

‘ L’Aronde

The Magazine of SIMCA Club UK
Vol.45 No.5 **November 2025**

SIMCA Club UK's stand at the NECClassic Motor Show earlier this month.....



Celebrating 50 years of the Chrysler/Talbot Alpine

Photos thanks to Jake Owen

SIMCA

Chrysler

MATRA

Talbot

More NEC photos and club cars MATRA display



MATRA stand with M530 and the Bagheera that Top Gear took through the Borneo Jungle.... Photo



The SIMCA Club stand celebrated 50 years of the Chrysler/Talbot Alpine with a Talbot badged Alpine SX from Guy and Stuart's collection. On the other side of the stand was an earlier Chrysler badged Alpine GL owned by Andy Stubbs. The centre piece of the SIMCA stand was Peter Brownrigg's rare 'decouvrable' version of the Rancho, only on sale for a couple of years and in a few hundred examples. It obviously didn't catch on with potential buyers as the 'hardtop' normal Rancho did in a big way. Peter's superbly restored example is the only example of the Decouvrable here in the UK. More photos elsewhere in this issue.

The 'Top Gear' Bagheera was known to us before the program. Kev, my brother was asked to supply a 'spares package' for the car they were taking on an 'adventure'... he never envisaged such a destructive one also they ignored his advice on weak points. He suggested clutch hydraulics, obviously ignored when Paddy McGuinness was seen pumping the clutch trying to find a gear!!

Editorial... November 2025

This issue features a report of our recent AGM. It was at a meeting at the same venue in 1997 that I took over the editorship of L'Aronde. While I still enjoy doing it, it would be encouraging to see somebody with youth on their side hankering to take over.....

Please keep sending in material for future issues. I had more than enough for this issue, so, if yours doesn't appear this time, I'll make sure it's in the Christmas/New Year L'Aronde.

It's good to see we've bucked the trend of many clubs with, I believe, membership now overtaking last year's numbers.

I've included my Editor's report with some suggestions for future articles.

2026 events were discussed at the AGM and information available so far is included.

The SIMCA and MATRA stands at the NEC Classic Motor Show drew in the crowds as usual and photos and report appear on cover, facing page and ins

Clive Milner continues his story of his original build of the customised 1100 van which I now have and am continuing reassembly.

Continuing the SIMCA/Dodge/Talbot light commercial (VF) theme, David Hart has sent in photos models of the surf inspired Talbot 'Wind' and the related Rancho.

Andrew Lunt updates us on the later work to get his Murena just how he wanted it and reliable.

Earlier this month Phil Hart and I and Richard & Fred Troop took our SIMCAs

and Avengers out at Blyton on what must have been the wettest, coldest trackday I've done. Still good fun and our cars stayed on the track better than some of the more modern stuff.

You'll note I've enclosed a 2026 subscription renewal form. Early renewal really helps myself and Edward, our treasurer re admin and mag circulation.



Mick Ward Tel 01246 200045 / 07713111339

Email scukmick@aol.com

*welcoming new members.....
Dean Hunter...Hooton Pagnell, Doncaster*

Martin Briggs.. Gosport, Hampshire

Jon Murden .. St Leonards, Ringwood, Dorset

*Alison Gudgeon.. “ “ “
material for L'Aronde always welcome ED*

Simca Club UK - www.simcatalbotclub.org Directory



Reformed by Bob Friendship in 1980 as the Simca Aronde Owners Register, later the Simca Owners Register
Now also incorporating the Talbot (1979-1986) Owners' Register

Committee and technical advisors

President & Aronde Advisor - Dick Husband 07785 595221 (09.00 to 19.00) angel.motors.wales@gmail.com
Unit 5, Spring Gardens Ind Estate, Whitland, Carmarthen, SA34 0HZ

Vice President, Archivist, Vedette Advisor & Events - Guy Maylam 01892 538598 (Mon-Sat 18.00 to 21.00)
guymaylam@aol.com 67 Longmeads, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 0AU

Membership Secretary - Daniel Husband 07904341819 (Mon -Fri 5 -8pm) but prefer contact by email
simca.talbot.uk@gmail.com 2 Lower Garthmyl, Garthmyl, Montgomery, Powys, SY15 2RP

Secretary-& Samba Advisor - David Chapman 01737 765331 or 07764 191744
18 Cavendish Gardens, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 4AQ (Mon-Sun 6pm to 8.30pm)

Treasurer & 13/1501 Advisor - Edward Martley 01295 255173 emartley@talktalk.net
8 Rye Close, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 1XG

Auditor David Chapman, See contact details above.

Magazine Editor, Press Officer, Competition/Modifications Advisor - Mick Ward 01246 200045 or 07713111339
email sucukmiick@aol.com 96 Newbold Back Lane, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 4HQ
Associate Editors - Kevin & Lesley Ward – for contact details see below

1100/1204 & Matra Bagheera Advisor – Kevin Ward 01246 278508 (prefer contact by email on)
kev.ward1204@btinternet.com 11 Belfit Drive, Wingerworth, Chesterfield S42 6UP

MATRA cars other than Bagheera Advisor - Clive Nelson 07836 537638 clive@automatra.co.uk
4 Maplewood Close, Larchwood, Totton, Hants SO40 8WH

Chrysler 180 & 2 Litre & 1300/1500 Advisor - Stuart Wade - 01622 532057 but prefer email contact on
V8stu@aol.com Forge Stones, Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, ME17 4HS

Alpine/Solara/Tagora & Horizon Advisor - Colin Hill - 01473 737325/Mobile 07510180574 colihill@hotmail.com
Ye Olde Mill Cottage, Dallinghoo Road, Bredfield, Woodbridge, IP13 6BD
1000, Rallye & 1000/1200S Coupe Advisor - Phil Hart - 01733 242242 philhartsr3@talk21.com 10 Rectory Way,
Stilton, Peterborough, PE7 3XS
Sunbeam & Lotus Advisor - Marcus Maylam - 07771 591366 marcus.maylam@btinternet.com
79 Culm Lea, Stoneyford, Cullompton, Devon EX15 1NJ

Website simcatalbotwebmaster@outlook.com Laura.

