

Friends

May 2010

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Continuing the theme of getting involved ... Thanks to the various Friends who helped man the museum's stand for four days at the Antiques for Everyone show at NEC, who were in attendance for two store tours at the end of April and who, this weekend, are displaying examples of the motorcycle group's projects at Gaydon.

Thanks too to the several Friends who signed up to our "Willing to Help" list at last month's club night. The list will be kept open for Friends to sign up at future club nights.

If you are unable to attend a club night, you can sign up through the Secretary – just let her have details of your particular skills or interests and how to contact you. As well as help with specific events, general help in preparing vehicles for display would be much appreciated by the museum.

You can find details of events in which Friends are involved in the newsletter or in our section of the museum website: www.transport-museum.com/friends.

Volunteer helpers for the next six weeks or so will be sought at club nights - again, contact the Secretary if unable to attend.

The aim is to let as many people get directly involved as want to but the number able to take part can sometimes be restricted by, for example, the number of exhibitors' passes available or the need for qualified drivers of museum vehicles. Priority will go to those already registered as willing to help; if you've not yet signed up, please get in touch.

Don't forget that next month's club night is an hour and a day early! 333 will leave the museum at 6.30 on Wednesday June 16 to visit the Wheels Display Evening at Long Itchington. Friends displaying their own cars can travel with us in convoy or meet us there.

I look forward to seeing you at bike night. Please note that on this occasion the yard will be for bikes only!



Friends found themselves in a handy spot for a quick round of salmon and cucumber sandwiches or a G and T when they helped the museum at the four-day Antiques for Everyone Fair at the NEC. Members were kept busy answering questions about the museum and the vehicles on display.

Pictured above are the Karrier coach and Austin Gipsy fire engine with Daimler double-decker 333 lurking in the background to the right.

Festival of Motoring

Members with a classic vehicle wishing to take part in this year's Festival of Motoring run on Sunday September 5 are offered a helpful concession that will save half the cost of entrance. Admission for cars is set at £10, motorcycles £5 valid for one vehicle per member. To take advantage of this offer please use the enclosed voucher and note that the concession needs to be forwarded with a cheque by post only. The voucher is not available for the weekend package.

MOTORCYCLE NIGHT



Thursday May 20 at 7.30pm

On this occasion the yard will be for bikes only!

Triumph bikes in Ca sale



1948 Triumph Speed Twin "Pretty Boy I"
Frame no. TF9369

Engine no. 485T96524 It was not an auspicious beginning for a motorcycle that would go on to make history. The brand-new 1948 Triumph 5T Speed Twin sat forlornly in the corner of a dealership, looking quite crispy following an electrical fire. The unlucky buyer got a replacement machine under warranty and the dealer, Bob SirKegian Sr., got a project bike. With ace shop foreman Fred Ford spinning the wrenches, the burned-out 5T was transformed into a hot little bob-job.



1928 Triumph 500 Nuremberg
Frame no. 881908

Engine no. 1610014 One thinks of Triumphs as the quintessential British motorcycle, but the firm was actually founded by a German. Seigfried Bettmann immigrated to Coventry in 1884 and began manufacturing bicycles in both England and Germany. Shortly after the turn of the century, he turned his attention to motorcycles and these were also made in both countries. To avoid confusion between the two Triumph companies, the German bikes were ultimately named TWN (*Triumph Werke Nuremberg*).

Wedge: The Austin Ambassador was introduced by BL in 1982. The car was a heavily updated version of the Princess, an ageing model that lacked a hatchback. The slightly wedge-shaped design betrayed the car's Princess origins, and it was not considered a truly new model.



B.L.'s appeal!

Last: The Triumph Acclaim was made from 1981 to 1984. Based on the Honda Ballade it used a Honda-designed engine. It was the last Triumph marque



On its launch, the Montego was sold as an Austin and also an MG. From 1986, it was sold without a marque following the phasing out of the Austin name



Public Transport in 1980: A line-up of first generation rear-engined buses at the Wythall Transport Museum. All the vehicles are Fleetlines: from left ex-Birmingham Corporation, Walsall Corporation and Coventry Transport. The Fleetline was built at the Radford factory of Daimler from 1960 to 1973, and from 1973 to 1980 at Leyland's Farington factory in Lancashire. The last Fleetline entered service in 1982 and was superseded by the Leyland Olympian.

Thirty years ago when the Museum of British Road Transport opened for the first time British Leyland was still making a significant range of cars at its Midland factories. However foreign imports, Japanese cars in particular, were becoming more and more popular. It caused the head of BL Sir Michael Edwardes to appeal to us through *The Times* newspaper in January of that year to buy British cars. He implored motorists to 'rekindle an attitude of enlightened self-interest in Britain' such as is exhibited by France, Germany and Italy. Sir Michael said that it had become fashionable to buy 'exotic' foreign cars in Britain and attacked trade union officials, UK company directors, government and local authority officials and Members of Parliament for driving foreign-made cars. He reminded that while the Japanese share of the British market was 10.6 per cent, the equivalent figures in France, Germany and Italy were 2.1, 5.5 and 0.1 per cent. The reason was 'healthy local chauvinism' in those countries, a natural instinct to buy home-produced products; this was an attitude virtually non-existent in Britain.

