



# Coventry Spires



**ROOTES HERITAGE DAY PHOTOS  
THE GREAT BRITISH CAR JOURNEY  
BROOKLANDS CLASSIC CAR BREAKFAST &  
AERO MINX UPDATE  
HOC WINDSCREEN LEAFLET  
OUT AND ABOUT PHOTOS**

The Newsletter of the Hillman Owners Club  
The Club for All Hillman Owners  
Autumn 2024

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**The Hillman Owners Club, a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital. Company No. 03216266 Director: Mike Redrup.**

**Company Secretary: Stephen Calk. The views expressed in Coventry Spires are those of the individual contributor and may not be those of the Club, Committee or Editor. The Club takes care in selection of advertising and contributions but does not endorse or recommend.**

*information@hillmanownersclub.co.uk*

*www.hillmanownersclub.co.uk*

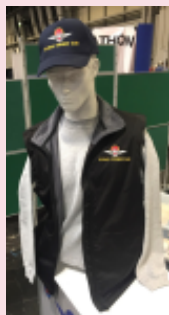
Login: **Members@hillmanownersclub.co.uk** Password: **Mark8**

Join our Facebook Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/2442577966069292](http://www.facebook.com/groups/2442577966069292)

# Hillman Owners Club Contact List

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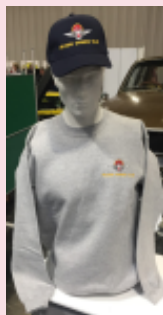
## CLUB REGALIA



Soft Shell  
Gilet £19.75



Micro Fleece  
Jacket £18.50



Sweat shirt  
£15.00



Polo Shirts  
£14



Short sleeved  
shirts £15.40



T-shirts  
£11.50



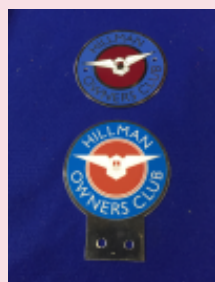
Club Hat  
£9.00



Coaster and  
Grill Badge



Lapel pins  
£3.00



Metal Vehicle  
badges £15.00



Key rings £4.50  
& £5.50



Hillman Cars  
book

For prices, sizes, availability and postage costs please contact Tom Clark  
(Embroidered items P&P £6, badges etc. £3.75 P&P, overseas extra)  
***eventsregalia@hillmanownersclub.co.uk*** or Tel. No. **07961 417310**

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### This Editions Cover Shot:

Heather Bickerton arrives at Ley Hill in style. Photo by Steve Thorp courtesy of Neil Lamond, Rapier club member and show organiser

### Editors Notes:

Print deadlines are last week of February (Spring), May (Summer), August (Autumn) and November (Winter). Try to get material to me at least two weeks before the print deadline or it makes it difficult to complete the necessary layout planning and have the copy proof-read.

Articles, reports and photos can be emailed to me at: [editor@hillmanownersclub.co.uk](mailto:editor@hillmanownersclub.co.uk) or at [glenn.brackenridge@btinternet.com](mailto:glenn.brackenridge@btinternet.com). I will confirm receipt of articles. If you don't get a receipt from me then please re-send. Articles can be sent as Word documents or as plain text in ordinary emails. Please include as many photos as you can where appropriate so that the finished article will be as interesting as possible to other members.

Coventry Spires is happy to publicise any meeting involving Rootes/Hillman vehicles, but the HOC Public Liability Insurance only covers members cars at HOC organized meets, or those pre-approved by the HOC committee. Non-members will not be covered by the HOC PLI.



8-10 NOVEMBER | NEC, BIRMINGHAM



## THE UK'S PREMIER CLASSIC MOTOR EVENT

3000 CLASSIC CARS

LARGEST INDOOR AUTOJUMBLE

300+ CLUBS

ICONIC AUCTIONEERS & CAR DEALERS

350+ TRADERS



SCAN ME TO BOOK TICKETS  
[NECCCLASSICMOTORSHOW.COM](http://NECCCLASSICMOTORSHOW.COM)



\*Discount code is for club members, friends and followers use only. Quote the club code online to save £4 off single-day adult tickets or £2 off family, child & multi-day tickets. Club discount applied to Advance Ticket Prices before midnight on Thurs 7 Nov and Show Open Ticket Prices thereafter. Full ticket information: [www.necclassicmotorshow.com/tickets](http://www.necclassicmotorshow.com/tickets). Book by 17 Oct to help your club earn extra benefits.

£4 DISCOUNT  
ON ADULT DAY  
TICKETS WITH  
OUR CLUB CODE\*:

**CCCNOV570**

## EVENTS / CALENDAR

The following shows and events are just a selection for your consideration. Please check **Classic Car Weekly** magazine and **Classic Shows UK** ([www.classicshowsuk.co.uk](http://www.classicshowsuk.co.uk)) for other events in your area. Also, let me know of any you think we should be listing here, space permitting.

### SEPTEMBER

- \* 8th Sept - Chearsley Classic & Vintage, registration required [www.ccvfd.com](http://www.ccvfd.com)
- \* 15th Sept - Kenilworth Castle - 2 Hillmans required (Richad Teasdale 02476 402757)

### NOVEMBER

- \* 8th - 10th Nov – NEC Classic Car Show

### REGULAR MEETS (CHECK WITH THE ORGANISERS)

- \* Classics Evening @ Whitley, Wiltshire, The Pear Tree at Whitley, each month, contact [steve@teamhaven.com](mailto:steve@teamhaven.com)
- \* Rootes Group East Anglia at the Sorrell Horse - check with Chris Hurlock <https://www.facebook.com/groups/212236782599797> - Also note that the RGEA folks organise several local meets and shows during the summer so please check their Facebook page for the latest
- \* Rootes in Englefield Green, The Holly Tree - 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7:30pm - check with Jay - <https://www.facebook.com/DoigClassics>

## A STOKE POGES SURPRISE!



*I saw David Dickinson's Super Minx Convertible at my local village fete so I went looking for him. His group wasn't hard to find!*

## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of Coventry Spires. I hope you all had a great summer (despite the poor weather) and managed to get out in your Hillman.

