

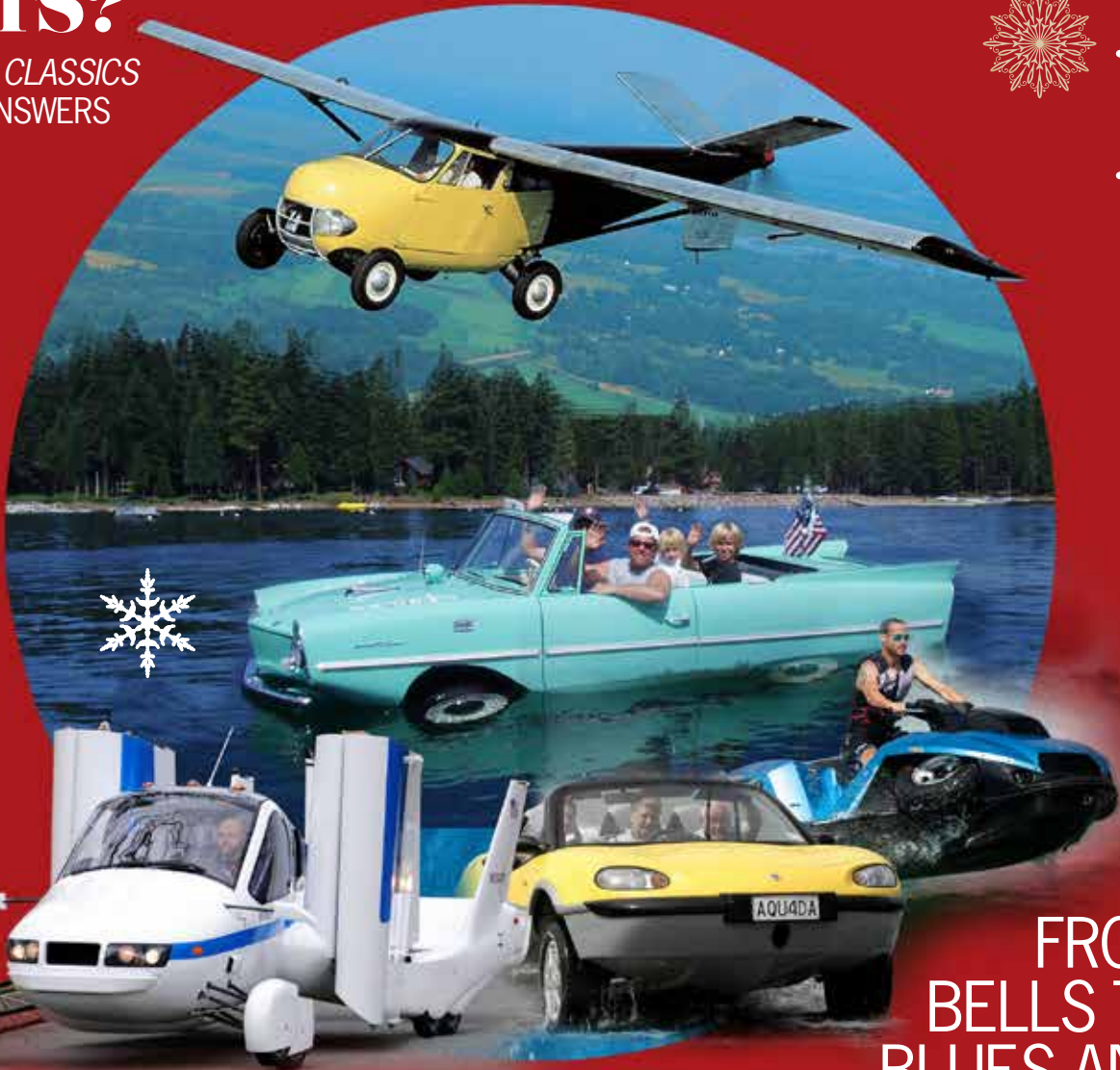
# MOTORING CLASSICS

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❄️ WINTER 2015

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS?

MOTORING CLASSICS HAS THE ANSWERS



FROM  
BELLS TO  
BLUES AND  
TWO'S  
POLICING THE  
NATION'S ROADS

# Cars That Float And Fly

THE ULTIMATE ANSWERS TO TRAFFIC CONGESTION?



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**Above:** in 1907 AC replaced the goods box of its Auto-Carrier delivery vehicle to create the company's first passenger car, the Sociable.

## Welcome

Have you ever sat fuming in traffic and imagined how fabulous it would be to have a car that could, Bond-like, zoom into the sky or dive into nearby water to escape the problem? Well, inventors have been working on such possibilities for decades and this edition's cover story takes a light-hearted look at some of the weird and wonderful vehicles that have resulted – hang onto your seats!

Police cars are a familiar sight on today's roads, but of course it was not always so and, until the early 1900s, the constabulary operated almost exclusively on foot, with a typical 19th century constable walking some 20 miles a day. On the face of it, more recent coppers have had it easy by comparison, and we take a look at some of the many cars they've employed over the years. Happily, we're not aware of any forces ever having an AC Cobra at their disposal, but the maker of this legendary model is the subject of our latest Missing Moniker. No, the marque hasn't gone away, but it's certainly had many ups and downs, yet has manufactured an amazing range of products from trains to golf trolleys – prepare to be surprised.

