

Friends

Return of a classic

July 2010



Festival of Speed: The 4.3 Litre Alvis was the fastest non-supercharged production car of its day. Here is one of the two show cars that created such a sensation at the Good wood event

More Goodwood news on the back

At the Good wood Festival of Speed a newly formed Alvis Car Company was announced by Red Triangle of Common Lane, Kenilworth. The firm that has been providing parts, maintenance and restoration services to Alvis owners for the last 40 years marks the comeback of the marque with remarkable news that the famous 4.3 Litre model of the 1930's will be reintroduced.

Member Brian Jackson was there to see the company's stand. He said:

"Red Triangle were showing their 'continuation' series Alvis 4.3 litre car. Two immaculate cars were on display, along with a bare chassis and a new engine."

According to the firm 77 of the chassis that were sanctioned for production before the Second World War were never fulfilled because car production was suspended in 1940.

Now, using the original drawings, the 4.3 Litre Alvis in-line six cylinder engine will be manufactured to the 1936 design. Red Triangle will maintain all its period character and quality, yet utilise modern technology to be emission compliant. Moreover, by using modern materials, fuel injection and engine management, this powerplant will deliver even more horsepower.

Announcing this sensational news Alan Stote, Red Triangle and Alvis Car Company owner said: "This is part of our overall business plan to maintain service to our existing Alvis owners but also to reintroduce selected authentic Alvis models in line with the vision of the Alvis board all those years ago."

The 4.3 Litre Alvis was the fastest non-supercharged production car of its day. One can't help wondering what reincarnation will come next.

Chairman's Chat

Another busy month for Friends with great days out with Museum vehicles – Warwick Classic Car Show and, on the same day, the Armstrong-Siddeley Owners Club at Kenilworth with our unique 1931 12hp sunshine saloon, and Barbie at the Coventry Fun Run and Styvechale School fete.

This level of activity would not have been possible without drivers' days for Friends to familiarise themselves with the vehicles and become qualified to take them out. Although the next few weeks are relatively quiet with just one trip out before the August bus trip, things will get busy again in September and more drivers will be needed. If you are interested, under 70 with a clean licence, do please get in touch.

I'm able to report that the Maudslay team has grown to five members and this has enabled considerably accelerated progress to be made in the past month. Also the motorcycle group has now made a good start on the Omega. If you are willing to help, regularly or just on occasions, let us know and **get involved!**

Finally, a little extra for this month:

The Ice Cream Dream Machines exhibition opens to the public on July 19 and Friends have the opportunity of a preview before this month's club night. The Museum yard will be open at 7.00 p.m. to let you in.

The next clubnight will be a special presentation evening by:

Paul Peterson

Director of Manufacturing— Engineering at Jaguar who will speak on

'Lightweight vehicle architecture' as used on the new Jaguar XJ
Thursday, July 15 at 7.30 pm
 in the Starley Room



Barton of Chilwell, Nottinghamshire was one of Britain's most interesting bus operators. The company was noted for its curious miscellany of vehicles, particularly in the 20 years following the end of the Second World War. Not surprisingly a number of the buses are now in preservation and member Martin Beckett pictures some of them for this month's main feature. Here is the first part.

Thomas Barton was a mixture of businessman, entrepreneur and engineer. In 1908 he made his third attempt to enter the transport industry from premises in the East Midlands. His first two attempts were at Mablethorpe in 1900 and Weston-Super-Mare, where he had moved due to ill health, in 1903. Although he passed away in 1946 his family continued to expand the business and within 60 years the Barton empire spread across much of the East Midlands and included bus services, express services as far afield as Glasgow and the coastal resorts as well as continental coach tours and a travel agency. There were also short-lived forays into furniture removals and local and international haulage.

He chose, as his base, the small town of Chilwell to the west of Nottingham, benefiting from having an Ordnance factory which needed a large collection of transport to bring the workers to and from the premises especially during the war years. As the city of Nottingham expanded Chilwell became, in effect, an outer suburb.

Bartons became Britain's third largest independent bus and coach operator during those post war years. By the late 1960's the fleet size was approaching 250 vehicles. However a population spending more time at home in front of their television and becoming ever more fixated by the motor car meant declining passenger numbers all across the transport industry. By the 1980's the government was busy selling off National Bus Company subsidiaries, passenger transport executives and London Transport in bite-sized chunks in the hope of engendering competition in the industry. By the end of the 20th century most privatised companies were in the hands of large British and French firms. However Barton's westerly neighbour, the Derby based NBC subsidiary Trent Motor Traction, having been sold to its management, remained firmly aloof from the forces of consolidation. Its holding company, Wellglade Group, bought out Bartons, and in July 1989 the red-and-cream Barton buses became no more.