The annual general meeting (AGM) was held on the 10th July and I have to say, disappointingly, as in recent years, was poorly attended. I say disappointingly as it's your chance to say how the Club is run but the opportunity is being missed. Being on ZOOM it really is easy to attend, involves no travelling and this year it was all over in 90 minutes, so not very time consuming. The important issues discussed were the approval of the 2023 accounts and the updated Articles were approved. The Committee was re-elected for a further year.

My Minx is currently out of action, spot the missing item below:-



The bench seat is out for repair as I was sitting in the driver's seat leaning back trying to find an item in my pocket .....when the seat back frame snapped! So beware!!

As for the Club, our final show of the season is the Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show at the NEC Birmingham 8th - 10th November 2024 so if you are attending, please make sure you visit our stand (5-522) and say hello to Tom and the team.

Anyway, that's all from me.

Happy motoring.

**Mike Redrup**  
**Chairman**

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT - STEVE GRIMES

We would like to welcome the following new members who joined the HOC after 1st June 2024. With the new membership system in place, your membership starts from the date that you join and will last for 12 months. Automatic membership renewal emails will be sent to you asking if you would like to re-join.

New members who joined since 1st June – Welcome to the Hillman Owners Club !!!

Geoff Smith	Birmingham
Paul Oliver	Redruth
Ian Whiteley	Bournemouth
Paul Williams	Farnham
Jim Corne	Stoke-on-Trent
Colin Greig	Buckie Moray
Hamish Hamilton	Duns
Linda Collyer	Isle of Wight
Malcolm Smart	Calne
Mark Lawrence	Nuneaton
Jacqueline Davies	Caerphilly
Peter Szekeres	Paris USA
Russell Smith	Winchcombe
Barry Hynes	West Wickham
Hari Clayton	Wincanton
Peter Elsey	Arthog
Philip Thornton	St Neots
Mark Mansell	Peacehaven

Our new online membership system has now been operating for just over a year and its great to see people renewing via the Membership Mojo software.

We accept cheques, bank transfers and Paypal

In order to save money for the club membership cards will NOT be posted to members when renewing their membership. Your online membership can be seen when you login in the membership system using your email address given to HOC.

To login please go to :

<https://membermojo.co.uk/hillmanownersclub>

If you don't use the internet and wish for a printed paper membership card to be sent to you, then please send a stamped addressed envelope to

Steve Grimes, Manor Field House, High Street, Seend, Wilts SN12 6NU

Membership Fees - see next page

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT ...

Membership fees after the 1st April 2024 are:

Standard Single	£30	Standard Family	£35
Over 60 Single	£26	Over 60 Family	£29
Europe	£35	Rest of the World	£40

### List of Registered Vehicles

The list of cars that we have is somewhat limited as this is being collected in this way for the first time. It would be really helpful if you could help us add to the list. This could be your car, one you see at a show or even cars listed online.

If you use a smartphone, then please search at your app store for TeamHaven Mobile and download the app.

Use the following login details

USERNAME **Spotter**  
PASSWORD **Hillman2023** case sensitive  
ACCOUNT **HOC**

Full instructions were given in the Spring Edition of Coventry Spires.

Members can login and see the existing database by going to [www.teamhaven.com](http://www.teamhaven.com)

USERNAME: Reporter  
PASSWORD : Hillman2023  
ACCOUNT : HOC

This will take you to the existing reporting portal. More reports can be added by request.

Steve Grimes  
Membership Secretary





## EDITORS RAMBLINGS

I'm writing this from sunny Spain as I thought that I deserved a break after enduring the heat of Ley Hill. Imagine my shock when I landed and the plane doors were opened to a 40 degree oven-like whoosh! Where did all my energy suddenly go?

You will see in this edition we have printed some invitation leaflets to put on Hillmans you see at shows you attend. It seems that in this day and age owners think that joining a Facebook Group is all that is needed. It is up to the HOC (and other clubs as well) to inform owners about the benefits of actually becoming a member of the HOC to gain the benefits of DVLA support and Insurance valuations, not to mention this great magazine and NEC show attendance. Let Tom know if you would like some copies.

I have been busy this summer with my media/video students who are using my Hillmans as a base for their graduation video project. They tell me the final cut will be available around March so I'll see if we can have the premiere at the Restoration Show. So far it has involved 9 days of shooting. Their Uni paid for my petrol but otherwise all participants donated their time. I thought i would be a good option for Hillman action in 2024 instead of attending so many shows.

We are still none the wiser about where all the Speedy Spares stock has gone. We need to identify a trustworthy set of suppliers who can help us with all our day to day maintenance items. I am working with a couple of suppliers to see if they can be coaxed into setting up a Hillman section.

Please let me have photos and a write-up of any good shows you attend. That will help members decide where to take their cars next year. I try not to lift photos from Facebook as this invites copyright issues. If you send me a photo directly then I know I have permission to use it.

Ed.



***My film "crew" about to start the sprinkler for a night-time rain scene. It has been interesting to see them at work - very thorough and very professional. And, yes, the actor got wet as well.***

## ROOTES HERITAGE DAY 2024

*This event is fast becoming an un-missable part of the calendar. Is your car here?  
Does it have a story? If so let me know so we can feature it in Coventry Spires*





***Andy Bye says the interest in the Heritage Day is growing nicely and although the Sunbeam Tigers were elsewhere this year the overall numbers were very encouraging. Good to see a couple of Simcas because they suffered the same "Chrysler" fate as Rootes and should be considered part of the 'family'.***

## ROOTES HERITAGE DAY 2024 ...



*I spoke to several owners and have hopes that some of them will tell us a bit more about their cars for the magazine.*

## ROOTES HERITAGE DAY 2024 EDITOR'S PICKS



*My favourites of the day were this Avenger Estate - looking suspiciously like the one recently seen on Bangers and Cash, and this Minx MkII. I'd happily drive home in either!*



## HILLMAN/SINGER TOUR & WEEKEND

Hillman Singer weekend in Sussex July 24

After an interesting journey which included a break down which was quickly dealt with by a back street garage in Swanley, I arrived at the East Sussex National Hotel to be greeted by Peter and Annemarie Brown and Simon Bishop of the Singer Motor Club.

