

Friends

Last of the XJ's

The last classic XJ saloon off Jaguar's assembly line at Castle Bromwich was donated to the museum at the beginning of this month. Receiving the car from Richard Else, Director of production operations, CTM's Chief Executive Gary Hall said: "As a museum we are here to preserve what Coventry is all about and the city's history. Jaguar is a key part of Coventry and we are delighted to be able to display this fantastic car for future generations to see."

The final model, a Sovereign, with 2.7 litre diesel engine, has vapour grey coachwork with a barley leather interior. It's the last in a long line of ground breaking XJ models that go back to 1968.



Last of the line: rag-out (top) of the Coventry Telegraph picture that puts on record the historic handing over, with (below) the windscreen production i/d for the car

May 2009

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

For the benefit of those Friends unable to attend our recent AGM, two important resolutions were passed. The first of these was that our annual subscription be increased to £12 with effect from January 2010. The second was that Friends would finance the restoration of the 1925 Omega motorcycle. This will not mean breaking into our Maudslay funds. Instead, we will devote the proceeds from refreshments and raffles on our monthly Clubnights, as well as the contents of the donations box outside the Friends workroom, to the Omega project.

My heartfelt plea for more volunteers has produced some heart-warming results. Sylvia Clarke has joined the archive team and Roger Brown and Mike Drakeley have joined the Maudslay team. Paul Stonley has offered to maintain the Friends website page and Jane Gammie has offered to write the Friends blog. Others are waiting in the wings ready to join in when needed. I am very grateful to all of you, my faith in the spirit of Friends has been restored!

The Maudslay bus project is gaining momentum. The entire back axle assembly has now been removed and brakes and suspension disassembled. The leaf springs have been taken to Jones Springs of Darlaston for refurbishment. Quotes for new rear tyres are awaited. We are about to examine the condition of the double reduction gear and the overhead worm drive. Watch this space!

2nd cycling festival



One of the highlights of this year's Cycling Festival to be staged over the May Bank Holiday will be an opportunity to meet Eileen Sheridan (pictured left). On the Saturday from 11.30am she will sign copies of her reprinted book, *Wonder Wheels*.

This year's event offers a fun-packed programme for all the family to enjoy whether it's youngsters just starting to cycle or the most avid enthusiast.

Throughout the weekend there will be a whole host of opportunities to win vouchers and cycling accessories donated by Coventry Cycle Centre, Ride, Mike Vaughan Cycles and John Atkins Cycles, Leamington Spa. See page 3 or look at the museum's website: www.transport-museum.com

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Next Clubnight

Museum Open House

with access to archives and sit in your favourite vehicle, plus hands-on vintage cycles. Thursday, May 21 at 7.30pm



Following big strides forward in the public galleries, Chris van Schaardenburg reports on plans reaching fruition to create a conservation area, maintenance area, machine shop and Friends area. This will enable us to make much more progress on museum and Friends projects alike, Chris said:

machine shop

Over the last few months many items in the engine store have been moved to the main store. This releases space to create a machine shop and Bill Bates has been painting the walls. The job of painting the floor will start shortly. New electrical wiring has been installed and soon all the benches, cabinets and machinery will be in place. This will allow us to support many of the ongoing projects at the museum. Of course Bill is looking forward to the move into his 'Grotto' with all its machines. New lighting will be installed in the maintenance area and the Friends area shortly. The workshop will have a new vehicle-inspection lift very soon .

Austin Three-way van

Much time has been spent on the Austin Three-way van in recent months. A new wooden floor has been fitted, the painting is complete, and repairs to the braking system are being carried out.

Workshop

Dave Withers has been checking through the rest of the vehicle. Problems with the fuel-system and electrics have been rectified only to discover a leaking head-gasket. A replacement has been found and will be fitted shortly. Obviously these are all problems one encounters after a vehicle has been static for many years. The three-way van should be on the road again in the not too distant future.