MATRA Club contacts **Editors Of MATRA magazine** Kevin & Lesley Ward **see contact details above**
4 All the above were re-elected at our recent 2025 AGM.....

The views expressed in articles or letters in L'Aronde are not necessarily the views of the committee of Simca Club UK No responsibility will be accepted for loss, damage or injury arising in the consequence of anyone acting on information contained in this publication

Services, parts suppliers and Sales& Wants

Angel Motors..... Dick Husband is now at Unit 5, Spring Gardens Industrial Estate, Whitland, Carmarthen, SA34 0HZ. He is working on reducing his huge stock of parts in light of rising storage costs. He may just have that elusive part for your 'club' car. . EMAIL.....
angel.motors.wales@gmail.com 07785 595221

TALBOT..... Exhaust systems / windscreens / gear change rods /driveshafts /water pumps /alternators / starters /service items plus many bits you thought you couldn't get again, and free advice on these models..... Contact COLIN HILL Horizon / Alpine /Solara spares /servicing 01473 737325 or 07510180574
colihill@hotmail.com also for Talbot stickers

GUY MAYLAM can supply new old stock parts for most SIMCA, Talbot & Chrysler models.....
guymaylam@aol.com or tel. 07801 187131

KEVIN WARD can supply parts with particular emphasis on MATRA-SIMCA Bagheera and SIMCA 1100 items. Contact him on 01246 278508 or email kev.ward1204@btinternet.com



KROStex

Quality Fasteners At Great Value Prices



M4 to M12 A2 stainless steel fasteners from stock
Fast shipping to the UK and EU
Great prices in our eBay shop too

www.KROStex.com

Phil Hart.....PARTS FOR SALE
New SIMCA/Talbot 1294 engine blocks complete with pistons for either fitment to rear engined SIMCA 1000 or 1100/ Horizon etc Fwd applications.
New SIMCA/Talbot 1294 and 1118 half engines, Genuine new old stock mostly in original packing on pallets, various types available.
New Crankshafts, pistons etc for various engines.
SIMCA 1000 lower door skins for all doors. Good quality and fit.. £28 each. Email philhartsr3@talk21.com , or phone 07949 440 721 Phil also has a stock of 13/1501 parts contact him for more details

MICK WARD 01246 200045
SIMCA TALBOT MATRA scukmick@aol.com



Brakes, steering, suspension, filters, gaskets, wheel bearings, etc. Contact Mick for all things SIMCA TALBOT MATRA.



Forthcoming events into 2026.....

Practical Classics Car & Restoration Show NEC 20th to 22nd March 2026... We'll be there as usual..... see advert facing page for club discount code.. we'll have resto projects and the finished articles on display there.

At the AGM another visit to Shelsey Walsh Hillclimb was suggested the 19th September 'Chill on the Hill' was pencilled in... I for one will be taking something SIMCA up there.... Ed

Also on 17th May, a French Car meeting here in Derbyshire at the Great British Car Journey museum was suggested, despite clashing with the International meeting we hope to get enough members there to rival the Renaults, Citroens etc.... more info to follow

19th July sees the Rootes Heritage event at the Gaydon Museum. We're invited as part of the Chrysler Europe operation. If we can get an idea of the number of our cars to attend, we probably could get a dedicated area there will include advert in next issue.

International SIMCA Matra Talbot Meeting Herve Belgium, 14 to 17 May 2026. These links will bring up event and accommodation info:

<https://www.simcabelgium.be/pages-club-pagina-s/ism-herve-2026.html> and

<https://www.simcabelgium.be/medias/files/logement-herve-2026.pdf>

Also we hope to be out in force again at Frank's Charity Track Day Club's trackdays at Blyton Park . Will post dates as soon as they are up. Just hoping the first one, usually March doesn't clash with the NEC Restoration show as We'll be working on our stand if it's the same time as this year.

If you are here in the Derbyshire area with your Classic on Mondays, Here in Chesterfield Market Place parking is free for classic vehicles from 09.00ish to 16.00. Enter from 'West Bars' past Portland Hotel (Wetherspools) we'll be around the Market area although redevelopment at present means our designated area is liable to change.

More events to follow next time as dates are confirmed for 2026..

Just let me know if you want any more info on any of above ..ED.

The BIG early season indoor show.... See us and the MATRA Club there.



CLUB DISCOUNT
SAVE £3.50
PER TICKET*

BOOK NOW

NECRESTORATIONSHOW.COM

practical CLASSICS

CLASSIC CAR & RESTORATION SHOW

20-22 MARCH 2026, NEC, BIRMINGHAM

1000+ Cars • 150+ Clubs • 250+ Traders • Live Restoration Work
Practical Training • Car Dealers • Auction • Celebrity Talks • And Much More!