After booking in and getting settled in my room I found my way to the bar where I met up with Paul Mackley and Carol. Later we went to find the rest of the group who had a meal after the SMC AGM.

The next morning the majority of the group set off for a private tour of Filching Manor Motor Museum. Where I understand they had a talk given by the owner Karl Foulkes Halbard and were treated to coffee and cakes.



I, on the other hand decided to go straight to Birling Gap. Owned by the National Trust it's at the centre of the Seven Sisters Cliffs. I spent a lovely morning in the heritage centre and coffee shop even managing to do some shopping.

I gave up waiting for the others to join me and went on to Hastings, getting lost near Beachy Head and meeting up with a chaplaincy vehicle who very kindly pointed me in the right direction. In Hastings I found the car park in the old town that everyone eventually turned up at. After a wander and a gin and tonic it was time to go to Maggies for fish and chips.

On Saturday I had a navigator. Nigel and Joan's car had problems so Nigel came with me and Joan navigated for Chris Hayward. Chatting away we missed the 2nd turning so followed the SatNav and were first at the Garden Centre/Heritage Centre where we had an interesting talk. Then it was on to Michelham Priory a fascinating Tudor style mansion dating from the 13th century. After lunch we spent a couple of hours looking around and then set off back to the hotel to get ready for the gala dinner at night.

Sunday was National Day at the Bluebell Railway where we were joined by Simon Ashenden as well as Bryan and Marilyn Catt. We spent the day at Horsted Keynes Station and most of took the



***Bryan and  
Marylin Catt  
won the "Best  
Hillman" award***

train to Sheffield Park where we had lunch and a look around. Then it was back to Horsted Keynes for the awards ceremony. George Long won the Best Hillman award from the SMC and Tom and I chose the Best Singer. We also chose Bryan and Marilyn Catt's Avenger for our best Hillman award.

Monday morning it was time to say farewell for another year to those Singer members who had stayed and to travel home full of memories of a fabulous weekend. We look forward to doing it again next year.

Thanks to the SMC for a fabulous weekend.

**Sue Hickford**

***The Bluebell Railway.***

***The Gala dinner guests  
were treated to a talk  
about its history from  
one of the railway  
employees.***



## HILLMAN/SINGER TOUR & WEEKEND ...



*Not surprisingly there was a selection of fine Singers in attendance over the weekend.*



*Praise where praise is due, the general standard of the food at the Gala dinner was excellent.*



# THE GLAMOUR PAGE



*Here's a nice photo of my '66 1725 Minx. Like all of us she's not perfect, but I love her all the same. Regards, Jack Bonner*

*Looks good to me! Great to have a Series Minx on show, an overlooked model, surely? Ed.*

## BROOKLANDS CLASSIC CAR DAY



*I had a long chat with Dale Scutter who brought his period caravan with his very nice Minx Mk V. I understood that his journey home was beset by a coolant problem and I hope that it wasn't too serious. It was a hot day.*

*The Commer below sported a magnificent "Just Roofing" paint job but the gentleman behind it was not the owner, he was just using the shade to look at his mobile, so I can tell you no more about it.*





*You know I have a soft spot for a nice Super Minx and this survivor was adorned with some "bullet holes". Who else remembers the mid 1970's craze?*

*The beige Arrow estate was de-badged and I'm afraid I can only guess that it is a 1967 Minx? Nice wheels.*



*David and Yvette Dickinson and their Super Minx Convertible and below right a smart Imp.*

*Below left: the Brooklands Aero Minx was hidden away in the shed with a possible engine problem.*



## CAN MAGGIE BE SAVED?



Here is the photo of my 1961 Hillman Minx 111C Convertible on the day I bought it in 1998 at the Brooks Classic Car Auction at the International Autojumble at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, Hampshire. I always look forward to attending the Spring Autojumble at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu in Hampshire to see what classic cars have been hauled out of hibernation many of them painstakingly restored with parts discovered at previous autojumbles.

I always thought restoration was for other people with much greater skill than me and I could only dream of reviving my own very much-loved 1961 Hillman Minx 111C Convertible long consigned to storage after many years of enjoyment.

This year though I had a sudden flash of inspiration, and I was in the right place. By coincidence the car - I named her Maggie (the Minx) - entered my life at Beaulieu where astonishingly she sat unwanted having failed to reach the reserve price in the Brooks Auction at the International Autojumble in September 1998.

A negotiation arranged by the auctioneer with the vendor from Hove meant I was soon whizzing back through the New Forest with the hood (made by the Worthing Carriage Company) down and the wind in my hair to my seaside home in Bournemouth where the salty sea breezes would unfortunately do a great deal of damage, as I was to discover later.

As I chatted this year to proud restorers of pristine motors it suddenly occurred to me in a flash that perhaps even I could do the same. Perhaps it wasn't a pipe dream. Even without vast sums of money, perhaps I could make progress. And so I started hunting around the showground with new energy.

It was not long before I had acquired some new sills, some bits n bobs for the engine, a bumper and sundry other items to begin the project. All at reasonable prices, from sellers who also offered sound advice.

Beaulieu is a good place to start searching because there are literally hundreds of stalls and vehicles offering a staggering range of choices plus an additional area on the Sunday called Trunk Traders where people clear their garages and display their offerings as a kind of car boot of car parts. Here I spotted some Hillman badges and car manuals, not essential perhaps but always handy.

I also got chatting to a star of the Internet called Ian Seabrook known as Hub Nut who was streaming his channel from the show and offered strong encouragement to start resto work on Maggie.

So will all this sudden enthusiasm work? Well we shall see.

I will be back at Beaulieu this coming September 2nd and 3rd for the International Autojumble which unbelievably has even more stalls and vehicles. Wish me luck.

