

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.

**CONTACT: Bill Kenchington Ph (02) 49454830 OR Andrew Vile on
(02) 4933 5607 [business hours only]**

-GEARBOX-



SPOTTED - A CLASSIC JENSEN INTERCEPTOR.

.MARCH 2022 EDITION.

Vale Diana Hamilton

It is with much sadness I wish to advise that Geoff Hamilton's wife, Diana passed away on Monday 21 February 2022.

A number of you would have known that Diana had been ill for some time.

As Diana's family are in Sydney, Geoff has advised that the funeral will be there.

The date is yet to be advised.

CLUB MODEL DISPLAY

Our Club has just been advised that the Kurri Kurri Public School Family Fun Day will be taking place on Sunday 27 March 2022.

Our Club has been invited to provide a Model Display at the Fun Day.

Members wishing to display should advise Paul the details of their proposed model display at our March meeting.

We would welcome our newer members and those who have not displayed before to consider providing a model display.

There will be an opportunity for a few members to sell on the day.

You will need to advise Paul of your intentions early as space is limited.

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INCORPORATED

Minutes of Club Meeting Held at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club on 8 February 2022

Meeting Opened: 7.30 pm.

Members Present: 19

Apologies: 1

Visitors: Nil

Previous Minutes: Moved: Trevor Palmer Seconded: Ernie Williams "That the November 2021 Club Minutes be accepted". Carried.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer reported that the Club funds stand at \$1,271.44

Moved: David Standen Seconded: Shane Neems "That the Treasurer's Report be accepted" Carried.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

- i) P H Cheah (SMAC) – Expressing best wishes for 2022 and an appreciation of our Club's magazine and activities.
- ii) Taff (Oxford Diecast) – Holding off till May 2022 on announcing any future developments and releasing a new catalogue.
- iii) SMAC – December 2021 issue of "Think Small" magazine.

Outwards:

- i) David Standen and Family – Expression of sympathy on passing of their father.
- ii) Remote Members – Reminder that Club subs for 2022 are now due.
- iii) Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club – Thank you for meeting venue in 2021 and request to continue in 2022 (schedule of meeting dates and times forwarded).

Moved: Paul Campbell Seconded: Shane Neems "That the Correspondence be accepted". Carried.

Matters Arising:

- i) Richmond Vale Railway Display – No word has been received as to when the next display might occur.
- ii) Maitland Steam Fest - Has been postponed to September 2022.
- iii) A "Celebration of the Life of Phil Cohen" Function – No date has been advised.
- iv) Hunter Toy and Hobby Fair - Paul and Bill to approach Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club regarding the possibility of holding the Fair in the second half of 2022.

General Business:

- i) "Show Us Ya Slotz" Slot Cars, Lemon Tree Passage – A combined weekend visit and model car display by our Club is proposed (displays limited per day to say 4 members due to space and operate from 10am to 4pm). Paul to check out details and dates.
- ii) Proposed Visit to Singleton Army Museum – As the museum is now open, Paul to enquire about a booking during April/May 2022.
- iii) George Thompson Auction – The February date has been cancelled and no new date has been advised.
- iv) Model Competition Fridge Magnets – Brian handed these out to members for both model competitions in 2022.
- v) Nominations for Club Visits in 2022 – Members are asked to nominate suitable venues for a Sunday visit.
- vi) HMAC Google Drive Account – Paul plans to have the Club history records fully entered by mid-year, at which time he anticipates having these records available for access on a USB stick.
- vii) Grey Fergie and Landrover Muster – Matt Vile announced that this event is to be held at Bendemeer (northern NSW) on 18-20 March 2022.

Model Competitions:-

"Actual" Model Competition: "Open" – Qualified.

1 st	Bill Kenchington.....	"Golden Fleece" Holden Utes.....	27 Points
2 nd	Brian Fairhurst.....	CAT Drill 6250.....	26 Points
3 rd	Peter Ralston.....	Audi Race Team.....	20 Points

"Virtual" Model Competition: "Open"

Equal 1 st	Paul Campbell.....	Dinky Foden Dump Truck.....	15 Points
and.....	Allan Evans.....	Dinky Super Toys.....	15 Points
2 nd	Terry Payne.....	The Mighty Holden Torana.....	13 Points
3 rd	Matt Campbell.....	Dinky AEC Trucks.....	11 Points

Next "Actual" Model Category - March: "Race Car" – Any scale up to three (3) models.