This issue's Classic Character is the indomitable John Bolster, who survived a horrific crash in the 1949 British Grand Prix to excel at both broadcasting and motoring journalism. 'Bloody Mary', the

fearsome special on which he cut his racing teeth, has to be seen to be believed, and can be too – at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.

With Christmas on the horizon, it is time to focus on our fellow human beings and we have produced two features with that in mind. The first concerns TRAX, an amazing charity that has successfully assisted underprivileged youngsters for some 25 years now. The second focuses on the excellent range of potential Christmas gifts that is available from *Motoring Classics*.

**Happy reading, and a very merry Christmas!**

**Gordon Bruce**  
Editor





## THE ROADSTER FACTORY

**Charles Runyan's passion for TRs was sparked at the age of 10 by the pages of Road & Track and Sports Car Graphic. However, it was only fully-ignited 11 years later, when he was finally allowed his first sports car, a TR3. A second, better one soon followed and it was seeking parts to restore it that prompted him to found The Roadster Factory (TRF) from his Pennsylvania apartment back in 1978.**

"Triumph dealers still existed but they had no interest in supplying TR3 parts, so that's where I started. Then, instead of immediately adding the TR4 and 5 to the roster, I jumped to the TR6, for which minor items such as sun visor retainers were already hard for owners to source. When I sold a 100 in just a few days I knew I was on to something." TRF now comprehensively covers TR models 2-6 and also stocks parts for the TR7, TR8, Spitfire and GT6, as well as the ubiquitous MGB in both roadster and GT guise. The company's inventory currently totals some 20,000 items, including numerous British Motor Heritage parts and around 2,500 that TRF has specially manufactured to its own exacting standards – 'I'd rather lose an arm than my reputation for quality'. The North American market

is expansive on its own, but the company also regularly supplies owners in Australia and New Zealand, plus around 20 other countries; it even serves as a wholesaler to various British suppliers.

TRF employs some 20 members of staff, all of whom have worked there for over a decade. The exception is Charles's son Albert who 'turned up prior to his last year at university, quickly found he was too busy to finish his degree, and has been at TRF ever since'. Pretty well every summer the company holds a much-vaunted three-day summer party that comprises a heady mix of drag racing,

autocross, gymkhana, mountain touring, concours and general socialising, and has been known to attract as many as 600 cars and 1100 people.

Proof of Charles's deep passion for TRs lies in his ownership of two of only four Works twin-cam Triumph TRS models built for the 1960/1961 Le Mans races. One remains unrestored, while the other is nearing completion following a total rebuild. When not slaving away into the wee hours at TRF ([www.the-roadster-factory.com](http://www.the-roadster-factory.com)), the American-born boss can invariably be found at the English pub he also runs.



# CARS

## *that Float and Fly*

### The Ultimate Answer to Traffic Congestion?



Films like *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *Blade Runner* have much to answer for - who wouldn't fancy a car that could float and/or fly? The big question is, can such things be made practical and affordable in the real world, and the honest answer is that, despite being able to send people into space, man has yet to create a truly viable, multifunctional motorcar. But as we will see, it hasn't been for want of trying, and a few exciting by-products have emerged along the way!

MOTORING CLASSICS 4



Above, L to R: Tampier's Avion-automobile; ConvAirCar 118; Terrafugia Transition; Moller M400 Skycar; AeroMobil. Below: the Terrafugia Transition in road mode.

Our thanks to Motoring Picture Library at the National Motor Museum and others for the photos in this feature.



**Above and below:** the most famous of the early flying cars, the Aerocar, in air and road modes.



**Continued overleaf>**

from the plushly-trimmed road-going body and it certainly looked the part, but the so-called Autoplane proved capable of only short jumps, so was abandoned. More influential was the Avion-automobile designed by Frenchman René Tamié. Effectively a bi-plane with wings that folded flush with the fuselage, it not only achieved a successful flight in 1921, but then drove to Paris's Grand Palais, where it starred in the Salon de l'Aviation.

The die for the flying car had been cast, with many other weird and wonderful contraptions quickly following suit, and anybody asked to sketch such a machine

folding wings of which allowed the transition from car to plane in just five minutes. When in road mode, the car module could be used alone or for towing the wings and tail unit. Optimum speeds were 60mph on the road and 110mph in the air. Civil certification was attained and a production deal agreed on the basis of 500 firm orders. Only half that number was achieved and the project foundered after six prototypes had been constructed, all of which still exist, one of which is still flying.

Scroll forward and the race to create the first series production flying car is as intense today as it was then. The three

## Flying cars/roadable aircraft

It seems as soon as the car and aeroplane were both in being, there were people scratching their heads about how the two could be combined. In truth, Romanian Trajan Vuia was probably just building an aeroplane the best way he knew how, but his Vuia I prototype of 1906 looked for all the world like a car with wings attached; a view compounded by him testing the chassis alone for several weeks near Paris before donning the wings and becoming one of the first people ever to fly a powered machine.

The first genuine attempt at a flying car was arguably made by Glenn Curtiss, who later gave his name to such aircraft as the WWII Kittyhawk. The wings and tail of his 1917 triplane were easily detached

by 1946 would probably have drawn something akin to Theodore Hall's ConqAirCar 118. The car part comprised a stylish two-door saloon powered by a rear-mounted Crosley engine, while the aircraft section was an integrated wing and tailplane assembly, plus its own Lycoming powerplant. When not in use, the aviation parts rested on a three-legged undercarriage, and to take to the sky you merely reversed the car under it, joined the sections together and bob's your uncle. Unfortunately, the first prototype was crashed when the pilot mistook the car petrol gauge for that of the aircraft module. Only one more example was built before the project folded.

