

SAH Journal



The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Issue 249 *Electronic*

January-February 2011

HINDUSTAN

Ambassador *The Ideal family Car*

Mark II

AMBASSADOR

AMBASSADOR

Cars That Transcend Eras, page 9.

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Date Reminders

April 10-13, 2011
Spring Board Meeting
London, Ontario, Canada
jleight@huron.uwo.ca

June 10, 2011
Scharchburg Award Papers Due
john.heitmann@notes.udayton.edu

SAH Journal



The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Issue 249 January-February 2011

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SAH Journal (ISSN 1057-1973)

is published six times a year by the
Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Subscription is by membership
in the Society.

Membership dues are \$40 per year.
Send dues, membership inquiries
and changes of address to

Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

178 Crescent Road

Fairport, NY 14450 USA

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The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Find the Society of Automotive Historians
on the web at www.autohistory.org.

Copy Deadline for Journal 250
March 25, 2011

SAH Annual Awards

Benz Award, magazine article

2010 John L. Baekke, M.D., "The Lebarons: Heir Apparent to the Throne," in *The Reunion*
2009 Jim Chase, "Packard and Winton: The Transcontinental Rivalry," in *The Packard Cormorant*
2008 Jeffrey I. Godshall, "The End of the Future: Chrysler Corporation Cars of 1957," in *Collectible Automobile*
2007 Greg Fielden, "Breaking the Mold: NASCAR at Road America, 1956," in *Collectible Automobile*
2006 William Oosthoek, "Lucky Goes to Camp," in *Vintage Motorsport*

Bradley Award, research institution

2010 Automotive Research Library of the Horseless Carriage Foundation, La Mesa, California
2009 Gilmore Car Museum, Hickory Corners, Michigan
2008 Benson Ford Research Center at The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan
2007 National Auto History Collection of the Detroit Public Library
2006 SAE International, Warrendale, Pennsylvania

Brigham Award, magazine

2010 *Antique Automobile*, published by Antique Automobile Club of America. Editor-in-chief/design director
West Peterson
2009 *Collectible Automobile*, published by Publications International, Ltd. John Biel, editor-in-chief
2008 *Old Cars Weekly* published by F+W Publications, Angelo Van Bogart, editor
2007 *Charge Utile*, published by Histoire & Collections, Jean-François Colombet, rédacteur en chef
Hemmings Classic Car, published by Hemmings Motor News, Richard Lentinello, editor-in-chief
2006 *The Bulletin of the Vintage Sports-Car Club*, published by The Vintage Sports-Car Club, John Warburton,
editor

Cugnot Award, English language book

2010 Charles K. Hyde, *Storied Independent Automakers: Nash, Hudson and American Motors*
2009 Karl Ludvigsen, *Ferdinand Porsche, Genesis of Genius: Road, Racing and Aviation Innovation, 1900 to 1933*
2008 Sally H. Clarke, *Trust and Power: Consumers, the Modern Corporation and the Making of the United States Automobile Market*
2007 William Pelfrey, *Billy, Alfred and General Motors: The Story of Two Unique Men, A Legendary Company and a Remarkable Time in American History*
2006 Beverly Rae Kimes, *Pioneers, Engineers and Scoundrels: The Dawn of the Automobile in America*

Cugnot Award, Non-English language book

2010 Sébastien Faurès Fustel de Coulanges, *Fiat en Grand Prix, 1920-1930*
Hans-Jürgen Schneider and Halwart Schrader, *Legende: BMW 02*
2009 Manuel Lage, *1,000,000: Un Millón de Camiones y Buses Españoles*
2008 Christian Rouxel, *d'Azur à Total: Desmarais Frères, le premier grand pétrolier français*
2007 Horst Ihling, *Autorennsport in der DDR - BMW (Ost), EMW, Wartburg*
2006 Bernard Vermeylen, *Panhard & Levassor - entre tradition et modernité*

Friend of Automotive History

2010 Miles C. Collier
2009 C. Marshall Naul
2008 Thomas H. Brownell
2007 Malcolm Jeal
2006 Bobbie'dine Rodda

Ingersoll Award, non-print media

2010 Mark Theobald, Coachbuilt.com
2009 Michael Hamm, producer, director/writer; Kerrie Long, producer "The Greatest Auto Race on Earth"
2006 Terry Dunham, Automotive Research Services

Scharchburg Award, student paper

2009 Ted R. Mitchell, "Sit-Down Women: Gender and the 1936-7 General Motors Strike in Flint, Michigan"
2008 Peter S. Cajka, "Consumers, Cadillacs, and Civil Rights: The Social and Cultural Impact of the Automobile in Ebony, 1945-1965"
2007 Els De Vos, "The Development of the Garage in Rural Belgian Flanders"
2006 Katherine Anne Mechler, "General Motors: Innovations in American Social Class Structure"

A complete history of award winners may be found at: www.autohistory.org/awards.html

President's Message

Founded in 1969, SAH is 42 years old this year. Its members have been bound together by the Society's mission, "to encourage research, preservation, recording and publication of historical material concerning the development of the automobile and related subjects, from inception to the present day."