BARN FINDS **RESTO PROJECTS** **PRISTINE CLASSICS**

£3.50 DISCOUNT ON ADULT TICKETS WITH OUR CLUB CODE*: **CCSIMCAM6**

In association with
CLASSIC CAR WEEKLY **Classic Cars**

Official Show Partners
practical CLASSICS **LANCASTER INSURANCE** **CLASSIC** **PSVA**

Detailing Partner
Footman James **Meguiar's**

*Discount code is for club members, friends and followers use only. Quote the club code online to save £3.50 off single-day adult tickets or £2 off family, child & multi-day tickets. Club discount applied to Advance Ticket Prices before midnight on Thurs 19 Mar and Show Open Ticket Prices thereafter. Full ticket information: www.necrestorationshow.com/ticketinformation. Book by 27 Feb to help your club earn extra benefits.

See us there with a variety of vehicles from the range restored and on the way to being.....

**The independent broker for
specialist vehicle insurance**



Talk to an enthusiast, not a call centre

Get a quote
For your bespoke cover package

0121 550 2380
abbeyfieldsinsurance.co.uk

Available discounts



Limited Mileage

+



Club Membership

+



Multi Vehicle

=



You Save £££

Stuart Moore writes..... Abbeyfields Insurance are an independent, family run insurance brokers based at Halesowen, West Midlands.

Most of us have worked for other specialist brokers and have accumulated a wealth of knowledge in the classic and specialist vehicle market, placing cover and in house indemnity.

Our team are very knowledgeable about products and know their cars as they are true enthusiasts.

Our ethos which is most valuable to us is excellent customer service and our policyholders have the benefit of their own Private Client Manager, who will handle arranging of cover, any mid-term adjustment and renewal. In the event of a claim, they will also be happy to assist you through this process.

After previous experience working in a call centre environment, we firmly believe that is not the way to look after customers. When you call Abbeyfields Insurance, you'll get straight through to our team. No waiting, no menu options, scripts, just simple conversation to help you get the cover you require.

Our specialist vehicle policies are ideal for vehicles of all ages. Below are some of the benefits you can expect to receive as standard

*Free agreed value for your classic and specialist vehicles *Club membership discounts- just mention you're a club member *Multi-vehicle policies – combine classics, daily drive, bikes and much more on one policy * Private Client Manager to assist you with claims, enquiries and adjustments during policy term *choice of repairer * 90 days free European travel included as standard * competitive premiums

Abbeyfields Insurance also have a dedicated and experienced team who specialise in Commercial and liability products, general and high net worth and prestige home insurance. They work in conjunction with our classic and multi-car team giving Abbeyfields an extended offering of services.

9

President Dick Husband opened the meeting welcoming those present and noting that as a small club as usual our AGM attracts a decent percentage of the membership.....

Present were: Mick Ward, Jennie Nicholls, Bob Hussey, Nick Retallick, Lesley Ward, Kev Ward, Andy Boulding, Callum Hancock, Clive Forder, Clive Nelson, Joseph Martin, Guy Maylam, Philip Ewan, Jill Ewan, Stuart Wade, Dan Husband, David Chapman, Richard Husband and Edward Martley.

Apologies were received from: Mike Barclay, Tony and Debra Bennett, Malcolm Bennett, Cornel Baxendale, Bob Friendship, Robert Hadfield, Mike Hammond, Justin Griffiths, John and Pam Henderson, Colin Hill, Ros and Pete Hawke, Trudi Heathcote and Andy Guest, (A big thankyou for an excellent club magazine), Clive Milner, Michael Thomas, Marcus Maylam and Kim Spooner. Our Collective good wishes go to John Henderson, recovering after a stroke and Debra Bennett and Ros Hawke awaiting hip replacements...

Membership Secretary Dan Husband reported: The current membership remains stable with new members replacing those not renewing. (1 over as I write this...Ed) New Members have joined through Website, Facebook Group and contacts at NEC and other shows.

Magazine editor Mick Ward.. My report appears on a separate page in this issue. This is the fifth issue for this year. A final one will constitute a December/New Year one...

Election of Committee for 2026: Jill Ewan proposed the existing committee were re-elected en masse as all were prepared to continue... this was seconded by Jennie Nicholls and carried by the meeting.

The Club Accounts for the years ended 31/12/2024 were circulated and on his arrival Edward Martley our treasurer commented as follows.... Our Funds remain relatively stable but costs regarding postage and maintaining the website in particular were rising. He suggested that Annual subscription @£30 for members receiving L'Aronde by post remained at that after an increase last year but those receiving the magazine by PDF should see an increase of £5 to £25. Some discussion followed regarding the extra costs being centred around the postal version of L'Aronde and that we had adequate reserves. However the increase was carried by the meeting with a younger PDF member commenting that he didn't see the increase as a problem..

Discussion moved to a National Meeting. Clive Forder again suggested Shelsley Walsh Hillclimb's Classic Festival, however this clashed they with the International meeting in Belgium. On 19th Sept Shelsley are running another Chill on the Hill event (I for one will be taking one of the collection up the Hill on that day..Ed) more details to follow.

The Rootes Heritage event at Gaydon will be on 19th July in 2026, I've now heard we may be allocated a designated area, It would be helpful if those going would let us know so organisers can plan for space.

Here in Derbyshire at the 'Great British Car Journey' museum 17th May sees a French Car event. Again it clashes with the International meeting. More info to follow. **9**

SIMCA Club UK AGM Longford House Cannock 25/09/2025.....

Guy Maylam mentioned they were moving things to their new building and may repeat the open day for 2026.