The most famous of the early flying cars was Molt Taylor's modular Aerocar, the

most prominent of the projects currently vying for pole position in flying car history are:

**Moller M400 Skycar** – a very futuristic-looking VTOL machine, Skycar is powered by no less than eight Wankel engines housed in four rotating Kevlar nacelles. However, after 40 years of development and a reputed \$100 million of investment it has yet to progress beyond the hover stage.

**AeroMobil** – this decidedly handsome roadable aircraft hails from Slovakia and features wings that fold back around the wheels when in road mode. A crash earlier this year dented progress, but the company still hopes to have a saleable product by 2018.

# CARS *that Float and Fly*



**Terrafugia Transition** – this is widely considered to be the most promising of the latter-day designs, for which the maker claims to have taken 100 deposits. It will fit in a single-car garage and hit speeds of up to 65mph on the road. The switch to flight mode takes just 40 seconds and once in the air the craft will cruise at 100mph. Trials have progressed well and it is hoped to commence deliveries in 2018. Current cost – a cool \$299,000. Watch this space!

## Amphibious cars

By far the most successful such car to date is the Amphicar that was designed and built in Germany, primarily for the US market and was described as 85 percent car and 15 percent boat. A four-seat convertible, it was powered by a rear-mounted Triumph Herald powerplant and was capable of 7 knots in water and 70mph on the road. Production ran for eight years from 1961, during which 3,878 were sold, however, this was way short of the hoped-for 20,000 and the company folded in 1968. Two examples crossed the channel that same year and the model featured in many films, including Inspector Clouseau.

In 2003 Gibbs Technologies produced a splendid looking two-seater amphibious concept car that would probably have many a potential buyer today, if made street legal. Reputedly the subject of 60 patents, it originated in the UK and was powered by a Rover 2.5-litre V6 engine. Richard Branson employed one to set a new record of 1 hour 40 minutes for crossing the channel in an amphibian.

One amphibious Gibbs product that's very much on sale in the UK right now is the Quadski. Powered by BMW's much vaunted 140bhp K1300 boxer engine, it's a quad bike whose revolutionary retractable suspension apparently 'provides a near-seamless transition from performance ATV to wheels-up watercraft in less than five seconds'. The best news of all is that the Quadski is weeks away from full EU approval allowing it to be legally driven on the public roads. It's available from Hunstanton Jet Ski ([www.hunstantonjetski.co.uk](http://www.hunstantonjetski.co.uk)) for £39,000 plus VAT. The perfect Christmas present!

## Other products worth a mention

The British company Dutton claims to have been manufacturing amphibious cars 'longer than all such companies in the world added together', ie over 25 years, in which it has racked up over 230 sales comprising three different models - the Mariner (up to the year 2000), the Commander (up to 2006), and the current Surf.

The Californian enterprise WaterCar currently offers the bespoke Panther, a fibreglass-bodied four-seater powered by a 3.7-litre Honda V6 engine on the road, and a 'Panther' jet drive unit in the water. The transition from land to sea takes 15 seconds, where speeds of up to 15mph can be attained.

The prototype Rinspeed sQuba is totally Bond-esque, having been inspired by the Lotus Esprit of *The Spy Who Loved Me*. It aims to be the first production car that can be driven both on and under water. Based on the Lotus Elise and powered by three electric motors it is expected to cost 'less than a Rolls-Royce'. There is no production schedule as yet!

**Clockwise from top left:** Gibbs Aquada; Amphicar; Rinspeed sQuba; Gibbs Quadski; WaterCar; Dutton Surf.

# Classic Character

**John Vary Bolster (1910-1984)**

Grand Prix driver, broadcaster, journalist and builder of the immortal 'Bloody Mary'

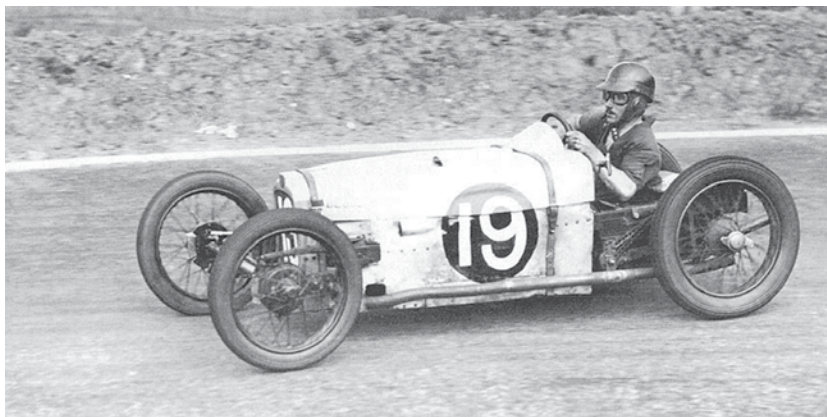


**John and brother Richard arguably owed their motoring passion to their mother. She transported WWI VIPs in her own Napier and Gordon Watney Mercedes and was actively involved in the cars' maintenance – when just six, John helped her decoke the Merc's massive six-cylinder engine. His first drive occurred courtesy of the family chauffeur, who illicitly allowed him behind the wheel during the school run. In his autobiography, 'Motoring Is My Business', Bolster recalled how this childhood association with chauffeurs and mechanics enabled him to 'command a flow of obscene language that would not disgrace a bargee'!**

Once old enough to drive legally he was presented with a new Austin Seven Chummy. That it and the brothers Bolster experienced many hair-raising moments was evident from John's remark 'to scrap on the public roads is no doubt reprehensible, but I'm afraid we greatly enjoyed it'. Their Tonbridge School strictly forbade the use of cars during term time, but the call of Brooklands was all powerful and visits were achieved with the assistance of 'heavy disguises, hidden Austin Sevens, and stealthy escapes'.

