

Friends

September 2011



Next year the much-loved Coventry Festival of Motoring moves to a new home at Stoneleigh Park, one of the UK's leading event venues, and set in 250 acres of lovely Warwickshire countryside. Vehicle owners who have previously supported the event and of course an enthusiastic public were disappointed to learn that this year's festival had been cancelled. However we can now look forward to the facilities offered at the new venue. The festival has also been moved to a new date—August 25 and 26. Further details on the Festival of Motoring website.

Chairman's Chat

Friends' contributions to the newsletter are always appreciated. So far this year, we have seen interesting vehicles spotted in foreign parts from the Far East to the Welsh borders, transport, photographs from family archives, articles based on Friends' personal interests and news of Friends and their cars. Despite the variety of material, the number of Friends contributing so far this year has been quite small, less than 10% of the membership.

Outside these contributions, the bulk of the newsletter's content comes from the efforts of Keith Draper. When there are few contributions, this can be quite daunting, particularly bearing in mind that Keith is already responsible for designing and compiling the newsletter and delivering it ready for printing or emailing.

Keith's contribution is hugely appreciated but all too easy to take for granted. Can members contribute more?

Take a look at past copies of the newsletter. What do you consider interesting? Do you have knowledge or experience that could be equally interesting to like-minded people? Do you have pictures that tell a story? Are there features missing that you think should be included in the newsletter? To sum up – do you think you could be a contributor? If yes, please get in touch with Keith to let him know what you can offer. If your answer lies anywhere between "maybe" and "probably not", it's still worth you contacting Keith. With his experience, he'll probably have a better idea than you as to how interesting you can be.

Bench tribute to George



A new bench has been unveiled at London Road Cemetery, Coventry as a tribute to industrialist George Singer, whose firm became one of Britain's leading manufacturers of motor vehicles. Members of two Singers owners' clubs have worked with the Friends of London Road Cemetery to provide the bench sited near to the monument in his memory. An appropriate way to mark the centenary of his death. Three Singers from very different periods in the firm's history are pictured on parade near to the new bench.

Wheels and Waves

Vehicles used by British surfers from the 1950s to the present day form the basis of a new show that starts on October 20 and runs through until March 2012. Complemented with an array of artefacts it will intrigue devotees and the general public.



Next meeting Thursday 15 September

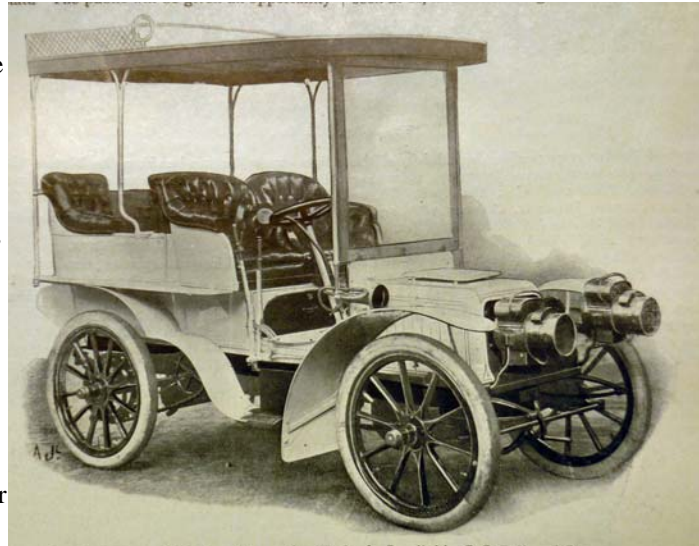
Trip by 333 to the 18th century Black Boy Inn on the canal side at Knowle
The bus will leave the Museum yard at 6.30 pm. **Early start!!!!**



