

*Issue 165 - Autumn 2021*

# *Cut & thrust*



*The Magazine of the  
Sunbeam Rapier Owners Club*



## Local Meetings

**Area 1:** South West. Malcolm Fletcher (Call 01626 779284).

**Area 7:** Chilterns. 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at The Olde Leather Bottle in Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP3 8QQ. Combined with SAOC but all Rootes members welcome. Contact Ron Atherton on 01525 221943.

**Local Area Officers please send details of your local meetings to [editor@sunbeamrapier.co.uk](mailto:editor@sunbeamrapier.co.uk) so that we can add them to the list above. Thanks.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE LOCAL MEETINGS MAY BE AFFECTED BY COVID-19.**



SROC WEB SITE...

**sunbeamrapier.co.uk**

*Webmasters: Roger Hembury and Glen Mason*



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### **DATA PROTECTION ACT, GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Club holds computerised records of membership details, as provided by individual members and is managed in accordance with the U.K. Data Protection Act and the latest General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) principles. These details enable the club to have the Cut & Thrust magazine sent by post to members, or to contact members by e-mail or telephone if such data has been provided. The mailing distribution list data (comprising membership number, name and postal address only) is securely sent to The Lavenham Press who print and distribute the magazine by post. We also maintain a database of all extant and non-extant cars with the associated owner details as supplied. This is only used for historical and statistical purposes for use within the club. We do not pass club members details onto any 3<sup>rd</sup> party, including sister or related clubs.

The data is held securely on a database that only certain designated officials have access to (via a user name and password) in order to carry out their duties as a club official. Which individuals, for the purpose of running the club, have access to that data is controlled by the web master and/or their designated representative who must be a committee member. A copy of the data we hold on any individual can always be obtained by that individual by making a request to the web master. If a member leaves the club we retain their details for historical and archive purposes, but should a resigning member wish to have all their details erased they can request this by applying to the web master.

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D J Cox	Gillingham, Kent	Series III
Will Franklin	Reading	Fastback Alpine
Paul Gordon	Norfolk	Series IIIA
Graham Hunt	Salisbury	Series IIIA
Ed McAllister	London	Fastback Rapier
Gerry McKee	Dunmurry, Antrim	Series IIIA
Joe Norman	Glasgow	Series III
Eric Schofield	Barrow-in-Furness	Fastback Rapier
Lee Scott	Alfreton	No Car Yet
Ernest Stewart	Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, Eire	Fastback Rapier

**Please send articles for the Winter Edition to [editor@sunbeamrapier.co.uk](mailto:editor@sunbeamrapier.co.uk) by 15<sup>th</sup> November. Articles received after this date may be held over for the next edition.**

**Cover picture: Freddie Flintoff with Malcolm Fletcher's convertible (see page 34). Photo by Malcolm Fletcher.**

## *Chairman's Rich Mixture*

This magazine gives a super account of SROC happenings over the summer months, with events held in Derby, in Somerset, in London and still to come on the 19<sup>th</sup> September at RACT in the Midlands. Plus, we were invited to join the Alpines at Thrupton for their National and of course for those just wanting to see interesting places you could check out the oddities on "I-Spy Mysteries on Routes". On his way to Thrupton Ralph Dalton took his convertible back to park alongside the Book of Bentley mentioned in C&T 163. I must say that I have been somewhat disappointed to the response to I-Spy, so will drop it from this edition.



*357RPJ "Georgina" parked by the "Book of Bentley"*

*Rapiers mingle with Alpines on the tarmac at Thrupton's SAOC National Rally. L-R Ivan Martingale's Series IV, John Lockyer's Series IIIA and Ralph's Series III. SROC member Mike Biddulph flew in with his classic Cessna!*



On a personal level, my convertible 775POO has been off the road awaiting some attention to her engine but the 1960 coupe 2926MK that I originally found and restored back in the 80s has come into its own this summer; what a lovely machine! On a 500-mile round trip and tour of Derbyshire she gave one spot of bother in heavy rain on the way up; her wiper arms have single screwed tips to them and the driver's side one came loose. The rain was so torrential, I could not get out to investigate, so continued flipping them on and off just to survive. When I eventually stopped the repair took seconds; must put some Loctite on that screw!

Following on from my articles on other former Rootes works drivers, I discovered that Paddy Hopkirk lives about five miles away from me. So, I decided to research his years on the team and show him the article for his approval, hopefully gaining a few extra personal comments. Well, I wasn't disappointed, what a super chap he is and he took the time to read the article and phone me for a chat. As I write this, I am hoping to meet him shortly and will tell you all more in the future. I only recall Paddy attending one previous Rootes event and that was in the earliest days of the classic car movement.



*I took this 1985 photo at a Ryton reunion and Paddy (in sunglasses) is talking to Don Pither. Note the Talbot ambulance in the background as the factory was still in full swing in those days. The ambulance would be collectable now!*

Ken Sparkes has stood down from handling all the reproduced spares sales and at the moment the items are in my garage. This means we have an opening on the Committee (not necessarily to take on Ken's role). Do please have a think about joining us in planning and being active within our club. Up until the pandemic we met 3 or 4 times a year in the Midlands; we have successfully moved to Zoom meetings and think we will go forward with a mix of the two. As more people seem reluctant to drive their ageing machines longer distances we want to promote localised events where you can meet each other and share experiences. This means we need feet on the ground and ideas from across the country, with Rootes Round Britain kicking off this idea back in 2019. Phone or email me if you have the enthusiasm to join us or have ideas – Neil Lamond 01494 774996, neillamond@outlook.com.

We are hoping to plan a gathering in the Bournemouth area next September. I am also seeking to arrange a visit to the Mosquito Museum (just off the M25 near London Colney) next Spring plus Ralph Dalton is seeking to organise a private visit to a 60 car collection near Farnham in Hampshire. Can your region come up with a similar idea? If you fancy putting your name for any of the above events, let me know. I am very keen on cross co-operation with other Rootes car owners, check out and see if others in your area are keen to team up – let me know how you get on. Once a month a few of us in the Chilterns meet local SAOC members for a drink.

Neil Lamond  
Treasurer and Chairman

## ***RAF Battle of Britain Bunker Rootes Run***



17<sup>th</sup> July 2021 was one of those scorching hot days and a group of local Rootes owners had put their names down for an organised trip out. My convertible was off the road at the time, but in the event, I was rather happy to use the hardtop (2926MK) and keep the sun off me. The photo above shows the first three starters that met at The Crown pub, Ley Hill, near Chesham. Leading in the photo is Chris Hayward's superb Gazelle convertible (an original twin-carb model), followed by Series III a car I owned and restored back in the 80s and bought back from Chris Lee last year. Just in view behind mine is Sean Joyce's lovely Series IV Alpine sports car.