Next "Virtual" Model Category - March: "Vehicle Running on Rails" – Any scale one (1) model only and ONE PHOTO ONLY.

Meeting Closed: 8.10pm.

*****SPECIAL NOTE - UPDATES TO MATTERS MENTIONED IN THE ABOVE MINUTES.**

- * **STEAMFEST TO BE HELD AT MAITLAND ON SUNDAY 9TH APRIL 2022.**
- * **NEXT GEORGE THOMPSON AUCTION WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY 1ST MAY 2022 AT HEXHAM BOWLING CLUB. THERE WILL BE TRAX MODELS INCLUDED.**

**** When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to your youth, think of Algebra.*

-PLACEGETTERS FOR THE JANUARY *Virtual* MODEL COMP.-

(** **Just a note:** Pics of the 'Virtual' Model comp placegetters from February on, will be sent out in a 'Special Edition' around every third or fourth month. This edition will still contain various other Gearbox articles.) Terry.



Above - First is Bills entry as shown and second is Brian F's as shown below.





Above – In equal third place was Brian B's entry and below Terry's entry.



PLACEGETTERS FOR THE FEBRUARY 'REAL' MODEL COMP

The results for our first 'Real' model comp are as follows:

- 1st – Bill K's Golden Fleece utilities.
- 2nd – Brian F's Cat Drill 6250.
- 3rd – Peter R's Audi Race Team.





SUNBEAM ALPINE – *Another 1960's car – Handsome, comfortable, but mild mannered.*



The **lead-in pic** is the first series Sunbeam Alpine produced by the Rootes Group in 1959 and when road tested in early 1960, *Car Illustrated magazine* wrote, *'Although it cannot be described as a hairy sports car, it offers a first class performance for a 1.5 litre production sports car.'* This view would stick to the little convertible during its lifetime.

The Rootes Group had not hitherto had anything to compete against the sports cars being turned out by MG, Triumph and Austin-Healey post WW2 that had become popular in North America. The Sunbeam Alpine was designed in the Raymond Loewy studios, with most of the body styling being completed by Ken Howes who had previously worked for Studebaker. By looking at any photo of an Alpine, it can be seen that there was a very obvious mixture of American design influence over the usual British two door roadster specifications.

The Sunbeam Alpine went on to become a reasonable success by selling 10,000 models each year on average from 1959 till production ceased in January 1968 and with most going to the United States. On the downside, in Britain some called it the 'hairstylist's car' as it lacked a bit of get up and go.

However, when released it was quite an up to date sports car for the era with its flowing body line capped off with fashionable tail fins. Basically, it should have been just a two seater but also had two very small seats in the back, though, to be honest, they were suitable for children only. It had a large boot, wind-up windows and a neat folding soft top with an optional hardtop available. The Alpine was powered by a 1494cc straight four cylinder engine with twin Zenith downdraught carbies producing 83bhp [61kw] out of the Hillman Minx, but with a new aluminium head. It was driven through a four-speed manual gearbox with synchromesh on the top three gears and an optional overdrive available. Front disc brakes were standard.

The floor pan was modified from that of the two door Hillman Husky station wagon. The structure of the little convertible meant that it was a heavy sports car and that affected performance which led to its reputation for a lack of vigour in performance. As an example, till a new 1725cc engine was available in late 1965, the Alpine could not achieve a top speed of 100mph.[160kph] With the new engine, top speed was now 118mph. [190kph]



Two nice examples of the later series Sunbeam Alpine [with reduced fins] at a car show in England.

Over its lifetime, the Alpine received regular updates, especially in the engine department. Later in 1960, the Rootes Group launched the Series II Sunbeam Alpine with a 1592cc engine but with a single Solex carbie and a slight reduction in power. The 1963 Series III retained the same engine but with twin Zenith carbies again.