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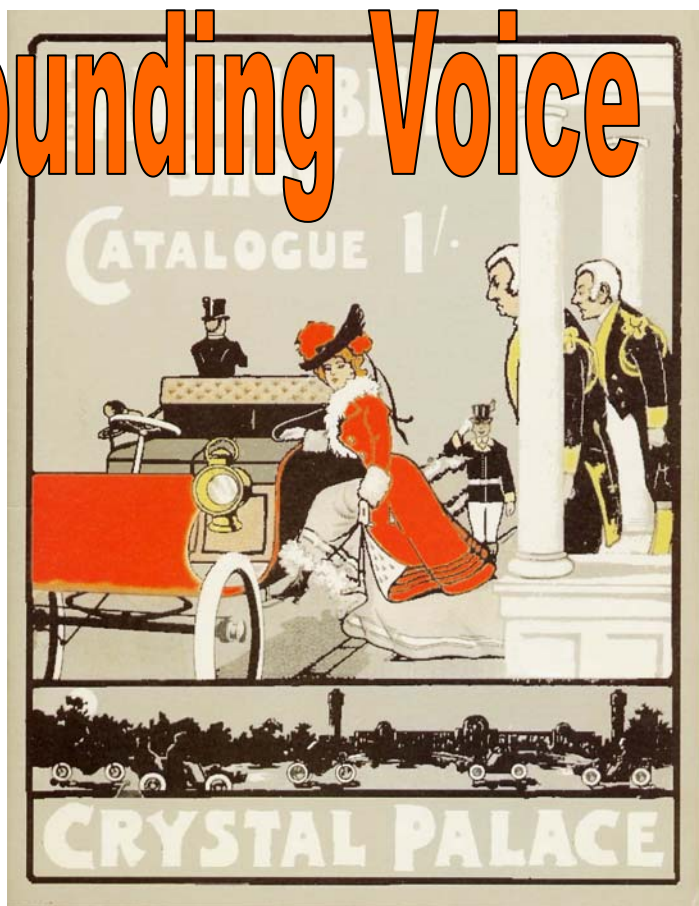
Frederick Simms, father of the British motor industry and founder of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, was born in 1863. He came from Hamburg where his English grandfather had established a trading company to equip the Newfoundland fishing fleet. When he was just 25 years old it was a chance meeting with Gottlieb Daimler at an exhibition in Bremen that led to the acquisition of British rights to a new power unit and the importing of Daimler engines through his London firm Simms and Company. He brought the words 'motor car' and 'petrol' into the English language and in 1893 founded the Daimler Motor Syndicate to handle the increasing demand for petrol engines. Two years later he met his client the Hon Evelyn Ellis and together they made the first long-distance motor journey in a Daimler-engined Panhard & Levassor that Ellis had just imported from France. That same year Simms announced the formation of the Daimler Motor Company. He was offered £35,000 in cash for the patent rights by company promoter Harry Lawson, who planned to control Britain's motor



One of the world's most important collections of motoring ephemera has recently been placed on long term loan to the Museum. Owned by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders it comprises books, periodicals, brochures and the like dating back to the dawn of motoring. In this issue we feature the founding of SMMT and its very first Motor Show at Crystal Palace. I will dig out more gems from the collection in coming months. Keith Draper

Founding Voice

trade and industry through his British Motor Syndicate. Simms accepted instantly making his shareholders an amazing 200% profit on their investment. Some of the money was used to save the ailing German Daimler company but then Simms loosened his ties with Daimler to pursue new interests. After the first London to Brighton Run in 1896 he founded the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1898 he designed the first motor lorry chassis for Daimler of Cannstatt and Milnes-Daimler of London. In 1899 he invented, designed and made the first four-cylinder engine with mechanically-operated inlet and exhaust valves on one side. He designed the first motor lawn-mower in 1902, and designed and patented the first motor plough and caterpillar type tractor the same year.



On top of all that Simms invented magneto ignition, a 100hp overhead camshaft engine, an automatic railway ticket dispenser, the first automatic telephone exchange, the first aeroplane joystick, the first air-brake for 'planes, an aero engine that pioneered the V6 layout, and the first application of gyroscope to aerial machines. Rather surprisingly he also found time to found the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Early days: (top right) Lord Dalmeny's Coming of Age Panhard supplied by C.S.Rolls and Company; (centre right) The Show Catalogue front cover; (right) Lunch at the Hotel Cecil in the Strand

On Tuesday, July 22, 1902, a group of some 32 businessmen sat down to lunch in the fashionable Hotel Cecil in the Strand. They all had one thing in common—they represented companies that built, traded in or promoted motor cars—and they were there to honour one of their number, S.F Edge of the Motor Power Company, who had just won Britain's first victory in international motor racing—the Gordon Bennett Trophy—at the wheel of a 30 hp Napier. But Frederick Simms, who had organised the lunch had an ulterior motive in his invitation. For good reason he had pulled the various trade factions together to form a corporate body of the motor trade with just the one annual exhibition each year. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders was born.