Dick Husband commented on spares availability. While overall parts seem more readily available that some more popular classics, often on ebay etc parts are badly described as fitting more models than they do. Checking part numbers helps but the SIMCA-Chrysler-Peugeot-Talbot renumbering confuses. Checking with club model advisors is a wise move before buying. Also on facebook groups parts advice sometimes is wide of the mark. He noted that sometimes sending parts to the USA often ends up in no payment arriving. Dick mentioned that he had a large stock of parts for cars from the whole range along with complete cars. The extortionate cost of storage will eventually mean some items has to go for scrap... contact him with your requirements..... a part number would help him to locate them.... STOP PRESS Dick's storage has been flooded so some parts could be damaged/packaging spoiled resulting in more difficulty in identifying. Contact him on 07785 595221

Any Other business rounded off the meeting:

Edward Martley reminded us that the club is a member of the FBHVC, a federation that works to protect the interests of the Classic Vehicle community against often totally misinformed political pressures. Our members are able to download their regular magazine on..... <https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/magazine> (use 'forgot password' button if needed) or register at <https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/register>

Meeting closed 7-30ish pm and many members stayed for a meal together.



Peter Brownrigg's Rancho Decouvrable on our SIMCA Club UK stand at the NEC Classic Motor show earlier in November.... Photo by Jake Owen

I took on the editorship of our mag at this meeting back in 1997. I still enjoy doing it especially as members are currently supplying me with good flow of material. However as the years go by I'd hope there's a member with youth on their side to eventually take over??

Recently I've received regular articles on the '70s SIMCAs and '70s/'80s MATRAS thanks to Clive Milner and Andrew Lunt and many others. I am always on the lookout particularly for material on the early '50s and '60s SIMCA models and the later Talbots plus the related Chrysler Badged models.

If members who've recently joined can send me photos of their car(s) I can feature them prominently even on the covers of the mag. Also even if your car is currently a barn find or dismantled project, let's know about progress and its history.

Of course, in the absence of magazine material I'm quite capable of writing at length about our cars and my projects but they will obviously centre around SIMCA 1000s, Rallyes and coupes and the 1100 range with just my late model pickup the only one venturing into the Talbot era. I can also draw on my many years in motorsport with 'club' cars after being cured of an obsession with the products of the blue oval.

I've quite a stock of French publications and intend to translate articles for future issues. Our 'French Connection' Alexis Zaregradsky also supplies current information on the scene over there.... And am in regular contact with French, German, Belgian and Dutch clubs.

I intend to continue including 'blasts from the past' featuring club cars at events over the years..... photos and info always welcome there from 'older' members.

Guy Maylam regularly supplies me with road tests and other articles from his extensive archive.

Other suggestions for articles include....

- *A page with a profile of a particular car including history, years owned, work done, original or modified etc etc
- *SIMCAs, MATRAS, Talbots and Chryslers in competition. ... past and present.
- *Reviving 'My first SIMCA etc ' articles we ran some years ago
- *Journeys made with your 'club' car.
- *Tips on how to repair common problems, alternative parts, things to watch out for on 'club' cars to help out recent new owners.
- *don't forget for sale, wanted and swaps adverts are free to members in L'Aronde.
- *as with Andrew Lunt's articles an ongoing round up of issues and solutions while running a 'club' car over the years.
- *or whatever you have connected with however remotely with the vehicles
- *Or tell us about cars you wish you'd never sold/scrapped.

As mentioned above I still enjoy editing your mag and am quite willing to continue if the meeting/membership wish.

Mick

11

Talbot 'Wind' and Rancho models

The Talbot Wind was a surf inspired special edition of the VF2 pickup, proposed by coachbuilder Heuliez who built the later 1100 light commercials. I believe few were sold but the extra parts were available as a kit. Photos show a model David has recently bought from France, just over 1:18 scale. Also a press photo of the Wind. Others I've seen show the Wind racing through the salty waves, not the ideal environment for an 1100 pickup...!! Also Rancho models currently available



The radio-controlled Ranchos were seen recently on Ebay. We have one, missing a few bits and without its boat/trailer.

David Hart.



Obviously the wind borrowed many 'touches' from Matra's Rancho which shared the pickup's structure and running gear.

From N. Irish member Patrick McCambridge .



when the Corrib Great Southern Hotel was in its heyday (circa early '70s) the picture shows the launch of a new model SIMCA by Ash Motors of Galway.....



Spanish 110 ambulance & 1100 customised



70's/80s SIMCA specialist Bill Bengry's Rallye 1 and service van.



Chris Tooze's rear engined collection..



USA V8 SIMCA range advert.....

A blast from the past... Club stand at 2018 NEC Restoration Show

Practical Classics Restoration Show 2018... NEC Birmingham.



Ade Brannan's Horizon and Kev Ward's 1204



Kev's 1204 has Honda 16 valve power...!!



Original club member with youngest one...
Dick and Arthur Husband.



Dick Husband's Aronde Grand Large



The MATRA club on the adjoining stand had two Talbot-MATRA Murenas on display, a 1.6 and a 2.2

The 'French Dressing' story part 2..... Clive Milner

.. Last time the van had just received its 1442 Alpine engine and Vinyl roof.....

The fashion then was to have a tail high stance, so I wound up the rear torsion bars to achieve this.

The side and rear corner panels were deteriorating, particularly where the rear lights form a mud trap and the lower forward portions of the rear wheel arches of the side panels. Having bought new ones, I blanked off the holes for the lamps, filled and shaped them to suit, obtained four mk1 Escort rear lamps and cut the tailgate to fit them. The number plate aperture was too wide so I brazed in some pieces to shrink it, thereby 'frenching' it as the current term was.