Bonhams 11th annual auction of Aston Martin and Lagonda Motor Cars held recently was it's most successful to date. One of the most exciting lots of the day was the 1959 DB4 Works Service Prototype Design Project eventually sold for £485,500 to a continental bidder. Top lot of the day was 'VMF 65' - the ex-Works 1950 Aston Martin DB2 Team Car- a British Racing Green gem, raced by Stirling Moss, Peter Collins, Roy Salvadori, Tony Rolt, Lance Macklin, George Abecassis and Eric Thompson. After fierce bidding it sold for £513,000 against a pre-sale estimate of £380,000-440,000

Contacts

Chairman: John Viggars tel: 024 7667 9967
 email: john.viggars@talktalk.net
 Vice Chairman: Jean Wilcox
 Secretary: Lesley Viggars tel: 024 7667 9967 email: jlviggars@talktalk.net
 Treasurer: Brian Jackson
 Outside events co-ordinator:
 Committee: Stan Wilcox, Julie Kendall, Dave Green, Jenny Pinfold,
 Dave Stansfield, Brian Bromwich, Terry Baimbridge
 Museum: tel: 024 7623 4270 email: enquiries@transport-museum.com
 Newsletter: Keith Draper 024 7640 2030
 or email: dandelion@ntlworld.com



Thomas Barton



In October 1908 Thomas Barton started the Barton empire with a service from Long Eaton to Nottingham taking people to the annual Goose Fair. The service was popular and it became a regular Nottingham to Beeston route with some journeys continuing to Long Eaton. The following year saw services connecting Nottingham with Sandiacre, Stapleford and Bramcote. By 1914 services reached Castle Donington but these were all suspended due to the war and efforts put into the transport of munitions workers. Petrol was in short supply but Thomas Barton devised a system for running vehicles on coal gas with a huge gas bag on the roof.



The company had a profitable sideline by making gas bags for other operators. After the war Bartons purchased many former War Department lorries and converted them to buses. Thomas was not averse to lengthening the chassis of his vehicles so that extra passenger capacity could be obtained. The longest vehicle was a 34' 2" single

- pioneer busman

decker with seats for 60 and standing room for a further 40.

To combat competition from other companies with faster buses, Bartons purchased a number of Lancias and converted them from two to three axles. At one point nearly 80 of these vehicles were owned. In 1920 a licence was finally granted on what became service 5: Nottingham-Long Eaton-Derby. Trent also competed on the route and it still exists as Trent-Barton Rainbow 5, a high frequency service using low-floor single deckers and passing the former Barton head office in Chilwell's narrow main street. Initial loadings were good and, by 1925, the service ran half hourly. In 1928 Bartons other well-known service commenced. This was long distance route 9 to Skegness. Initially there was one return journey daily but business was good and a Birmingham-Nottingham-Skegness service followed as well as increased frequencies from the East Midlands using different routes to the coast. The Birmingham spur was later exchanged with Midland Red for their Nottingham to Leicester service. Despite opposition from Skegness Council, Bartons obtained permission to construct its own bus station in the town which opened in time for the 1939 summer season to cater for the 8,000 or so passengers being conveyed annually to Skegness. After the war the service continued but from 1967 onwards the number of journeys lessened. It finished altogether after the Trent takeover. Road Cruises, as Barton's extended tours were called, began in 1934 with trips to: London and the South Coast; Weston-Super-Mare and the West Country; Portsmouth for Navy Week. There was also a Christmas trip to Weston. The coach was fitted with a radio to enable the travellers to hear the King's Christmas message. The programme was extended over the next two seasons following a successful battle in the traffic court consequent upon objections from Trent, who ran similar but more expensive programmes. In October 1936 the company ran its first European tour, as much an experiment as anything else. Nineteen passengers left Nottingham on a new Leyland Tiger luxury coach for a 12-day trip to Germany visiting Aachen, the Rhine Valley, Heidelberg, Lake Constance, the Black Forest and Baden-Baden. The channel was crossed from Dover, where the coach was driven onto a

cradle and lowered into the hold of the ferry. By a strange co-incidence the coach was later requisitioned by the War Department and accompanied the British Expeditionary Force to France in 1939 and was lost at Dunkirk.

Continental cruises were offered for the next three summer seasons to Germany, to the French Riviera and to Switzerland although it is doubtful if the September 1939 departures took place. The Leyland Tiger coaches proved to be extremely reliable on such arduous trips. Tours used the Dunkirk train ferry which was a drive on. Tours re-commenced in 1947 including a trip to Norway and a coach-air trip from Elmdon Airport, Birmingham to Switzerland and the Italian lakes.

