

April 2023



In Tune



GUILDFORD MOTOR CLUB

Social Calendar

April

11th Clubnight 20:00 - The Fox at Fox Corner, Worplesdon GU3 3PP

18th Committee Meeting

25th Pubnight 20:00 - The Fox at Fox Corner

Goodwood Events - April

1st Saywell (Supercars), **15-16th** Members' Meeting **22nd** BRMC Sprint CKL

Brooklands Events - April

8th Easter Classic Gathering, **23rd** FBHCV Drive It Day, **29th** Italian Car Day

Competition Calendar

April

2 April – FDMC April Solo at Abingdon

14 April – Southsea MC, 100 lanes 12 Car. Start Meon Hut, finish Angel Hotel

16 April – FDMC April Antics Autotest - Bramley Camp

19 April – Basingstoke MC, Starters Gun novice 12 Car (for novice/beginner crews). 40 miles, start & finish Sun Inn - Dummer

13 May – HERO Rally; in and around Amesbury

2 December – Southdown Stages - Goodwood

Weald MC 12 Car Challenge

Friday, 7th October 2022 (Borough 18)

Friday, 21st October 2022 (Croydon)

Friday, 18th November 2022 (Sevenoaks)

Friday 9th December 2022 (Southern)

Friday, 20th January 2023 (Maidstone)

Friday, 10th February 2023 (Guildford)

Friday, 24th February 2023 (Eastbourne)

Friday, 10th March 2023 (Bexley)

Friday, 31st March 2023 (Blackpalfrey)

Guildford Motor Club Event 2023 Dates

~~10th February our round in the Weald 12 Car Series – The Wheeled 12 Car~~

14th May Printemps Touring Assembly

20th August David Roscoe Memorial Dimanche Tour - Touring Assembly

29th September Rapsallion (Scatter or 12 Car)

Editorial

Welcome to the April edition of the magazine.

It's time to get your entry in for The Printemps, regulations and entry form are with the email which distributes the newsletter and also available from the link on page 5 of this Newsletter.

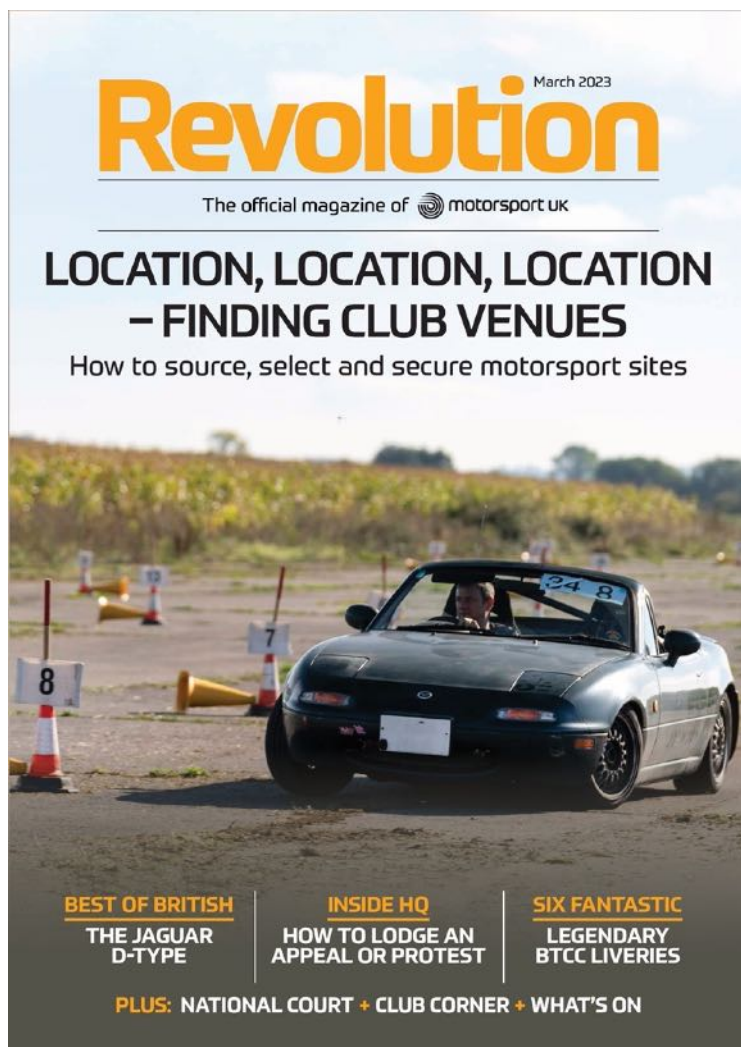
Mark writes a few words about our friend and former committee member Henry Richardson who sadly passed away at the end of March.

We have an interesting read for you this month - Ian MacFadyen provides an article about his uncle who was a Director of Aston Martin in the early years, there is also an invite to a Mike Hawthorn Track Day at Goodwood in July. We have some invitations from other clubs of events to enjoy. Robert has been out and about quite bit so naturally there are a few photographs to look at.

Any reports, anecdotes and articles always gratefully received.

Stay Safe

Annette & Robert Clayson



Revolution

Revolution is the official magazine of Motorsport UK. Guildford Motor Club is a member club of Motorsport UK.

The magazine is published monthly and can be read either online or as a .pdf.

[Read the current edition Online, past editions are also available.](#) You can also access the Motor Sport Year Book from this link.

[Download the magazine as a .pdf. \(This downloads the magazine from Motorsport UK website\)](#)

Henry Richardson

It is with great sadness that I have to report the untimely passing of Henry Richardson.

Henry Joined GMC in 1984 and was an active member for many years. He held the position of GMC Secretary for several years and helped to organise a number of events during his time with us. Best known throughout the UK as a top class navigator, Henry co-drove for Justin Dale in the British Rally Championship for 18 months in a factory supported Peugeot 205 1.9 GTi.

Henry also navigated for Steve Cole for many, many years, notching up a number of regional road rally wins. The club lost regular contact with Henry, when his work took him to Wiltshire and then 'home' to Yorkshire, but he always had time for a chat whenever our paths crossed on rallies across the UK.

I'm sure you'll join us in sending our condolences to his family and friends.

R.I.P Henry.

Mark



Henry with his wife Jean (left couple) outside the The Friary Centre in Guildford when in March 1992 where Motor Club had a display in the shopping centre.

Printemps 2023 - 14th May 2023.

With just a few weeks to go before this years Printemp's Tour, we could do with a few more entrants.

This is an ideal starter event for both drivers and navigators and we'd love to see a few of our newer members out there.

It doesn't matter what car you bring (so long as it's legal), the route is a doddle, and technically, you don't even have to follow it.

You'll see from the regs, that there is complementary tea or coffee at the start and hot food will be available from the Thai Bites mobile unit at the finish.