By its very mission, SAH is international. At least 25% of its nearly 1,000 members are from countries other than the United States. To fulfill its mission, chapters have developed, from several US chapters to its most active in Great Britain. Recognizing SAH's global reality, the Society has an annual Cugnot Award for excellence in books on automotive history written in languages other than English, and a winter meeting in Paris, designed for those unable to attend the Annual Meeting at Hershey, Pennsylvania, USA, in October. (Do we also need a Pacific Rim meeting?!) SAH has always been an all-volunteer organization, at both the parent

and chapter levels. But even when enthusiasts are also good managers, it is natural to focus on the history that brought us to the table, not the elements of management that forge a smooth-running association. An effective infrastructure has not grown with the Society. We need to work together to make our now-world-wide Society responsive to its members' needs, while giving it a much greater public presence and voice.

SAH's relationship with its chapters requires some re-examination. In anticipation of a meeting requested by our UK chapter, SAH of Britain (SAHB), I've been learning more about the history of our relations with our chapters. Both in the US and abroad, board awareness of issues appears reactive, not proactive. I look forward to the requested meeting with SAHB board and members in Bath, England, January 28. Look for a report elsewhere in this issue.

I invite any and all members of our other chapters to use this opportunity to contact me or any of the current

officers and board members with ideas, suggestions, comments, etc. Awareness, self-consciousness if you will, will not only address these issues but should also strengthen and enrich the larger organization. The SAH board has its spring meeting in April. Chapter relations are very much on the agenda. If we could receive your comments by then, they will enrich our discussion.

We have a lot on our plate. Two infrastructure pieces currently underway are a new website under construction and new membership management. We are streamlining our award criteria and delivery. Meeting protocols, virtual and actual, are being strengthened. All this has combined these last two years with a simultaneous turnover of editors for our publications, the heart of SAH. We are currently at an exciting phase in our development, which presents us with great new opportunities.

We look forward to hearing from you!
—Susan Davis

SAH members are invited to join the **Classic Car Club of America (CCCA)**

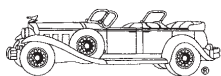
founded in 1952 to promote the preservation and restoration of distinctive motorcars built between 1925 and 1948.

The club publishes its *Bulletin* eight times a year and the quarterly *Classic Car* magazine.

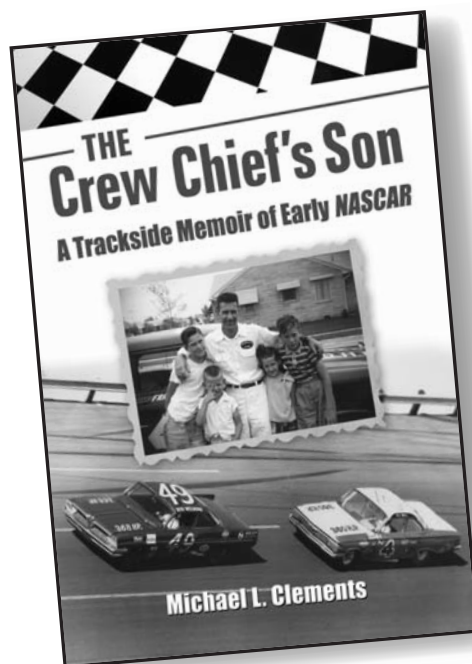
The club maintains a museum and research library on the grounds of the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan.

For membership details contact the club

CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA



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Letters

A Eulogy

From Jim Stansfield

SAH member *Harold (Hal) Wood* died December 26, 2010, from a long list of maladies. He was 85.

Hal introduced me to SAH in about 1999, shortly after I had joined the Packard Club, then joined the Classic Car Club of America and Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Club.

I met Hal in Portland, Oregon, in 1946, through other car nuts. I was fresh out of the Navy and was selling used cars for my father. Long story. I wandered off to college at University of Oregon and at Syracuse University, while Hal stayed in Portland, attending a couple of colleges.

We stayed in touch. I ended up in San Diego working for Convair in 1957, and Hal moved to Los Angeles a short time later, to work for the County in Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation. He had acquired a 1929 LaSalle rumble seat roadster in Portland, and brought it south with him.

I had a wife, four sons, and a house when Convair folded. Hal had trouble supporting the LaSalle and had given it to me to share and keep in repair about 1961. Just the tow trip

HORSELESS CARRIAGE GAZETTE

As you might expect from a club publication, the *Horseless Carriage Gazette* is chock full of exciting four-color photographs showing brass-era automobiles in action. First-generation cars don't get out often but, when they do, it is a real privilege to be along for the ride.

History buffs will enjoy a feature or two in each *Horseless Carriage Gazette* about marques both popular and obscure. In addition, more than 240 black & white images from the pre-1916 era were used as illustrations in the six 2007 issues.

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to San Diego is a story in itself. The car eventually ended up in Harrah's collection in Sparks in 1963, another long story. It was sold off in one of the auctions in 1986. Hal had married and eventually moved to Upland, California. I ended up at Douglas in Long Beach in 1964.

We have been friends a long, long time, and the last time I spoke to him was in November regarding the SAH event in Aliso Viejo, which he could not attend due to his health problems.

He leaves his wife, Barbara, and a son, Bob. Also a beautifully kept 1986 Cadillac Brougham sedan, which I'll try to advise them in selling.

I will miss him. My late wife and I owned a house in Costa Mesa for 40 years, and Hal and his family joined us for the 4th of July for many of those years. He was like one of the family, and all five of my kids share my feelings for Uncle Hal.