The vinyl roof was then extended down the rear door pillars and across the tailgate, from which I had removed the push button lock and pull handle. This was replaced by a pair of Hillman Imp locking engine lid handles. Rear wiper and washer system also fitted. Having the lights now in the tailgate meant extending the wiring from the offside loom and running it up to the roof and along the o/s hinge. Extra flasher units and relays were employed, so the indicators now flash alternately up and down.

At some point a pair of FIAMM electric horns replaced the original which had surrendered, and then triple air horns added too. The air horns have the choice of a single shriek, or undulating up and down in sequence. Running the van caused me to be a regular customer at Randersons, so they were interested to see developments from their original work hack.

The 'artwork' on the sides was over the top for the era, so I painted them out. I

still liked the white and blue so that's how it stayed.

I have always liked 2 tone colour schemes, right from when, as a child, my dad occasionally took me on to his place of work on a Saturday morning when he wanted to have the place to himself while he completed something without interruption. One day the owner was there, Sam Cliff, and his son Stuart, who ran a Mk 2 Zodiac in maroon over grey. Dad introduced me and I got a good look at this wonderful car. That memory has always stayed, and so has the liking for 2 tones, as my various past Alpines will attest. Those Saturdays were rare but memorable, if only for the smells. The smell of the tannery we had to walk past from the bus stop, the smell of the cloth in the factory itself (it was a tailoring factory) and the smell of the river by the factory. All gone now.. the tannery is adapted to student housing and the factory site is a lorry park for Arla foods. At the top of the street was Wheatley and Whiteleys who overhauled diesel engines.

When changing the engines the van distributor was used. I had a feeling that was restricting it a little so, after discussions with someone at Randersons I ordered a Bagheera distributor. I believe it gave a better power curve. The cassette points were expensive though! About £10 a set back then! (we found that with our first late model 1000s..Ed) Since the engine swap I noticed the temperature gauge reading higher than it previously had. I cut two holes in the bonnet and fitted two scoops, these were fashioned from 2 pie dishes bought from Leeds market, white enamel with a blue rim, cut down rivetted and 15 blended in. Looked good too!

If I remember rightly when I joined the club mid '80s Clive had started on a further rebuild.. Ed.

The 'French Dressing' story part 2..... Clive Milner

An extra fan was added, being a fan from a SIMCA 1100 heater motor, attached to a bracket made from a damaged Chrysler sunbeam bumper and bolted behind the radiator on the opposite side to the original fan.

Somewhere around this time I'd been invited to join the Leeds & District Cruisers, a Custom and Classic car club, where I made many friends, some of whom I'm still in touch with.

A carpet shop remnant smartened up the floor in the back and the front footwells, a rather nice gold colour. A pair of front seats in black leather were rescued from a Mk 4 Zodiac in a nearby scrapyard. The cars were so close together it was impossible to get them out through the doors, so we had to take them out through the windscreen. My mate who helped me was too eager and tore one of them. Some vinyl glue was applied at home and has lasted ever since. Very comfortable seats too. The original van seats, including the driver's one with its home in the Bedford CF of the lad who would eventually be our best man. A young lad was hanging about while we got the seats out then dived in for the massive centre console and armrest. The last we saw he was trying to squash it between the seats of a Triumph Herald.. optimist!

At some point in '78 I converted to electric windows. The motors fit over the spindles for the winding handles and so were unsightly against the red door trims. With the help of a friend made some new trims from hardboard with boxes around the motors. A member of the Cruisers was an upholsterer, so I bought a quantity of gold dralon and some foam, he then did the door panels for me with four buttons in a diamond

pattern. Delighted with this, the fake plank side panels received the same treatment. Next the tailgate was finished in the same way. With no provision for pull handles on the front doors, I acquired a pair at an autojumble, either Rover P4 or Triumph TR4, in chrome. The handle is hinged so flops down until wanted. These were screwed on to the metal part of the door above the trim panels..... quality!

The electric motor kit came with only two switches, i.e. one for each side. I mounted them both at the driver's side so I had control of both windows. The passenger side lock barrel was removed for security too.

The upholstery chap then covered the headlining with dralon, and my woodworking friend cut a piece of hardboard to be sprung into place for a lining above the load space. This again was covered and 4 buttoned, and, as a treat the upholsterer covered the sun visors in fawn suede.

The interior was looking quite good by this time, however there was still quite a lot of white metal visible. At a custom show, Belle Vue Manchester where a whole horde of us went in convoy, there was a stall selling sheepskin offcuts in various colours. I chose a fawn colour and a bag was delivered in a few days. A few tubes of Evo Stik and a lot of patience visible areas of white paint were covered

Outwardly the bumpers were now quite bad and, having blanked out the side mounting holes on the corner panels there was nowhere to fit the rear one, so it was dispensed with and I ran without. Likewise the front bumper was in poor condition and the reflectors in the twin spotlamps were

The 'French Dressing' story part 2..... Clive Milner

Peeling . A narrow panel which spans the width of the front was also tatty. What was needed was a spoiler. A closing down sale at a Horsforth accessory shop provided one for £12, but the wrap around sides caused a problem so they were cut off. The main part was self tapered into place then overlaid with fibreglass. The sidelights/indicators were removed and plated welded in, as the air vents in the spoiler were the exact same size for those lamps.! Fibreglass was then laid up from the spoiler onto the front wings to create a smooth shape and blended into the wheelarch swage. Looking at the photos taken during the rebuild I am reminded that just after the vinyl roof was fitted I had acquired a pair of wing top sidelights from an Austin A55 van, they liked these lamps and fitted them to many of their products. Mine went on to the roof and can be seen in some photos.