Early February 1903 saw the first SMMT motor show staged at the Crystal Palace. One press coverage indicated a successful event: "There is no doubt about it that the Palace Exhibition forms the most impressive and imposing show of automobiles that has ever been collected together in one place in this country, or probably any other. The impressive effect is undoubtedly heightened by the assemblage of all the principal exhibits in one long vista in the immense nave of the Crystal Palace. In this respect it is more impressive than the Paris Exhibition, and the numbers and importance of the exhibits themselves are not inferior."

Another report: "The Exhibition has been exceedingly well patronised by the public. On Saturday for instance the numbers admitted amounted to 32,000, and the class of visitor was distinctly above the average intelligence and, apparently in social position."

What a statement and they got away with it, no doubt!

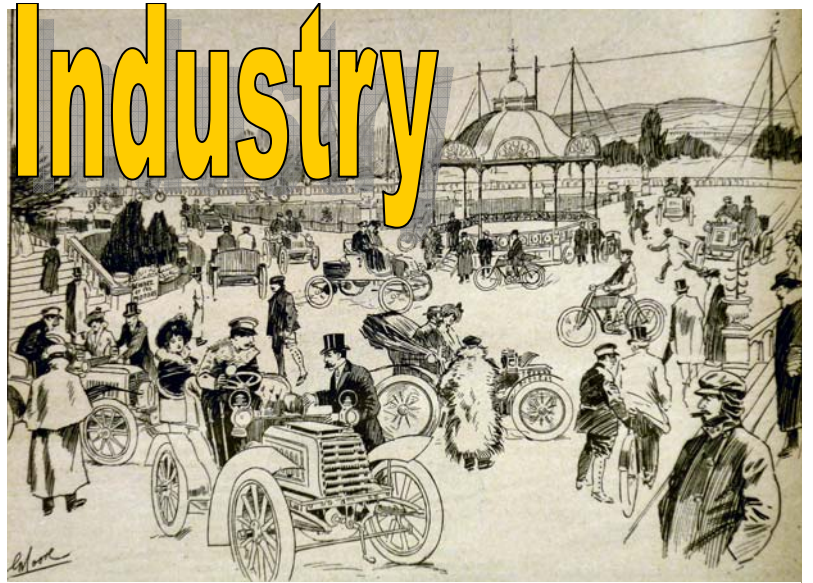
The Automotor Journal reported: "One of the main features of the exhibition was provided by the demonstration cars running in the

grounds. These were mostly assembled on the terrace between the palace and the North Tower, but they took runs all over the grounds and were able to give very pretty demonstrations of the controllability of the modern car round sharp corners and down steep hills on the road between the North Tower and the reservoir. The return journeys afforded excellent demonstrations of hill-climbing capabilities. Some very fine displays of expert steering were given at this corner, and sometimes things looked a little risky, but thanks to the assistance of a man with a red flag stationed at this point nothing ever happened.

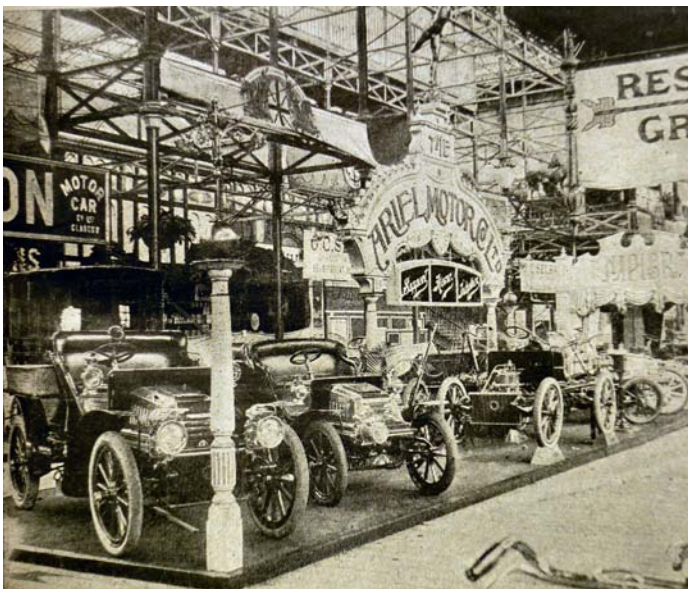
This man with the red flag was himself an interesting exhibit. He recalled forcibly the bad old days when a similar functionary was compelled by the wisdom of our legislators to walk in front of every self-propelled vehicle.