From Joe Bortz

I thought that the readers of *SAH Journal* would be interested in finding out what is going on with the restoration of two of the most important historic cars in the 20th century. Of course I am referring to the 1955 LaSalle Roadster and 4-door sedan.

These two particular cars were conceived by General Motors not only as a design exercise but also as an engineering exercise. Both cars had V6, aluminum block, double overhead cam, and fuel-injected engines with independent rear suspension and flexible drive shafts. These mechanical innovations never trickled down into production in the immediate years after the cars were shown at the 1955 Motorama. However the Europeans, particularly Mercedes, brought some of these features in as their great innovations and were eventually able to overshadow General Motors in terms of engineering innovation.

The reason that I consider the two LaSalle's so important to American automotive history is because had GM



picked up on these great engineering innovations and put them into the following years of production I feel that the entire course of American automotive history would have been different. The Europeans would not have been able to take such a foothold in the United States. General Motors would have remained the number one corporation in the world. Most people who study the history of the concept cars of the 1950s and 1960s don't know that the two LaSalle's had all the external features of the engine in place but there were no internal parts for the engines and therefore these cars were "push mobiles."

Now that we have finished the 1955 Chevrolet Biscayne Motorama restoration we are getting back to the restoration of the 1955 LaSalle Roadster. The Biscayne is viewable at the link below:

[youtube.com/watch?v=Pae3qVRPdPw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pae3qVRPdPw)

The below link will take you to the first video that was prepared showing the history of the LaSalle roadster from its GM Motorama days to its junkyard days and now the beginning of its restoration:

[youtube.com/watch?v=PWhjxCKw-34](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWhjxCKw-34)

Dave Holls told me that it was the original intention of General Motors to electrify both the LaSalle Roadster and the LaSalle 4-door sedan in the trunk. In other words rather than having it pushed by a bunch of personnel at a car show it would move on its own power.

Chapter News

The Society of Automotive Historians in Britain

President Davis' Remarks

"...and as ever, Britain 'rules'!" S. S. Davis, reporting on Chapter activity in her President's Letter, *SAH Journal* #245, May-June 2010.

Indeed, of all our Chapters, the Society of Automotive Historians in Britain is our most active. The quality of SAHB publications, *Aspects of Motoring History* and *SAHB Times*, speaks for itself—simply outstanding and easily the equal of SAH's *Journal* and *Automotive History Review*, all in pursuit of our shared purpose.

SAH members have been bound together by the Society's mission since 1969, "to encourage research, preservation, recording and publication of historical material concerning the development of the automobile and related subjects, from inception to the present day." With this mission to guide us and with good will in all its parts, the Society's survival as a whole is our aim. Addressing issues that potentially divide us can and should result in a stronger association.

Recent concerns indicated by *Peter Card* and *Malcolm Jeal* about SAH's relationship to SAHB, not to mention to all its Chapters and the new Motor Sports Section, bear serious reflection—and appropriate response. With this in mind, *Tony Beadle* has kindly provided me space in an issue of *SAHB Times* to address the topic:

How does the SAH Board view its relationship with the membership outside the USA?

In preparing this response, it has become clear that this question refers to our entire membership, national as well as international.

This topic has never been an item on an agenda nor a primary topic of conversation at meetings that I recall since I joined the board in 2003. Instead, we have received specific reports of SAHB's activities through *Kit Foster* and of the Paris meeting from attendees like the late *Taylor Vinson*.

This may well be a question of content vs. process, or, put another way, of self-consciousness of the whole rather than just its parts. Certainly, "the whole" has never been a topic of conversation that I remember. This may be at the heart of problems, perceived and real, rather than an intentional or unintentional slight. In fact, we have experienced dissent from other Chapters. SAH leadership bears responsibility in both international and national cases.

In the meantime, internally SAH has gone through a major change over the last several years—whether growth spurt or sea-change is a matter of discussion. This year we finally finished correcting a reporting technicality that preserves our non-profit status. Also, over a long period of time, *Kit Foster* had gradually assumed as many as twelve positions starting with President, from Treasurer and Membership Secretary to chair of our biannual History Conference. At his request, starting in 2007 we have gradually shifted each of these tasks to other officers, members of the board, etc.

Although transitions are virtually complete and *Kit's* only official task is editor of the *Review*, the smoothness

of having related functions overseen and handled by one person has suffered. My term as President may be serendipitous; as a systems person rather than a content person (my only automotive expertise is Stanley steam cars), and with the help of new and talented officers, I am instituting processes and systems to standardize committee reporting, the Awards system and much of the overall operations of the Society. This is needed to buttress the all-volunteer management reality of SAH. Although a foundation was in place, it was not complete. The need became especially apparent as we lost *Kit's* leadership.

Even while handling these internal realities, SAHB's concerns remind us to pay attention, to keep our eye on the prize, or in our case, our Mission. Fortunately, no one of us alone is as smart as all of us together, one of my favorite board-room quotes. This January, I am able to stop in England on my way to attend the SAH dinner in Paris February 3rd. Several of SAHB's current officers and interested members are able to meet with me in Bath with an agenda to discuss not only present concerns but also possible solutions.