In 1929 the Bolsters created their legendary special 'Bloody Mary' (BM). The driver was positioned low in the offside of the ash

frame, while opposite a 760cc V-twin JAP engine drove through a Jukes gearbox to the solid rear axle from a Graham White cyclecar. BM was continually developed, and was ultimately powered by a pair of JAP engines and garnered countless wins in sprints, hillclimbs and races all over the country. Aiming at yet greater success, the moustachioed John briefly campaigned a still more fearsome machine with no less than four JAP engines. However, his most prominent post-war racing was at the



wheel of Peter Bell's ERAs, and it was a crash in one during the 1949 British Grand Prix that broke his neck, effectively ending his competition career.

Multiple new challenges beckoned though, and many will recall his pit-based motor-sport broadcasts for the BBC, with radio pack on his back and trademark deer-

stalker on his head; also the peerless road and track tests and technical articles he penned for Autosport magazine. A confirmed Francophile he opted for small-engined Renaults when motoring over there and for many years campaigned a Panhard et Levassor on the London to Brighton run. Bolster is sadly no longer with us, but his beloved BM is on permanent display at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.

**Above top:** Sallon's wonderful cartoon of Bolster in full BBC broadcast mode.  
**Above:** John and his immortal Bloody Mary with which he had so much success over so many years.

# TRAX

## Delivering kids from **ADVERSITY to ACCOMPLISHMENT**

Readers of a certain age will recall the problems that afflicted Oxfordshire's Blackbird Leys estate in the early '90s. Joy riding had become so endemic that an anti-skid surface was applied to the roads to discourage handbrake turns, chicanes were installed to protect the shopping area, and the police were forced to invest in faster cars - their standard issue vehicles were simply being outgunned! The media coverage was worldwide and the resources of the authorities stretched to the limit.

Those most affected inevitably sought the toughest possible penalties. Peter Bridges (subsequently awarded an MBE for his charity work) took a different slant. Yes, the culprits were causing misery and acting illegally, but they were also displaying a genuine enthusiasm for cars and, in many cases, a fair degree of skill and showmanship. What if these attributes could be channelled more positively? Together with Patsy Townsend, Peter Shepherd, and Peter Patrick, Bridges formed TRAX – a charity aimed at providing disaffected youths with real purpose via a mechanical workshop where they could learn all about cars. They could even gain related qualifications, thereby taking them off the streets and into worthwhile employment.

The thinking spread nationwide, funds flowed, and support materialised from

many quarters – eg TRAX was honoured by a visit from Prince Charles in those early days. However, as that oh-so-true saying goes, 'today's news is tomorrow's chip wrapper', and once the media storm over Blackbird Leys had died down, the kudos from supporting such schemes dwindled and many hit the buffers. To its eternal credit, TRAX has consistently reinvented itself and broadened its offering, so it's not only still with us a quarter of a century later, but now ably provides some 400 disadvantaged youths per annum with hope and wellbeing, to the benefit of the entire Oxfordshire community.

### **Every penny counts**

There are no external shareholders in this operation, no dividends to be paid – every penny earned or donated goes to running the charity and therefore the benefit of the kids it supports. TRAX

is operated by a team of 10 from an abandoned farm which, though undeniably dishevelled in overall appearance, bristles with the innovative thinking of its devoted staff. Its inventory of motorcycles, quad bikes and go-karts is neatly stored in converted shipping containers, which have been cleverly transformed with windows, lighting, power and a fully-equipped workshop. What was the cowshed is now the car workshop complete with hydraulic ramp and all the required tools.

Other areas house the engine and bicycle workshops, admin offices, classrooms etc.

Outside you'll find cars kindly donated for the youths to work on, not to mention dozens of bicycles that have either been gifted or sourced from the corporation tip. These will now be







# TRAX

## Delivering kids from ADVERSITY to ACCOMPLISHMENT

rebuilt for the benefit of the local community – depending on specification, the restored machines are sold for between £40 and £100. There is also an innovative scheme aimed at Oxford's university fraternity that allows them to buy bikes for £60 and then sell them back to TRAX when they graduate.

times with equal success. Most of the intake is boys, but girls are also involved and the hope is to attract more in future. Says TRAX's Peter Wilks: "They have just the same issues as the lads but are obviously more vulnerable. There is much we can do to assist."

son than Princess Anne; not to mention a fine dining event for 200 people that alone swelled the coffers by £6,000. TRAX relies heavily on its own students to make these programmes work, which is how they earn money for themselves as well as the charity. Says Wilks: "It is



The two of TRAX's 10-strong team tasked with its day-to-day running are Operations Manager Olivia Davies, a qualified teacher, and Workshop Manager Chris Harman. Chris's story is especially poignant, as he was among the first intake of students back in the '90s and has remained with the project ever since, evolving from self-confessed tearaway to a highly-valued organiser.