The company's bus routes expanded during the inter-war and early post-war periods partly by take over. The 1953 route map shows services radiating north of Nottingham; into Derbyshire beyond Ilkeston; in the south to Swadlincote, Coalville and Leicester; and eastwards to Oakham, Bottesford and Bingham. Engineering innovations were numerous. In the early days Thomas Barton made a vehicle with a front section which was detachable for ease of repairs. This resulted in minimal ground clearance and the prototype never went into production.

Up until 1932 many of the company's vehicles were built "in house" at the Chilwell premises.

In 1930 the company operated the first oil-engined bus as a result of Tom's visit the previous year to the Gardner stand at the Shipping and Machinery Exhibition. It came to be used on the Nottingham to Coalville Service.

Next month: A motley collection of vehicles ...Lolines and Lodekkas.....and ten operating garages



Pictures: (clockwise from above) JRR 930 is a 1948 Leyland Titan PD1A with a double lowbridge 55 seat body. Alongside is one of Hall Brothers coaches often seen in Coventry; W 693 is a 1923 Daimler CJA with a 22 seat char-a-banc body built by Barton in its Chilwell workshops; CRR 819 is a 1937 Leyland Cub with a Brush 20 seat coach body; WAL 782 is a Leyland Tiger PS 1 chassis of 7 feet 6 inches width which originally had a single deck coach body. In 1957 it was rebodied by Willowbrook with an 8 feet wide 61 seat double deck body. Close examination shows that the rear wheels seem slightly inset which is due to the extra six inches of body width

• In 2008, one hundred years after he opened that first bus route, the Barton Society commemorated the event with a rally at what remained of the Chilwell premises

Rudge Centenary Parade

One hundred years ago the Coventry based Rudge-Whitworth company sold its first motorcycle. The factory in Spon Street continued in production until 1938.

Rudge-Whitworth motorcycles came to be recognised world-wide as a high quality Coventry product and desired by many a vintage motorcyclist.

On Saturday July 17 the centenary will be marked by The Rudge Enthusiasts' Club with a motorcycle parade beginning at 11.45 from the Hare and Hounds on Watery Lane – Keresley End.

The procession will pass through Radford on the Tamworth Road making its way to a static display on the Millennium Place and a reception at the Coventry Transport Museum at 12 noon.

The parade will depart the museum at 14:30 for a service of remembrance at the Rudge-Whitworth War Memorial at St Nicholas Church, Radford at 14:45 led by Father Graham Marcer. This memorial is quite different from the usual ones, listing both the names of those Rudge-Whitworth workers



who gave service in the Great War as well as those who served and died for their country.

The parade will continue to a finish at the Hare and Hounds at 15:15.

It will be led by the Rudge Enthusiasts' Club President, Coventry resident and businessman Dave McMahon, riding his veteran 99 year old Rudge-Whitworth motorcycle. This machine is the third one made by the company.

The president will be flanked by club chairman Mike Wild and Vice-Presidents and followed by over 50 members riding Rudge-Whitworth machines spanning the whole of the product range of this famous Coventry firm.

Ken Ashton



The fastest : Jaguar production car, the XKR 75 is pictured at Goodwood (ignoring the XJ220). 523bhp make it capable of 174mph, and it costs just £85,500.

The Goodwood Festival of Speed lived up to its reputation with a spectacular array of cars and motorcycles, plus fabulous star drivers and riders to thrill the crowds. Member Brian Jackson and wife Jenny went along this year to soak up the atmosphere and brought back a few pictures to share. Brian tells me that they also relaxed in the Dunlop courtyard arena to listen to live interviews with motoring personalities. Among them were TV's Amanda Stretton interviewing Lord March, and Simon Taylor interviewing Doug Nye.

Outside in the paddock was the public unveiling of the McLaren MP4-12C and the Jaguar XKR 75. For those wanting to see something a tad less outlandish, Alfa Romeo presented its new Giulietta hatch.

As if this was not enough there were superbikes galore, an aviation show, a Forest Rally Stage and a display marking the anniversary of F1 cars. In fact there were over 50 F1 cars present to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first world championship season.

The Goodwood Revival meeting takes place in September.

Festival of Speed

Another head turner: the Triumph Fury dating from 1964 when Italian stylist Giovanni Michelotti was helping to turn round the company's fortunes. The Fury sports car had the Vanguard straight-six engine fitted into a monocoque bodyshell and this is the result. The car was seen as a model to fill the gap between the Spitfire and the TR5. Only one prototype was built at Michelotti's own carrozzeria in Turin but sadly Standard-Triumph didn't have the resources to put the car into production. Fortunately the prototype survived in the hands of one fortunate owner



As is traditional at Goodwood's early summer festival, the focal point was the hillclimb – a 1.16-mile stretch of road running through the estate, and swarming with all types of automotive exotica. Among the marques was the latest model from Coventry car maker Spyker. The vehicle in striking orange livery is pictured on the hillclimb