Early in 1964, the Rootes Group introduced the Series IV Sunbeam Alpine with the most modifications made yet. It now exhibited reduced rear fins with new tail light assemblies and with the rear now being squared off slightly and a single bar replacing the slats in the front grille. Another change was having the manual gearbox becoming an all-synchromesh unit with an automatic gearbox now available as an option. The Mark V would be the last of the Alpine models and, as mentioned previously, was fitted with a new 93bhp [69kw] 1725cc straight four with twin Zenith downdraught carbies and special tubular exhaust system that saw it break the 100mph barrier. The slow selling automatic version was dropped.



1:43 scale models of the early Sunbeam Alpines. Left – Lansdowne in white metal & Right Vanguards in diecast.

To stay competitive with the latest MG and Triumph products, the Alpine's overall concept had to have a serious re-think, especially in the area of 'horsepower.' Enter Carroll Shelby and the V8 powered Sunbeam Tiger. That story can be found in the **DECEMBER 2018 GEARBOX.**

A few **myths** about the Sunbeam Alpine. Many members would remember that great TV series 'Get Smart.' The hero of the show, Maxwell Smart, was seen over a number of years driving a red Sunbeam Tiger, the V8 engined Sunbeam convertible. In fact, the car was actually the Sunbeam Alpine with 'Tiger' badging. For the series, Max's vehicle was fitted with special features, akin to James Bond's Aston Martin such as a machine gun, a smoke screen device, radar tracking equipment and an ejection seat. The famous American customizer, Gene Winfield who was contracted to produce Max's car, had to use a four cylinder Alpine to give him the necessary room under the bonnet for the modifications needed for the little convertible.

Maxwell Smart may have driven a Sunbeam Tiger, but **James Bond** drove a **Sunbeam Alpine** in the movie, 'Dr No.' **Hagerty Insurance** wrote, 'Although the Alpine is among the least memorable cars that 007 has driven in 58 years and 26 films, it was his first, and that makes it special.'

Upon release, some motoring enthusiasts assumed that the name 'Alpine' related to the fact that much of the road testing took part in that type of region, however, the name was a link back to the early 50's coupe of the same name produced by the Rootes Group.

To sum up what was a handsome, but mild mannered sports car, **Unique Cars** Aussie on-line site said, 'Where Alpines of any age and model excel, is in their versatility and comfort. The seats are well-shaped, there's plenty of legroom, carpeted floors and lots of information available via comprehensive instrumentation.' **Terry.**



1:43 scale diecast model of the 1961 Sunbeam Alpine set in a diorama from the James Bond film 'Dr No.'

ALMOST UNHEARD OF TODAY IN AUSTRALIA — THE TRIUMPH RENOWN.



A line in an auto magazine story prompted this article. It was about a collection of nice British *pre-WW2* sedans, though the writer pointed out that one was actually a *post-war* model. He explained that many immediate post-war vehicles actually had pre-war bodies till the late 1940's. Remember Phil Cohen telling us that in his story of the new 1949 Ford. The car in question here was a *Triumph Renown*, an unknown model to me. *See lead-in pic.*

However, when I did some research, my immediate thoughts were that it looked more like a stretched Triumph Mayflower of which I *was* familiar. The Mayflower was a two-door four-seater sedan powered by a 1.5 litre side valve four-cylinder engine through a three-speed column shift gearbox. It was aimed at being a premium saloon but in a compact size and was produced from 1949 to 1953 by the Triumph Motor Company, a division of the Standard Motor Company. *See next pic of a 1952 model.* Around 34,000 were produced with nearly half going to Commonwealth Countries like Australia and New Zealand as it never became the big seller in Britain that it was expected to be. Interestingly, Triumph went on to produce a small number of convertibles in 1950 and in 1952 they sent the sedan in CKD kit form to Australia where they were partly assembled and then modified into a utility.



So I found out a number of things in relation to the *Triumph Renown* in doing my research. You will notice on both the Mayflower and Renown models, the sharp edges in the body styling that became known as 'razor edge.' By the late 1930's, most British automakers tended to have a rounded or streamlined body shape, but some coach building firms drifted towards these sharper edges in body design. This was especially true of the hand-made special bodies produced by coach builders for luxury marques such as Rolls-Royce, Bentley and Daimler.