### TRAX caters for students from 14-19 years of age

The youngsters supported by TRAX are ones who, to one degree or another have disengaged from mainstream schooling. They may suffer from severe dyslexia, mental or physical disabilities, or perhaps a particularly troubled home-life – one we learned of had been ejected by his parents and was living on the streets; another was responsible for running the family home at the age of just 14. The intake is split into groups of 14 to 16 year olds and those aged 16 to 19. Depending on their needs they attend TRAX full-time, or divide their days between TRAX and school. The established courses on offer relate to bicycles, motorcycles and cars and are geared to attaining City and Guilds or even IML qualifications. Catering courses have been added in recent

A retired businessman, Wilks is in charge of the charity's finances and also Executive Director of the Social Enterprise scheme that's fundamental to its current operating model, because it not only educates TRAX students and helps them gain a meaningful place in society, it quite literally employs them to earn money for the charity. This is how the circle is squared:

- **Any lack of social skills is addressed and the students educated in the mechanics of bicycles, motorcycles, cars, or, the world of catering**
- **They are treated to relevant practical experience**
- **They use their newfound knowledge to earn money for themselves and the charity**
- **They now have a CV and qualifications with which they can seek employment alongside their peers from school**

Last year, TRAX earned £25,000 through private programmes such as holiday courses for run-of-the-mill kids on building a bike (which they got to keep afterwards), football, survival, baking etc. Individual catering projects include one carried out for no less prominent a per-

son than Princess Anne; not to mention a fine dining event for 200 people that alone swelled the coffers by £6,000. TRAX relies heavily on its own students to make these programmes work, which is how they earn money for themselves as well as the charity. Says Wilks: "It is

fascinating to see the way our relatively under-privileged kids interact with those on these courses, many of whom come from wealthy backgrounds and private education. Common interests quickly blur the boundaries and they simply get on with each other.

"The behaviour between our own mix of students is equally interesting as the wilder ones are sometimes also the most caring – eg they tend to be naturally protective of those with severe learning difficulties."

- ### How can we help
- Needless to say, TRAX is always in need of additional support and there are many ways we could all help, including:
- **Personal assistance on site or with campaigning**
  - **Donations of funds**
  - **Donations of unwanted bicycles, motorcycles, or cars**
  - **Corporate or personal sponsorship of the whole programme and/or individual students**

Further details of this fascinating and very successful operation can be found at [www.traxorg.com](http://www.traxorg.com).

# NEWS FROM BMH

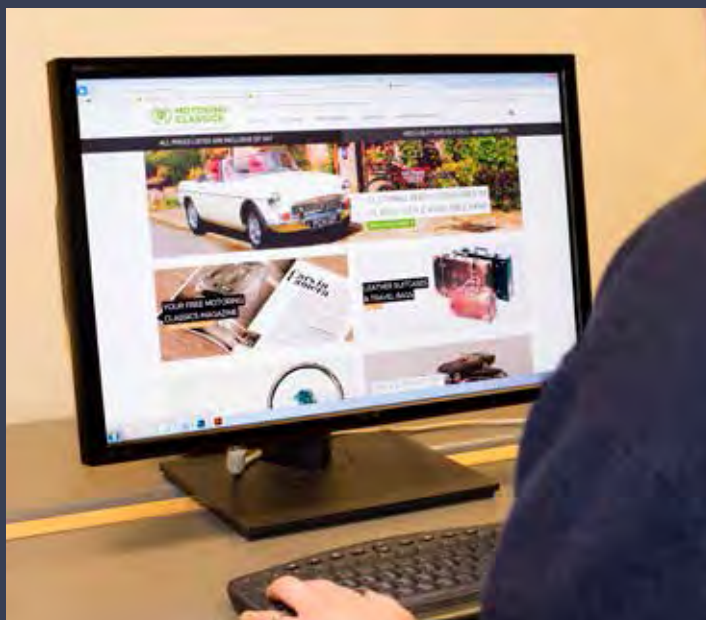


## Managing Director John Yea reveals all

### Web wonders

The big news this month concerns the relaunch of the *Motoring Classics* website, following a major visual redesign and a whole new operating system. The overriding objective was ease of customer access and site navigation. We also used the opportunity to give us total control of product information and updates. If you haven't already visited the site ([www.motoringclassics.co.uk](http://www.motoringclassics.co.uk)) we recommend that you give it a try - any comments would be most welcome.

The new site provides us with a great platform to increase the product offering whilst retaining our ethos that quality is paramount and that we only ever list products we would use ourselves. You can expect a raft of announcements over the coming months, but as a taster we can herald the availability of two established quality products as follows:



#### Keeping cool

The first is the Revotec electric fan kit for classic cars. Revotec have grown to be the premier electric fan provider for our sector of the market, and we are proud to add their product to our site. We have direct experience of the fan in question, as one is fitted to the BMH A40 race car, and has proved fantastic in this stressed application. Revotec is an important addition to our existing range of Samco Classic silicone hoses and Zircotec heat management solutions; premium products that use modern technology to keep classic cars cool.