And to cap it all, there's a chance you might win a bottle of Fizz.

[Regulations can be found here](#) and the [entry form here](#).

Regards,

Mark & Lorraine



Barry Dreghorn & Jack Janikowski with Ford Model T on last years Printemps

Aston Martin - The Early Years

We are grateful to member Ian Macfadyen for this article written by his uncle, Robert Gordon Sutherland, recounting his time as Director of Aston Martin.

SPRING 1985

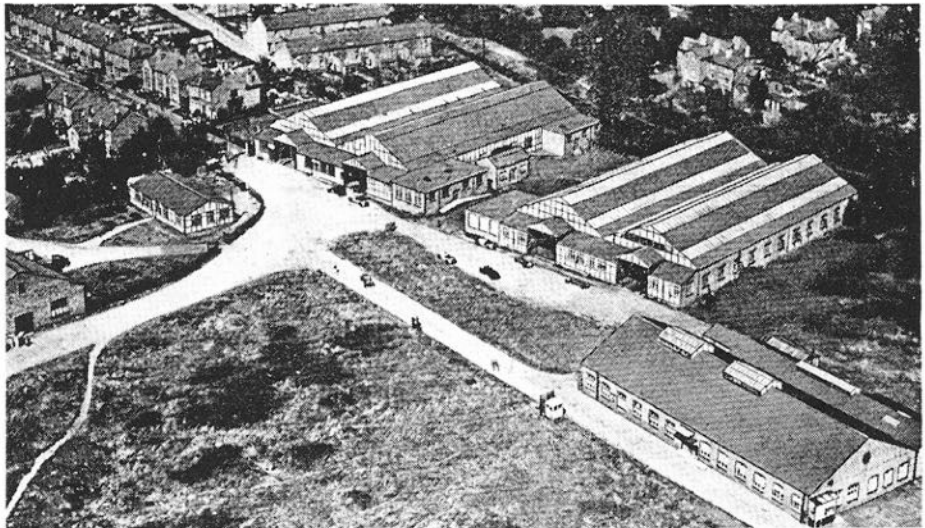
Gordon Sutherland, a Director there for 15 years (1932-1947), looks back . . .

Lionel Martin, Lord Charnwood, Renwick, and the Bertelli brothers, Prideaux Brune, I met them all except Renwick who I understand was a mathematical genius and brilliant designer. He and Bertelli left Enfield-Alldays and formed a company to manufacture the engine they had designed and patented, and eventually took over Aston Martin Motors at Feltham. Apparently they had differences, and, on Renwick leaving, the company in 1929 was reformed as Aston Martin Ltd. Renwick went to M.G.s and was, I believe, subsequently responsible for the R type racing cars, one of the first ever with fully independent rear suspension.

Ever since World War I Bertelli had been developing and racing sports cars, first at Enfield-Allday in 1921/22, then with his own Bertelli single sleeve racing car built at Woolf Barnato's country estate at Lingfield. Might a similar story to Bentleys have unfolded at Feltham one wonders? No one working with 'Bert' could fail to come under his spell and become a racing enthusiast. When I arrived on the Aston scene in 1932 the number of cars made for sale since 1927 was only about 250 in total! The Feltham Works was more like a racing stable than a manufacturing firm. They had always been under-capitalised yet were still sending teams of cars to Ulster, Brooklands and Le Mans! When the Sutherlands took over it was decided that for a trial period we would lay down a production run of 100 cars and then review the commercial position.

The original International with its worm drive and torque tube transmission, separate gearbox, and rod operated brake gear, was a very ambitious design which, given more finance and time for development, could have been quite outstanding. In particular, its low slung chassis, relatively soft springing, powerful brakes and sure roadholding were vastly superior to most cars at that time. It did lack power, though; a 12/50 Alvis engine probably gave comparable power with much less complication. In particular, the Renwick and Bertelli ingenious arrangement of angular rockers and cams lubricated through minute oil holes both gave a lot of trouble. The rockers were difficult to manufacture, the cam pads having to be hardened whereas the beam section must remain ductile, and the small camshaft lubrication holes often blocked, particularly with cold oil, a condition found a high percentage of running time due to the enormous dry sump tank. This was O.K. for prolonged high speed running but unsuitable for everyday work. Added to all this, there was a nasty vibration period at about 1500 rpm on the camshaft drive which often fractured the Weller spring tensioning the chain. These defects were more noticeable in normal usage than in racing, when oil was clean and hot, and one did not run at 1500 rpm very much!

Long before Bertelli resigned I had persuaded my father, who was company Chairman, to finance the design of an entirely new engine. However, Bertelli said he could 'expand' the old design to 2 litres using many of the existing jigs and patterns, which was obviously going to be very much cheaper. With hindsight this was a mistake. All our existing problems were still with us, and in addition we got a much rougher



The works at Victoria Road Feltham about fifty years ago.

engine and were on the limits for bore wear and piston reliability. To add to our troubles, solid Specialoid pistons were fitted instead of the previous split skirt B.H.B. type. These may have given more power (which we were going to get anyway) but they nearly all seized up after a few thousand miles, and we had to rebuild most customers' engines free of charge.

Probably Bertelli got over-enthusiastic about the 2-litres because he had fitted an experimental one in our Mk II demonstrator BME399. This became known in the Works as 'the blue car' and had a very fine performance indeed—90/95 mph and tremendous acceleration; I suppose the bhp was about 95. With a new cylinder head and camshaft, and inlet valves transposed, the power was eventually increased to 105/110 bhp at 5200 rpm.

By 1935 we had still not sold all the Mk. II 1½-litres made, in spite of considerable success in long distance racing. The standard production cars were too expensive and did not really have an outstanding performance. M.G.s, Riley and Alvis were all making comparable models about £100 cheaper. Rileys in particular had an excellent engine design, with a hemispherical head, that was capable of very high outputs, as proved by Freddie Dixon. The normal 1100 cc Brooklands model had a similar performance to our 1½-litre. In spite of these rather disturbing facts, my father agreed to sanction production of 25 of the new Speed Model 2-litres and for the Works to enter for the 1936 Le Mans race. Luckily in a way for us, this race was cancelled at the last minute due to Strikes in France. If we had run I do not think the new cars would have given a very good impression. The brakes would have undoubtedly have failed after a few hours as all the liners would have cracked due to the greater pressures exerted by the Lockheed operation; also there was an inherent steering fault in our new front axle layout. Both these facts came to light after we sold one of these racing cars to Mr Hertzberger who raced it on the Continent and was able to describe his troubles to Bertelli when he visited us at Feltham. We also built two more racing cars

for the Ulster T.T. in 1936, one to be driven by Dick Seaman, which got us excellent publicity. The other was for an American, Phipps, who had recently married Doreen Evans of M.G. fame. In the race neither of these cars lasted long enough for any inherent faults to be highlighted; Seaman's engine seized solid after he had led on handicap for a few laps, and Phipps crashed.