While it is fashionable to refer to the 21st century automobile industry as global, SAH members know it has always been global. From the earliest days, American and European firms engaged in active exporting and importing of motor vehicles, American vehicle builders learned from their British and other European counterparts and vice versa. It is in this spirit that all of us on the SAH board, through publications, meetings, and inclusion of all members, international and national, will be able to build on the camaraderie of shared interests and research that brought us together in the first place.

SAHB Meeting Highlights

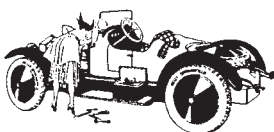
Highlights of a Special Meeting with *Susan Davis*, President of The Society of Automotive Historians, and the SAHB Committee held at Budds Farm, High Street, Barrington, Somerset, on Friday, January 28, 2011.

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Chapter News


Present: *Tony Beadle, Peter Card, Tom Clarke, Anders Clausager, Susan Davis, Philip Hall, and Malcolm Jeal* by invitation.

Covering a broad agenda in a congenial and business-like meeting, we discussed the importance of recognizing SAH's international members and subject matter in all SAH areas, from its publications and website to committees and the board. Having international members on its award committees and chapter chairs as ex-officio members of the SAH board would strengthen communication lines as well as enrich the Society.

SAHB committee members also discussed the possibility of recruiting European members to join SAH through membership in SAHB. SAHB would also like to initiate their own award for excellence, and if approved by the SAH board, would begin in time to present the first award in 2012. We also discussed the interest in American members for receiving SAHB's publications.

All in all, we found this such a stimulating exchange that all agreed we should try to do something like this as often as possible, if not each year around the Paris meeting.


— *Via Susan Davis*



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The 1905 AAA National Automobile Racing Circuit and the National Motor Car Championship

At some point during the Spring of 1905, the Racing Board of the American Automobile Association (AAA) heard a proposal for the establishment of a "National Automobile Racing Circuit." The AAA National Automobile Racing Circuit would, in concept, mirror the similar circuits held as part of the horse racing and trotting scene. It seems that one of the proponents for the AAA National Automobile Racing Circuit was David Hennen Morris, the proprietor of Morris Park, a horse racing track in Bronx, New York, and president of the Automobile Club of America (ACA).

The Morris proposal may well have been motivated as much by the loss of horse racing at Morris Park for the 1905 season due to a falling out with the Jockey Club, as any interest in automobile competition. It seems clear that Morris saw an opportunity to use Morris Park as an automobile racing venue, rather than shuttering the facility.

In April of 1905, news was released of an AAA "national championship" scheduled for Morris Park for the dates July 3 and 4. The original plans seem to suggest that the competition for the championship would be for that meeting. A special committee led by the chairman of the AAA Racing Board, Robert Lee Morrell, was set up by the AAA to consider the Morris proposal.

In mid-May, the AAA Racing Board formally announced the National Automobile Racing Circuit. In addition to the listing of venues on the circuit, Morrell also announced that there would be a "National Motor Car Championship" for the season, which would be determined by a point system. The points would be allocated as follows: first place, four points; second place, two points; and, third place, one point. Other stipulations for the championship were: an additional

\$25 added to the sanction fee for the promoter; the race distance to not be less than five miles nor more than ten miles; first prize to be worth not less than \$150, in cash or plate; and, an entrant must obligate himself to compete in all championship circuit events if in first or second place in the championship.

The following events, as best as can be determined, are those which comprised the events counting towards the 1905 AAA National Motor Car Championship:

June 10; Morris Park Track, Bronx, New York
June 17; Charter Oak Park, Hartford, Connecticut
June 26; Empire City Track, Yonkers, New York
June 29; Brunot's Island Driving Track, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
July 4; Morris Park Track, Bronx, New York
August 14; Glenville Driving Track, Cleveland, Ohio
August 19; Kenilworth Driving Park, Buffalo, New York
September 9; Hyde Park Track, Readville, Massachusetts
September 18; New York State Fair Grounds, Syracuse, New York
September 23; Narragansett Park, Cranston, Providence, Rhode Island
September 29; Hudson River Driving Park, Dutchess County Fair Ground, Poughkeepsie, New York.

The first event in the championship was a 5.56-mile event held at Morris Park and won by Louis Chevrolet driving a FIAT entered by Major C.J.S. Miller. The five-mile championship event at Hartford was won by Barney Oldfield in the Peerless Green Dragon in a "walk-over," that is, none of the other entrants started the race. Chevrolet won the ten-mile Empire City event when Webb Jay's White Steam Car, "Whistling Billy," broke during the third mile of the race. In Pittsburgh, Oldfield led Chevrolet until the halfway mark when his engine went sour, handing the race to Louis Chevrolet in the Miller FIAT.

The Independence Day race meeting at Morris Park saw a succession of accidents on the July 3 races which preceded the championship event on the Fourth. In the heavyweight race, Paul Satori, driving the Alfred Vanderbilt FIAT, crashed through the fence lining the track and struck a spectator, a 16-year-old named Joseph Holahan, tossing him 40 feet and resulting in fatal injuries. In the same race, Montague Roberts suffered three fractured ribs when his Thomas threw a tire, Roberts being thrown clear when the car overturned. Roberts was fortunate to escape serious injury. While running a warm-up lap in the Reo Red Bird, Dan Wurgis was unable to control the car when a tire burst, sending the car into the crowd lining the rail. Wurgis suffered cuts and bruises as a result of the accident. On July 4, Jay won the championship meet with a walk-over after the Miller FIAT of Louis Chevrolet could not start the event.