The spoiler was cut to match the original holes for the bumper brackets. Memory fails me as to whence it came but I do recall using steel water tubing and welded bumper brackets to it once I had trimmed off the towing loops, ends capped. I'd had a chrome badge bar for years but never fitted it to anything. This was welded on to the water tubing and away it went for chroming. Likewise the one for the rear. The signwriter who'd painted the van's name on the sides was approached once again and presented with a rear screen. Very skilfully he drew out the name in reverse on to vinyl sheet, stuck it to the glass and then cut out the name. I took it to M.S.S, a firm in Horsforth, who did sand and bead blasting amongst their many talents. I used them many times, over many years, and what a brilliant firm they were. Rob

Rymer was the owner, Charlie Plaice who worked there could do anything.

Keeping the vinyl on, MSS blasted the name on to the glass. It can be read from outside, and on a sunny day, at a show, the name can be projected on to the ground. There is a colourful butterfly sticker in each bottom corner and these too show on to the ground.

The Eiffel tower on the bonnet previously mentioned was only applied after this rebuild.

Once the front end was painted, the wiring had to be extended to reach the lights in their new lower position. The grille received a coat of satin black paint, then attention turned towards the back, which was prepared and painted, with the exception of the petrol flap with its mini mural.

Escort rear lights fitted, wired up and working, and a pair of Fiesta number plate lights above the plate in its new narrowed slot. The Spaghetti striping was matched up and airbrushed on. Brake drums were painted red, wheels back on and the side pipe shield refitted..

At this stage no upholstery was done, and the fake plank wallboarding is visible in one photo. Also the roof spoiler can be seen, one rear foglamp beneath it. The rear wiper motor mounted in the rear lid too. The final photo this time is from the van's first post rebuild outing, 30/6/79 at Holbeck Moor, Leeds. To the right is Dave Korner's Ventora, which had a Rover V8 in it. Apparently it proved more economical than the original 3.3 litre Vauxhall straight six..!!

Photos follow on next page along with a bit more progress I've recently made on "French Dressing". Hoping to get it completely mobile very soon..ED 17

If I remember rightly when I joined the club mid '80s Clive had started on a further rebuild.. Ed.

Recent progress on the van and Photos accompanying Clive's article.. Ed

Now the trackday season has ended for me, it's time to get on with road projects. Clive Milner has described one stage of its original build. He has done much more work over the years since. It's now down to me to have it up and running ready for our club stand at the March NEC Restoration show. Work on My 1200S coupe, 1000GLS and Lightweight racing 1000 will have to take a back seat to this project.

Recently I've had the engine running, the low mileage 1442 sounding spot on. Immediate work must be the brake and clutch hydraulics so it is mobile under its own power to shunt around my collection, in and out of garage etc. Have fitted both doors, modifying new one to later lock position as described last time and have been preparing rear corners for fitting wings and front wings to fix to side skirts and spoiler. Fittings from remains of old rear hatch need transferring to new panel and Escort rear lights fitting. Mick



Front wing fitted now needs front corner connecting to spoiler. Have got fibreglass sections from Bagheera wings to cut up for that. Other photo shows trial fit of rear wing sections with 1000 Rallye 3 arches from Kev's 1204. Clive's not sure about the 'look' but I intend to run it lower so need clearance.

MATRA- FACT-with content applicable to 180/2Litre

MURENA MANIA CHAPTER 14

I know you've been waiting to know if it got through its 2022 MOT, the answer is here at last! Please read on.

Chapter 14 encompasses a full year with JUG 35Y because there weren't too many urgent issues to deal with, that's got to be a good sign. The chapter is bookended by Gawsworth 2022 and Gawsworth 2023. Much of the work in that time was preventive maintenance rather than firefighting.

June 3rd 2022 – Gawsworth Hall meet

Everything was fine for the MOT, it passed with no advisories, so a few days later we drove 35 miles to Gawsworth Hall to meet Tim with his Murena 2.2 and the Ward brothers with their series 1 and series 2 Bagheeras. We were given pride of place on the front lawn of the house with the Ferraris, while other prestigious makes such as Jaguar E Types and Lotuses were found hidden round the back in the forest!



MATRA- FACT-with content applicable to 180/2Litre



An excellent day out. We arrived 3-up with grandson in the middle seat, exactly what these cars were designed to do!

August 13th 2022 – AGM

At this year's AGM we had a trip to The Great British Car Journey near Matlock. The impressive line up of French cars must have confused some people, but they attracted plenty of interest from petrol head visitors.

The car performed perfectly, it just needs anti rattle springs fitting to the front brake pads and investigation of a slight transmission click when setting off forwards after reversing. It could be the brake pads moving in their cradles.



I didn't have time to stay for the Staveley Hall visit the next day, but the photos I saw looked as if a good day was had by all. (except ME.... Who got the thankless job of manning the gate enforcing the restricted number of cars imposed on us by the council.... ED)

September 20th 2022 – Fuel sender

MATRA- FACT-with content applicable to 180/2Litre

Having struggled to position the generic fuel sender correctly, so that the float arm could move up and down freely without catching the inside of the tank, I decided to try and source an original one. I had bought various parts including the s/s exhaust and manifold from Carjoy in the past so I thought I should have a few brownie points with them to ask if they had a spare original fuel sender they could sell me. To my surprise they said yes and the price was in line with the market for these at €200 including VAT. We had an upcoming trip to Amsterdam already booked via the Hull Rotterdam ferry so I asked them to put it on one side for me and I would call in for it in September.