As well, the immediate post-war Triumph models bodies were fabricated in Aluminium over timber framing due to a shortage of steel post WW2. But the *Triumph Renown* was actually the third series of models turned out by Standard-Triumph commencing with the 1800, followed by the 2000 and then the Renown. The bodies for these vehicles were made by the coachbuilders 'Mulliners' of Birmingham before being fitted to the chassis at the Standard-Triumph factory in Coventry. For fans of Rolls Royce, you will recognise the name **Mulliners**, though there were actually three separate coachbuilding firms with the same name, but all were independent entities.

As an aside, after WW2, well-known body builders Duple Vista were at full manufacturing capacity in building the Duple Vista coach bodies and they outsourced additional bus body building on the Bedford OB chassis to 'Mulliners' of Birmingham in 1947. As it turned out, Standard-Triumph were at full capacity by 1958 and they bought out Mulliners of Birmingham who had been turning out 700 Triumph car bodies a week for them.

The Triumph 1800, released in 1946, was powered by a 1,776 cc 48kw four-cylinder engine and was replaced in 1949 by the 2000 TDA. Interestingly, the gearbox in the 1800 was a four speed manual unit but with the gear-lever mounted on the *right* of the steering column. The 2000 TDA had a larger 2088 cc 51kw engine that, together with the three speed manual gearbox, came straight out of the Standard Vanguard and the gear lever was now mounted on the *left* side of the steering column. The 2000 TDA model was only in production for 12 months before being replaced by the **Triumph Renown TDB** late in 1949 for sales to commence in January 1950. This was advertised as a luxury up-market saloon and had a new dashboard with a more refined set of gauges in keeping with its other luxurious interior appointments.

As was the case with the 2000 TDA, the **Triumph Renown TDB** also had the 4-cylinder 2088cc engine and gearbox from the Standard Vanguard, but now had an all steel body and was built on a new chassis based on the Standard Vanguard with front coil suspension. In mid-1950, the gearbox was offered with the option of overdrive. Triumph produced a limousine version in 1951 on an extended wheelbase and in 1952, the new **Renown TDC** models were built on the same wheelbase for extended legroom in the rear passenger area and it had a larger rear window. The Triumph Renown ceased production in 1954.

This series of Triumph saloons, as well as the 1946 Triumph roadster, were the first models to have Triumph badging after the takeover by the Standard Motor Company. Some members may recall a deep red 1947 Triumph 1800 roadster being driven by John Nettles in the long running British TV series **Bergerac**. Nettles then starred as DCI Tom Barnaby in the even longer running TV series **Midsomer Murders**. *Terry*.



Above - Lansdowne 1:43 scale white metal model of the Triumph Renown. Below – The real car.



Dinky made diecast models of the 1946 Triumph 1800 almost immediately upon its release and it ran for around five years. I found that there are still plenty on Ebay and they are inexpensive. *See the next pics courtesy Ebay.*



JENSEN – VERY BRITISH WITH AN AMERICAN CONNECTION.

The Chrysler V8 powered British Jensen Interceptor of the 1960's, is a model most of us are aware of, and it is well modelled by Oxford Diecast in 1:43 scale diecast. [SEE COVER PIC](#). This was an attractive GT class two-door four-seater coupe with a large glass rear window. Some may recall that Jensen produced one Interceptor model with Ferguson's four-wheel drive system, first introduced in their 1965 Jensen C-V8. Called an 'FF' for Ferguson Formula, this was the first production sedan to use a four-wheel drive system and also have anti-lock brakes fitted.

However, for this article, and using the *Veloce Anglo-American Cars* book I have been reading, I will go back to the Jensen of the 1930's where the company had a strong relationship with Edsel Ford.

Richard Jensen and his brother, Alan, commenced their car, truck and bus coachbuilding business located in West Bromwich, England, in the late 1920's. They concentrated on producing specialised bodies for many automaking companies such as Wolseley, Singer, Morris and Ford to name a few. One particular body was for a famous motor racing competitor, Ronald T Horton's single seater MG Midget that went on to win the 1933 Brooklands 500 mile race. It broke numerous competition records and the Jensen Brother's reputation for innovative ideas was even recognised by Rolls Royce.