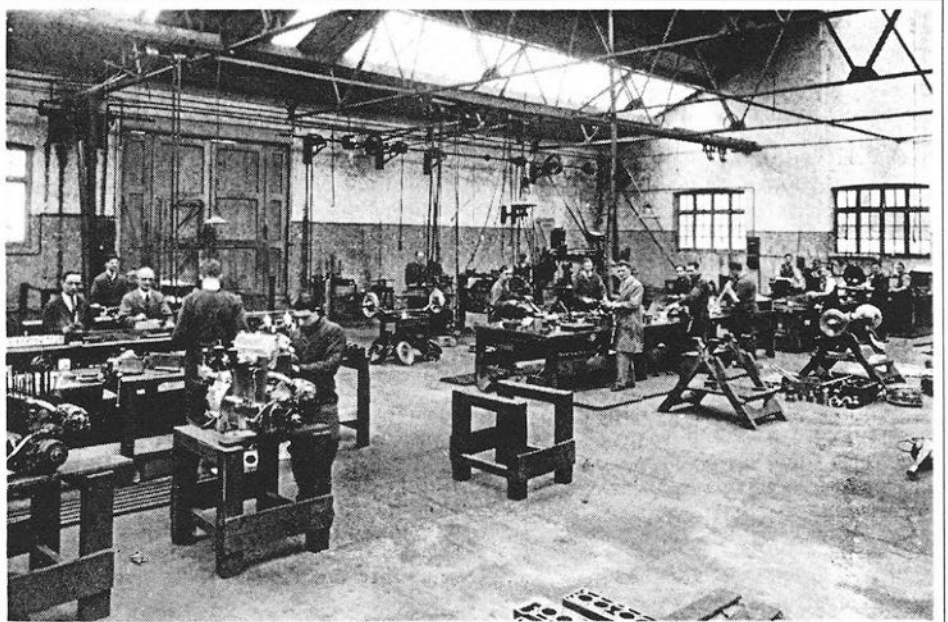
So we battled on into 1937 still trying to sell off the remaining few 1½-litres, and concentrating on the design of the new 2-litre Standard Saloon and Tourer. We also sold several 2-litre Speed Models fitted with 2/4 seater Bertelli bodies. These were a great disappointment in their performance. Although there was now well over 100 bhp available, these cars had to be fitted with a special lower axle ratio to enable them to attain 90 mph! The experimental Blue car had grossly misled us—all the 1½-litres had been of narrower track and fitted with cycle wings but in plan view the new 2-litres were nearly square and must have had an appalling drag coefficient. It was not until 1938 and 39 that, with our much criticised semi-streamlined bodies, we were able to get 100 mph in full trim. This did not apply to the four racing cars or to Jock Horsfall's who was really showing the way racing a 2-litre Speed Model fitted with a 1½-litre Ulster body. He won several races at Brooklands. With the final streamlined type C, I was able to get about 112 mph, lapping Brooklands at 104 mph average.

Claude Hill had come from Birmingham with the original Renwick and Bertelli set-up, and was an indispensable adjunct to the team; his mathematics and drawing ability were outstanding in any company. When we took over he had gone to Vauxhalls, but Bertelli soon was able to persuade him back to us, and his loyalty to the firm kept him at Feltham until 1948.

About 1935, when thinking about new engine designs, Bertelli had been considering the Cross rotary valve and became very enthusiastic about it, as he also was about sleeve valves. Like him I also fell for the rotary valve idea which seemed to offer such remarkable possibilities, and after he left we wasted some months designing an adaptation

to try it out on our existing engine—a very difficult and complicated design which gave Claude Hill many headaches. Although we got it to run quite well we never got more power than we had already, partly due to the fact that with our bore and stroke we dare not take advantage of its high revving possibilities—Cross was at that time running up to 10,000 rpm. Also Claude was able to prove to Mr. Cross that his Controlled Loading theory was a fallacy. At any rate Aston Martin were awarded 5000 shares in the Cross Co. for the experiments we had carried out, and since 1940 these have paid high dividends; they must have developed into the best assets taken over by David Brown.

With this background we embarked on the design of the new Claude Hill push rod engines—a 2-litre 4 cylinder, and a 3-litre 6 cylinder, which was always my ultimate aim. Claude found that by using diagonally placed combustion spaces he could not only improve the combustion but also use simple straight rockers, and by adopting a rear drive high camshaft with automatic chain tensioner our Weller spring problems were eliminated. No doubt my Alvis experience led us to this. When David Brown took over we had made and run prototypes and were all ready for production. Also we had chassis designs for what became the DB 1. DB made getting on for one hundred of these engines at Feltham and thus kept our machine shop busy, but I believe few went into cars and the rest were scrapped—shades of RR and the old Bentleys! Of course our whole concept was completely altered by DB's purchase of Lagondas, when he acquired a very nice 2½-litre 6 cylinder engine ready for production. Quite rightly he decided to use this in the DB 2, with great success, and Claude Hill's 3-litre was never made. This was a pity as I think it might have saved the firm a lot of headaches later on when they were seeking to get into higher powers. I believe the Lagonda engine in Vantage tune gave 120 bhp and I am sure Claude's engine which was all aluminium with steel liners and very light could have been developed into the 200 bhp category. Another possibility which Jock Horsfall and I both wanted to try was to put one of the existing W.O. Bentley 12 cylinder engines into a DB 1 chassis. This undoubtedly would have been a world beater in 1948 and would have given Ferraris something to think about.



Engine assembly goes on at an unhurried pace, one man per engine just as today.

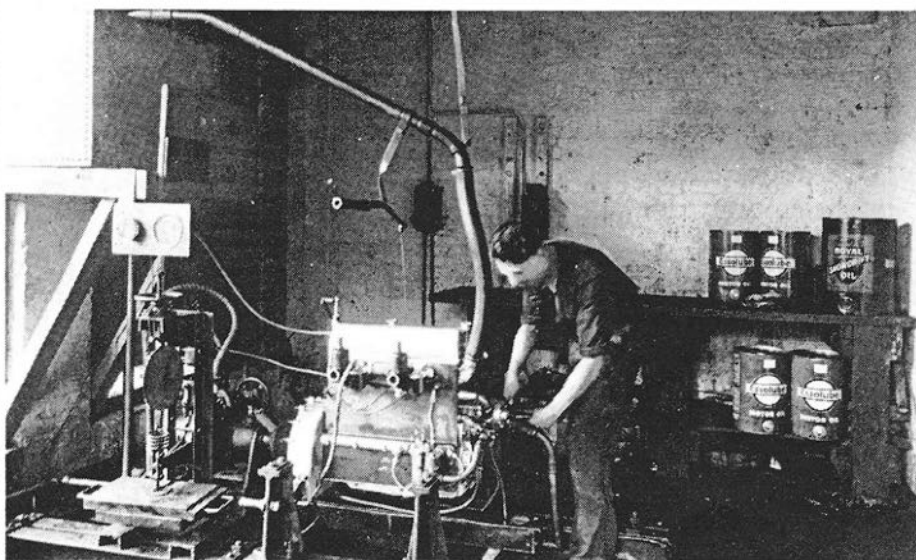
Remember how well the two racing Lagondas went in 1939 at Le Mans and Brooklands—over 200 b.h.p. and 140 mph! Strangely enough at a later date considerable efforts were made to build a 12 cylinder engine, which was I believe something of a disaster.