Humber 11 project

Tom McFadden has set up a conservation area and has made very good progress on the 1914 Humber 11 conservation project. The chassis has been conserved and the engine and gearbox have been placed back into the chassis. Detailed conservation work has taken place on the body, which is currently being finished. Once the body is complete it will be placed on the chassis, and final assembly can take place. It will be fantastic to have a completely original and conserved vehicle on display at the museum. New conservation approaches are being tried out and specialist products have been ordered to support the work.



New workshop: the chassis, body and hood assembly making up the parts of the 1914 Humber 11 are suitably presented as a display for visitors



Nearly complete: the Tiger 80 with its mudguards temporarily fitted and prior to painting

Refreshers

Friday, May 8, saw members and museum staff on parade (pictured left) for a drivers' refresher day, especially for those who take vehicles to events.

Pictured left are: Dave Green, Bill Bates, Tom McFadden, Dave Stansfield, Richard Dawe, Brian Jackson, Bob Smith, Dave Parry and Dave Withers.

Not included in the picture but also taking part were: Roger Brown, John Bachelor, Brian Bromwich and Chris van Schaardenburgh.

The vehicles pictured against the mural of a Daimler Empress on the museum's rear roller doors, are from left to right:

1968 Triumph Herald, 1938 Alvis Speed 25, 1949 Singer Roadster and 1965 Alvis TE21.

Cycling Festival Events

Saturday 23 A special cycle ride around the city explores Coventry's unique cycling heritage; find out about the city's cycling pioneers with an expert talk from the museum's head of collections; and meet Eileen Sheridan. In parallel to the public entertainment the museum will be hosting a special cycling conference for invited representatives of local cycle groups to meet and share ideas.

Sunday 24 a packed programme of entertainment including rickshaw rides, face painting, story sessions and the chance to have a go on bikes of all shapes and sizes.

Bank Holiday Monday BMX display and roller riding demonstrations. Younger visitors can win a bike in the wickedly difficult slow races; the more adventurous of all ages can clamber onto a penny farthing or try swapping two wheels for one and have a go at uni-cycling.

*The museum will also be staging two evenings of cycle films on Saturday and Sunday Free admission. Turn up on the day at 7.30pm.

update



Rolling: (top) Aided by a fork lift, Dave Stansfield and Brian Bromwich manhandle one of the heavy Maudslay wheels

The Maudslay

The Friend's Maudslay area has been repainted by Roger Brown and is now better fitted for purpose.

Shortly it will be possible to move the stored chassis parts from the conservation area into the refurbished Friend's area.

This significant Friends project has made a lot of progress:

the main chassis has been cleaned and the rust has been treated; the only part left to do on the main chassis is the engine and gearbox sub-frame; most of the nuts and bolts holding the chassis together have been replaced to ensure structural stability.

The Maudslay's rear axle and springs have been removed and the chassis is now resting on a wooden trestle made by Bill.

The springs have been separated from the axle and have been sent to specialist company, Jones Springs in Darlaston, for repair. We expect them back at the museum in the next few weeks.

Once the springs had been removed from the rear axle the rear wheels were removed from the axle. We have contacted two different companies for quotes to replace the rubber on the wheels.

The differential has been removed from the rear axle and has been cleaned. It will now be inspected to see if it is still functioning properly. Friends and workshop staff have worked hard on the chassis, and it's good to report some real progress.

Tiger 80

Turning to the Triumph Tiger 80 project with funding from the British Motorcycle Charitable Trust now available. The Friends team has been busy preparing the bike for painting. But discovered the Magneto is not sparking, and will require investigation.

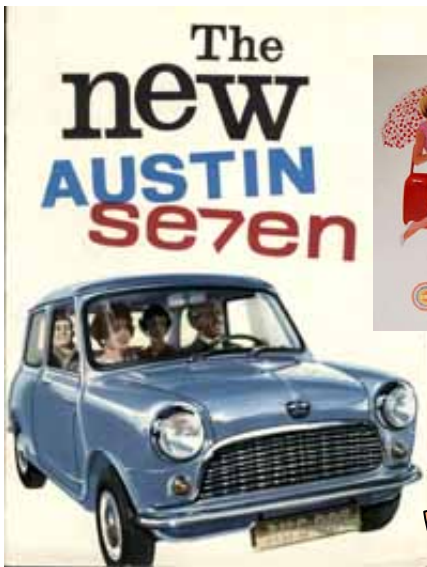
Dave Withers has adjusted the rear mudguard so that it will fit properly after it comes back from the paint shop. Once the parts have returned from the paint shop, the final assembly will take place.