*Five Rootes Audax cars and thirty Lamborghinis, oh dear where to park?*



*With the Lambos gone, Mike Langley tries his hand at some doughnuts on departing the Ace Café carpark! (Photo: Ralph Dalton)*

We left Ley Hill at 8.30am and headed 20 miles into London to join others at the famous Ace Café on the North Circular Road. We arrived there as planned at 9.30am only to find the car park already full of Lamborghinis. Three Rapiers had just sneaked in (Ralph Dalton in his Series III convertible, Stephen Blackburn in his lovely blue Fastback Alpine and Eloise Robinson in her well known green Fastback. The gate wardens did let us in on the promise that there were only six in total. Then Mike Langley arrived; he speaks the local lingo and got in no problem! Following some nice coffee (Ralph took advantage of a superb “full English”), we all looked at our cars as well as at the Lambos.

At 10.30am we headed off in convoy to the RAF Battle of Britain bunker HQ at Uxbridge about 7 miles away. The local traffic was now bad and we were soon split up but all made it on time for our private tour booked at 11.30am. We also met up there with Geoff Campbell and his one family-owned Hillman Hunter, so 13 were ready for the tour.

I cannot recommend enough a visit to this unique site in Uxbridge. It is little known and doesn't seem to get many visitors, those making the effort will be taken into a WW2 underground bunker unknown to the Germans during the conflict. Here the very heads of the armed forces teamed up to defeat the Nazi threat in the skies above our island. Both the King and Winston Churchill visited to see at first-hand how battles were developing and being countered by our brave RAF heroes. You will get a sense of the tension, the dread and the relief from a tour that lasts an hour. It is 76 steps down with no disabled access, but was lovely and cool on the hottest day of the year thus far. Once back on the surface we headed for the café and light refreshments.



*The foot of Kop Hill road in the Chilterns and a selection of Rootes finest wait to try their hand.....*

In the afternoon we took a nice countryside drive out to Buckinghamshire and the lovely hillsides of the Chilterns. Close to the Prime Minister's country retreat at Chequers nestles Princes Risborough, a small village that in the 1920s hosted regular hill climb events on its famous Kop Hill, an almost straight half mile road rising from the valley below. The idea in the day was to see how fast you could reach the top, according to Wikipedia the record is some 22 secs, which for a car 100 years ago was amazing. A weekend in mid-September is now set aside to emulate those events and great fun it is too. Nowadays speed gives way to showmanship, as veteran cars with Edwardian clad ladies and gents puff up the hill followed by supercars leaving rubber trails on the tarmac; nobody is now timed.

Neil Lamond

## ***Editorial***

My thanks for all the contributions for this issue - please keep them coming.

With more events happening we should have some great articles to come in future issues.

LATE NEWS: there will be some editorial in November's Practical Classics (due out in October) about this magazine.

Tim Sanders  
Editor



## **Graham Robson 1936 - 2021**

It is sad to report that Graham Robson passed away in August. He was well known on the classic car scene from its inception in the early 1980s. He was a prolific author of books and articles on the subject and his knowledge encyclopaedic. He had a great talent to speak over Tannoy systems at car shows and events; Kop Hill climb this September will sorely miss his engaging tones.



*A young Graham Robson clocks in whilst co-driving a privately entered Series II Rapier WVK1.*

Throughout the early 1960s Graham had strong links to Rootes, for a period working for them in the engineering department and picked to co-drive on at least two works team entered rallies (the 1961 RAC International and a Monte Carlo).

In 2008 Graham wrote "Rootes Maestros" helped in part by our own Tim Sutton. Several of our members have fond memories of talking to Graham with him always being extremely helpful. I am so pleased to learn that Graham was doing what he loved best almost to the end – exciting the pulse of motor transport history. Well done Graham, your commentaries, books and articles have enthralled countless thousands over the years.



Neil Lamond  
SROC Chairman

## ***SROC Visits The Great British Car Journey – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021, Ambergate Derbyshire***

SROC member Steve Street came up with the idea of a meet at this new exhibition on the outskirts of Derby. The Committee decided it was an idea we could sponsor and so offered free entry to any Rootes car and owner who made it to join us outside by 11.00am on the morning. In the end ten vehicles were lined up (Series Rapiers, Fastbacks and H120s, two Hillman Super Minx estates and a Humber Sceptre).



The owner and creator of the museum (Richard Usher) personally took time out to welcome us all and give us a briefing on what to expect. We can certainly recommend it to you all; take time and listen to the headsets that take you on the journey over the motoring years of Britain. In excess of 100 cars are well displayed and you can walk round them and put your head through the open windows. Smell the aroma, recall the dashboard from anything from an Allegro to a Triumph Toledo (I owned one in the early 70s and had forgotten it completely), and see the velour seats of the 80s. Visit the special Rootes section and see the Moors murder trial judge's Humber, see Elton John's Bentley and the nurses retirement Mini that she only got to drive 3000 miles before sadly dying; it still has the plastic seat covers! In the main these are all unrestored cars, time capsules of family motoring as we remember it.



After the visit and some coffee we took a touring route to Chatsworth farm shop for a spot of ice cream and afternoon tea. Steve had managed to find some uphill hairpin bends to challenge the steering on our 50-60 year old cars or should I say 60-70 year old bodies! All great fun with some smashing cars creating a sight and most of all, promoting the Rootes heritage.



There is a lot to see and do in this area and it is well worth a few days staycation.

Neil Lamond

## ***Paddy Hopkirk MBE: his life at Rootes 1959-1962***

Fortunately, I discovered that Paddy lives very near me and I managed to find his address and contact him. He generously read my original draft article and helped me personalise it a bit more with some “special” recollections. His wife has just had a hip replacement and he has been rushed off his feet lately doing everything, and of course the dog always needs walking!

Born Belfast 14<sup>th</sup> April 1933, Paddy’s first drive was in an invalid carriage at the age of 9, later moving to a motor cycle and sidecar, and then owning an Austin 7 “Chummy” tourer in which he participated in his first rally. He then upgraded to rallying VW beetles as he worked on an assembly line building VW kit beetles in Dublin. Paddy developed an interest in motorsport and scored a victory at Cairncastle hill climb in 1953, following which he entered a couple of “Circuit of Ireland” rallies, becoming the most successful Irish rally driver in 1955 and taking a class win in a Triumph TR2. Standard Motor Company took notice of this feat and offered him a factory drive in a Standard Ten for the RAC Rally in March 1956. For the Dutch Tulip Rally that May, he campaigned a Standard Eight to a highly creditable 3<sup>rd</sup> place, winning the Circuit of Ireland that year in a TR3. However, Standard fell out with the young Hopkirk when he wrecked an engine for them in the 1958 French Alpine Rally.

The door was open for a place in the Rootes Works Team and following the 1959 Monte in which Paddy co-drove a Riley 1.5, Norman Garrad approached him in the Metropol Hotel and Paddy couldn’t say “yes” enough times. In his 2005 book, Paddy described Norman Garrad as “next to God”. He initially picked up a drive in a works Series I Hillman Husky (KGD835) in that year’s East African Coronation Rally with navigator Ronnie Dalton. Mike Hawthorne, the F1 World Champion, had been the scheduled Rootes driver on this event but had been killed in a non-competitive motoring accident. Paddy described the Husky as a box with no sound proofing. It did not have any success and in fact Peter Harper overturned his and broke his left arm. It has been said that Paddy and Peter were the only drivers that Norman Garrad ever paid to drive, and even then the sums involved were not great. However, all chosen drivers did get generous expenses which as Paddy recalls in his book were better than Triumph.

