchair-seated driver. Entry can also be via the side door allowing access for two passengers in the back.

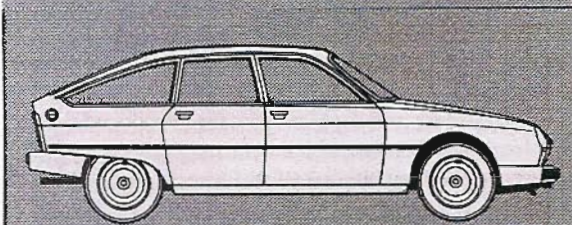
Oxfordshire enthusiast Stuart Cyphus is secretary to the national Invalid Carriage Register. The register has records of some 300 surviving powered British invalid three-wheelers of all makes, model and ages, and is always keen to learn about any other surviving examples, wherever in the world they may be. Email: invacar@yahoo.co.uk



Ford Capri 1300L

£3,867

The Capri Mk 3 was referred to internally as "Project Carla", and was little more than an update of the Mk2. The first cars were available in March 1978, with a front very similar to the Escort RS2000 and its four headlamps, a black slatted grille and a rear spoiler.
0-60 in 18.8 secs Overall mpg 28.7



Citroen GSA

£4,399

The GS (1970-79) was voted European car of the Year for 1971 and was probably the most technologically advanced car in its class when launched, with top notch comfort, safety and aerodynamics. 576,757 GSA models were produced in total.
0-60 in 14.9 secs Overall mpg 28.8

Museum 30th anniversary year

+++ THIRTY YEARS ON +++ PRICES UP +++ MPG UP +++ PERFORMANCE UP +++ MILES PER GALLON UP +++

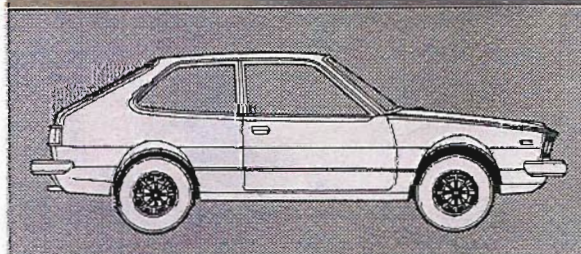


1980

Talbot Horizon GLS

£4,350

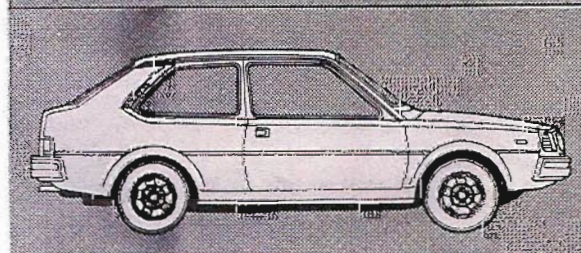
Appeared in France as the Simca Horizon in January 1978 and was a development of the Simca 1100. Unfortunately much of the sales momentum was lost by the change from Chrysler Simca to Talbot in July 1979. Horizons were assembled in the UK at the Ryton plant from 1982 and a number of important fleet orders were secured by Talbot once it was seen as a British built car. The range was widened by the introduction of a diesel engined model, the LD, for the 1983 model year, although all the diesel cars were built in France. A Talbot Horizon turbo concept car was produced in 1984. It was designed at the Whitley Design Centre here in Coventry.
0-60 in 15.4 secs Overall mpg 31.8



Honda Accord 3-door

£4,160

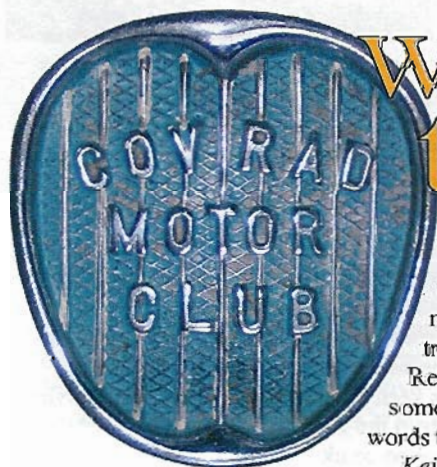
The Accord was launched in 1976 as a compact hatchback, but this style only lasted through the 1980s. Became the first Japanese car to be produced in the USA where it was the best selling marque for 15 years. As well as being built at Swindon, Honda also had factories in New Zealand, China and Thailand.
0-60 in 12.4 secs Overall mpg 31.2



Volvo 343DL

£3,964

The 343 was launched in The Netherlands in 1976, shortly after Volvo acquired a controlling share of the passenger car division of DAF. The 300 series was unusual in having the transmission mounted over the rear axle (De Dion tube type).
0-60 in 15.0 secs Overall mpg 26.8



where are the stories?

In the January issue I put out an appeal for memories of the great days of car clubs in the city. The days when industrial concerns in Coventry formed their own motoring organisation to run rallies, timed driving tests, treasure hunts and the like. Leamington member John Redshaw has an amazing collection of car club badges from some of these clubs and would very much like to put some words to them. Please write with your memories.
Keith Draper