Great evidence of solid British progress is afforded, and a greater number of well designed, well-built and highly finished British cars were in evidence than ever before."

of the Motor Industry



Crystal Palace: An artist's impression (above) of demonstration cars running in the grounds between the palace and the North Tower; The colourful back cover of the show catalogue (left); The Ariel Motor Company of Birmingham stand (below left) Cars were produced from 1900 but assembly was transferred to the Coventry Ordnance works when its factory was sold to Lorraine Dietrich; A Milnes Daimler omnibus (below) was on display inside the palace. It was fitted with 3 inch twin high-speed Buffer solid tyres marketed by the Sirdar Rubber Company. The vehicle weighed 5¼ tons when loaded and carried 36 passengers.



British but French from Richard Dawe



Bob Aldridge, my next-door neighbour in Ffordun has owned this exotic French thoroughbred since 1990. It is a Salmson 2300S Coupe, and like all Salmsons it is right hand drive. The Paris-based Salmson company started life as a civil engineering firm in the 1880's and progressed to making aero engines in 1912. Emile Salmson died of a heart attack in 1917, but the company prospered, building bodies for Citroen and woodworking machines for airframe construction. They built GN cyclecars under licence until 1924 when the first production Salmsons appeared. A small number of British Salmsons were built in the UK during the 1930s.

Bob's fully restored example of the marque is one of only 70 known survivors worldwide and one of just two in the UK, the second one being off the road for many years. It has a 2.3 litre twin-cam 4-cylinder engine mated to a four-speed Cotal electro-magnetic gearbox giving smooth clutchless gear changes. Final drive is by torque tube.

The attractive 2+2 coupe body style was by Chapron of Paris, a prestigious coachbuilder. There are some neat touches: light pressure on the front of the door lever causes the rear end to flip out to provide a handle, and the rear lights are recessed into chromium plated housings. Just 241 were built before production ceased in 1957.

>With thanks to Anthony Pritchard, whose article in the August 2006 edition of *The Automobile* provided most of the facts for this report.

Update: The car was recently sold at auction for £22,000. A bargain?

Coming up



Wednesday, September 14 at 7.30 pm

An Evening with Lois Pryce, (pictured above) returns with a new talk about her intrepid travels across Africa.

Tuesday, September 20 at 7.30 pm

An Evening with John Favill

A former Villiers, Norton and Harley-Davidson design engineer, he talks about his career

Thursday, October 20 at 7.30 pm

An Evening with Quentin Willson—one of the UK's best-known television presenters and motoring experts. His subject: Driving the World—the UK Industry leads the world. Concessions for members of Friends at CTM. *The event is this year's Cyril Scott Memorial Lecture with all the proceeds going to the Teenage Cancer Trust.*

Monday, November 14 at 7.30 pm

An Evening with Austin Vince

This larger than life adventure motorcyclist returns with a new talk: 'Austin's Weird World of Post War Transport' Tickets available to purchase online for all events.



Richard Dawe also sends us this superb candid snap of Brian and Shirley Bromwich at the Shrewsbury Steam Rally on August Bank Holiday.

Committee member Brian restores vintage prams to the same high standard as his car renovations. Shirley has a huge collection of dolls, somewhere around 4500, and several superbly presented prams.

The smartly dressed couple were just about to join the parade of like-minded pram enthusiasts in the main arena.

>This year Shrewsbury Steam Rally celebrated its 50th year with record attendance of around 10,000.

The boom in interest from people of all ages was put down to programmes like the BBC's *Victorian Farm*, inspiring people to get outdoors and catch a glimpse of life in years gone by.

About 100 steam engines attended – more than double the usual 40 to 50 exhibits. Among them were six engines that attended the first steam rally in 1961. In total there were more than 1,000 exhibits including motorcycles and fairground organs.

Sounds like a good trip out next year for the 51st event.