**Michael Whiteley**



## BROOKLANDS AERO MINX UPDATE



*The Aero Minx  
in its normal  
habitat in the  
Campbell shed*

Imagine my disappointment to see an empty space where the Aero Minx should have been in the Campbell Shed on the Classic Car Day. It's had an engine problem one of the staff told me, it's in the workshop near the entrance. If you come back on Thursday you can talk to the team repairing it. I had another appointment nearby on the Thursday so I left a bit early that morning and dropped in to Brooklands on my way.

Sure enough there was a hive of activity in the workshop with 5 or so Brooklands volunteers and staff milling around the Minx. The engine was suspended and being mounted on an engine stand, and a new clutch plate was sitting in a box on the back of the car. Jules, one of the Brooklands volunteers, who it turns out I already know by name and reputation from the Sunbeam Alpine Owners Club, explained that the troublesome noises that they were worried might be an engine problem were mainly down to a disintegrating clutch and so the fears of a more serious engine problem had been dispelled. They had checked the engine health anyway and carried out some precautionary rebuild work.

They seemed to be making good progress and I didn't want to get in the way so I left them to it. It was good to finally put a face to a name and I got a promise that they would let me have some more details of their work for the magazine when it was finished.

If all goes well the Aero Minx may be available for outings in 2025 as there are some interesting centenary events coming up that it is eligible for and the museum is keen for it to see the outside world whenever possible. Watch this space. Ed.



*The actual culprit turned out to be a disintegrating clutch. The new plate looks as though it could fit a more modern car. They took the opportunity to overhaul the engine as well.*

*Museum volunteer, Jules, was explaining the progress of the rebuild when I suddenly realised I knew him from the Sunbeam Alpine Owners Club! Small world!*



*I'm guessing the museum staff are allowed to wear red overalls. I didn't want to interrupt him in mid 'engine lift'.*



**BROOKLANDS  
MUSEUM**

# HOC WINDSCREEN LEAFLETS

Ask Tom if you would like to have some leaflets to hand out when you attend a show. These can be left on the windscreens of any Hillmans you see when you are out and about. We need to remind owners about the HOC!

## Hillman and Rootes History

William Hillman made his fortune manufacturing bicycles and was able to fulfil his ambition to produce cars, setting up a factory in Coventry. The Rootes Brothers, William and Reginald also decided to expand from their bicycle workshop to distribute, sell and service cars and commercial vehicles, re-establishing their business after the First World War. They became so successful they were able to acquire Kew World Motor, Clement Labor Ltd, British Light Steel Pressings and Sunner Motors. The Rootes Group was formed with William Hillman as Chairman, Clement Labor Ltd, British Light Steel Pressings and Sunner Motors. The Rootes Brothers took care to maintain commercial vehicles companies. The Rootes Brothers took care to maintain the different identities and markets of each company. Sunner for Sport, Humber for Upper Management, Hillman for Family and Singer for the Family (Army) market. They managed to build up the strength of the group by developing their designs and production methods during the difficult 1930's.



## The First Rootes Hillmans and WW2

The Hillman Wizard was launched in 1931 as a 'new car for world markets', although its success was limited. Time was needed to develop and re-organise the companies Rootes had acquired. The first Rootes Hillman was launched in 1932 which was an immediate success, lasting through the decade. The Rootes factories were turned over to the production of military vehicles during World War Two. Hillman Rootes was a key member of the Ministry of Supply and He also played a major role in the rebuilding of Coventry after the massive bombing in November 1940. Finally becoming Sir William Rootes, Knight Commander of the British Empire. Rootes built 3 in 7 of all British Bombers and 60% of all armoured cars and by the end of the war was one of the major employers in Great Britain. Rootes

were also a key part of the recovery drive through exports and they established factories in Australia amongst others and Hillman cars were also manufactured under the Isuzu brand. Hillmans and other Rootes marques were a common sight on the roads of the various Commonwealth countries through the 1950's.



## The Slow Decline, Chrysler and Peugeot

By the 1960's the privately owned Rootes Group was not able to compete with the investments of the larger Corporation owned manufacturers and the burden of opening a new factory in Scotland to build the Imp, under Government pressure, led to the invitation to Chrysler to take a 50% share in the Group. For several reasons, including strike action, delayed delivery of the Imp, inefficient production practices and outdated Quality Control practices, a full takeover became necessary and was agreed in 1967. During this period Rootes vehicles generally remained better equipped than the competition and this was a key selling point, albeit cars like the Super Mine were not a key selling point. The situation improved with the introduction of the Hunter and Avenger but Chrysler were unable to maintain their profitability in Europe and sold to Peugeot in the late 1970's. Peugeot had no feelings of nostalgia for the old Rootes products and so the chapter was closed.



## Contacting and Joining the HOC

Click on the Membership & Renewals link on the HOC website and follow the instructions on the MemberJoin page, entering your details and proceeding to the payment section. Note that we are collecting much information on your Hillman car(s) as the new membership form enables us to collect a usable information about the surviving cars and their history.

<https://memberjoin.co.uk/hillmanownersclub/renew>



This leaflet has been placed on your car by a member of the Hillman Owners Club (HOC) and is an invitation to join us and see how membership of the club can increase your enjoyment of your car and help to keep it on the road. Read about the club inside.



HILLMAN HUNTER MARK II BETTER THAN EVER!

## The HOC Mission and Objectives

The HOC exists to promote the preservation and use of all Hillmans, and to provide members with relevant advice and assistance. We promote a friendly atmosphere so that members will benefit by sharing their interest in, and experiences of, owning Hillman vehicles. It is the only Hillman Club to encompass ALL Hillman models from ALL eras and the ONLY Hillman club to provide the price a regular full colour magazine. We encourage you to join up and become part of the Hillman community!



The Hillman Owners Club  
The Club for All Hillman Owners

## Noted Hillman Models



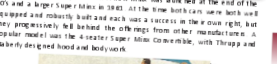
1920's and 30's. The Wizard and Wizard. The Wizard was Hillman's most successful vintage model. The Wizard, introduced for international markets, was the popular butyrous within the Rootes Group production processes used in modern and new designs introduced.