#### Gearing up

Secondly, stemming direct from our competition activities, we can announce that BMH has commissioned competition straight-cut, close-ratio gear sets for the four-synchro MGB transmission. Supplied with brass baulk rings, these UK-manufactured parts are available now directly from British Motor Heritage, or from your Heritage Approved MG Specialist. The retail price is £2,250, including VAT. These gear sets complement our existing range of MGB competition parts which includes the 4.1:1 crown wheel and pinion (the ratio of choice for the majority of British circuits) and the BMH range of aluminium panels.



#### Getting shirty

We are also excited to offer the Auto Racing Club range of motorsport-themed leisure clothing, comprising T shirts, polo shirts and sweats. This stylish, quality leisurewear complements the existing clothing on the site, and is sure to prove a popular addition. Auto Racing Club's knowledge and skills will also enable us to develop unique British Motor Heritage-badged products; an exciting opportunity for the future.

# FROM BELLS TO BLUES AND TWOS



It's difficult for enthusiast drivers not to be a shade hypocritical about the traffic police. If there's trouble brewing, then there's nothing more welcome than their familiar blues and twos. On the other hand, if you're enjoying yourself on a quiet country road, there are few more blood-draining sights than a police car suddenly looming large in the mirror. Whatever, most of us has our favourite 'policemobiles' from the past, whether inspired by such TV series as Z Cars or personal experience.

## Pre-1900

It took a while for the boys in blue to embrace the horseless carriage. During the car's infancy, police forces were localised, familiar with their public, and carried out most of their work on foot – a typical constable of the 19th century would walk up to 20 miles a day. Even horses were

employed less than one might imagine. In fact, the first dedicated police vehicles were not cars, but Black Marias – ie horse-drawn vans used for the transportation of prisoners or the rapid delivery of a group of officers to an incident.

## 1900-1930

It was around 1903 that motorised police cars were first seen in the UK. For example, the Met invested in a pair of 7.5hp Wolseley tourers, but these served as status symbols for Assistant Commissioners, not the pursuit of criminals. The move was paralleled in the provinces,



**Left:** Irish officers on parade with a fleet of Vauxhall Veloxes. **Top right L to R:** the Chief Constable of Reading aboard his chauffeur-driven Austin; the first non-British cars used by the UK police were Volvo 121 estates; in 1965, the Sussex Constabulary's fleet boasted five Lotus Cortinas. Right: MKII Jaguars were a favourite of many forces.

Our thanks to Vauxhall Heritage; Ford; MPL, National Motor Museum and others for the photos in this feature and Police Car UK for its overall assistance.

with Chief Constables being chauffeured to meetings within the community. The drivers, also policemen, generally sported knee-length boots and gauntlets, as though expecting to tether their steed at the journey's end.

Police motorisation accelerated following WWI, when there was a surfeit of military-trained drivers to man the vehicles and the public were taking to the roads in ever greater numbers. The use of cars progressed down the police ranks, with Superintendents understandably citing the greater efficiency of travelling by road rather dog-cart or train. Junior officers went about their duty on foot, bicycle, bus, railway or motorcycle. Britain was certainly becoming substantially more car-orientated, with the wealthy embarking on ever longer journeys and the one-time

jams of horse-drawn vehicles replaced by those of the small Austins, Morrises and Fords of the day.

### 1930-1940

The much needed Road Traffic Act of 1930 brought a host of new motoring offences for the police to deal with and, considering there were still only 2.4 million cars on the road, the 7,343 fatalities of 1934 was a cause of very major concern (if replicated today, such a kill rate would see the demise of over 100,000 people!). Moreover, statistics proved the police to be little safer than the public they served - they were, on average, involved in accidents every 8,000 miles, and the resulting review led directly to police driving schools being opened in Hendon, Chelmsford and Preston. The war then inflicted a range of entirely different challenges; pet-

rol rationing, blackout regulations, bomb damage and related casualties etc. With male recruits in short supply, women were drafted into the force like never before.

### 1940-1950

Immediately post war, new designs of car were virtually non-existent, so the police either continued to run those purchased pre-hostilities or new examples of the same designs, and were still tied to British marques finished mainly in black. However, two things that did evoke major change in the force's approach to traffic policing around this time were:

- The 999 emergency telephone number trialled in London from 1937 now became available in all major cities
- The cessation of petrol rationing that took place on May 26, 1950



Continued overleaf >

# FROM BELLS TO BLUES AND TWOS

As a result of the latter, the number of motorists and the mileage they travelled soared and the police responded by forming dedicated traffic sections, and selecting more powerful and capacious vehicles that could at least match those of the public, even when laden down with the increasing amount of paraphernalia now required.

## 1950-1960

Another landmark date in the life of traffic policing was December 5, 1958 - ie the day the Preston By-pass (the first section of the M6) opened to the public, making the Lancashire constabulary the first to police a UK motorway. The initial length of the M1 that ran from Jn5 (Watford) to Jn18 (Rugby) followed on November 2, 1959. Concerned that traditional black police cars were insufficiently visible in such continuously high-speed terrain, the Bedfordshire force followed the lead of Lancashire with its MGAs and ordered their new Ford Farnham estate cars in white; the blue roof lights of which were another innovation. The 1950s also saw the first

use of radar speed detection and experiments with on-board cameras.