The British Economy (both in a national sense and the fuel consumption performance of BL cars), Sir Michael says that the outburst is not special pleading for BL. Except insofar as the re-building of the company is a move to reverse the steady decline of the British Motor Industry, a matter with which everyone in this country should be concerned.

Maxi

to 'rekindle...self-interest'!



Museum 30th anniversary year



1980



Pictures: clockwise from the top: The Dolomite 1300 was the final addition to Triumph's small car range. It was designed to be a replacement for the rear-wheel drive Herald. A larger engined Dolomite Sprint with high performance was produced from 1972-1980; The Austin Maxi (code name ADO14) was the last car designed under the BMC, and also the last production car dreamt up by Alec Issigonis; the Morris Marina has been described as one of the worst cars of all time and was replaced with the Ital in 1980; the Austin Metro launched as BL's 'British car to beat the world'

In the event BL's fortunes took a much-awaited rise in the October of 1980 with the launch of the Austin Metro, a modern three-door hatchback that gave buyers an alternative to the iconic but ageing Mini. The Metro went on to be one of the most popular cars in Britain of the 1980s.

In 1982 most of the car division became the Austin Rover group marking the end of the Morris and Triumph marques although Jaguar and Daimler remained in a separate company called Jaguar Car Holdings. The Austin Rover Group started a partnership with Honda. A rationalisation of the model ranges also took place around this time. In 1980, British Leyland was still

producing four cars in the large family car sector — the Leyland Princess, Austin Maxi, Morris Marina and Triumph Dolomite. But the Dolomite was discontinued in August that year -and replaced by the Honda Civic based Triumph

Acclaim- in a move that saw the Canley plant closed. The Austin Maxi was also axed a year later. Morris Marina became the Ital in August 1980 following a major facelift, and a year later the Leyland Princess received a similar upgrade to become the Austin Ambassador, meaning that the 1982 range had just two competitors in this sector. In April 1984, these cars were discontinued to make way for a single all-new model, the Austin Montego.



In the 1950s every major industrial concern in Coventry had its apprenticeship scheme that provided the opportunity for mainly young men to gain engineering skills on the shop floor. Competitive motor sport was a popular pastime among many apprentices and a network of clubs sprang up. Many of them are remembered through a club badge collection owned by member John Redshaw. But this month John Box from Burton Carrforth, Lancashire has provided us with some of his personal memories of those heady days. Here is his story complete with a badge from his own club—The Daimler Apprentices' Motor Club.

The Daimler Apprentices Motor Club was founded in 1956 mainly to rebuild some of the company's historic cars. It soon developed into the organisation of daytime and all night rallies. One of them stretched into the Forest of Dean, covered 200

Apprentices' motor sport



miles and included middle of the night refreshments.

Driving tests were held on the factory premises and other works clubs were invited to attend. Invitations were received from other apprentice clubs and friendly rivalry developed.

Thinking back I do not know what the insurance implications would have been had there been a serious accident. I remember that someone overturned a car during driving tests at the Austin factory, Longbridge, but it was quickly put back onto its wheels and nothing more was said!

All this could not happen today. It was possible to organise a rally then tell the police where you would be and when. That was about it!

The Daimler badge comprises a yellow flag, international for proceed with caution, on a blue background that was the colour of company transport. The picture (left) is of an Austin 7 special which won the first driving tests in the factory grounds.

The grey 1910 12 hp Daimler in the CTM is the first car that the Apprentices Motor Club rebuilt. It won the Cheshire Life concours at the VSCC Oulton Park meeting in 1958. Other cars rescued by the club are in the Jaguar Heritage Collection and an ex-Royal Shooting Brake from 1924 that is back in the Sandringham Mews.

John Box

Tom Sabin Memorial Ride



In celebration of the achievements of Victorian cyclist Tom Sabin, a marathon to the birthplace of the modern Olympics will take place at the beginning of June. The 92 mile route from Millennium Place outside the museum to Much Wenlock in Shropshire is clearly for the more serious cyclist taking in some of the county's many beauty spots including the formidable Clee Hill. The run starts at 9am on Saturday June 5 and returns the following day by a shorter route. Coventry born Tom Sabin achieved fame when the city was the centre of the cycle trade and won the first Olympic races in 1876. This inaugural run is a fitting tribute to this champion cyclist. Entry fee is £10 and further details are available from the museum on tel: 024 7623 4270.



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



Many thanks to John Box for recalling his time as a member of his apprentices' motor club. There must be some more stories out there. Please send me a few notes before the subject dies a death. Here are two more badges for inspiration.

