



# Members Newsletter

April 2022  
Issue 2

## Welcome

BY JEFF COOPE, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Welcome to the second edition of the British Motor Museum Members Newsletter.

Since our first Members Newsletter we continue to live in uncertain times. As I write, dreadful events are unfolding in Ukraine which we had all hoped would never be seen again in Europe. At the British Motor Museum we express our solidarity with the people of Ukraine and hope for a speedy resolution to such an unnecessary war.

On a more positive note, the UK's Covid 19 restrictions have now been lifted and I am pleased that so many of you have made good use of your Membership. We have held a 'Museum Late' event each month including two quiz nights, an evening focused on our temporary exhibition 'Factor Us In' and an exclusive Members-only evening with the BRM P15 F1 car which included a chat with the people who built it - Hall & Hall. The most recent event, 'Collections Centre After Dark' attracted over 100 guests including Members, for a fascinating look around the building, a tour of the vehicle workshops and delicious ploughman's supper; it proved to be a very popular event.

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## Welcome continued

It has been great to open the Museum during the evenings and now the brighter weather is upon us, we will continue the evening format with the Gaydon Gatherings. These run throughout the summer on the second Tuesday of the month - but outside of course! We also have a full season of shows, events and activities for you to enjoy, our largest programme ever, so I do hope you can use your Membership and come to 'your place' this summer. You are guaranteed the warmest of welcomes when you do.

Best wishes

*Jeff*



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

12 April  
Gaydon Gathering

29 April  
Museum on the Move  
Members only exclusive

7-8 May  
Gaydon Land Rover Show

10 May  
Gaydon Gathering

5 June  
National Metro & Mini Show

11-12 June  
Classic & Vintage Commercial  
Show

14 June  
Gaydon Gathering

Members and Premium Members benefit from FREE entry to ALL shows - but pre-booking is still required.

[Click here for a full list of WHAT'S ON and to book tickets.](#)

## 1927 Leyland 8 - clutch replacement

BY PAUL GILDER, WORKSHOP MANAGER

When your average modern car needs a new clutch, it's half a day at the local garage and a new clutch kit from the manufacturer. Not so easy with older cars! The Leyland 8 came into the workshop as it was time for a full inspection. On this particular car the starter motor drives through the gearbox and clutch to the engine, so signs of a slipping clutch show during the starting procedure as well as while driving. And the signs were there.

The most common way to change a clutch is to remove the gearbox. For the Leyland 8, however, it proved more straightforward to take out the 7 litre, 8 cylinder engine, rather than the gearbox and rear axle! To do this, much of the front end bodywork had to be removed, along with radiator and all engine ancillaries. No five minute job!

With the engine out of the car, the clutch was removed and inspected. We found the friction material to be worn but all other parts to be satisfactory. The clutch was relined to our specification by a specialist supplier. Consideration needed to be made of the type of friction material, as well as the thickness: too thin and it would wear out quickly, too thick and there would be clearance issues when operating. This would only become apparent on completion of the job and, as you can appreciate, any miscalculation would lead to the whole process having to be done again.

The engine is now back in the car and awaiting a test. That will have to wait, however, as while we had the engine out we took the opportunity to inspect the steering box and discovered that part of the steering gear needs to be re-manufactured. But that's a story for another day...



## Cultural contrasts

BY STEPHEN LAING, HEAD OF COLLECTIONS

Those of you who are of a certain age must surely have posed by the Reliant Regal van from 'Only Fools and Horses' during a visit to the Museum. It's one of the handful of vans genuinely used in the TV series and is owned by TV memorabilia collector, Scott Harrington. More recently Scott gave us a call to say he was on the hunt for not one but two more pieces from the show. And now they're here!

The first is Del Boy's 1980 Ford Capri 2 litre Ghia, in startling green paint with tiger-print interior and a variety of tasteless accoutrements. No wonder Rodney nicknamed it the 'Pratmobile'. To complete the scene, the Capri's backdrop is the actual red garage door from the Trotters' lock-up. Much of Bristol doubled up for Peckham in the filming and the garages used on set in the series were recently replaced by the council so Scott added 'No. 22' to his collection. "Crème de la menthe" as Del Boy would say.