The sender was in nice condition with no corrosion on the mounting plate and Laszlo demonstrated it working on a car they had in the workshop. So I brought it home and fitted it this week and it works perfectly. I can now stop worrying about how much fuel is left in the tank if I forget to zero the odometer when I fill up. They do at least 500 km on a full tank by the way, if you have fuel sender problems.

October 1st 2022 – CV problems

I've been hearing a click noise when manoeuvring the car and suspected a CV or maybe brake pads moving. The car was also due an inspection to check nuts and bolts etc are all tight. So I chose a nice day and got the rear wheels off to have a good check round. I found the left side engine mounting bolts through the chassis were a bit loose and one had a stripped thread, so I replaced the stripped thread one and tightened the other two.

Everything else looked okay, but on close inspection I found a small 1 cm split in the left hand outer CV boot. I also found a slight click from the inner CV joint of the right hand drive shaft, suggesting something is wearing out in there.

For the split boot I looked at a few short cut options to avoid removal of drive shaft, rear trailing arm, brake caliper etc and came across a Bailcast CVS18 Universal Split Constant Velocity Joint Gaiter Boot Replacement Kit, Black. I watched a YouTube video and it seems worth a try as it's only £10. It'll save a lot of work if it lasts. I've ordered one.

For the right hand clicking CV joint I'll check with Roy and see what my options are. Changing the joint looks like a real struggle, so maybe I'll get someone else to do them both. It could also be a good time to replace the rear discs. I'll avoid new drive shafts if possible.

November 1st – Drive shaft refurbishment

Having done more research and emailed Roy I decided that the split CV boot I'd bought would probably not last very long, so I looked at options to get both drive shafts refurbished. Simon in Germany would be £520 plus shipping of old ones and shipping back of refurbished ones. I looked locally to me and found a company in Chorley called North West Propshafts, who specialise in refurbishment of props and drive shafts. They quoted £420, so a nice saving if I dropped them off and picked them up, just 15 miles from home.

November 6th – Collected and refitted drive shafts

Collected the shafts today and they look like new. They've completely refurbished the CV's including opening up the channels slightly and fitting oversized bearings (excuse non-engineering terms!), new springs and boots. All the parts were fairly standard and readily available.

Having removed both shafts in 2 hours, it took me 3 hours to refit them as more time and care was needed. All the nuts and bolts have been on and off so many times in the last 3 years none of them were a problem. I fitted new hub nuts (from Matra Magic) and went for a test drive. **21**

MATRA- FACT-with content applicable to 180/2Litre

The clicking when manoeuvring has gone and they run very smoothly, unlike the engine which was now hesitating. Another problem which had developed was as a result of having to leave the car outside on axle stands while it had no drive shafts, in a period of heavy rain, it had started to fill with water! Not the original windscreen leak, which was fixed, but around the bonnet pull, the floor on the passenger side and a small one in the boot. I'll tackle those one by one over the winter. I didn't want to put the cover on the car because it might have damaged the paint. I sucked a lot of the water out of the carpets and underlay, now they're air drying in the car, back in the garage. The last problem which developed was a constant locking and unlocking of the central locking. I had to remove the driver's door panel and pull the power plug off the central locking unit. I plan to let it dry out naturally and see if it then reverts to normal operation.

The engine hesitation was a bit more concerning, but on closer inspection I noticed the fuel filter looked dirty and the vanes inside were a bit squashed looking. I fitted a new one and the engine ran perfectly. I suspect the replacement fuel sender had some sort of deposit on the inside of the pickup pipe, which got flushed through into the filter. I cleaned out the filter in the carburettor, but it seemed clear anyway. I'll monitor the new fuel filter and make sure all the bits have now passed through the pipes.

During the test drive the rear window misted up due to the damp boot carpet, so for the first time since Roy replaced a gas strut for me at the March Classic car show, I got to try the demister. It didn't work. The light came on, but there was no dip in voltage on the dashboard meter as I might expect and no effect on the steamed up window. There's 12 volts at the terminals on the window itself so I assume the wires in the window just don't heat up due to age. I remember my Bagheera had a similar issue. Fortunately a Murena hardly ever needs the window demister.

December 3rd – low fuel warning light came on!

It's taken a few weeks but finally I've used up enough fuel since fitting the OE fuel sender for the low fuel warning light to come on. It has come on at 450 km since the last fill up (back in September I think!) so there were probably 50 more km left in the tank as I've normally worked on a full tank having a range of minimum 500 km.

From now on I don't have to fill the tank and zero the odometer every time I need petrol. That means I can keep the fuel fresher by putting half a tank in when just doing local runs and get it used up in a few weeks instead of 4 months. That's got to be better for the fuel supply system with modern petrol having such a short shelf life.

The carpets have almost dried out now, a month after getting the car back in the garage. The windows are open permanently and the driver's side carpet is lifted up on a couple of pieces of wood to allow it to dry out underneath. The air humidity is a bit less now so I think it'll dry out faster.

Minor jobs to look at are: Reconnect central locking, sort out the now very slow passenger window, sort out various rattles from headlight pods, dashboard, front brake pads, heater flaps.

May 15th 2023 – Service and fuel pipes. Door seals and minor jobs.