Norman would have wanted to see hot competition between Paddy and Peter Harper. Despite managers needing to promote “team spirit”, Norman always had an eye for good competitiveness and it is claimed Garrad promoted internal competition. Paddy agreed all of this was most certainly true; he actually liked Norman Garrad and got on well with him, but his relations with Rootes incumbent leading driver Peter Harper never really softened. Richard Langworth described Paddy in his 1982 book as “an individualist who didn’t always agree with team management decisions”. To be honest, to be a top flight campaigner in rally sport you had to be ruthless and that meant doing anything and everything to win, so the “individualist” tag fitted the best drivers and Paddy was proving himself to be among these. In Rosemary Smith’s book “Driven” she recalls Paddy Hopkirk complaining to Garrad about breaking off from a rally’s practice recce just so the boss could indulge in his desire for a gourmet lunch; Hopkirk told him they were wasting precious winter daylight hours! Graham Robson once claimed that “Harper was most interested in beating Hopkirk, and vice versa.

Later Peter Procter was most interested in beating both of them". Peter Procter and Paddy were always the very best of friends, Paddy told me.



*1959 Paddy Hopkirk (aged 26) gets a new driving job with Rootes*

Driving his first works Series II Rapiers (VRW507, car 62) with navigator Jack Scott in the 1959 French Alpine Rally, Paddy was consistently the fastest team car and ended up taking a Class win and 3<sup>rd</sup> overall, winning a "Coupe des Alpes" for a penalty free run. Paddy recalled to me his description that the Rapiers had an 8-speed gearbox (works cars were modified to have overdrive on every gear) and he felt the preparation of the Rapiers was superb and different to those the public would be buying; he hadn't felt the same was true at Triumph. He quickly learned to squeeze everything out of the gearbox, despite being told not to exceed 6,500 rpm and certainly not to hammer the overdrive in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Like all highly competitive drivers he ignored most of what the mechanics said and regularly revved the engines up to 8,000 rpm, taking seconds off Harper's times! What a start to his Rapiers driving career, bringing absolute joy to Norman Garrad and his team. As a treat to all, Norman showed off the new Sunbeam Alpine to them at a party afterwards.



*1959 Alpine Rally on the road to success, Paddy taking a sharp left hander and Jack Scott checking on the photographer. VRW507 was in a Moonstone and Morocco Brown colour scheme. Paddy recalls these earlier Rapiers with drum brakes all round suffered with brake fade and fluid boiling if pushed hard on Alpine descents; the front discs of the Series III cars would herald a cure.*

High hopes then for the Liege-Rome-Liege rally, the next major event for Paddy again in VRW507 but this time with Cecil Vard. Regrettably, it was a gruelling event in which Paddy failed to finish. In fact, of 97 starters only 14 reached the finish line at Spa in the time allowed. One valiant Rapier campaigned by Ray and Cotton did make 11<sup>th</sup> place.

The year ended with Paddy and Jack again campaigning (the now replaced Series II model) VRW507 in the RAC International Rally; this time a late failure of the transmission stopped their rally five miles from the end.

For 1960 the Rootes Team would showcase the Series III model and their famous YWK rally cars. The first major event of the rally season was the Rallye Monte Carlo and Paddy and Jack were given YWK3 (in Powder & Corinth blue) with the hope that its increased power, front disc brakes and new Dunlop "Duraband" radials would make them highly competitive. Although unpenalized when they arrived at Monaco, the pair left the road and got stuck in snow on the final 350-mile regularity Mountain Circuit test.



*An unfortunate Paddy with YWK3 well and truly stuck in snow on the final Mountain Stage of the 1960 Monte Carlo Rally.*

The Rootes team decided that Paddy would drive a Rapier (KGM857) in the 1960 Safari Rally. He teamed up with "popular" local man, Viscount Kim Mandeville, and both went through a long period of preparation in Africa. They did extremely well early on and led the rally for a long while despite an incident where Paddy narrowly missed a leopard (but felt he may have sadly hit its cub). They eventually got bogged down in mud and lost a huge amount of time, but it was a differential drive failure that finally caused them to pull out.

Paddy (back with Jack) would next run in the 1960 Tulip Rally in which they broke a half-shaft and lost a wheel; although repairs were facilitated, they ran out of time.

Paddy had an embarrassing end to the 1960 Rallye International Gran Canaria driving Rapier YVC431 (Velvet and Sage Green in colour) and partnered with Norman Garrad's son Lewis. After finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in Class, he was asked to demonstrate the forward and reverse spin turns favoured on driving tests by expert British drivers. Unfortunately, the adhesive properties of the new Dunlop tyres on the very hot Canary Island tarmac threw the car on its side rather than allowing the spin turns familiar in colder climes. However, onlookers righted the car and the resultant oil spillage allowed a successful second demonstration.

*1960 Gran Canaria and a closing demonstration by Paddy goes a tad wrong! This "Works Team" effort was in the Canaries to support a very enthusiastic and successful local dealer.*



In the 1960 Alpine Rally, Paddy and Jack came 2<sup>nd</sup> in Class driving Rapier YWK3 bringing home a 1-2-3 finish for works Rapiers. Whilst at Rootes, Paddy also took part in circuit racing, winning his class (and beating Harper) in a Rapier in a touring car race that supported the 1960 British Grand Prix at Silverstone. But Harper came out on top a month later at Brands Hatch in YWK4; this was definitely nip and tuck stuff. Harper would triumph in November at Riverside, California when he finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall behind two Jaguar 3.8 Mk 2s. Sadly, Paddy suffered his second broken half-shaft that year. However, when talking to Paddy he had some interesting tales to tell about this trip as the Rootes racing team were given a handsome welcome by staff from Rootes America. Paddy remembers going into a bar with John Panks (top Rootes man in the USA) and when the bartender said to John "I'll be with you in just a second," John immediately responded "The second has gone where are you?"



*November 1960 and Peter Harper and Paddy Hopkirk enjoy a photo session before "friendly" rivalry on California's Riverside track with their special lightweight track racing Rapiers. Paddy's was number 75; car 74 eventually came back to the UK and was restored by our club founder David Parrott. These cars were shipped to the States on the Queen Mary.*

Another man Paddy remembers meeting in America was 6 feet 6 inches tall Henry Henkel, who he recalled being something to do with Rootes Finance. Henry had actually appeared in our Coventry Evening Telegraph in 1957 in a transatlantic story when he sold a Series I Rapier to America's smallest musician, 3 feet 8 inches Bill Barty. The article pictured Henry holding Bill up like a toddler. Paddy said "Henry was

the life and soul of a party” but it turned out Mr Henkel had a very dark side, as we shall see later.

Closing off 1960, Paddy and Jack tackled the RAC International in Rapier YVC431 but with no honours, and he went home for Christmas and to get ready for the Monte in January.