In complete contrast, one of the Museum's most important artworks has recently returned from a spell at the MK Gallery in Milton Keynes. "Bomber Construction" by Dame Laura Knight was one of 160 pieces that featured in the largest retrospective of her work in over half a century. Knight is particularly known for capturing the human form, for example at the ballet or in the circus, during an 80 year career. In the Second World War she was engaged as a war artist and Bomber Construction depicts the manufacture of Stirling bombers at Longbridge. The focus of the work is Trudie Freckleton, one of the many women that were employed in the war effort. She notably became the first woman supervisor at Austin.

At over three metres by two, it was amongst the largest paintings in the exhibition. Thanks to the team at Momart, it has been safely reinstalled at the Museum and can be found in the 'Making British Cars' exhibit under the mezzanine. Do check it out the next time you visit – it's a fascinating moment in time.



## Archive overview

Archive display cabinet

BY IMOGEN WATTS, SENIOR ARCHIVIST

Since joining the Archive team as Senior Archivist just before Christmas, I've been getting to know the archive collections and the amazing gems within. Did you know that the archive collections cover over 3,500 metres of shelving, with a further 850 metres of photographic and film collections? The collections range from production ledgers to paint colour samples, posters, and even factory canteen recipe cards, as well as over a million images.

Before joining the Archive team here, I was most recently working for Gloucestershire County Council in their Records Management team, and my previous experience also includes the Wordsworth Trust and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Having worked from home for 18 months during the pandemic, being in the Museum is quite a change of pace – one that I'm very much enjoying!

One of my favourite ways of getting to know the archive collections is by putting together a selection of items for our display cabinet in the Museum, which we update with a new theme each month. The theme for March was Women in Industry, and we focussed on two main stories: the Lucas women's strike of 1934, which saw changes made to the "Bedaux" payment system; and the Austin and Lucas training programmes which included pamphlets aimed at girls



Imogen, with the rest of the Collections Team

leaving school, to give them ideas about the different career options available.

I can also give you details of our upcoming display cabinet themes. For April, the theme is Mini, focussing on pop culture special editions. Then for May, we'll be sharing the story of the 1996 Land Rover Calvert Centenary Expedition in Australia. And in June, we'll commemorate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee by looking back at the Lucas company's celebrations for the coronation in 1953. Do look out for the display cabinet when you're in the Museum, it's on the left hand side of the Welcome Gallery. We'll be posting a Document of the Month blog online each month to highlight our favourites from each display cabinet theme, so keep an eye out for those.

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The Reading Room

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There are many other ways to get involved with the archive collections. The Reading Room is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm, for access to original archive material and the reference library. The reference library consists of an extensive range of books relating to the Motor Industry; please do come in and browse the bookshelves when you're next in the Museum. Access to original archive documents is by appointment, please email [history@britishmotormuseum.co.uk](mailto:history@britishmotormuseum.co.uk) if there is something you would like to come and view; we'd be delighted to assist you.

For our photographic collections, we have a wide selection of images online on [www.motorgraphs.com](http://www.motorgraphs.com), and you can also order prints of a variety of archive images through the Museum's online shop.

And for all you classic car owners, did you know that we offer Heritage Certificates which provide a certified copy of information from the original factory ledger, showing your car's specification as it left the production line. You can find out more at [www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk/archive/heritage-certificates](http://www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk/archive/heritage-certificates).



Archive shelving

## BRM preview evening

BY STEPHEN LAING, HEAD OF COLLECTIONS

The BRM marque has been having a bit of renaissance recently, thanks to John, Paul, Nick and Simon Owen, respectively BRM owner Sir Alfred Owen's son and grandsons. The Museum, of course, has its own link to BRM, with the unique Rover-BRM gas turbine car in the collection.

The Museum was delighted to exhibit the first of a new series of the much-fabled BRM V16 Formula One car from the 1950s. The P15 V16 was an extraordinary piece of British engineering and the new cars are exact recreations of the original. Making use of unallocated P15 chassis numbers, the first of just three was commissioned by John Owen to mark the 70th anniversary of BRM's foray into Formula One.

In February, Members were treated to an exclusive preview of the car before it went on show to the public. Paul and Nick chatted about the background to the project and the father and son team of Rick and Rob Hall, who had turned the idea into reality, told the amazing story of recreating such an iconic racing car from scratch.

Members were able to have a really intimate look at the BRM, including with its body panels removed, accompanied by Rick and Rob's unrivalled insight into the technology of the car. The breath-taking V16 engine alone has 36,000 parts! A real privilege whether you admired the car's beauty of style or intricacy of technology.