1930's Mine. The Mine was successful throughout the 1930's and played a key role in the success of Hillman in the pre-war car market. There are various models including the 400 cc and 450 cc models.



1950's The new Imp range was a great success for Hillman post-war and through the 1950's with several improvements in design made during the decade. The California model was part of the American post-war.



1960's Mine and Super Mine. A new Mine was launched at the end of the 50's and a larger Super Mine in 1960. All the new Hillmans, save both used they progressively fell behind the offerings from other manufacturers. A popular model was the 4-door Super Mine convertible, with a large and highly designed hood and body work.



1960's The Imp was built under all the Hillman, Singer and Sunbeam brand names. Legally, it was poorly built and it took some time to meet out all the issues. The Imp has a very strong following today. It was one of the few cars to challenge the Mini in the 1960's.



1970's Hunter and Avenger. Hillman hit pay dirt with their use of the 1967 London to Sydney Rally, with a Hillman Hunter. The engine was by now well tried and tested and the car itself proved to be very durable. It was 'hugely popular' and the Hunter and Avenger models. The Avenger became a 'hugely popular' and was 'hugely popular' in a 'hugely popular' and 'hugely popular'.

## Hillmans in Competition



We don't know of any surviving vintage of historic competition Hillmans but the London to Sydney Rally in 1967 was a real test with continued participation by the surviving cars, race cars and replicas in modern historic rallying. Central and the Hillman Hunter with the blue and white livery of a Hillman Hunter and was to fight the Ford Escort and the 1967 Ford Escort. The Hillman Hunter was a 1967 Ford Escort and was to fight the Ford Escort and the 1967 Ford Escort.



The Rootes Archive Trust

The HOC is active in its support for the Rootes Archive Trust and Centre which maintains all the surviving design documents for the Rootes Group. Part of the membership subscription is donated annually to help maintain the Centre and its valuable information. Some meetings are held at the Centre.



## Website and Facebook



The HOC website provides the contact details for the committee members, details of forthcoming events, members' classified ads, insurance valuations, information on recovering a registration, joining details and club services among others.



The club also supports and maintains several Facebook sites where all enthusiasts can discuss technical details, and find out the latest news. You don't need to be a paid-up member to access these pages.

## Club Regalia

The club has a wide selection of attractive regalia including key-rings, coffee mugs, t-shirts, sweat shirts, baseball caps and car badges. These can be ordered from the web site or from the magazine.



## The Coventry Spire Magazine

Coventry Spire is published by the HOC in full colour every 3 months and includes feature articles, technical hints and tips, stories from the archives, classified adverts and member contributions, both from individuals and area reports, details of forthcoming events and contact details of the various club officials and area meetings. This high quality magazine is at the core of the experience of club membership and is issued to all paid-up members.



## OUT AND ABOUT - POWDERHAM



I thought you might like to see the photo of the Sunbeam Rapiers at Powderham Rally this year with our Super Minx in the middle. Sadly very few Hillmans on display but there were a couple of very nice examples of the Husky.

I am trying to find a chrome front bumper for our 1970 Commer PB and wondered if anyone within the HOC would be willing to sell one?

Best wishes, Mark Thompson. Email: [m.thomson321@btinternet.com](mailto:m.thomson321@btinternet.com)



## OUT AND ABOUT - LEY HILL

It seems that David and Yvette Dickinson (blue Super Minx Convertible) and Heather Bickerton (Glen Green Minx Convertible) are vying for the most photographic inclusions in the magazine this year! And so their competition continued at Ley Hill. The meeting is organised by Neil Lamond, a Sunbeam Rapier club member and as such it seems to attract a very reasonable Rootes attendance due to publicity "in the family". I noticed that the Hemel Hempstead Sunbeam area had a strong gathering with some nice Alpines and Rapiers. One of them, Jerome Senn, is a supplier of Alpine spare parts and could be a very useful contact for us Hillman Owners. He has access to a replacement Weber for the Series Super Minx and Minx models. I hovered over one of their members who was trying to coax his new H120 back into life after an electrical problem but he seemed to know exactly what he was doing so I left him to it. I had bravely attended the show without any spares or tools (a bit of a risk) so I would not have been particularly useful anyway! David and I went in convoy with Nathan Jacobs in his green Humber Sceptre. It certainly makes the day more enjoyable if you have a group of friends with you. Walking round the field I noticed a superb deep red Super Minx Convertible. It belonged to Keith Langley. I have a dread of getting names and captions wrong in the magazine so imagine my horror and shame that his wife decided to pose in the photo and I didn't make a note of her name. 1,000 apologies.

The Ley Hill meeting is definitely a recommended outing for Hillman owners. It helps that the facilities include good food and drink and a pavillion with all facilities.



***David Dickinson's Blue Super Minx Convertible, Nathan Jacob's Sceptre and my convertible at Ley Hill***



***Above: Keith Langley's deep red Super Minx Convertible***

***Below: Heather Bickerton's Series IIIC Minc Convertible. She was having a civilised picnic from her boot with a friend***



## OUT ANDABOUT - GERRARDS CROSS



*As reported last year, the Gerrards Cross Charity mid-week gathering is a fine way to spend an afternoon and the locale attracts some super-prestigious motors. David and Yvette Dickinson, Heather Bickerton and myself were the only Hillmans. I gave the new HOC Leaflets a trial run on my windscreen and several people stopped to read them and asked questions like "whatever happened to Hillman?"*



## PETER SAINTY'S VINTAGE RUNNING

Through Ray Sellers, I had an interesting correspondence with the owner of a Scottish registered red 1919 Peace Model 11hp Hillman, with an Avon body, which he had recently inherited from his late father (a former member). The Peace Model was only made for a single year, so they are not common vehicles, though this one is not unique, as there is a yellow one elsewhere in the UK. The Peace Model left the factory in Elephant Grey coachwork, and the fact that both the cars we know about have been repainted in brighter colours perhaps indicates the unpopularity of the factory finish. However, it seems likely that its connection to the end of World War 1 persuaded the Hillman Motor Car Co that a sombre colour would be more fitting than a fairground appearance.