I now come to chassis design. To appreciate our aims here one has to think back a few years. About 1924, when "balloon tyres" as they were then known came into vogue, many manufacturers experienced terrible chassis oscillation, known as "tramps", at speeds of 60-80 mph. This was due to the natural oscillation period of the chassis co-inciding with that of the front axle which, with its heavy tyres and brake drums (fwb came in about this period), became like a swinging dumb-bell. I had had experience of this on some Alvis models and a Lagonda; and when we gave the 2-litres softer springing we also got it. If one was brave or foolhardy enough one could drive through it and find that things smoothed out at higher speeds. Obviously however such characteristics could not be tolerated, and the answer seemed to be a stiffer chassis and much softer springing.

In the meantime, luckily for many manufacturers, a palliative was available in the Wilmot Breedon 'harmonic stabiliser'. This consisted of a transverse spring bumper with bob weights at either end which could be tuned permanently to suit the car. They were already used by many manufacturers including the R.R. and Bentley, so we were in good company. Soon after the first 2-litres were delivered we had designed the necessary front brackets which had to withstand enormous stresses, and all 2-litres were then so fitted. At that time we were very amused by R.R.'s response when a Bentley's bumper bracket fractured and allowed the bumper to fall down and caused the car to somersault; instead of redesigning their very neat bracket they fitted safety hooks underneath to catch the bumper! To us, this seemed very illogical, and Bertelli ensured that our brackets could, as he said, "have lifted a battleship."

All this seemed to me to be the wrong way of approaching the problem, and I became determined that any new car we produced would be really rigid in its own right. Torsional rigidity on a flat chassis is obviously not easy to achieve, and the original International chassis with its tubular cross members must have been considerably better than our later cars where, to reduce cost, normal cross members were rivetted in by the frame makers. The racing cars had these bolted and split-pinned which ensured the best of a bad job. As I was also convinced that our future lay in a streamlined saloon, we did various layouts with roof member frames. The famous car "Donald Duck" was the first practical experiment in this line of thinking and enabled us to eliminate the Wilmot Breedon stabiliser, also to use a fully floating engine mounting. If only we had been able to carry out some of these ideas on the 2-litre saloon in the first place in 1936 how different our results would have been.

To return then to the story of model developments at Feltham, we got a 2-litre saloon to the 1936 Show with a struggle, but no one had yet driven one! It looked just what the public wanted however, and we sold a greater number the first day than we had ever thought possible. By the next day,



Also as today, so fifty years ago each engine was run up on the test bed.

though, Bertelli had driven the second one and was very depressed; he said, "we have bitten off more than we can chew." How right he was—when I tried it I was horrified; admittedly I was then running a 3½-litre R.R. Bentley, but still it was exceptionally rough and noisy.

Shortly after this Bertelli resigned—I do not think he could ever have had his heart in the idea of major production of saloons, he had achieved so much success and publicity in developing and racing small open sports cars. Although the saloon had been so well received at the Show, in its present state it was obviously not fit for the scale of production we had planned. This created serious problems for us as E. Bertelli had accepted the order to make 100 saloon bodies. I am sure they all realised we had no alternative but to reduce this order and change back to more open sports cars, and we were only too willing to pay for any materials for which they were committed. Although Bertelli was not a Director of the body business, his wife was, so it was inevitable that feelings ran very high. For several months matters were in the hands of the lawyers which was very sad and did nobody any good, except the lawyers. Eventually differences were settled out of court, but naturally I felt rather bitter about the whole affair—especially as Astons were left holding the 2-litre baby. It also meant we had to seek a new body supplier, which was tragic as Harry Bertelli was a real genius at designing the types we needed—they had made 99% of all Aston bodies to this date. They completed 50 saloons for us and 25 long chassis tourers, and we altered our remaining 75 chassis to short chassis that could be fitted with more sporting coachwork. Of these, 25 were fitted with rather attractive drophead coupes by E. D. Abbott Ltd. who were already making a similar body on the little Talbots; at that time, contrary to several accounts, I had absolutely no connection with this firm. I only became involved with them after the war in 1951. We also ordered 50 open 2/4 seater bodies from Abbey Coachworks, Park Royal, West London.

So far as the 2-litre saloons were concerned, there was not much we could do to improve them, other than fit a good deal of sound insulation and an air silencer on the carburettors. It seems incredible that no previous Astons had had air silencers; apart from their acoustic properties they also served as air cleaners, something which surely should have been fitted years before. No doubt the maximum power was slightly reduced however, and I suppose this would have been criticised by the sporting fraternity. Actually on the bench we found there was a drop of 10 bhp at 4500 rpm if the silencer got hot. So far as engine mounting and exhaust silencing were concerned, Claude and I studied all available technical literature on these subjects, and eventually got exceptional results (which were incorporated in "Donald Duck" and the "Atom") from a paper by Maurice Platt of Vauxhalls. In particular the acoustic silencing worked out 100% successful after Claude had found the right frequencies using a tin whistle and french chalk on the exhaust pipe to find the nodal points. Such crude experiments seem strange now in this age of electronics, but we did get the results we wanted.