# Meet the Museum Explainers

BY CLAIRE BROADER AND JIM ELLISON

Our names are Jim Ellison and Claire Broader and we are the British Motor Museum's Explainers. Jim has a background in retail, delivering a high standard of customer service. He worked for Austin Reed for 26 years, with the last 12 as a manager in Oxford. A lifelong classic car fan, he is also the proud owner of a 1972 Triumph Spitfire and a 1990 TVR S, which has just enough room in the back for his two Standard Poodles.

Having achieved a BA (Hons) in Drama at the University of Manchester and then gaining postgraduate qualifications in Heritage Interpretation and Education, Claire worked as a secondary English teacher for a number of years. Both of us joined the Museum in 2016 as volunteers and when a position for a new Museum Explainer opened up, we jumped at the chance to get involved!

So, where to start describing our job? Initially employed as costumed explainers, our role involves bringing the collection to life as characters from different periods of motoring history. So you might find Jim on the Museum's Time Road as William the Edwardian Chauffeur, tending to his lady's Albion A6 motorcar. Or you might meet Claire as cockney Mavis the 1920s London bus clippie and hear her stories of life on the road.

During the school holidays and at weekends, you will find us out in the Museum delivering hands-on, interactive tours to families and facilitating family activities in our Learning Spaces. We also work with school groups of different ages, delivering interactive tours, running remote controlled car sessions, LEGO® workshops and even crazy science shows!

Finally, one of the most rewarding parts of our role is working with SEND groups of all ages, which may include school groups, Dementia cafés and other community groups. We are so proud that we are able to bring the Museum to life and ensure that it is accessible for everyone.



## Volunteer news

BY SONJA DOSANJH, VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR

Our Volunteer Guide project started when the Collections Centre opened in February 2016 and the involvement of the 80 Volunteers has been vital to allowing visitors access to the collection. In fact, we could not open the building without them.

So successful have they been in welcoming visitors, giving tours and interpreting the collection, that it was decided to introduce Volunteers onto the main Museum floor this spring, to enhance the visitor experience.

This has meant our existing team of 80 have had to absorb details of many more vehicles and, for me, has resulted in a recruitment campaign to increase the team by 20-30 people.

The process starts with a Role Profile posted on the website, this generates application forms, leading to an informal chat over coffee with the Curator and myself. An induction follows for those chosen, a handbook given, uniforms and name badges ordered, a "walk and talk" through the collection with Stephen, Head of Collections, and Cat, Curator, and the new team are ready to start.

This month we welcomed 18 new Volunteers, who will be split between the Museum and Collections Centre. So, please say hello when you visit.

We hope that whatever personal motivations and goals are, we can help to fulfil aspirations for volunteering through good quality training, excellent support and the opportunity to make a difference by sharing old skills and learning new ones. And, we hope, making new friendships. Giving time and skill to the Museum must be enjoyable for the Volunteer; that in turn gives enjoyment and education to all who visit the Museum while helping to preserve and protect the heritage and legacy of this great place.

Thank you to all the Volunteers who give time to the community and to us at the British Motor Museum.



Volunteer 5 year service awards

## Volunteer restoration news

BY JOHN RATHBONE, VOLUNTEER

When the Collections Centre was opened in 2016, a review of all the exhibits in the Museum collection was carried out. This review identified display engines and chassis that would be of interest but needed to be repaired or cleaned. Today, a number of those engines are on display in the Collections Centre and many have been restored by volunteers.

These 12 engines include an Austin-Rover S series single cylinder development unit, revised from the E series used in the Maxi and Allegro and which was probably used for combustion chamber development.