The 1961 Monte will be remembered for the French altering the rules to favour their small engined / heavy cars and as such the first 11 places in general classification went to cars under 1,100 cc, with French Panhards taking 1-2-3. It seems that before the “R” Factor handicapping was applied, Paddy was actually the overall leader just ahead of Harper; both were clear but Hopkirk had lower penalty marks. I can’t imagine what Paddy said when the handicapping was applied! In the end he actually came 13<sup>th</sup> overall. He had even suffered wiper failure at Charbonnieres and had the problem remedied by Lucas mechanics, then making up the lost time en route – never easy. Harper said after the event he “had never worked so hard on a Monte for such a low placing”. However, a separate circuit race around the Monaco Grand Prix track gave Harper a victory time over all competitors of 2mins 15.1 secs, with Paddy coming in 7<sup>th</sup> with 2mins 18.6 secs.

By March that year, Paddy and Rootes were off to the USA again, this time for the 12-hour Sebring race (in Florida) with three Alpines entered. This was a marketing exercise to the US public to prove how a relatively low-cost sports car could compete on speed and endurance with much more expensive models.

Next up, Paddy took his second Circuit of Ireland win; 1,500 very tough miles in 1961 driving YWK4 (Ash Grey and Pippin Red in colour). There followed another 3<sup>rd</sup> overall and 1<sup>st</sup> in Class at the 1961 Alpine Rally in Rapier YVC431. The whole Rootes entry did so well at the 1961 Alpine Rally they won the Best Team award irrespective of size, class or nationality and were able to keep the cup as it was their third time of winning. Sunbeams had consistently performed well in all sections over the years at this summer rally. Maybe this success went to Paddy’s head, as I have seen an after-event photo of him and “Tiny” Lewis in a hotel pond fully clothed. Paddy says in his book that they were “thrown in”.



*1961 hardtop standard bodied Alpine racing at Le Mans and driven by Paddy Hopkirk and Peter Jopp until main bearing failure forced withdrawal.*

Paddy would go to Le Mans in 1961 with a team of Sunbeam Alpines. This was the year the car won the “Index of Thermal Efficiency” award but it was not contributed



to by Paddy, whose car retired with a main bearing failure. Harper's Harrington bodied, more streamlined car had clocked 115 mph on the Mulsanne Straight and returned 18 mpg for the 24-hour race.

In September they entered a 10-day "Tour of France" rally that saw Paddy again teamed with Jack Scott; this was a rally with plenty of speed tests and seats belts were now compulsory. However, a lost wheel saw them out of the running.

He finished the year on a better note with a 4<sup>th</sup> overall in the RAC International Rally in works Rapier Series IIIA 5192RW even though he decreased the number of bars in an otherwise 5-bar gate en route.

*Here Peter Proctor and Graham Robson (car 12) are chatting to Paddy at the 1961 RAC International Rally. Peter is holding the door and Graham is in the driver's seat. Paddy told me he became very good friends with Peter Proctor.*



The bigger-engined Series IIIA with different gear ratios sought success in 1962. So it proved, as Paddy gained a well-earned 3rd overall and the first Rapier home at the Monte Carlo Rally, again in 5192RW (Velvet & Sage green). Paddy also waltzed off with the Riviera Cup (Winner 1300-1600 cc class), RAC Trophy (Best performance of a British car) and a First Prize (Speed and maneuverability trials), quite a haul of silverware for a driver who was to shock the Rootes stable later in the year.

As if making the Circuit of Ireland his own showpiece event, Paddy once again raced to victory at Easter. Campaigning in 5190RW, he handsomely beat Bobby Parke's Austin Healey 3000, the greater significance of which will become apparent very shortly.

It was next off to Le Mans, this time with just two Harrington Alpines and Paddy was again teamed with Peter Jopp; their car had a revised tail (9203RW) but I am afraid no silverware in 1962 as it again retired with engine failure, having achieved early lap times of 98.6 mph.

A little later in 1962, and highly unusually, it was claimed that Hopkirk had become frustrated by the Rapier's lack of reliability (see Wikipedia write-up), culminating in all three works cars blowing their engines within the space of a kilometer at that year's Acropolis Rally. This catastrophic event was put down to a fault in a new style



*1962 Monte Carlo Rally and Paddy drives fabulously for a third place overall and some wonderful silverware in Series IIIA 5192RW (Velvet & Sage green).*

oil filter, but interestingly it never affected two other works prepared Rapiers, one of which was driven by Rosemary Smith who was competing in the Rootes team for the first time.

For a while longer, Rapier drivers continued to achieve success and Peter Harper went on to have a Class win in the 1963 Monte Carlo Rally; this was no mean feat in a car now late on in its life. Hopkirk though, after being impressed by a test drive of Pat Moss's Austin-Healey 3000, made a move to become a BMC driver. This would very soon lead to his most famous victory; the outright Monte Carlo Rally win in 1964 in the Mini Cooper S. That victory alone made Paddy Hopkirk a household name and he was flooded with congratulatory messages from UK dignitaries and celebrities alike. His beaming face was everywhere and he stepped out on stage for "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" whilst his Mini turned on the theatre's famous revolving stage. Paddy's Minis would edge out Rapiers on most racing circuits from then on, but in 1968, Rootes could possibly say they had the last laugh. The high-profile London-Sydney Marathon captured the public's imagination and saw Paddy in an Austin 1800 battling away with a Citroen DS whilst being chased down by Andrew Cowan in an underrated Hillman Hunter; we all know the result became the last hurrah for Rootes. But in truth, Paddy stopped to help the driver of the Citroen when he was involved in a serious collision. Paddy ended up second behind Cowan's Hillman – ruthless or not so ruthless these rally drivers, I leave you to decide.

Paddy highlighted a story earlier in this article about meeting Henry Henkel in the States in November 1960. Paddy recalls that sometime after the event, Henry was arrested and charged with stealing money from Rootes Group. Rumours went around the company that Henkel had even taken a heavy suitcase of money to deposit in a Swiss bank, stopping overnight with Lord Rootes in Park Lane before an onward flight to Switzerland! This intriguing story warranted extra research with a normal Google trawl revealing nothing. I asked for a friend's help; he regularly searches newspaper archives and came up trumps. A short note in the Coventry Evening Telegraph in September 1961 announced that a warrant for the arrest of Henry Henkel (aged 54), manager of Rootes Motor Agency Los Angeles, had been issued for skipping bail having been accused of failing to pass on funds to Rootes in the sum of £107,000. A co-defendant, Kenneth Fisher was also charged. The trial took place almost a year later, with Henkel still nowhere to be found. It seems that Henkel effectively stole 160



*1962 Le Mans 24-hours Paddy and Peter Jopp pose for the cameras before the start.*

new cars from Rootes, as he had Fisher sell them through his agency and then Henkel pocketed most of the money. Fisher was found to have played a minor part and was jailed for nine months (report from the Birmingham Post, August 1962). So had the event been brushed under the carpet by Rootes? And has anyone else heard about the 160 stolen Rootes cars?

At this time Paddy even had a couple of Rootes cars of his own. I have seen photos of a Hillman Minx (fitted with a Le Mans Alpine engine) and Sunbeam Alpine 2-seater with hard-top, both of which he campaigned sporting the registration HOP750. I must ask him what happened to that lovely personal plate (DVLA do not list it now).