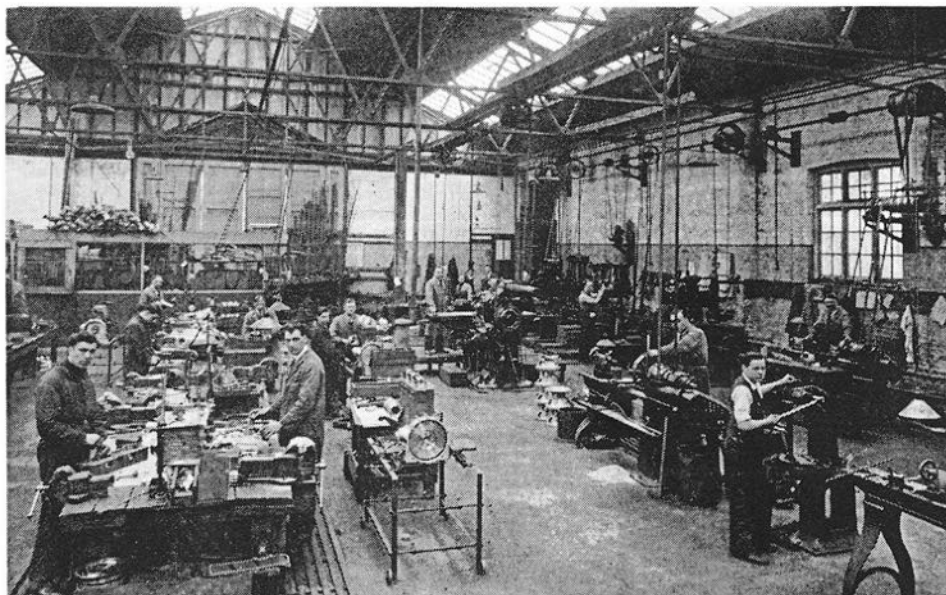
By this time we were convinced that our future chassis frames should consist of welded tubes taken at least to bulkhead

height, and Claude devised the idea of straight sections of square mild steel (for easy welding) with distance formers at right angles to get the body contours—the panelling was then fitted over these resting on T section rubbers. These ideas were patented under his and Aston Martin's name. I do not know whether any of the DB models used these patents, but it did seem a good way of achieving small production of a rigid chassis. The "Atom" was so constructed, as were the bodies of the C type Speed Models. Big producers do not have these problems as their numbers can cover the huge cost of pressed steel tooling. Such tooling for an Abbott estate car rear door alone was quoted at £75,000 in 1960s £s!

We had been able to get the "Atom" completed in 1940, and it had by 1947 run for 100,000 miles using firstly the pre-war 2-litre engine and then one of the prototype push rod engines, both mounted flexibly on mountings developed earlier on "Donald Duck". These gave smoothness and silence better than any previous car made at

Feltham; and we had also proved the rigid tubular chassis and soft springing theory to give outstanding roadholding and comfort in practice.

By 1947, therefore, we were ready technically to produce a completely new Aston. Also, after the continuous war work, our financial position for the first time since 1934 was sound, and we had a better machine shop and equipment than ever before. The Company was now totally mine, all the share capital having been sold to me by my father at a nominal figure. I still hold the receipt dated 23rd October, 1944 for £5! To launch into production was however going to need much more money than I personally could risk, and I could hardly approach my father again after his generosity. Faced with this problem I put an advertisement in the Personal Column of *The Times* under a box number to see if I could find a suitable person who would be interested in participating. Of the several replies I received, that of David Brown really interested me, as here was someone with the



Above: Orderly calm in the engine fitting shop. Below: Chassis erection was a more noisy department.



engineering connections as well as the capital. I therefore approached him and showed him all our new designs, as well as letting him try the "Atom". It was apparent straightaway that he was extremely interested, but in true Yorkshire fashion he negotiated cautiously. Our actual assets, machine tools, etc., at a write down value were worth £21,000, quite apart from any goodwill or the new designs. His meagre offer of £14,000 horrified me; but he did seem the ideal person to take over the Company and develop it into something worthwhile. Having striven for years to establish Aston Martin for the long term, and bearing in mind the future of the enthusiastic employees, after several weeks of haggling I decided I must seize this chance which seemed to offer such great possibilities. Actually we finally settled at a figure of £20,500, with an agreement that Claude Hill and I stay on as Technical Directors. Little did any of us realise then that quite shortly the Lagonda take over would also be upon us, making the whole scene change dramatically. I was saddened to see a recent TV interview with Sir David who, when asked what he got for the £20,000 he paid for Astons, replied, "a few bits and pieces and some rusty tools", or words to that effect; hardly fair comment I think. If such had been the case why his interest in the firm? Not only did he get his value of assets, he also got a promising design, and the enthusiastic team to make it, as was proved so convincingly at Spa in 1948.

What of the personalities and atmosphere at Feltham? My memories of these are chiefly happy ones; in my exalted position I perhaps missed some of the "seamy" side. When we first took over in 1932, my impression was that everything—production, accounts, buying, sales, service, you name it—was run from the general office dominated by Albert Masters, the Company Secretary, who had come from Birmingham with Renwick and Bertelli. No one seemed to have authority but him, even Bertelli held him in awe. This to me seemed to require changing—authority needed delegating to the various departments. It took me a long time,

several years in fact, to achieve this; but I did eventually, and landed myself with being Company Secretary as well as Joint Managing Director.

Although not actually part of the firm, Harry Bertelli was a personality I well remember. He seemed to have a more excitable Italian character than his brother, had a beautiful singing voice, and although rather temperamental was altogether a very likeable person. He spent much of his time chalking full size body drawings on a specially prepared wall, and when all was going well sang opera very lustily. There were occasions when he and Masters clashed over some account or late weekly payment, and then things became really noisy. For contrast one went to the Design Office where Bert Bertelli and Claude Hill held many quiet discussions. Right at the start Bert and I drew up lists of our responsibilities; he had all design and production, and I had sales, service, advertising, and accounts. Both of us had to grapple with Masters at various times in these categories.