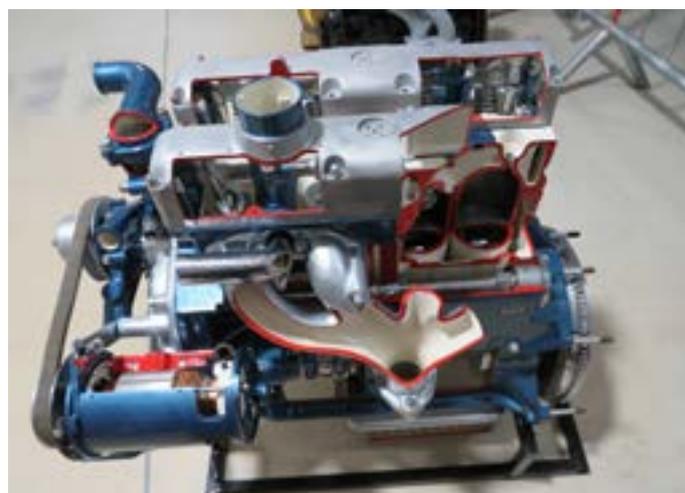
There is an interesting version of the Riley 2.5 litre, which shows its many internal parts. It was fitted to the RM model and later to the Pathfinder. With twin camshafts it was quite advanced for its time. In contrast, many cars up to the 1950s used side valve engines and another of the refurbished engines would have been found in a Triumph Mayflower. Performances have improved a lot since then, with this engine producing only 38bhp from a 1247cc block.

The latest project is an Austin Devon chassis which started life in 1948 when the Longbridge Apprentices were given the task of producing an exhibit promoting the new car. The Devon and the Somerset that followed would be some of the last cars still

employing a chassis, as this was the start of the change to monocoque construction.



Riley engine before and after restoration



This chassis would travel around Britain extolling the virtues of the new model but also showcasing the engineering capabilities of the apprentices at the Longbridge factory.



The Austin chassis on arrival

In fact one of our volunteers, Cameron, remembers seeing it on display in Edinburgh in his younger days.

The restoration work has been separated into three categories:

1. Brakes, steering, suspension and wheels.
2. Chassis, drive shaft and rear axle.
3. Clutch, engine, gearbox and exhaust.

The general condition considering its age and storage is what you would expect, with no serious rust. The main problem being the chrome of which there is a lot which is now

flaking off and none of it restorable. Cleaning and painting is underway and a challenge is to match the chassis' original existing metallic finish paint.



## Museum on the Move - an exclusive event for Members and Premium Members

Taking place on Friday 29 April, this is a chance to immerse yourself in the sights, the sounds and the smells of almost 100 years of motoring history at our Members only 'Museum on the Move' event showcasing a selection of cars from the collection.

The event will start with drinks and canapés in the Museum, before we step outside and introduce you to the cars. Not only is this a chance to see some of the cars from the collection running, but you'll also have the chance to take a ride! It's an event that's guaranteed to provide Members with a unique insight into our collections and the people behind them.

**BOOK NOW** - bookings close on 25 April. To see a full list of the shortlisted cars as well as for more information about the event and how to book [click here](#).



## Making the most of your Membership

Our vision when launching British Motor Museum Membership was to provide Members with new opportunities to access and engage with the Museum's collections and the people responsible for looking after them. As a charity, we are incredibly grateful for the financial support that your Membership provides and we're keen to provide plenty of opportunities for you to extract value from your Membership in return.

It has been wonderful to see so many of you enjoying our indoor winter events. Well done to all those who attended the winter quiz nights, although from the feedback we've received, it seems that Chef's treacle sponge was the unanimous winner!

Last month's Collections Centre Late proved to be very popular with over 100 attendees, including many Members and Premium Members, all of whom seemed to particularly enjoy the restoration briefings held inside the workshop, an area usually off limits to the visiting public.

The exclusive BRM preview evening was a very special evening, providing a chance to get 'up close and personal' with a fabulous vehicle and the team responsible for its creation.

As we move into the outdoor show season, we'd like to remind you that both Members

and Premium Members benefit from free entry to ALL shows - but pre-booking your visit is still required as this will help us to provide a better experience to everyone attending.

The Premium Members Lounge will be available at the following events:

- Gaydon Land Rover Show, 7 & 8 May
- National Metro & Mini Festival, 5 June
- Classic & Vintage Commercial Show, 12 June
- BMC Leyland Show, 10 July
- Old Ford Rally, 17 July
- Retro Truck Show, 11 September

Premium Members, along with one guest can access the lounge on these days, where complimentary refreshments will be served. Please remember that Show entry fees apply for guests and show tickets should be booked in advance to guarantee entry on the day and to benefit from the advance booking discount.

Whilst on the subject of making the most of your Membership, please don't forget to scan your Membership card to receive your Membership discount when visiting the Museum Cafe and Gift Shop. We are unable to apply this retrospectively so don't miss out!