Paddy Hopkirk was awarded the MBE in 2016.

Thanks so much Paddy for your kind help in enhancing this article.

Copyright: Thanks also to our Club President, Tim Sutton, for his major research into rallying Rapiers written some 20 years ago now, I used this as the framework on which to develop this story. My friend Ian Garland did the sleuthing to find out more about Henry Henkel. Photographs were used from The Rootes Archive Centre Trust, Coventry Transport Museum, Michael Frostick "Works Team" and Richard Langworth's book "Tiger, Alpine Rapier" along with contemporary publications and articles in our possession such as "Autosport" and "Motorsport". This work is printed for circulation in our Club's free magazine and is only done so for the furtherance of our members historic knowledge of the marque. No financial gain will be made by its inclusion and we hope any photographs included to which the original copyrighter is unknown to us will agree that this is a worthwhile project. Should anyone come forward to claim exclusive copyright on any of the work then the Club will willingly print a specific message of gratitude to them in a future edition.

Neil Lamond, August 2021

## **More about Gordon Jarvis**

Following on from last issue's article about Gordon Jarvis and his Fastback rallying adventures Robin Shackleton sent in these pictures he had of Gordon's driving.



*Robin with Ralph Lodge rallied this H120 based rally car between 2002 and 2010. He said that Gordon provided much useful assistance helping them to convert the H120 to a rally car.*



*Although not a Rapier this helps complete the story about Gordon's rallying career. Gordon and Derek Skinner (by the driver and passenger doors respectively) were campaigning this Avenger Tiger in 1973. What a great period shot!*



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\*All cover is subject to insurers terms and conditions, which is available upon request. \*\*Premium example based on: 1962 Sunbeam Rapier. Value: £5500. Main policy only and does not include any FJ+ cover options. All premiums assume the vehicle is not the main car and includes Insurance Premium Tax. Male driver aged over 25 years old, 2000 annual limited mileage, and full clean driving licence with no claims or convictions. Member of associated club. Postcode OX10, vehicle garaged with no modifications. Includes a £10 arrangement fee.

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## *Sunbeam Rapier Picnic July 2021*

Longstanding member John Lockyer from Clapton near Crewkerne in Somerset invited members for a picnic with their Rapiers. This was just after certain lockdown restrictions were being eased in England so it was a great chance for members and friends to meet up.



29 people attended with 21 show cars, although it has to be said that 8 of them were John's!

Two of Neil Cridland's cars were also in attendance (Neil was an early member of the club; he sadly died in 2006); a 1963 Series IIIA 267COO (owned by John) and a Series V Alpine PEU47F. The owners of another of Neil's cars were present but attended with their motorhome.

John was able to reunite the other two owners with some of the history of their cars from Neil's ownership.



Seven of these cars are John's, with an eighth car in a garage!



Sheltering from the sun to eat our picnics. John also displayed these picnic hampers.



Photos by Malcolm Fletcher and Tim Sanders.

# *From Concept to Customer*

## *The creation of an Audax model*

A somewhat tongue in cheek view by Neil Lamond



Clearly one starts with a cigarette packet. At least Tim Fry, who drew this original sketch for the Series II Rapier, indicated as much when he talked to an SROC group 30 years ago. The Rootes brothers often visited America and in 1956 they came back and asked the in-house design team to see if they couldn't give the very first Audax model (the Series I Rapier) a more Americanised feel. Of course, as little money

as possible should go into the transformation. Tim's idea was that flashy new fins would be stitch welded to the tops of the existing rear wings, with a newly designed front end with more chrome and cowl'd headlights providing a more elongated, sleeker, lower feel.



*Initial outlines were worked up with sharper graphics, ready to show senior management.*



*Clay models were made to mock-up further how a finished car may look.*



*Timber and plywood full size mock-ups would be constructed to fully test driver and passenger room, luggage boot space (the golf clubs must fit!) plus engine bay requirements.*



*Brian Rootes would have more detailed models placed in front of him, so as to inspect every angle and do the final sign-off.*

*Body shells would arrive from the Pressed Steel factory in Cowley to have wings and doors fitted, be sprayed and have glass and all mechanicals fitted.*



*However, production line logistics would involve sending all convertible bodysells from Ryton to Thrupp & Maberly in north London, where their hoods would be fitted before being returned to the Ryton line.*



*Back at Ryton and almost nearing completion.*



*Eventually streams of shiny new Minxes, Gazelles and Rapiers would emerge (in no particular order), fully completed, from the Ryton production line.*

*New unregistered models would be loaded onto transporters and shipped to fulfil orders at the various worldwide dealers.*





*Models would then be displayed in showrooms, at motor shows and on brochures, to be sold to adoring husbands and wives around the world.*

*Eager buyers would turn up on the allotted day to have their lovely new Rootes car waiting on the forecourt. Ahhhh how proud they look and the garage has even transferred their grille badges over for them as well, now that is great 50s style service, an extra 10-bob please.*



*Copyright: Photographs used are mainly stills of screenshots from free to air "Look at Life" films or other internet sources. The photographers in these publications are unknown with the exception of the third from last image, this was taken by member Malcolm Fletcher after he had set up a showroom display in his Rootes dealer days. This article is printed for circulation in our Club's free magazine and is only done so for the furtherance of our members historic knowledge of the marques. No financial gain will be made by its inclusion and we hope any photographs included to which the original copyrighter is unknown to us will agree that this is a worthwhile project. Should anyone come forward to claim exclusive copyright on any of the work then the Club will willingly print a specific message of gratitude to them in a future edition.*

## Rootes Road Trip 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021

*(Ed: You have an appeal for articles and just like waiting for a bus, two come in about the same event!)*

The Ace Café, the Battle of Britain, Kop Hill. Each of these evoke different memories or recollections. And yet rarely would they be spoken or written about together. So why now? Well, the answer to that question is Neil Lamond, who organised a road trip for a local group of Rootes cars in July.

“Freedom Day” was imminent and on a scorchingly hot day, I set off early to rendezvous at the Ace Café. For me, a quick blast down the A1, A41 and North Circular as long as I was early enough to miss the Saturday snarl up that anyone who has driven in London in normal times will know is something to be avoided at all costs. And fortunately, I did.



Someone once said “Give a man a hi-vis vest and a clipboard and you will create a monster.” Clearly, they had the gate guardians of the Ace Café in mind. I turned into the forecourt in my Sunbeam Rapier Fastback, which going by the admiring glances from the onlookers was indeed a rare sight, and at once was stopped by said gate guardian. “Who are you here for? You’re not a Lamborghini...” Not exactly the welcome I had been expecting. So, I pleaded ignorance,

showed the man the printout of Neil’s instructions (paper hardcopies clearly have value, as without paper what use is a clipboard?) and smiled. Fortunately, there was a suitable row of empty spaces and the man relented (well I wasn’t planning on going anywhere else anyway..) and so I parked up.