In preparation for the MEC Wales tour next month, I've given the car a good service and replaced all the fluids, because it's been nearly 3 years since it passed its first MOT with me! It's had: fully synthetic 5W 40 oil, filter, synthetic DOT 4 brake fluid, IAT blue coolant with water wetter (supposed to give better cooling due to less surface tension). While I was doing that I noticed the fuel pipe coming from the tank, where it bends over, was showing signs of ageing, so I fitted a new piece from the tank to the pump. The other pipes were all replaced during the restoration and look okay. **22**

MATRA- FACT-with content applicable to 180/2Litre

I noticed that the rating for the pipe I fitted is SAE J30 R6, but I read in Practical Classics that this isn't the most resistant to ethanol. There's a better version rated as SAE J30 R9, which I'll use next time. However, I'm using super unleaded with 5% ethanol, so I think the pipe will last for a while yet. I also realised that the fuel filter is fitted after the pump rather than before it, I'll correct that when I change the pipes next time, in about 3 years. I'll probably read this diary first and know what to do then!

Further to the rain water leak and considering Welsh weather, I decided to order replacement door seals from Woolies (about £90 for both) because the old ones were looking their age and there was a draughty gap at the bottom; nice in summer, not so nice in winter. They were easy to fit, I just had to make sure they went right into the corners by using a piece of wood and tapping them home. The top corner of the door opening was the sharpest, so I bent the seal first, then tapped it in hard. It's probably the best place to start fitting because where it has been bent into shape can be in exactly the right place. The other corners are easier. I left a bit of excess for where the ends would meet, at the bottom centre middle, then once I was sure all the corners were seated properly I cut it to length with metal shears.

Once dried out the central locking was lubricated and reconnected, it now works very well. The window performance on the passenger side has also speeded up again, so I put WD40 in the channel to help it along. It's still not perfect but is usable if we plan in advance for any toll booths in Wales! Start winding it open about 100 meters before we get to the booth! I'm going to need a lower window seal to stop water getting inside the door, but I'm not sure if they're available.

The headlight rattle at idle was cured by putting a washer under the rubber buffer that the left pod rests on, which was enough to hold it clear of the bodywork. Rather than remove the dashboard to cure another rattle at idle, I put a piece of black shrink sleeve, with another piece inside it, between the leading edge of the dash and the windscreen, where it was vibrating. I could push it down out of sight and it wedged there well enough to cure that rattle. The front brake pads have now got functioning anti rattle springs, so another rattle has gone! This all means that the heater box rattle is now very obvious, but it seems to quieten down when it warms up. It's still on the To Do list.

I'm getting some slight brake judder, I think from the front left disc. The discs were just within spec when I did the restoration so I left them to sort out in the future. Maybe that time is now approaching.

Finally, there is a bit of tappet noise when the engine is warmed up so I'll get a new rocker cover gasket and have another go at setting the valve clearances.

May 25th – Front discs and pads

I ordered front discs and pads from eBay plus a pair of hub nuts from Matra Magic. As mentioned above I was getting a small amount of brake judder and the front discs were old and a bit corroded so I wanted to swap them ready for the summer season.

Removal and refitting was reasonably straightforward but undoing hub nuts and removing the disc carrier took time and care, I didn't want to get dirt inside the wheel bearings when they inevitably get exposed during this job. The central spindle on the driver's side was a bit tricky to hold still whilst removing the hub nut because the speedo drive was corroded into it so I had to use an open ended adjustable spanner to hold it. I didn't have an open ended spanner larger than 22mm. The other side was easy because I could put a 24mm (I think) socket on it as there was

MATRA- FACT-with content applicable to 180/2Litre

The other fiddly job was getting the anti-rattle springs correctly located and seated. They needed a bit of adjusting with the pliers so that the part which crosses over actually sits in the notch of the pad tag and doesn't stop the pad from moving in and out with braking. Roy's technical bulletin helped with this.

The fiddly jobs are necessary because brakes have obviously got to be right, so I spent around 6 hours in total on this job.

The calipers on the front aren't exactly the same for some reason so I found that the right one was a bit of a tight fit with new disc and pads and the brake was binding slightly, so I ran the car round for a few miles and let it bed in so that now it's fully freed up. The wheel was a bit warmer than the other one, but having driven 80 miles to the Gawsworth Hall classic car show 2023 all is now well and there is no pulling under hard braking. So there are many years of wear in the front brakes now.



While I was doing the brakes I noticed a split in one of the lower ball joint dust covers, plus there is a bit of play in the steering universal joint. Apparently the UJs aren't that easy to find, so I'll see if the company which restored my drive shafts can fix it. From what I've read the lower ball joints can be a nightmare to get out so I'll need to plan carefully.

Find out next time about the ongoing maintenance and progress with the To Do list.

Wettest trackday yet ?? Still great fun though.

At Blyton Park on 14th November we had 4 club cars out on the track. My Ex 'Youngtimer Trophy' Rallye 2, Phil Hart's Rallye 2, Richard Troop's Avenger Tiger and son Fred's Plymouth Cricket badged modified Avenger. After a dry, quite sunny Thursday (the usual day for FCTDC trackdays) the Friday was WET, WET WET all day and increasingly cold too. My car was plagued by electrical issues through the morning, once sorted by Phil and my other driver Phil White, it went well in the conditions as did the others... sticking to the track better than some of the more modern stuff there..... Audi TTs etc.



photos by track photographers Katie Rose and Matt Sayle.



Jake Owen our photographer friend had planned to record in car videos but the wet conditions resulting in condensation on the windcreens ruled out any decent results on the day. I think that's it for this year. Time to sort out electrics and find a 2nd gear on mine.

More photos from November NEC Classic Motor Show.... By Jake Owen