My Fourteen has not been very active this year, though it is scheduled to attend an event at the end of August. There seems to have been a sudden change this year in the attitude of owners, and perhaps event organisers, with regard to Vintage vehicles, and very few seem to be appearing (the exceptions being of course the VSCC events). There seem to be two main factors to this – firstly, the move towards more modern classics (up to, I am told, 2010!), which is inevitable as younger generations gravitate towards the cars their parents owned and ran; and secondly, the undoubted complexities of driving in modern traffic, with people who have absolutely no idea of how an elderly car performs, and are prepared to give no quarter. This is not new – even in the 1970s, there were drivers who assumed that pre-war vehicles could only travel at 25 mph but (perversely) would be able to stop on a sixpence (2½p) if they decided to cut in front and stand on the anchors. The difference now is the quantity of traffic, and it is not always possible to stick to the byways to which our cars are more suited. Certainly the Moffat event this year was almost devoid of Vintage cars (I only saw two or three), and not many pre-war cars either. It should be added, though, that although the Fourteen cannot hope to keep up with modern traffic, its steering and brakes are a lot better than many cars of the pre-1950 era.

Tony Jones has his Fourteen Coupe back on the road, and used it recently for a family wedding.

Peter J Sainty.

HILLMAN				
PRICE LIST				
FOURTEEN				
Tourer	..	..	..	£275
Safety Tourer	..	..	..	£290
Saloon	..	..	..	£295
Safety Saloon	..	..	..	£338
6-Light Weymann Saloon	..	..	..	£338
Segrave Model	..	..	..	£338
Drop-Head Coupé	..	..	..	£378

*The Fourteen price list  
from 1930*

## A MAN WITH A PASSION

As I hinted in the last edition I had invited Jeff Lawrence to tell up about his passion for Rootes cars. We had exchanged emails where he told me about an article about his cars published 10 years ago in Classic Car Mart. He was also very complimentary about the new format of the magazine so how could I refuse to include it? In truth we want Jeff to bring us up to date with his activities as he is a serial Rootes restorer. He sent a picture of his current Minx IIIB Convertible. This is a reminder of the CCM article, all rights acknowledged:



"I tell people I've got a collection of classic cars," laughs Jeff Lawrence, "and they're probably picturing E-Types or MGs – certainly not Rootes cars!"

That single comment though rather neatly sums up the status of the Rootes Group products in the classic car scene. The '50s and '60s cars from brands like Singer, Hillman and Sunbeam are pretty rare these days, yet their glamorous transatlantic style was a world away from the often rather dowdy competition when they were new.

A self-confessed Rootes fan, Jeff points out how his first classic, a 'sit-up-and-beg' Ford Popular, would have been on sale at the same time as the Gazelle convertible you see here. Yes, the Singer would have been more expensive but the plain black Ford and the befinned two-tone Singer may as well be from different worlds.

Underneath they may not have been so different though: Rootes had a reputation both for producing high-quality cars yet also for being conservative with the mechanical specification, often spinning multiple models off the same chassis and drivetrain.

In the Britain of the '50s and early '60s though, that was very much what the buying public wanted and proved to be a shrewd strategy. Ultimately of course, the catastrophic finances of the Imp would bring the empire

to a crashing halt in the arms of Chrysler, but when Jeff's cars were produced, Rootes was something of a European powerhouse – indeed William (later Lord) Rootes' stated aim was to become a European General Motors.

Jeff's own interest in Rootes classics began in early childhood, growing up in the Bedfordshire town of Dunstable which was the manufacturing home of Commer Cars Ltd, one of the many Rootes subsidiaries. With father and grandfather both working for the company and the family living in a company owned and rented house, Jeff and his brothers spent a happy childhood playing in and around the new Commer trucks and vans parked just over the garden fence.

Car-mad Jeff spent hours wandering round the ranks of shiny new Rootes cars in the staff car park picking out his ideal spec from the massed ranks of Minxes, Huskies, Rapiers, Hawks and Gazelles and even persuaded a tolerant dad to get him driving on private land from the age of 10.

Leaving school at 16, Jeff's first job was as an apprenticeship technician at the local BL/MG dealership, quickly acquiring an Austin A35 as soon as he reached driving age.

A long career in the motor industry saw him work his way up the ladder to service receptionist engineer, workshop controller, sales manager and then general manager, but despite working in the trade all week, his passion for



cars had never gone away. All of which explains why a 40th birthday present saw family members club together to find £1000 for a classic car. Said funds duly purchased that Ford Popular which set Jeff off on the road of classic car ownership, which was to encompass two Ford Pops, a couple of Ford Pop vans, an Anglia 100E van, a Singer Gazelle saloon, no less than three Singer Gazelle convertibles, a Hillman Minx convertible and a Hillman Husky.

The collection currently includes a '61 Gazelle convertible, a 1960 Minx convertible and a Husky. The Gazelle is the car which Jeff has

owned for the longest period: some 12 years in fact, having bought it after owning a Gazelle saloon for a while and trading up to the open version. A Series Ilic example, it has the 1592cc engine with a four-speed floor change and Jeff reckons it's a superb example of an unmolested example, being largely original except for some cosmetic paintwork on the lower panels.

In Powder Blue with a contrasting white flash, the Gazelle's Raymond Loewy-styled body looks really striking, especially with the blue tonneau cover, hood and carpets.

This was a period when Rootes was producing

what is known as the 'Audax' models under several different name plates and Jeff's 1960 Hillman Minx convertible is essentially the same car as the Gazelle. In this case it's a Series IIB and is powered by the 1494cc version of the same OHV engine.

Unlike the Gazelle, the Minx was fully restored last year, the work including a full body respray and in Old English White with bright red interior it looks more Corvette than Coventry.

The third Rootes car in the collection is the Hillman Husky which despite lacking the glamour of the convertible cars is a real rarity. Produced



by the factory as an estate car, the Husky was essentially a Commer Cob van with rear side windows fitted at the factory and proper rear seats. Many Cobs were bought new as vans and then converted later with owners adding side windows and rear seat to avoid purchase tax which applied to cars but not vans, but the Husky was a proper factory-built model. It's essentially built on a shortened Minx chassis and shares the Minx's running gear and front end styling.