For those of you that don’t know it, the Ace Café was established in 1938 when the North Circular in London was brand new and it quickly became a popular spot for motorcyclists. However, in 1940 it was bombed and it wasn’t until 1949 that it was rebuilt. The 50s and 60s were its heyday with increasing road traffic, a strong British motorcycle industry and the advent of rock and roll all contributing to its success. And then in 1969 it closed, reopening again after a gap of nearly 30 years in 1997 as a café,



functions and entertainment venue. Since then, it has been featured on Car SOS and Wheeler Dealers, while still retaining its roots as a place for motorcyclists to meet up.

So back to that hot and steamy day in July. I was seriously outnumbered by Lamborghinis. Never before have I seen so many in one place – Countachs, Diablos, Aventadors to name just a few. And many that I couldn't name too. A cacophony of vibrant colours sparkling in the sunshine, engine noise that you would not believe and a whole array of personalised number plates with D114BLO, 82HRH and V12OOH being my favourites.



Soon afterwards Ralph Dalton joined me with Georgina, his lovely Series convertible and then our numbers gradually swelled with the addition of a Fastback Alpine, two Series Rapiers, a Singer Gazelle convertible and a Sunbeam Alpine; a great selection of Rootes Group's finest.



After sufficient time to be watered and fed, the raging bulls left in convoy and we watched and listened in awe as the ground shook and the air was ripped asunder as these majestic beasts left the car park to venture on to their next pasture.

Then it was our turn. The man on the gate wielded his clipboard like a ceremonial sword and stopped the traffic so we could leave together. Next stop the bunker at RAF Uxbridge. Just the North Circular, Hanger Lane Gyrotory and the A40 on a busy

Saturday morning to overcome. I had forgotten what driving in London traffic was like. Red lights, nose to tail, no quarter given, Webers getting lumpy in the heat and vinyl seats, which on the hottest day of the year provided me with my own personal sauna.

Despite being last in the convoy and losing sight of the others on the A40 (purely due to traffic), I found myself at RAF Uxbridge first with not a single Rootes car in sight. Google Maps really is my friend! The rest of the group arrived shortly afterwards augmented by a lovely Hillman Hunter.

The bunker at RAF Uxbridge or “The Hole” as it was affectionately called by those who worked there, was the centre of operations for No 11 Group RAF and controlled fighter squadrons operating within the group, having the responsibility for the aerial defence of London and South East England during the Battle of Britain and beyond.

Although the Germans knew about RAF Uxbridge, the presence of the bunker was kept secret and remained unknown to them throughout the war. Previously the Operations Room had been in an above ground building but with the Munich Crisis in 1938, excavations began and the bunker was constructed between February and August 1939, only just in time as WW2 started in September. The extra time achieved by Neville Chamberlain in Munich had been critical.



*Inside the Bunker*

Often referred to as the “Dowding System” after Air Chief Marshall Sir Hugh Dowding, who was Commander in Chief Fighter Command at the time, the bunker was the centre of the world’s first integrated air defence system, linking Fighter Command with all the other essential parts of the chain: Anti-Aircraft Command, Barrage Balloon Command, Observer Corp, the radar installations along the coast and the intelligence services. All of these successfully worked together to ensure our airspace was preserved and ultimately to achieve victory in the Battle of Britain.

Our group had a guided tour of the bunker, which was fascinating, and I highly recommend a visit. It is 60ft below ground and the main operations room is laid out

as a typical day during the battle. As you descend the 76 steps down into the bunker, all of the 1940s style cabling is visible on the walls. An interesting fact is that the original air circulation and ventilation system is still in use. This keeps the air pressure at a slightly higher rate than normal so that in the event of a gas attack on the surface it wouldn't be able to seep in.

Now, think back to the classic post-war war films that used to be shown on TV on a Sunday afternoon. In many of them there are shots of WAAFs around the plotting table with headphones on, calmly moving blocks around the map to indicate where the RAF planes are, where the Luftwaffe planes are, plotting interception courses and so on. This is what actually happened in the main room of the bunker while defending SE England. On the wall there is the indicator system for the seven sector stations for which No 11 Group was responsible: RAFs Kenley, North Weald, Debden, Biggin Hill, Tangmere, Hornchurch and Northolt, and then each of them linked in turn to their own satellite airfields.

*Adorning the entrance to  
RAF Uxbridge*



My maternal grandparents bought their house off plans in 1938 in Riddlesdown near Purley. It was a new housing development and building was stopped for the duration of the war with their house being the last pre-war one finished in their road, with the rest not being built until the 1960s. My grandmother used to walk up on Riddlesdown downs during the war and when I was younger told me whenever she saw the Germans fly over, she would run back home to get into the Anderson shelter in their garden. Their roof was blown off three times during the war which my grandmother explained was because they were right smack in the middle of the RAF bases at Kenley, Biggin Hill and Croydon so were a prime target. She used to joke that after the third time they put the roof back on properly and it would never come off again. And she was right because in the 1987 hurricane it didn't budge...!! I also remember she showed me a crater on the downs where she saw a Spitfire crash.

Seeing RAFs Kenley and Biggin Hill up on the wall of the bunker as an adult made it much more real for me and also helped those old childhood memories to resurface.

As Winston Churchill said after visiting the bunker in August 1940, and then later in the House of Commons “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

After perusing the Visitor’s Centre and Museum, followed by some lunch in the café, our intrepid bunch set off for our last destination, Kop Hill. Again, traffic was fierce and this time I led the convoy back to the A40 but then, due to a combination of unfavourable traffic lights, roundabouts and heavy traffic, had no option but to leave them behind. Fortunately we all managed to find our way to Kop Hill, albeit arriving from different directions...!!



Kop Hill is a quiet leafy lane surrounded by fields in the middle of Buckinghamshire. Less than a kilometre long, it was used as a competitive hill climb from 1910 to 1925, when the RAC banned all motorsport on public roads following an accident involving a spectator. Since 2009, Kop Hill has seen an annual revival run as a non-competitive charity event.



There is a loose connection with our cars, however, as Malcolm Campbell raced a Talbot 12hp “Blue Bird” and Sir Henry Segrave a Sunbeam 2 litre Grand-Prix. Sir Henry set three land records and one water record, was the first person to hold both titles simultaneously, and also the first person to travel over 200 miles per hour in a land vehicle. On 29<sup>th</sup> March 1927, Sir Henry achieved an average speed of 203.79 mph across the two runs over a measured mile in his “Mystery Sunbeam” at Daytona Beach in Florida.



So, with that heritage and a clear road, it was our turn to ascend the hill. I decided to bring up the rear and as I waited to set off, I tried to work out how big a gap to leave so as to have a decent run. “Finally,” I thought, “that should be big enough” as I let go of the anchors and floored the throttle, the twin Webers singing in the heat. For a moment the car was in its element, perfect traction on the tarmac as it surged ahead. Then the road steepened, the older cars in front came into view and my charge up the hill turned back into a sedate country drive. Great fun nevertheless.





And so, our road trip ended. After a few short goodbyes we all went our separate ways back home, with tales of times gone past still echoing in our thoughts. My gratitude and thanks go to Neil for organising. It was a great day and so lovely to be out in the Rapier again after the Covid enforced confines of the last year and a half.