There was a long break until the next championship event in Cleveland, Ohio. At the Grosse Point Track in Detroit, on August 7, Oldfield was fortunate to escape serious injury when he and Wurgis collided on the track. Oldfield managed to escape with cuts to his head and bruises to his right arm when the car crashed through the fencing and left Oldfield unconscious after being tossed from the Green Dragon; Wurgis was not injured. This seemed to be a prelude to what would follow that month. During a warm-up lap at the Cleveland track prior to the day's events, Earl Kiser lost control of the Winton Bullet, crashed through the fencing lining the track. Kiser smashed through seventy feet of fencing, the car then digging in and executing an about face. The driver was struck by a fencepost and then thrown about ten feet when the car stopped and turned. Suffering from several serious injuries, Kiser was rushed to the local hospital after an ambulance finally arrived on the scene. The crash crushed Kiser's left leg, the doctors amputating it above the knee. The championship race was

won by Charles Burman in a Peerless. Less than a week later, at Buffalo, yet another driver would almost meet the Grim Reaper. During one of the events on the racing card on August 18, a ten-mile event, Webb Jay lost control of "Whistling Billy," the White Steam Car, in the dusty conditions and left the track. After crashing through the fencing, Jay plunged down a 15-foot embankment into a water-filled ditch. The car stayed upright and Jay was pulled from the car before he could drown. Among the serious injuries were a rib puncturing a lung and a fractured right leg. Jay's injuries were almost fatal, but while he would eventually recover, his track racing career was over. The championship race was won by Oldfield in the Green Dragon, the driver wearing a bandage covering his scalp lacerations from Detroit.

After the accidents at Cleveland and Buffalo, along with those at Morris Park and Grosse Point, there was a public reaction against motor racing, track racing in particular. Several of the manufacturers and many newspapers condemned automobile racing. That the AAA pondered dropping its sanctioning of track racing events seemed to have been commonly accepted. Exactly what the Racing Board decided concerning its "track championship" is unknown, but the championship events for September were not cancelled.

The September rounds of the championship opened in Readville, with Oldfield winning the five-mile event. After a delay of several days due to rain, the championship race event was won by Guy Vaughn. The five mile Narragansett event saw Oldfield overcoming a slow start to beat the FIAT of Emmanuel Cedrino. Oldfield captured the final round of the championship at Poughkeepsie a week later.

From what we have been able to determine, the 1905 AAA National Motor Car, or "Track" Champion was Barney Oldfield. Yet, Oldfield

never mentions this championship in later years, something that is noteworthy considering his often stormy relationship with the AAA. There is literally no mention of this championship after the Poughkeepsie event in any newspapers as far as can be determined, nor anything from the AAA for that matter. We are handicapped by the absence of the early records of the AAA relating to the Racing Board and, later, the Contest Board. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine just what the status of the national championship was, particularly after the events of August 1905, which seem to be pivotal in this case.

Therefore, we have nothing to indicate whether the Racing Board officially abandoned the championship, as has been suggested; or that the AAA simply lost interest and allowed the championship to play itself out, especially if the promoters had already paid the additional fee for a championship event on top of the regular sanctioning fee. Whatever the case, the championship simply disappears after September 1905.

Credit for the initial "rediscovery" of this championship must be given to Ken McMaken, who, with John Glenn Printz, provided information to the early editions of the Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) annuals concerning the history of the national championship. The 1905 championship was originally mentioned in the 1985 edition of the CART media guide. However, any information concerning the 1905 championship was not included in subsequent years due to editorial changes to (or in) the media guide staff. Twenty years later, Mark Dill brought this championship back to the attention of those studying the national championship, resulting in what we know today.

—H. Donald Capps

Book Review

Jaguar Coupés 1932-2007

By Matthias Pfannmüller.

Original edition 2005.

Text in German, 176 pages, hardbound, 11.5 x 9 inches. 220 b/w and color photographs.

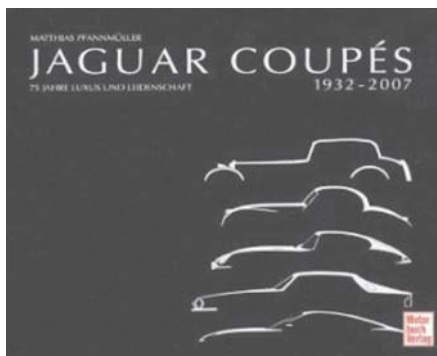
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Published by Wieland Verlag GmbH, Bruckmühl, Germany.

Special offer by Motorbuch Verlag, Stuttgart, www.motorbuch-verlag.de 19.95 Euros, Approx. \$28 + Shipping.

The subtitle “75 Jahre Luxus und Leidenschaft” nicely sums up the contents. It is about luxury and passion. The renowned automotive journalist and author has chosen a beautiful but somewhat challenging task. There are many publications on Jaguar on the market. Amateurs and experts cherish mainly the open roadsters and convertibles. He however concentrates on the equally beautiful and attractive Jaguar coupés for this book.