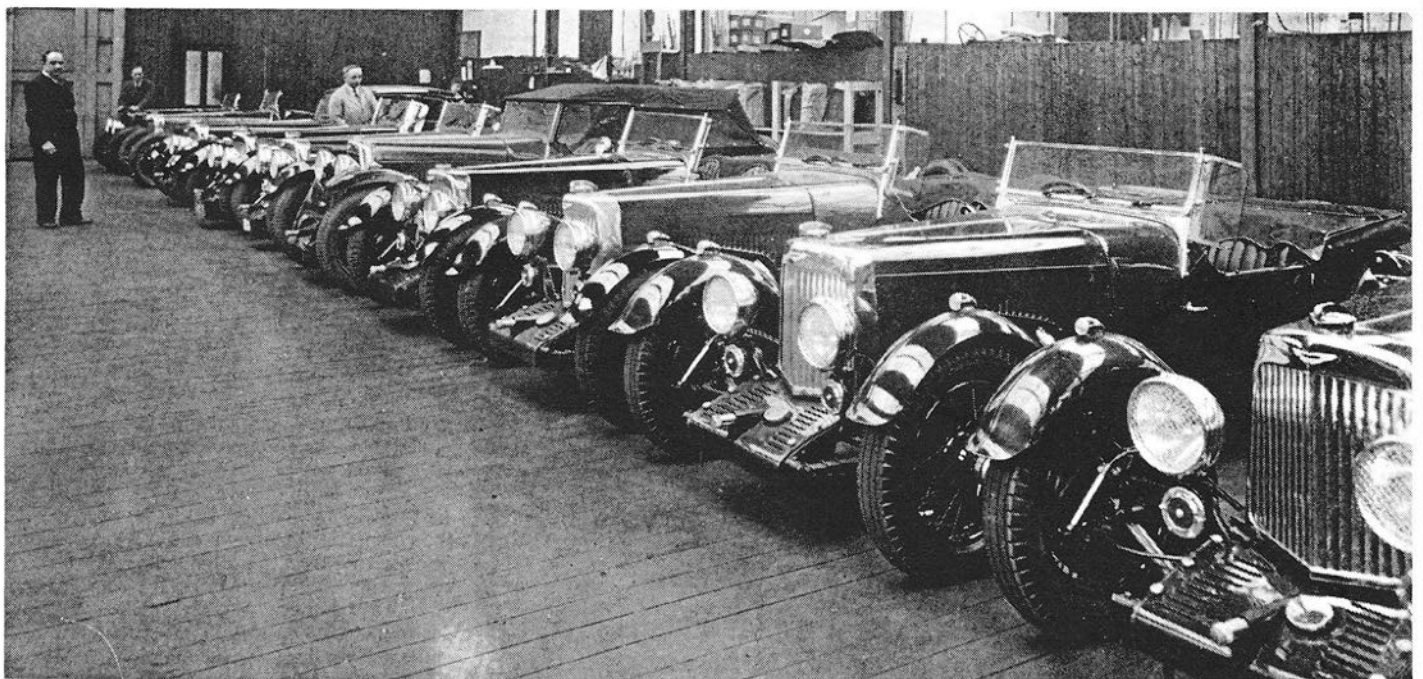
There were several brilliantly skilled men in our employ. Bert knew all of them more intimately than I, but I do particularly remember several. Bill Pate was a toolmaker and a wonderful craftsman, and in charge of inspection. He eventually became Works Manager, and during the war was transferred to Swindon where he held a very important job in aircraft manufacturing. Joe Bestante was chief engine man; he supervised the building and testing of engines and also ran the Experimental Test bed. I think Bertelli valued him very highly. He was at Napier's at Acton during the war, and afterwards came with me to Friary Motors Ltd., but sadly died a few years later. Ted Sleep was the chassis builder, and a marvellous person for devising quick methods of production. When we went on to a bonus system his section always seemed to earn more than anyone else, a fact which on more than one occasion caused friction. I believe he subsequently ran a pub near Staines.

Fred Streather was another brilliant craftsman. He was in charge of all our milling operations, and used to complain

bitterly very often of the cylinder castings having hard sections which caused problems and damage. In 1938, when we were trying to introduce outside machining work, we installed a huge planing machine that Bill Pate and I bought in Nottingham (it weighed 20 tons and had about a 10 foot stroke and took up about half our floor space). Fred was put in charge of it and I think he wondered what he had done to deserve this!

Fred Firr was another brilliant craftsman, the best centre lathe turner I have ever seen. He could get a centre lathe to produce almost anything, and very quickly too. When we went on to war work he was a problem, as being a conscientious objector, he refused anything pertaining to the war effort. As we had an old lathe in the Service Department that was lying idle I moved him on to that, to machine Aston castings for spares when Peace returned. Rather narrow minded it seemed to me, operators in the main machine shop objected to this, although it had no effect on them or the war effort, so he had to leave. I have often wondered what happened to him—I still have a collar stud and some golf tees he made for me.

These were some of the people responsible for the manufacture of the pre-war Astons, and they all got key positions in war work. Finally I must not forget the real "old timers" George and Nobby, who had come from Bamford and Martins at Kensington, been taken over by Renwick and Bertelli, and finally by Aston Martin Ltd. I suppose you would call them labourers—Nobby in the Stores and George as general handyman. Claude Hill did a famous cartoon of the two of them gazing at one hundred cylinder blocks, and Nobby saying, "how the hell can we put this lot away?" After David Brown took over they were both moved to Friary Motors and continued to give yeoman service, Nobby in the Stores, until he died, and George several years longer on our petrol pumps. He was really a wonderful old man, and used to ride, fair weather and foul, each day from Feltham to Old Windsor on a moped; he was always reliable, always on time, always cheerful. There can not be many like him these days.



A batch of newly completed Mark II models await delivery.

(All pictures kindly supplied by Gordon Sutherland from his personal albums).

This article, also supplied by Ian, from 2007 looks at the purchase of Aston Martin from Ford to David Richards, owner of Pro Drive and a number of Middle Eastern Investment Companies.

The Guardian | Monday March 12 2007

Financial

Middle East backers revealed in car enthusiast's buyout of Aston Martin

Prodrive boss leads £450m deal behind luxury brand

Ford forced to sell after last year's £6.6bn losses

David Teather

Details of the Middle Eastern money backing the buyout of Aston Martin emerged yesterday.

Ford is close to agreeing the £450m sale of the classic British car business to a consortium led by the motor enthusiast David Richards and an announcement could be made as early as today.

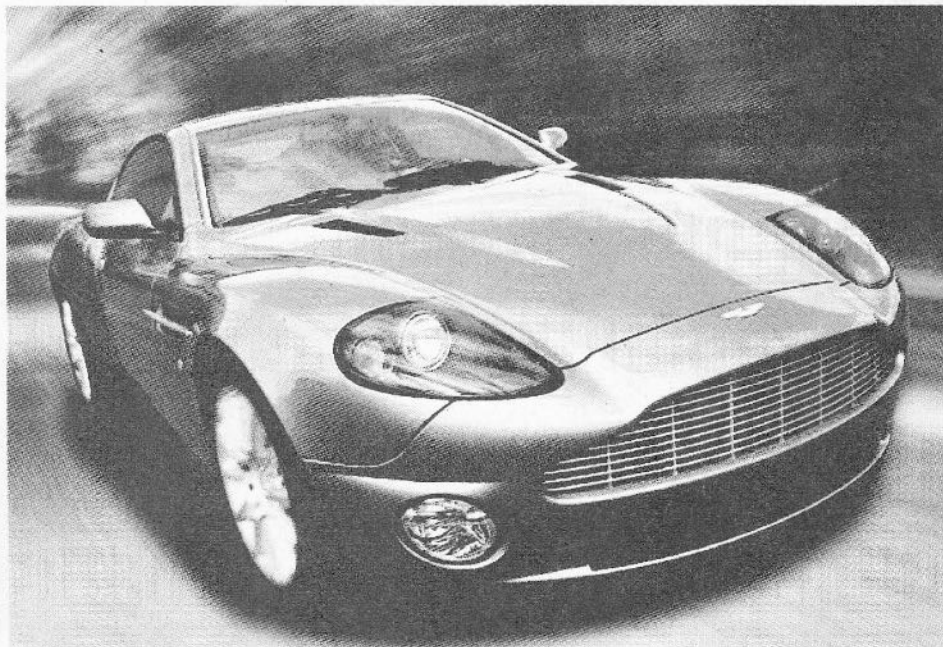
The US auto manufacturer is being forced to sell off the luxury sports car brand in an effort to repair its balance sheet – but will hold on to a share of around 15%.