Eloise Robinson

## ***Update from Down Under - J-Type Overdrive***

Recently the J Type overdrive on the H120 did not disengage when the operating stalk was moved. This occurred only after a drive of more than five miles. Bringing the car to a halt had the desired effect, but there was always a risk of it sticking before reverse gear was selected. Not a good situation. I noted the solenoid was quite warm as it draws about 2 amps continuously.

Checks on the electrical circuits indicated all was well and a temporary light installed to show when the overdrive circuit was live gave all the correct signals. Research on the net revealed this was not an uncommon fault and the solution was likely to be in the hydraulic control system. To experiment, I obtained a new operating solenoid, internal filter and gasket kit from Overdrive Repair Services in Sheffield. They are the successors to Laycock Engineering Ltd. The easiest item to replace was the solenoid using a 1" flat spanner ground down to about 5mm thick to fit the solenoid hexagonal securing nut. It was a bit tight but once loosened quickly unscrewed. Replacing it with the new item was easy and little oil was lost. The car was then checked and so far the overdrive is working as it should. A 125 mile drive showed no sign of misbehaving. Considering what a repair shop would charge for a full overhaul and check, the £170.00 including freight to New Zealand was reasonable and it took less than an hour to achieve. Special tools are needed to access the internal filter and are easy to fabricate. If the unit is working properly with no strange noises then this repair is a home mechanic's job. Just make sure the correct oil, SAE30W (non-detergent) is used and kept topped up.

Brian Baylis

# ***SROC RACT Gathering***

Just in case this magazine arrives on your doorstep before this event here's a reminder of our September SROC gathering at the Rootes Archive Centre Trust:

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021 11am – 4pm**  
**Rally plaque presentation to RACT at 3:00 pm**

Bring your Rapier to this event at the Rootes Heritage Centre in the Midlands. If arriving in a non-Rootes car please park elsewhere on the estate. Further details were on page 9 of the summer edition of Cut & Thrust. Please note the details about Covid-19 rules in force at the time.

RACT's address is 15 Apollo Park, Ironstone Lane, Wroxton, Banbury, OX15 6AY

If you intend to come, please email (neillamond@outlook.com) or phone me (see inside back cover).

Neil Lamond

## ***Front Cover Picture - Freddie Flintoff***

Malcolm Fletcher heard that Freddie Flintoff was filming close to him at Teignmouth Sea Front with a yellow Cortina. This was for a Regatta Sportswear advert and he was supposedly arriving at the beachside swimming pool in the Cortina 2000E.



He then unloaded his rubber ring and flippers and pretending to go to the outdoor pool. Malcolm thought it was for some sort of comedy possibly going for retro gear. The Cortina owner said he had moved it 15 times by mid-morning and had been filming elsewhere the previous day.

When they had finished filming I asked him if I could take a photo of him by my car which he readily agreed to, even having to walk down the road to it. I heard comments from the crew that the Sunbeam would have been a better choice which of course we know. In fact my car had been used at a beach when I got it and it was full of sand.

*(Ed: After seeing the Top Gear team on the front of the Sunbeam Alpine Owners Club magazine, The Horn, we really had only one contender for this issue's front cover!)*



## ***Ron at 90!***

The SROC wishes Ron Atherton a tremendously Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday!!!

Spon already has his party hat on ready to celebrate on 6<sup>th</sup> October. You would have thought that years as SROC Editor and General Secretary would have worn him out, not a bit of it, he has only recently finished restoring this wonderful Series II.



We all take our hats off to you and thank you for everything you have done for SROC over the years, enjoy the day but don't forget PUT might be feeling left out!

## ***Rapier Wanted!***

I'm a new SROC Member as I've always wanted to own and drive a Sunbeam Series IIIA since I was a child; ideally a Convertible but a Coupe is also very appealing.

My father was the Rootes Group Distributor for Suffolk & Essex in the 1940-50s based in Sudbury, Suffolk at Friars Street Garage. So our family were always driven by father in almost all the models at that time. The Rapier Series IIIA has always stood out for me as a stunning distinctive design.

So if you have a Series IIIA that you are considering selling to a good home or maybe you know where a Rapier is looking out for a new caring owner please send me genuine details of engine condition + externally and interior ideally with photos and price to [email@jeffleeks.com](mailto:email@jeffleeks.com) with your contact telephone number.

I promise to reply and thank you.

Jeff Leeks

# **Sunbeam Alpine Owners Club National Rally 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

The SAOC had invited SROC to be guests at their National Rally at Thruxton Racing Circuit in Hampshire this year. As I was fully vaccinated and given it was one of a very small number of events that had not been cancelled this year, I thought “Why not?”

The weather in the weeks running up to the event had been very changeable with sudden downpours and multiple instances of localised flooding across the country. So given the choice of either taking my Rapier and a tent, or taking my 1969 Commer Autosleeper camper van, the latter won out. SAOC rallies usually run from Thursday to Monday, with Friday being an informal relaxing day, Saturday being the main day with the concours, AGM, prizegiving etc plus dinner-dance in the evening, and then drive outs on the Sunday with final packing up and leaving on the Monday.

Thursday dawned bright and clear and once I made sure I had everything I needed in the van, I set off and prayed for good traffic as my route involved the A1M, M25, M3 and A303. Fortunately the traffic gods were kind to me and I was able to cruise comfortably at 55-60mph for most of the journey down to Thruxton Racing Circuit; the journey took me about two hours overall including a stop for petrol.

Like many UK race tracks, Thruxton was originally a RAF base and the circuit follows the line of the airfield’s perimeter road. Established in 1968, it is often referred to as the “fastest circuit in the UK” and hosts British Touring Cars and Formula 3 racing as well as a weekend dedicated to the British Superbike Championship.



The SAOC campsite was just inside the circuit and having checked in, I soon spotted a gap alongside the track next to a VW Camper so parked up and set up camp. This means turning the engine off, lifting the pop-up roof, lighting the gas fridge then opening a drink.

Many people don’t realise that Commer were part of the Rootes Group and shared engines and ancillaries with other vehicles in their range, so I didn’t feel out of place. I think people were somewhat surprised though to discover that my van contains a Holbay Marathon together with Jerome Senn’s awesome downdraft Weber conversion kit; this was actually developed for the Sunbeam Alpine but works well on the Series Rapiers as well. For those of you that are curious why I didn’t go for the twin 40s, there is a straightforward answer – there isn’t room in the engine bay.

There were cars going around the track on Thursday and Friday, mainly for driving experiences I think, but it wasn’t a race weekend and we weren’t allowed to try our luck out on the 2.4miles long circuit. According to the SAOC organisers, the fines

for doing so would have been more than the average person's annual income!! Lots of smart looking modern cars were parked up including some very attractive Renault Alpines which I had only seen on TV before.



Throughout Friday there was a Porsche event which included a display of a pair of very original cars in front of the main building. PDA518 in black is an original 1960's Porsche 911 and interestingly does not come up on a DVLA search. TYV912F in red is an even rarer 1968 Porsche 912 (the 912s had four-cylinder engines compared to six in the 911s) and whilst it currently has an MOT, it has not been taxed since 1986. So I can only assume these are either museum cars or in a private collection.