Jeff acquired the car in 2013 after a long search for a Series I Husky in original condition and with the 1390cc engine it features the

four-speed floor change and is a delight to drive, reckons Jeff. On more than one occasion he's been known to load it up with stock and drive several hundred miles to a book fair.

Something which you wouldn't generally have ordered on the Cob is the two-tone Salmon Red and Foam White paintwork, which back in 1960 would have reinforced the point that this Husky was a proper estate car, not a converted van.

So what's it like owning and running these forgotten Rootes Group cars? Surprisingly easy, says Jeff. In two decades of ownership,

he reckons he's never found himself unable to source parts for any of these models, whether original or remanufactured.

Jeff admits that he did entertain thoughts of adding a Sunbeam Rapier to complete the collection, but with a used book business competing for storage space in the garages and outbuildings at home, he's reluctantly thinning the collection down and you'll find the Gazelle in the classified section of this very issue.

"I'll regret it, I know," he admits. Maybe he'll end up with that Rapier after all... **CCM**

## THE GREAT BRITISH CAR JOURNEY



The Great British Car Journey held their inaugural Rootes Day on 18th August. You can't have too many Rootes Days!

One of the stars was Jack Bonner's 1966 Minx which was owned from new by the same family but stored away after a small accident. The car sat in a dry garage for 30+ years until the owner's death and was reconditioned 18 years later when it was sold to Jack for lack of use.

ThRootes Day co-incided with the Sunbeam Alpine National and was visited by several Alpines and Rapiers as part of their "day out tour". There were also several Imps in attendance.





There was also a super rare Sunbeam Venezia driven over from Belgium by owner Jean-Paul Piers with his wife Christine. The Venezia is effectively based on a shortened Super Minx/Sceptre floorpan with a tubular frame and aluminium panels. Venezias were built in Italy by Touring of Milan and carry the Superleggera badging as well as the Touring crest. This compares to Aston Martin Superleggeras which don't qualify for the crest as their bodies were built in the UK to Touring specification. In the words of the great Michael Caine, not many people know that!



***Left: Sunbeam Venezia. I spoke to Jean-Paul, the owner, when I was at the Sunbeam National the day before. If you have the Superleggera script on your car then you are a member of a very exclusive club. However to be really exclusive you also need the Touring crest!***

## FOR SALE & WANTED

**\* AVAILABLE:** I have a set of doors to give away as follows - Rootes Hillman Arrows classic car doors Hunter, Minx, Vogue, Sceptre. Set of 4 doors. Decent condition only two have slight repairs needed as shown in pictures. All have all glass, handles and locks and levers. All but one hinge included. No door cards. Pictures available for condition, I have not cleaned them, dust and storage dirt present, been stored in dry area. Collection only from Barnet, North London. No returns, no warranty or guarantee given. Any inspection welcome. I'm happy to answer any questions, or provide more photos. Contact Tim Bury Tel: 0203 6481424 Email: [timburyhome@aol.com](mailto:timburyhome@aol.com)



\* **WANTED:** I am trying to find a chrome front bumper for our 1970 Commer PB and wondered if any contacts within the HOC would be willing to sell one? Mark Thompson Email: [m.thomson321@btinternet.com](mailto:m.thomson321@btinternet.com)

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\* **FOR SALE: Hillman Hunter Estate 1972/1973** The car has been barned stored for 25+ years with the intention of getting back on the road, but I haven't got round to it. It has a lot of spares included in the sale which I can list on request. It has new sills and out-rigger. £1500.00 spent on welding, approx 4 years ago, it now has 2 very small areas of rust left as can be seen from the pictures. (bottom of the off side screen pillar and the bottom of the front wing) I was going to fit a different engine so the cross member has been modified, the engine and over drive gearbox are just sat in. There is a standard cross member in the spare package. The engine is a Humber Sceptre with twin Strombergs and has been sat for a long time in a barn. The suspension has been uprated all round, hence its higher than standard. It can be lowered back to original very easily. I have the log book in my name. £1725 Based in Taunton, Somerset. Contact Neal Vile, Tel: 07796 521518, Email: [trialer55@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:trialer55@hotmail.co.uk)



## FOR SALE & WANTED ...

**\* FOR SALE: Hillman Avenger 1500GL.** I am the executor of my parents estate and part of that is my mothers 1970 Hillman Avenger 1500 GL. It was my grandfathers from new. Mileage is 60,214. It has not been used for 15-20 years but has been garaged all that time although a garage roof leak has caused rust on the base of the NS front door. I have every reason to think the car will run, although it needs a battery and fresh petrol. The base of the passenger door is not good as you will see but I believe the sill and floor pan is sound. It was always properly maintained although I need to look for the paperwork. Basically we are looking to sell it to someone who would appreciate it. I have several more photos and the car is currently in Gravesend in north Kent. Offers around **£4,000** Adrian Lee. Tel: 01694 781460/07962 973560 Email: [adrianl63@btinternet.com](mailto:adrianl63@btinternet.com)



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**\* AVAILABLE: Hillman Super Minx Mk1/2 windscreen/glass** We have all of the glass from a Hillman Super Minx. It may be of interest to any of your members. It seems wrong to scrap it. Caroline Sanderson Telephone Number: 07920030107 Email: [cmsanderson38@gmail.com](mailto:cmsanderson38@gmail.com)



**\* FOR SALE: Hillman Super Minx Estate reg No. JOG 60E.** This Super Minx Estate is one of a special order Rootes received, instructing them to produce 10, but it had to have a diesel engine fitted! They fully fitted the order including 2 other body shells that they had left. I understand JOG 60E was one of them. All 12 were fitted with the Perkins 4/108 Deisel Engine. JOG 60E is all original (including the paintwork). The only non original items are the carpets, which I fitted. The originals are still fitted in the car. There are a number of extras that Rootes fitted at the factory, the main one being the Borg Warner Overdrive Unit. This Estate Car is more or less how it left the factory in 1967. Had a new clutch fitted in 2023, total mileage only 38000 from new. I've owned the car since 1998. Prize winner at shows etc. Also been used on Period TV shows. Date of first reg 15/02/1967. Only reason selling due to my age therefore for me it is the end of an era. Location nr. York. **£15,000** Keith Wishart Tel: 07979 995586