Guided Tours

We will spend more time in the main store in the next few months to have a good clean-up and install many of the loose items on racking. To achieve this we will be ordering a large amount of new (standard size) pallets, so many of the collections items and parts can be stored away safely. This move provides us with a huge amount of extra floor space in the impressive hall of the former warehouse.

Hopefully this will enable us to offer regular guided tours of our store later in the year.

Leaves: (left) the detached rear springs ready for despatch to specialist company, Jones Springs in Darlaston, for repair



50th

As you will have been reminded by the motoring press it is 50 years since the genius of Alec Issigonis and his team was first placed in the public eye. To be strictly correct it was the end of August when the car or cars were launched. Of course the Mini came in two guises—the Austin 7 and the Mini-Minor. And they had been coming off the production lines in their thousand for several months prior to the big day.

Autocar readers were invited to examine and judge all the design features for themselves. Aside from the model descriptions there was a road test report. “It will gladden many hearts,” said the leader writer. “...for it gives great promise of economy, lively performance, comfort for four grown-ups and exceptional safety of handling, in a car costing home buyers around £500 total (including PT).” “Perhaps it is appropriate at this time of launching to wish good luck and Godspeed to the new models, and all who work on them and drive in them,” declared *The Autocar*.



FWD

“Many people asked: “Why use front-wheel drive?”

In August, 1959 the *Autocar* replied: “First, for a car to be inherently stable in a straight line it should have understeer characteristics, most easily achieved by loading the front tyres more than the rear. With the forward-mounted, transverse engine there is a preponderance of weight on the front end in the ratio of 60-40 unladen.

“In addition, because the power is put through the front tyres their cornering power is diminished, which adds to the understeer effect.

“Another requirement for good stability is that the centre of wind pressure should be well to the rear of the centre of gravity—the reason for using stabilising fins on most record attempt cars. The BMC 850 has its CG inherently well forward, and as the body sides are relatively long and flat, the centre of pressure is well to the rear.

“In the hands of the average driver the ability to control the slipping and spinning driving wheels by steering them, rather than manipulating the throttle, is probably mastered more readily.”

In the hands of a professional driver the cars handling proved to be superb and well up to competing against more powerful entrants in successive rallies of the 60s like the Monte Carlo.

Commemorating the remarkable Mini

- The Royal Mint celebrates with the issue of a cupro-nickel coin to the value of £5 for the Channel Island of Alderney. It features a side view of the vehicle, an image created by David Cornell FRSA, and the coin is housed in an illustrated presentation folder.

- May Bank Holiday sees a Silverstone event entitled Mini’s Massive Birthday Party. Not cheap at £35. But if you like a bit of pop and razzmatazz, enjoy chart-topping Calvin Harris on the Friday and a night of rock on Saturday then it’s value for money!

- A more sober affair takes place on July 4 with a Mini Heritage Run from Longbridge to the Gaydon Heritage Motor Centre.

Hard on the heels of this event is the International Mini Meet at Longbridge over August 7-10. There’s even a “design a logo” competition for readers of the magazine *Mini World*. See its website.

- But if you are off to exotica soon the Sol Rally Barbados might appeal. It runs from May 22-24 and will feature a Dutch Austin Mini-Cooper in bright orange.

Just proves the world-wide varied appeal of a truly British masterpiece.

Own up if you owned one!

Some members may have owned a Mini. I’m pretty sure that a Friend or two will have rallied one in the days of the local motor club events.

Why not send me a picture and a line or two about your personal adventures with this ground breaking car that brought a new meaning to the concept of a Peoples’ Car.

Keith Draper



Write to me with any photos using my email address: dandelion@ntlworld.com