One of the many advantages of Friday is that you can wander around all the various parts suppliers without being in a rush. It's good to see what is available and many of the bits are suitable for our Rapiers too. SAOC organised communal barbeques for Friday evening together with seating so everyone sat around eating and drinking in the warm evening air until it was too dark to carry on. Great to catch up with old friends and meet new people in a relaxed and informal way.

As mentioned earlier, Saturday is the main day and an early walk around the paddock led me to an Aston Martin DB5 Superleggera which is clearly still being raced, and then I found a brace of racing Sunbeam Tigers.

The red Tiger is a 4.3 litre from 1965. The green Tiger is incredibly rare. It has a 4.7 litre engine and is one of only three Sunbeam Tiger Le Mans Coupés constructed by the Rootes Group Competition Department specifically for the 1964 Le Mans 24-hour race. The design was by Ron Wisdom, one of Rootes stylists, with the body made by Williams & Pritchard and overall construction by Brian Lister. Note also the



bigger wheels filling the wheel arches – keeping the standard Alpine/Tiger 13” wheels would have seriously over-stressed the tyres, so 15” Dunlop magnesium wheels were used instead and this also facilitated larger diameter brakes.



After further exploration I stumbled across Sunbeam Alpine 9201RW which was all by itself in the scrutineering area. In 1962 three cars were prepared for the Le Mans 24-hours: 9201RW, 9202RW and 9203RW, but just the latter two took part in the race itself. Coincidentally in Neil’s article on Paddy Hopkirk in this issue you will find a period photo of 9203RW, car 33

(see page 19). All three cars had a raised Kamm tail (a flattened square rear bringing the boot lid level with the fins) to try to increase airflow over the car. 9201RW was driven by Peter Harper and Peter Procter as car 33 in the 1963 Le Mans race although some sources suggest the number plates were switched between the three cars in between the 1962 and 1963 races.

The Sunbeam Tiger club had also been invited and brought Peter Procter along as a guest of theirs for the event. In total there were 100 to 150 Alpines and Tigers on the Saturday and I lost count at over 30 Tigers – I don’t ever recall seeing so many together in one place before. The cars for the formal concours judging were lined up on the pit straight and the rest were in the paddock and car park.



Two very beautiful Harrington Alpines caught my eye; the one in Seacrest Green is a Le Mans version and the blue one showed its unusual boot mechanism. I suspect you would need to be very precise when loading up the boot and to be honest I’m not sure I could fit a tent in there...

Rapier turnout was very low with only three cars that I saw. John Lockyer brought his Series III (Windsor Blue and Corinth Blue) which has been rallied extensively, Ralph Dalton his Series III convertible (Ash Grey and Pippin Red) and Ivan Martingale his Series IV (Pearl Grey and Pippin Red).



Saturday evening saw everyone put on their glad rags for the dinner dance in the Thrupton Centre with live entertainment and dancing afterwards – great fun and a good way to unwind. Or maybe that was the alcohol helping...!



As I planned to go home on the Sunday to be back in time for work the following day, I was unable to join the SAOC drive out. After a leisurely full English for breakfast, I packed everything away and made my way home. Overall, it was a lovely weekend and so nice to be able to get away, switch off from work, and catch up with old friends and acquaintances. Next year I understand the SAOC will be up North somewhere, with venue still to be confirmed. Definitely worth a trip if you can make it.

Eloise Robinson



# Remanufactured Parts



1: Pair of Rapier Series I to V  
Boot Hinges including gaskets  
and fasteners.

Members £102/pair.

Non-Members £122/pair.



2: Rapier Series I to V

No longer available from the club  
but we understand that some  
other Rootes parts suppliers still

have stock. **Editor: We understand  
that these are now for sale on  
the website of "Forest Custom &  
Classic Spares" under their Alpine  
section.**



3: Fuel Filler Grommets. Set of two  
parts for Series I to V Rapiers.

£28 per set.



5: SUNBEAM Boot Letters.

Members £45 per set.

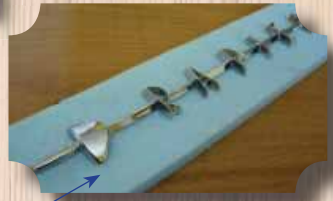
Non-Members £51 set.



4: Fastback quarterlight seal.

Special offer £80 per pair  
(members only).

Contact: Peter Lawrence



6: Rapier 'sword' motif  
(on front wings for Series I and II).

Members £35

Non-Members £37.50



7: Motif Surround for  
Series IV and V Rapiers.

Members £20 each

Non-Members £25 each.

**A**ll above items are temporarily being held by Neil Lamond so stock may be checked with him. The prices include UK postage only, if enquiring from overseas contact Glen Mason and he will advise you on cost and making Paypal payments. To place a UK order, you need to pay up front for the item you want. You can pay by sending a cheque made out to SROC to Neil Lamond, Treasurer at the address on the committee page. Or you can pay by the UK bank on-line transfer system BACS, make payment to SROC, Lloyds Bank Sort Code 30-97-41, Acct No. 01530480. Once you do this send Neil Lamond an email (neillamond@outlook.com) confirming your payment, your order and your address.



# SROC Services

## Membership Subscription Rates (for 2021)

Members £12.50. A portion of the subscription goes to the respective spares fund to assist in the purchase and remanufacture of spares.

## Back Issues

Back issues of Cut & Thrust are available at £1 plus postage each. Original copies of some early issues are no longer available, but photocopies can be supplied on request, contact the Editor for details.

## Parts Department

The SROC operates two parts funds: one for 'Series' and one for 'Fastback' models. Both sell New Old Stock (NOS) parts at a discount of approx. 30% to Club Members. Some second-hand non-safety critical parts are also available, mainly interior and exterior trim parts. A parts list of both new and second-hand spares with retail and discounted prices is available for the 'Fastback' range on request but please contact the 'Series' Spares Secretary direct for information as to what parts for those models are currently available.

Please be aware that many NOS items have been 'on the shelf' for many years and those that are safety critical should be examined by a competent mechanic before fitting to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Whilst the Club makes every effort to ensure they are, this cannot be guaranteed due to the age of stock that is held. If a Spares Secretary supplies a second-hand mechanical part they will advise the purchaser that it is sold from their own stock and without any liability to the SROC.

Finally, if you are aware of any spares for sale or know of any alternative parts that also fit our models, or if you have experience of a firm who are prepared to remanufacture parts please let us know.

## For Sale and Wanted

Adverts are accepted in Cut & Thrust via the Editor, accompanied by a cheque covering any costs (see rates below).

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## ADVERTISING RATES

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
For one issue of Cut and Thrust		
Rapiers for disposal	Free	Free
Cars for sale (up to 60 words)	Free	£3
Cars for sale (up to 120 words)	£3	£6
With photograph	add £5 for each photo	Same as Members
Parts for sale or wanted	Free	Free
<b>Trade advertising rates for one issue...</b>		
Quarter page	£10	£12
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**TIM SANDERS**, The White House, Alhampton, Shepton Mallet BA4 6PZ 07890 152314

Email [editor@sunbeamrapier.co.uk](mailto:editor@sunbeamrapier.co.uk)

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## Fastback Registrar

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