In 1934, Jensen commenced producing vehicles fitted with a Ford 221 cubic inch [3.6 litre] V8 engine for both competition and touring. I read that this vehicle established Jensen's reputation as being persistent builders of, not only specialised 'up-market' touring vehicles, but also high performance sports cars. In 1935 and wanting to build a larger volume of sports cars, the Jensen brothers came to an arrangement with Ford to be supplied with Ford engines direct from Detroit. At the same time, they finalised an arrangement with British Ford to be supplied with chassis parts. By the end of 1935 Jensen was able to start selling their Jensen bodied Ford V8 powered cars. Of note, these vehicles also had a Ford grille and bumper bars. The first model was shown at an auto show and an order for two was placed immediately. One went to a dealer in the U.S. and the other to the famous American actor, Clark Gable. More orders soon followed.

Edsel Ford made a visit to meet the Jensen brothers in their factory in 1936 and he expressed admiration for the high quality workmanship of these Ford V8 powered autos and continued an interest in their company. In the meantime Clark Gable purchased the original model sent to a dealer in the US and Jensen took orders for another twenty 'Clark Gable' type models. Later in the year, Jensen made the first of what would be a standard production model, a stylish four-seater open tourer which the British magazine, *Autocar*, wrote that it was, '*One of the best sports cars Ford has produced.*' They were produced in both open and closed touring versions.



Edsel Ford with his Jensen V8 in 1936 – Courtesy of Veloce Anglo-American Cars.

Jensen standardised one Ford Jensen V8 model, known as a 'Type S' as a four-seater open tourer and convertible as well as a four door sedan followed by a smaller capacity 2.2 litre Ford V8 model and in 1938 at the Earl's Court Motor Show, displayed a Nash 4.2 litre straight eight engined model known as the 'H' type Jensen. The Nash engine had been given a makeover, including twin carbies, and had a top speed of 90 mph or 145 kph and this model launched Jensen's reputation as an independent automaker in Britain. ***They continued to provide coachwork for other automakers as well as manufacturing small fire engines and lorries with a Jensen designed chassis. Terry.***

- More little snippets OR did you know things -

I read recently about the big three Automakers from North America attempting to entice British motor vehicle buyers to step into their sedans over the years and the fascination some Brits had for American cars. The U.S. automakers, particularly Cadillac and Oldsmobile, had targeted Britain from early in the twentieth century and it is worth noting that US vehicles were nearly all right hand drive till around 1910. Also, Ford in 1911, and GM in 1925 with their Vauxhalls, had commenced local production in Britain to avoid their high import taxes.

Though the article nominated ten vehicles, I have selected three to write about and these three were from the 60's and 70's. First cab off the rank was the **Ford Falcon** sedan. **(Next pic)** North American imports were obviously well known automotive products that for years, saw most Brits viewing them as being part of the so-called '**American dream.**' However, Ford in the U.S. decreed that the Falcon was a 'compact' sedan and could possibly offer a challenge to the usual European type of family sized vehicle. The export model Falcon was produced in Canada and was powered by a 2,365cc six cylinder engine that produced 67kw of power through an automatic gearbox. Though only 4cms longer than the Mark II Jaguar, it was still considered a large sedan by British standards. In any case, the Jaguar 3.4 litre was cheaper and more powerful than the Falcon with a 30mph higher top speed and better handling capabilities, especially on British roads of that era. So ultimately, the Falcon didn't really stand a chance.



My next selection was the 1962 **Pontiac Parisienne**. **(Next pic left)** With the Suez oil crisis of 1956 came the Mini in 1959 and three years later came the Pontiac Parisienne. This was a vehicle that was twice as big as the Mini and which London based U.S. Concessionaires Limited felt would be an attractive proposition for the wealthy businessman or celebrity. Again, it was produced in Canada at Pontiac's factory in Ontario and was actually classed as a full sized sedan in North America. The export model had a 127 kw 4.6 litre V8, but came in at over 1700kgs in weight and though it had a top speed of 150 kph, it was very sluggish for a big vehicle. On the plus side, it had ultra-light power steering and with the GM Powerglide two speed auto gearbox, was an excellent cruiser especially as the M1 motorway was still derestricted as far as the speed limit went. It never took off either.