A wide circle is covered. The foreword was written by the grandson of the famous and genial founder of the marque, Sir William Lyons. With detailed information on the early years, the sensational SS1, its small brother SS2 and the one-of-a-kind Jaguar SS 100 fixed-head coupé the pre-war years are covered. The next chapters contain the history of



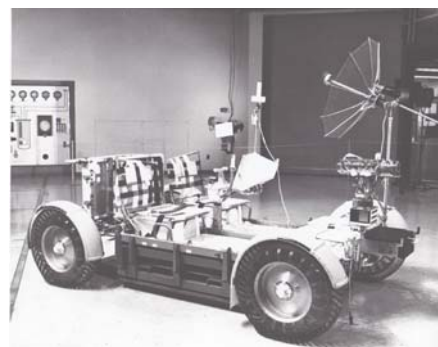
success of the admired XK 120, XK 140 and XK 150, where apart from the factory versions a number of special coupés by the most renowned European coachbuilders are included.

The famous E-Type and its development, the XJ-C, XJS, XJ 220 and finally the XK8, XKR and XK are all described in detail and illustrated with plenty of great pictures. Comprehensive technical specifications, production figures and chassis numbers for each model built are found at the end of the fine book.

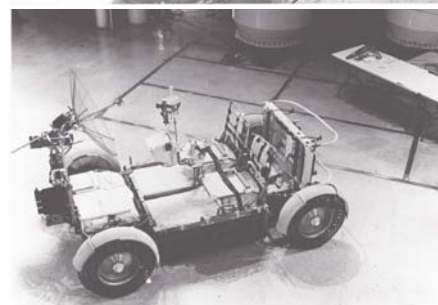
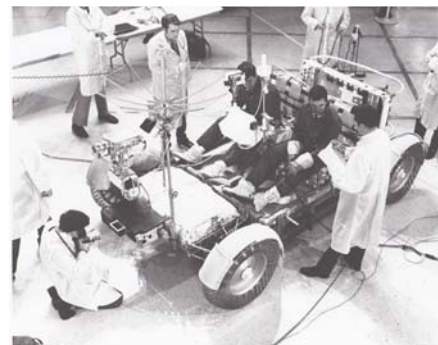
For any Jaguar enthusiast with some knowledge of the German language, this book is a must. All interested in the history of the automobile and in exciting cars of the last 75 years, will find this book representing excellent value at low cost. It is very well produced and well recommended.

—Ferdinand Hediger

What About It?



What is it? The Lunar Roving Vehicle built for the moon missions Apollo 15, 16 and 17. Since the LRV is a self-propelled, wheeled vehicle under direct control of a driver, it may be considered “automotive,” making the three vehicles on the lunar surface the first extra-planetary exports. These 8x10 photo prints were unmarked except one which reads, “Issued by General Motors Limited, Stag Lane, London NW9 0EH.” The question is, are these images really from inside NASA, or are the people actors on a sound stage, posed for publicity purposes?



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Editorial

Stalwart or Fossil?

Recently a discussion occurred regarding how to define and name different eras of automotive history. The terms Brass Era, Vintage, Veteran, etc. were discussed, along with debate about the corresponding calendar years representing each era.

What about cars which have been in production so long that they transcend an era or several eras? Consider a "mere" twenty-year production run, from 1908 to 1928. Tremendous changes occurred in terms of infrastructure, manufacturing techniques, materials science, and engineering in general. This is in addition to the cultural and legal changes over twenty years, and the influence of World War I and the Spanish Flu on global societies. Automobiles themselves became more standardized in terms of pedal placement and the use of a steering wheel. The electric self-starter and electric lighting made automobile operation accessible to more people under more weather conditions. Mechanically, standardization of parts such as spark plugs, where applicable, made repair work much more expeditious.

The twenty years between 1908 to 1928 saw more significant changes than, for example, 1948 to 1968. By the same token, a twenty-year period between 1888 and 1908 would represent the difference between having an automotive industry in the world or having a few self-propelled inventions which an enterprising wife could drive to her mother's house.

Cars with very long production runs have several things in common, especially the fact that the tooling and production lines are fully amortized so the products can be less expensive. Several vehicles were intended to be the national car of a given country or became a *de facto* national car through sheer numbers and staying power. The Volkswagen Type 1 sedan was infamously the national car project of Germany under the Third Reich, but became the national car of México by staying in production in the Americas longer than it ever did in Europe. The former East Bloc nations and China had totally isolated economies where cars commenced production nearly on par with other global products. Such cars became living fossils through sheer political and economic inertia.

Fleet vehicles like the Checker A8/Marathon or the Police version of the Ford Crown Victoria have self-created market niches which further benefit from parts commonality and ease of repairs. Trucks, busses, postal vehicles and other commercial vehicles exist on a different time scale where long production runs are the norm compared to consumer-level passenger cars.

Auto manufacturers get into the game of touting a decades-old product as well. The difficulty comes when examining the vehicles themselves. A 1948 Citroën 2CV and a 1988 2CV are without a doubt the same model yet mechanical evolution means that almost no parts will perfectly interchange between the two types. Similarly the Mexican 1957 Volkswagen Sedan and the 2004 Última Edición would have




Volkswagen Sedan, *above*. The Type 1 "Beetle" re-started volume production after the war from 1945-1980 in Germany, from 1957-2003 in México with the final models badged as "2004." Revisions included multiple generations of fuel injection and emissions controls, brakes, windows, lights, dash and interior.