## FOR SALE & WANTED ...

**\* FOR SALE: 1972 Humber Sceptre Mk3 (Hillman Hunter with leather and wood!).** £2,450 Lots of new parts new sills rear wheel arches, wheels, tyres, brake pipes. Fuel tank removed and cleaned, new head gasket and head skim. Lot more done, starts and stops. MoT till September. New carpet. Bad parts: seat tatty, engine needs tuning. Car in High Wycombe. Nathan Jacobs. Mob: 07507 807158



**\* FOR SALE: 1962 Hillman Super Minx Convertible Mk1.** £8,500 o.n.o. Car was purchased by my dad from someone in Bembridge, around early sixties possibly never been off the Island (IoW) but couldn't confirm that. Was extensively restored by him, so an older restoration. The current mileage 79,729 car is now MOT exempt and subject of SORN notice but was last tested 27th July 2006. Car is in our garage at home, Howgate Road and viewing is welcome. Mobile 07790 558707 Linda Collyer. Email: [linda.collyer@gmail.com](mailto:linda.collyer@gmail.com)



## FOR SALE & WANTED ...

\* **WANTED:** We are the proud owners of a 1932 Hillman Minx. We are from Portugal. We are looking for wire wheels for our car. Can you help? Patricia Rei, Telephone Number: +351939435959, Email: [patricia.rei@sapo.pt](mailto:patricia.rei@sapo.pt)

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\* **FOR SALE: 1934 Hillman Minx** (showing 8000miles) Offers around **£5,250** Not many of these left. New tyres, new battery, new radiator. Good condition and drives well. Fitted with the free wheel gearbox that works. Shabby interior lets it down a little. Buy yourself a piece of English heritage. V5 here & big box of spares. Located Nr Horsham, West Sussex. Ring or Text Phil on 07860 852013



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hi Glenn

We met briefly at Gaydon last Sunday. I am the owner of the 1955 Minx CSV 493. Having looked at the much improved recent issue of Coventry Spires that you gave me I have decided to re-join; I sense that the society has 'turned a corner'.

Having received the summer edition of your magazine yesterday I read with interest about a visit to the Prescott Hillclimb, and your suggestion that it be followed up by other Hillman owners. As I live within about 5 miles of that location I would be happy to support that idea.

Another venue in this area you might like to consider for advertising to members is the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway. I am aware that other car clubs have used our railway as a venue for a visit / gathering, and the carpark at Toddington station proves a popular spot to park in. There is a good Cafe on site, and there is the added attraction of being able to watch, or even ride on, steam-hauled trains.

I have been a working volunteer there for some 14 years now, and would be happy to be a go-between the society and the railway for such a gathering.

Kind Regards, **Russell Smith**

*Hi Russell, Many thanks for the email. I definitely want to have a Hillman gathering either at Prescott or at the Railway in 2025. Maybe an idea for Drive-It-Day? Ed.*

Hi Glenn,

I hope Le Mans trip went well for you and that you had a good time. Last weekend I uncovered the mystery of the bonnet ornament on ALC 538A. Having had no success through Coventry Spires or Facebook, I met someone last weekend who identified it immediately. It is from a 1953 Standard Vanguard Phase 1a. Quite an ugly car! It looks better on the much more elegant Super Minx! Standard seemed to change the mascot for each Phase of Vanguard and I have a photograph to show you.

All the best,  
**Revd Dr David Dickinson**



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ...

Hi,

I just read the article about the Car Susan's husband was restoring and as you rightly stated - a buyer did indeed surface, me! I already have the same car which I have just got on the road having renewed all brakes, attended to the lack of any electrics and a multitude of mechanical issues together with no hood (pic included below).

My initial interest was indeed a big selection of spares, but looking over the car from Susan suggests 'Charlotte' is really very good condition and if anything, better than the one I already own. There doesn't appear to be any rust, and no welding - not bad for a 76 year old car! I think this could be a good starting point for a concours, or very near concours vehicle - so fingers crossed! Therefore my plan is to mothball 'Charlotte' for a short while whilst I sort a few other projects out (house, boat and plane!), and then look towards organising the spray job and then a careful reassembly - watch this space...

By the way, if any one trips across spares for a Minx Phase 2, please do let me know!

All the best, Tim Goodwin



Hi Glenn,

It was lovely to read and see the pictures of the Hillman in this months magazine. Thank you so much for publishing it and helping me find it a new owner.

Sue

*[Paul contacted me to see if I know of a Hunter GLS for sale, I gave him Arrow5's details]*

Hi Glenn,

I emailed Paul Marshall last evening on EBay, how's that for coincidence. We've agreed to telephone today for a chat and go from there.

Couple of shots of my cars enclosed, both owned in the early 80's. They were relatively cheap and thought they were v cool & understated as almost no one of my age group knew they existed so everyone wanted a hot Escort/Cortina. I was very young and would've liked to have had available a bigger budget to develop the mechanicals better. For the yellow car, Howdens of Harrogate



supplied loads of panels and parts for peanuts when they changed over to Peugeot. I sent the cylinder head to Holbay for modification plus a mild cam, think it was HR270/2, all for £480 which was more than I paid for the car. I had the car set up at GRV Littleborough by Harry Radcliffe. He wasn't impressed as the cam wasn't much better than standard and flow wasn't brilliant so we only managed a steady 100bhp at the road wheels and a modest increase in torque.

So with many years hindsight and access to much more technology I thought I may have another look.

Regards. **Paul Roberts.**

*Hi Paul, please let us know how you get on! Ed.*



Hillman Mink



Hillman Husky



Hillman Hunter



Hillman Imp

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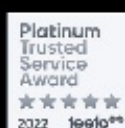
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