Finally, and the most expensive U.S. model offered, was the **Cadillac Seville** of the late 1970's. **(Above pic at right)** In 1977, the General's British vehicle importer, knowing that the 1973 fuel crisis was well and truly gone from motorists minds, decided that the Cadillac Seville would be an ideal vehicle to challenge Rolls Royce's new model, the Silver Shadow II. The Cadillac had a more refined ride and was kitted out with more technical gadgetry than the Rolls Royce, and was even only two-thirds the purchase price of the Silver Shadow II. The Seville model now had a slim European styled body, a surplus of luxury equipment and was close to the same size as the Silver Shadow II. On the other hand, it's 5.7 litre V8 engine only achieved a fuel consumption figure of between 12 and 15 miles per gallon through a three-speed Turbo Hydramatic 400 auto gearbox. The Rolls Royce had a 141 kw 6.7 litre V8 which outshone the Cadillac's 134 kw unit as far as performance went. The article mentioned that the Cadillac speedo read up to 85 mph, yet it was advertised as having a top speed of 105 mph. Go figure. **Terry.**

-Another little snippet – The Ford Cougar-



Ford Cougar coupe in 1:18 scale diecast by Action.

The front wheel drive Ford Cougar was produced from 1998 till 2002 and was a replacement for the Ford Probe that failed to ignite the sales market for this class of auto. *(See the February 2022 Gearbox.)* The Cougar was built on the Ford Mondeo structure and as can be seen in the lead-in pic, was a continuation of Ford's so-called 'New-Edge' styling which leant towards a wedge shaped body design on their smaller two door autos. Upon release, the Cougar was considered by some motoring journalists as being a fine-looking little coupe and quite modern as far as styling cues went. Others gave it negative reviews claiming it to be poorly built and would be more popular with the female driver. Oops!

Basically, Ford had tried to recreate the success of the Capri models with the Probe, but after the Probe failed to impact positively on Ford's financial position, the next step was the Cougar. This two-door automobile would target Fiat's 20V coupe models of the time that were powered by a 2 litre 4 cylinder a later five cylinder engine, both with turbo options. It would also go up against the very popular Alfa Romeo GTV6 coupes that were facelifted in 1998 as well as the Fourth generation of BMW's 3 Series two-door models. However, the Cougar would suffer by only having a small rear seating facility, even if it had a large boot and a nice modern interior. Nonetheless, it had luxurious appointments and was still a reasonable handling vehicle, if not exactly an exciting sports car.

It was powered by a 2.0 litre four-cylinder or a 2.5 litre V6 engine. Part of the initial criticism about the Cougar was that, though based on the Ford Mondeo, the 4 cylinder versions were slower off the mark and quite lethargic performance wise compared to the Mondeo. As well, and similar to the problems besetting the Probe, the V6 was a very thirsty engine and this was not a good start with fuel prices climbing around this time. For the North American market it was badged as a Mercury Cougar but in Britain in its right hand drive format, it was the Ford Cougar and was first shown at the 1968 British Grand Prix held at Silverstone.

U.S. Ford, as they found with the Probe, upon sending the Cougar to Britain soon saw that it was not well received as the type of auto it was intended to be, that is, a sporty coupe that would appeal to performance car enthusiasts. An issue at first was that there was a limited supply available for Britain and then they saturated the market there. Another mistake was their high purchase price as well as the high tax on the V6 models which saw them quickly become quite undesirable. Even though many motoring historians have since stated that the Cougar was a reasonably sound version of a two door coupe style for the Mondeo platform, within a short time after their release, their lack of popularity meant that within five years, the British Ford Cougar was only valued at a quarter of its original purchase price.

From my research, it appears that for Australia it was imported from late 1999 till 2001 and was only available with the 125kw 2.5 litre (2544cc) V6 engine out here. They came with a five speed manual or four speed auto gearbox and the manual gearbox models had a top speed of around 215 km/h compared to the auto versions with a top speed of just over 200kph. Our models came with sixteen inch alloy rims fitted with 215/50R tyres and were not exactly light for a two door coupe coming in at almost 1500kg without extras. Equipment levels were excellent though, and as an example, it had climate control air-conditioning, an alarm, remote central locking, fog lights, a leather-wrapped steering wheel, power mirrors and seats, a trip computer, dual front air-bags, front side airbags and anti-lock brakes. But in the showrooms, our motoring writers felt that Toyota's Celica and Honda's Prelude were offering a better proposition and at the end of the day, the Cougar failed in Australia as well. *Terry.*