## 1960-1970

The less lawful '60s will be remembered for all manner of challenges including:

- Policing the new unrestricted sections of motorway - the 70mph limit wasn't imposed until December 1965 and only made permanent in 1967
- The warring 'ton up' rockers and scooter riding mods
- The 1965 abolishment of capital punishment that led to the perception of increases in violent crime - the Great Train Robbery of two years earlier was still much in people's minds
- The phrase 'one for the road' had become all too common among drivers and riders of all types - the Road Safety Act finally imposed drink driving limits in January 1966

The introduction of unit beat policing brought us the Panda car. Some sources attribute the nickname to the fact that, even striped in blue and white, they looked a bit pander-like in the black and

white photos of the day. Others suggest it was derived from the phrase 'Patrol And Neighbourhood Deployment Area' cars. Whatever, Ford and Morris were quick to offer Panda versions of the Anglia and Minor 1000 respectively. Colours for the other fleets changed again for, as the public's vehicles also became ever lighter in hue, the now mainly white police cars no longer stood out from the crowd - enter the now familiar Day-Glo highlights.

In true *Motoring Classics* style, our story largely ends in the late '70s, by when the police, like the public, was despairing of the British motor industry. Many of the marques the force had loyally supported for decades had disappeared altogether - Wolseley, Riley, Humber etc. The likes of Vauxhall were no longer offering large saloons. The Hampshire force had been the first to do the unthinkable and opt for imports (they purchased a fleet of Volvo 121s in 1965), others had long-since followed. The era of the archetypal black-coloured British-made police car with token silver bell affixed to the front had long since been consigned to history.

**Clockwise from top right:** A Ford RS200 on test with the Essex and Suffolk force, 1986; a Metropolitan Police Sunbeam Tiger; once familiar sights - police Land Rover and Rover SD1; the Metropolitan Police loved their Wolseleys; Ford made a special Panda version of the 105E Anglia; a Vauxhall Model H of the Jersey force; Ford's Granada - another model popular with the police. Photos courtesy of: Vauxhall Heritage; Ford; MPL, National Motor Museum; and others.



# MISSING MONIKER

*sometimes*

# AC Cars



The history of AC Cars is a tangled web, from which has spun items as diverse as the 'Bag Boy' (an all-alloy, independently-sprung, golf trolley), trains for Southend pier and invalid carriages constructed for the Ministry of Health. Incredibly, this is the same AC that brought us the mighty Cobra, a derivation of which beat Ferrari to the 1965 World Sports Car Championship.

The story began in 1904 when Autocars & Accessories was founded by butcher John Portwine and engineer John Weller for the purpose of building a wooden-framed three-wheeled delivery vehicle, the Auto-Carrier. It caught on, encouraging the creation of a passenger version, the Sociable. A four-wheeled Fivet-engined lightcar then ensued, but few were made before the intervention of WWI.

Immediately following hostilities Weller unveiled his six-cylinder OHC engine that was to remain in production for a record-breaking 44 years.

In 1921, former Works Napier driver S F Edge assumed control of what was soon to be renamed AC Cars and instituted a programme of racing and record breaking. This led to J.A Joyce's victories in the 1923 and 1924 Brighton Speed Trials, and AC employee the Hon Victor Bruce's win in the 1926 Monte Carlo Rally – the first for a British car. Despite numerous such successes, the depression took its toll, the receiver was summoned and the remains were sold to successful hauliers William and Charles Hurlock. This sparked a golden period for the company during which a memorable line of lean, low saloons, drop-head coupes and tourers was produced.

The post WWII 2 Litre models were less remarkable, but it was the coincidence of the Buckland versions being made next door to where John Tojeiro was turning out race winning two-seater sports cars with pretty Ferrari-esque bodywork, that led to the creation of the giant-killing Ace, its Aceca and Greyhound siblings, and ultimately the all-conquering, Shelby-inspired Cobra.

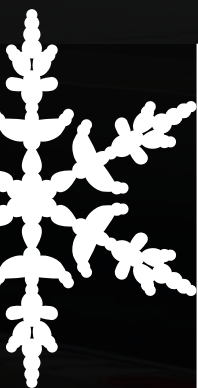
Another recession, the protracted birth of the mid-engined 3000ME and ill-health conspired to bring the Hurlock era to a close after 56 years, at which point ownership passed to a partnership of Autokraft and Ford, with Autokraft's Brian Angliss assuming full control in 1992. Fine evolutions of the Cobra and an all-new Ace resulted, but by 1996 AC had again hit the buffers and was acquired by South African Alan Lubinsky, who retains the rights to this day. Owners of all ACs are well-served by an active club – see [www.acownersclub.co.uk](http://www.acownersclub.co.uk).



Above right: AC's answer to post-war austerity was the Petite, a two-seat version of its invalid carriage adapted for general sale. Above: the famous Works Cobra '39 PH' that Peter Bolton and Ninian Sanderson drove to 7th place in the 1963 Le Mans 24 Hours.



# Motoring Classics in Motorsport



## British Motor Heritage MD **John Yea** reports from the cockpit for the last time in 2015

Following the summer break we gathered at Brands Hatch for the September 5/6 Equipe GTS races on the Grand Prix and Indy circuits. Qualifying on the GP circuit was in damp conditions and my position of 11th out of 34 disappointing; especially after being right on the pace last year. The race was dry and, after a good start, became a long battle with Paul Latimer in his MGB. He carried more speed into the corners, but I exited quickly and had pace on the straights. I just stayed ahead, finishing 9th by half a second; albeit with a telling-off from engineer Ralph for watching my mirrors rather than the circuit!