Ford has been in exclusive negotiations with Mr Richards for the past few weeks. The British businessman has secured backing from, among others, the Kuwaiti firms Investment Dar and Adeem Investment. Another name that has been mentioned as a backer is Naeem Capital, part of an Egyptian investment bank. Mr Richards is also said to have won support from US investors.

Investment funds from the Gulf region are eager to diversify and have been buying up assets in Britain including Madame Tussauds, P&O and Veridian, the main electricity supplier in Northern Ireland. Dubai International Capital owns a \$1bn stake in DaimlerChrysler and Abu Dhabi's Mubadala Development Co owns 5% of Ferrari.

The agreement between Ford and the consortium has been hailed by fans of the quintessentially British car as a great day for British motoring.

Mr Richards, 54, a former accountant,



is the founder of Prodrive, the group that runs Aston Martin's racing team, and has long harboured ambitions to run his own manufacturing operation. He is the former head of the BAR Honda and Benetton formula one teams and he has a private collection of classic Aston Martins. Barring any last minute hitches, he will become Aston Martin chairman.

The Aston Martin chief executive, German born Ulrich Bez, has overseen a remarkable turnaround in the marque's fortunes and is expected to remain at the company. In 1992, production skidded to only 46 cars. Under Mr Bez, it has risen to 7,000 cars last year and the company is in profit. Mr Richards's medium term ambition is to increase that number to 10,000, reports suggest. He also plans to keep building the Aston Martin range, including the Rapide, a new four-door coupe.

Aston Martin has had a long and fruitful association with the James Bond films

– Daniel Craig was behind the wheel of an Aston Martin DBS in *Casino Royale*.

Ford took a controlling stake in Aston Martin in 1987 and acquired full ownership in 1994. It announced plans to sell the company almost six months ago. Ford last year lost \$12.7bn (£6.6bn) and announced plans to lay off 44,000 workers and close 16 plants. Ford could now turn its attention again to the sale of its other two luxury British car-makers, Jaguar and Land Rover.

Mr Richards saw off competition from the private equity group Doughty Hanson and Simon Halabi, the Syrian billionaire.

Aston Martin produced its first car in 1914. The firm was bought by the Yorkshire tractor maker David Brown in 1947. When he sold the business 25 years later it was in poor shape. Several owners followed before Ford bought the business. The company employs 1,700 workers at plants including Gaydon in Warwickshire and Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire.

Invitations

Hants & Berks MC have recently got in touch to invite GMC to a couple of their club nights. On **April 27th**, at The Raven PH in Hook, they are running a tabletop rally. For the uninitiated, a tabletop rally has nothing to do with getting your car onto any furniture, it's just the navigational part of rallying, done in the warm with little or no risk of suffering 'Mal de Nav'. The last tabletop rally we contested with H&BMC, we were clear winners and the committee expect nothing less this time. No pressure then!



Lastly, they are promoting a Touring Assembly on **7th May**. So, if you want to avoid all of the Coronation shenanigans and would like a drive out from Woodley near Reading to the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum near Calne in Wiltshire, this is the event for you.

An Invite - 16th July

The Mini Cooper Register - Thames Valley and the Windsor Forest Group of the TR Register invite us to 'The Thames Valley Tour' – Minis, MINI's, and TR's and classics over 35 years old.

Based in Hook, Hampshire, the event is a gentle tour of the surrounding countryside for only 30 cars. Breakfast and lunch at a quality venue will be provided as well as a detailed road book and a rally plate. All for only £58 for a crew of two. Excellent value I think you will agree!

[Regs and Entry form here.](#)

Out and About - The Walsingham Trial

A Sporting Trial from the 750 MC, held at in Queen Elizabeth Country Park near Buriton. This was a round of several championships and comprised of a total of eight hills which were tackled twice in the morning and again once after lunch. Due to the dry conditions up to the event there was no mud being thrown up just loose dirt and leaves.





Guildford Motor Club Touring Assemblies

These events have no competitive element and are intended as an opportunity for you to drive your 'Pride and Joy' through picturesque parts of Surrey and Hampshire with other like-minded enthusiasts.

The Start and Finish of both the events will be local to Guildford and with a halfway halt. Each event will take a different route.

You will be given an easy to follow tulip road book to take you along our carefully designed meandering routes. If you have never used this sort of instruction before, help is on hand at the Start.

We welcome any type of car; old and new, petrol electric or diesel, sports estate or saloon.

These events are low cost and fun for all the family and you don't even have to be a member! (But we would like you to join!)

For more details visit our website : www.guildfordmotorclub.org.uk



The Printemps Touring Assembly 14th May

David Roscoe Memorial Dimanche Tour 20th August

Out and About - Vintage Bentley Generations Day at Goodwood

This very relaxed track day run by Vintage Bentley (based near Liss) aimed to let younger Bentley enthusiasts to experience and even drive the cars. The cars were driven at a more sedate pace negating the need to wear helmets. A thoroughly enjoyable day in spring sunshine!



On behalf of the “Friends of Mike Hawthorn”, a private track day at Goodwood is being organised on July 5th to commemorate Britain’s first Grand Prix World Champion Mike Hawthorn’s first victory at the French Grand Prix on that exact day 70 years ago.

The track day is limited to 60 cars and includes lunch and refreshments. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis, and all cars of a type that Mike drove are welcome, both road and race cars.

Mike Hawthorn Memorial Track Day

To celebrate the Seventieth Anniversary of Mike’s First Grand Prix Victory

Goodwood Circuit 5th July 2023



Mike Hawthorn was Britain’s first Formula One World Champion. The flamboyant racer drove for Ferrari, taking the World Championship title in 1958. He also drove Jaguar’s with great success, winning many times in his famous MK1, and in ‘D’ Types at Le Mans, and Reims. Mike retired from racing after becoming World Champion in October 1958.

Sadly, just three months later, he died in a road car accident. Hawthorn won his first Grand Prix on the 5th of July 1953, driving a Ferrari 500 at Reims, France.

Any queries, please contact Michael Ballard at msbassociates@ntlworld.com

Out and About - GRRC Sprint

Variety at the Goodwood Spring Sprint



Out and About - MotorSport Magazine Track Day Goodwood



Out and About - HRDC Track Day Goodwood



From the Slide Collection

Another delve into the Slide Collection, this time at Beaulieu in April 1970. The car at the top on the right is a Crossley from 1935. Crossley was based in Manchester and manufactured cars from 1904 to 1938. The coach in the middle on the left bears the same name as the photographer whose pictures these are.



Motorfilms Quarterly DVDs

A series of DVD's has been donated to the club which form the first twenty volumes of the Motorfilms Quarterly series.