VW Transporter, *above*. Built 1968-1979 in Germany, 1971-1996 in México, continuing from 1976 in Brazil. A wide variety of powerplants have been placed in the spacious engine bay, including several flat-four air-cooled engines, and a 1.8-liter inline water-cooled unit with a front radiator. May end in 2012.



1948 Citroën 2 CV, *top*, pre-production image compared with a whimsical Tintin-themed 1988 2CV image, *above*. The 1948 2CV had a 375cc engine, last versions had 602cc, revised chassis, front disc brakes, revised body structure with seat belts, revised lighting.



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Editorial

almost nothing in common except the overall appearance and a few pieces of hardware.

Auto makers tend to publicize years-longer production runs than may necessarily be the case in a given country by claiming every example of the model from every factory in every nation. The 2 CV was built in France from 1948 to 1988, but lasted until 1990 in Portugal, thus making forty-two years rather than forty. VW claims an even longer lifespan and volume for the Type 1 “Beetle” by counting production in México, Brazil, Australia, Nigeria, South Africa and other locations.

These distinctions bring up the philosophical question of what makes a particular car model the “same” for all those decades. In general, the powertrain will evolve in response to market conditions such as competition from newer more powerful cars, or emissions and fuel economy legislation. The chassis, suspension and lighting evolve to accommodate increased high-speed driving on new highways and in response to safety legislation. Window glass, seatbelt anchors, and interior materials such as padded dashboards respond to occupant safety regulations as well.

Along with question of what era a car may belong to, there is the situation of vehicles which create their own category, such as the Jeep or the virtually bespoke Morgan. The Jeep, as a military utility vehicle, later became available to civilian buyers. Jeeps were manufactured under license in several nations, where they remained in apparently continuous production from firms like Mahindra in India. Mahindra clearly made their own modifications over the years.

Many venerable vehicles go through several phases. Beginning as cheap, common cars, to living fossils, to being in vogue with new younger generations of car drivers.



1967 Hillman Hunter, top, and the Paykan, above. Originally assembled in Iran as CKD (Complete-Knocked-Down) kits in 1967, the Rootes-era Hunter survived as the Iranian national car until circa 2005. Ultimately, the entire Paykan production process took place on Iranian soil. The vehicles had several face-lifts and variant models, such as a pickup.



FIAT 126 bis, above. The 126 began in 1972 with an air-cooled inline twin cylinder engine mounted at the rear. This powerplant was later placed transversely at the front of the newer FIAT Panda, yet the 126 remained in production in Poland as the Polski-Fiat 126 until 1987. The rear section of the body was completely remodelled to house a horizontal inline twin, now water-cooled, and allow a flat floor and tailgate. The “126 bis” remained in production until 2000.



Morgan Plus 8, above. Built from 1968-2004, the Morgan continued a great British tradition of limited-production sporty cars. An additional note is that the Buick 215-based engine which powers the Plus 8 took on a life of its own in Rover and Land Rover products as well.



FIAT 124, upper, Lada Signet, above. The FIAT ran from 1966-1974, when Russian VAZ took on production of its own version which remained in production until circa 2010. The Lada Signet, also known as the Lada Riva, was revised with an overhead-cam engine. Other versions of the 124 were produced in Bulgaria, Egypt, Turkey, Korea and Spain.