Sunday was on the Indy circuit, with a somewhat bizarre and disrupted qualifying. Firstly it was red flagged for an accident, and then there was a big oil spill which ended the session. I only managed 12th, unable to get below the minute mark. The race assembly area resembled an advert for

the infamous duct tape, the normally immaculate Equipe GTS field amply displaying the effects of the oil. I made a good start and was having great fun, with Paul Latimer again in close attendance, as were the MGBs of Martin Richardson and Andrew Bentley. Unfortunately the race was red flagged after a massive accident on the start/finish straight due to a further oil spill. I finished 7th, within less than a second of 5th.

My next outing was at Spa, Belgium for the classic Six Hour race aboard Barry Sidery-Smith's LHD MGB. Last year the car was crashed before I had a chance to drive. This year the team comprised myself, Barry, and Chris Ryan. Barry drove the first stint and I the second. I had a steady run that was enlivened by a rain shower at the midpoint. Chris really increased the pace when he took over, accelerating us up the leader board. He then had a typical Spa deluge to contend with that neces-

sitated a change of tyres, but was still making progress as we got to the finish. There was a great feeling of elation in reaching the end, and finishing 37th out of 105 starters, having qualified 85th.

The next weekend comprised a trip to Mallory Park with the A40. The improvements made were obvious, allowing me to qualify 9th. Unfortunately the race didn't go to plan. The car expired due a water leak, and then I was excluded for 'loose seat belts' - the consequence of easing them off as I entered the pit lane for the compulsory pitstop.

We entered both cars for the final meeting at Donington on October 17, the MGB having a run out in the HRDC Allstars. This was prompted by the Allstars entry at Mallory, which suggested the car would be in with the chance of a good result. However there was a much stronger field at Donington, including two







AC Cobras and an Elan 26R in the same class! Nevertheless we qualified 12th. I made a good start in the race itself and was just getting into my stride on the 3rd lap when I was tapped into a spin at Redgate corner, and had to let almost the entire field past before I could get going again. I was pretty fired up by the incident and made my way fairly quickly up the order to close on the TR4 responsible for the tap. As we approached the Esses I dummied as if going down the inside, causing him to miss his braking point and slide into the gravel trap. I finally finished 10th (a reasonable recovery), ruing the circa 20 seconds lost through the spin.

Qualifying with the A40 was great fun although the crowded track made it hard to get a clear run, and to the alarm of the pit crew I only really got my act together at the end of the session. My position of

13th overall was not brilliant, but I felt good about the race. I made a reasonable start, but slight hesitancy cost two places and I was then sandwiched between the Polson Riley 1.5 and Stephen Miles' A40. It stayed that way until the pitstop, which was a complete disaster. I already knew I was a bit slow, but for some reason we could only manage 1 minute 26.7 seconds, when most achieved under a minute! This cost dearly in terms of my overall position. However, I had a good run to the end, including a close tussle with Christopher Unsworth in his A40, in which I just prevailed through my fastest three laps of the day, to finish 11th overall.

**Here's to next season, which can't come soon enough as far as I'm concerned!**

**Left:** a WSM and Alfa Romeo do battle at Brands Hatch (Photo: Dickon Siddall). **Above:** the Donington pitstop John Yea would prefer to forget (Photo: Dickon Siddall). **Below:** the BMH MGB at speed during the same meeting (Photo: Mick Walker).



# Christmas crackers from **MOTORING CLASSICS**

Trying to find that special present for the motoring guy or gal who appears to have everything can be quite a teaser, but one the ever-expanding line-up of *Motoring Classics* items might just solve for you. There's something for everybody - and every pocket too, with prices ranging from £9.50 to £8,500.00.



MOTORING CLASSICS 18



### **Heritage leather gloves**

Allow your friend or loved one to 'feel the wheel' like never before with a pair of Heritage classic leather driving gloves. Available in all regular sizes and finished in the choice of black or dark brown, they are priced at a very affordable £29.95 inc VAT.

### **Mota-Lita steering wheels**

With a peerless history dating back to the 1950s, Mota-Lita steering wheels have been the 'must have' accessory for generations of classic car enthusiasts. Handmade to the highest quality, they are available in a large range of designs and with leather, wood or laminate rims. Prices from £120.00 inc VAT, depending on the design and fitment.



### Startmonkey 400

Infinitely smaller and lighter than conventional battery jump packs, Startmonkey 400 will fire up any 4x4, van, car, boat or motorcycle up to 20 times before needing a charge of its own. Available with crocodile clips or motorsport-style Anderson plug. £199.95 inc VAT.



### Samco hose kits

Much smarter than standard organic rubber hoses, these premium quality hand-crafted silicone ones are also designed to withstand greater temperature and pressure – an essential quality when equipping a performance engine. Prices from £76.33 inc VAT, depending on model of car.



### Auto Racing Club Polo Shirts

The Auto Racing Club polo shirts are available in nine different design and colour combinations, and a wide range of sizes from XS to XXL. These high quality items cost just £35.00 inc VAT each and feature unique motorsport-themed designs that are both distinctive and tasteful.



### Tex mirrors

The renowned Tex brand is these days owned by British Motor Heritage and their quality mirror products are manufactured on site at the company's headquarters in Witney, Oxfordshire. The classic mirror range includes fitments for wing, door and quarterlight as well as some replacement glasses – a wide selection of items covering cars from the '60s, '70s and '80s.

## Other specific gift options include:

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- The renowned range of Autoglym polishes, cleaners etc
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### Chassis and body parts and accessories:

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