Each DVD contains series of historical films made independently, by manufacturers and suppliers. They are definitely from another era! They really do make enjoyable viewing.

The full list of DVDs is available on the website only via this [link](#),

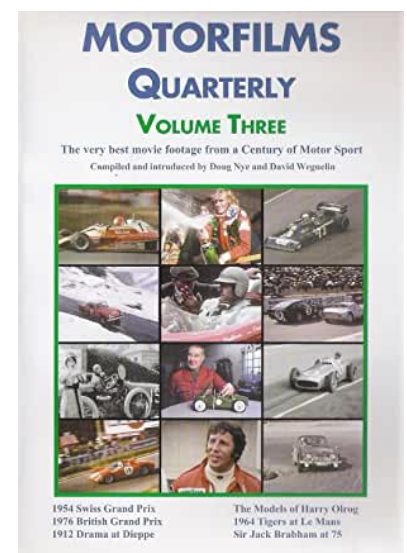
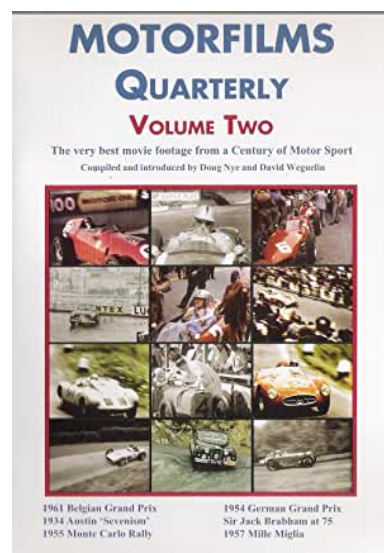
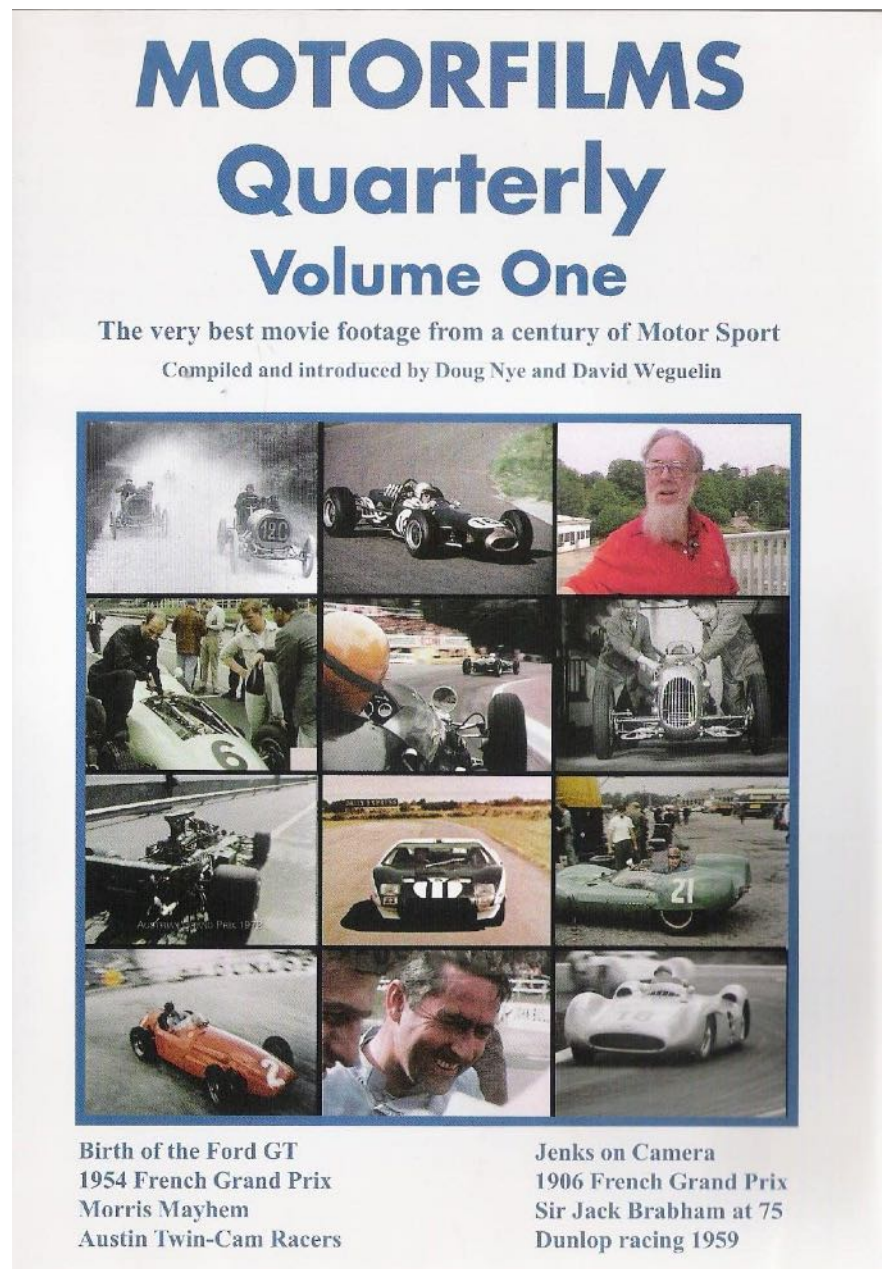
or use this: <https://tinyurl.com/ad4nez2m>

As you will see from the list the films cover a wide range of motoring related topics. Racing and Rallying are well covered along with drivers and personalities and of course some period oddities!

Individual DVDs are available to hire from the Club to members only.

DVD's can be collected from the Librarian at both Club and Pub nights. Hiring cost will be £1 per month with a £10 deposit.

We think we have sorted your winters evening viewing!



GMC - Goodies

The following GMC Goodies are available from Mark Feeney, just phone him or speak to him at Clubnights

Car Badges (Enamel)	£30.00
Windscreen Sticker	£1.50
Club Badge (Self Adhesive)	£1.00
GMC Leather Key Ring	£1.50
GMC Mugs	£2.00
GMC Polo Shirts (White)	£15.00
GMC Sweat Shirts (Green)	£20.00
Romers, Clear or White plastic	£6.00
GMC Ice Scrapers	£2.00

GMC - Membership Fees

Full Membership	£15.00
Family Membership	£20.00
Associate Membership	£2.50
Pro-rata Membership for new members joining after 1st July	
Full Membership	£7.50
Family Membership	£10.00

Website and Social Media

Website:

www.guildfordmotorclub.org.uk

facebook:

www.facebook.com/guildfordmotorclub

instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/guildfordmotorclub>

twitter:

https://twitter.com/guildford_motor

Hamish Roscoe's YouTube channel is [here](#).

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