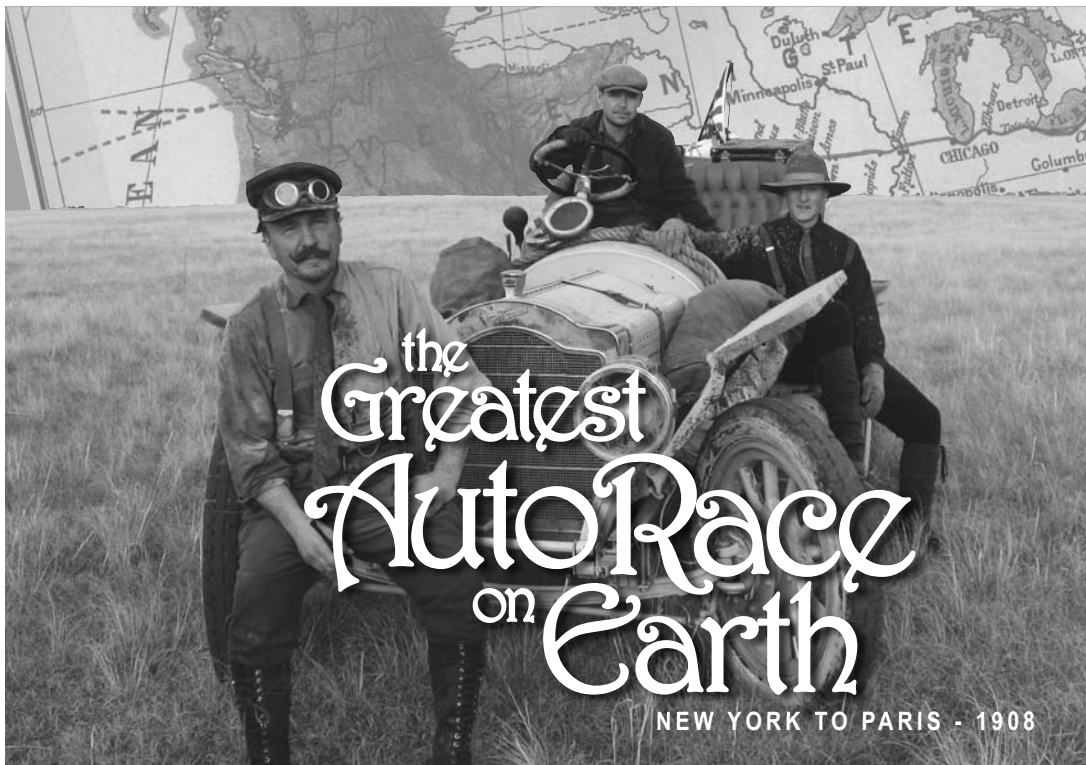
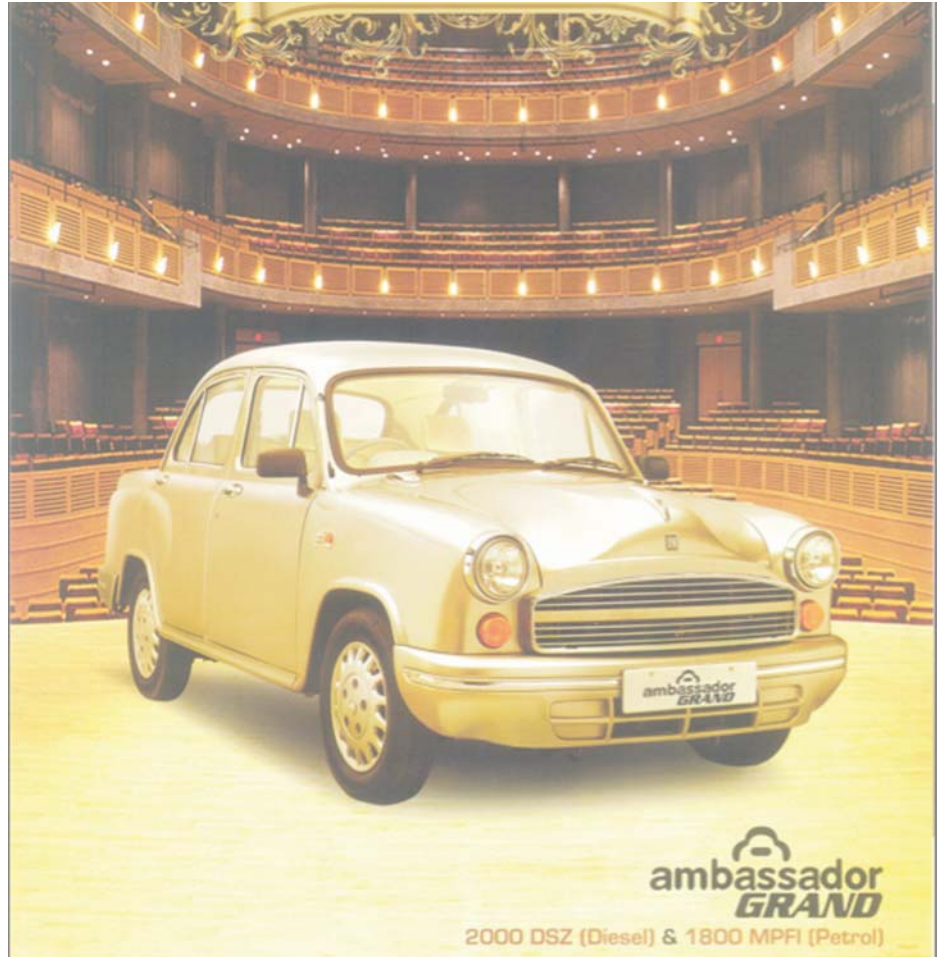
Mahindra Jeep, above. Mahindra & Mahindra began assembling Willys Jeeps from kits in 1949. Today, the model MM540 is known as the “Thar.” The latest versions feature independent front suspension and a turbocharged 2.5-liter engine.



Mitsubishi Debonair, above. Built in limited numbers from 1964-1986. Executive-class Japanese cars for the home market included the Nissan President and Toyota Century. The Debonair was somewhat outclassed with its carburetted 2-liter inline-six engine. The Toyota Century was a bespoke vehicle with a V8 engine, built from 1967 to 1997 when it was replaced with a similar-appearing model with Toyota's only V12 passenger car engine.



The Morris Oxford III, *above*, and Hindustan Ambassador, *right*. The Morris Oxford series III commenced in 1956 with a 1498cc side-valve engine developing 55hp. Hindustan began producing the Ambassador in 1957. The current model Ambassador now offers a 1.8-liter overhead cam engine with multi-point fuel injection. In addition, there is a diesel version and a CNG (compressed natural gas) version. Other updates include a 5-speed transmission, disc brakes, and optional power steering. Over the years several attempts were made to facelift the Ambassador including a version called the Avigo, which looked a bit fish-eyed. The entire dash and interior fittings have been revised, including leather seats. In the 21st century, the car is being repatriated to the British market by Merlin Garages in Wales.



Eight years in the making, **The Greatest Auto Race on Earth** is now available on DVD, telling the story of the 1908 New York to Paris auto race.

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SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 249 January-February 2011



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