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THE INVERTED COMMER

Official Magazine of the Rootes Group Car Club Inc



No. 387, May 2023





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ROOTES GROUP CAR CLUB INCORPORATED

CONTACT US Address: P.O. Box 932 GLEN WAVERLEY, VIC 3150

Note that post box is only checked fortnightly – allow plenty of time for response

Note new phone number: (03) 9005 0083 (AH)

Email: rgccvic@gmail.com

Web Site: rootesgroup.org.au

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WEB SITE: Alex Chinnick

achinnick@gmail.com

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Wanted – another Social Coordinator to assist!

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Mick Lindsay: (03) 5860 8650 (AH) or 0417 304 616

Thomas Clayton: 0414 953 481 (AH)

AOMC Rep: John Howell

Federation Rep: Neil Yeomans

CLUB PERMITS

For club permit applications & renewals, call one of the above Club Permit Officers who will tell you what needs to be done, and where to send your paperwork.

Include a stamped envelope and don't forget to sign the form!

Fees: 1. Lodging an application (Post 1931 vehicle): \$30

2. Lodging an application (Pre 1931 vehicle): \$POA

3. Renewal: \$10

4. Provision of paperwork to support the applicant (e.g. loss of logbook): \$30

Don't post renewals to the Club PO Box!

Note it is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure that the renewal gets to VicRoads on time

MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Meeting times and locations vary each month – see the Calendar for details, which is an effort to give more members a chance to attend meetings. *New members and visitors always welcome*



Rootes Group Car Club website

hosted by: www.qcsgroup.com.au

This month's cover – A magnificent Sunbeam Tiger at the British & European Motoring Show at Caribbean Gardens

“Churchill stood off to one side, serenely puffing at a cigar. He made no sign of apology but only got in and cried, ‘Drive off!’ The constables saluted humbly.”

On a campaign trip to Wales, Churchill conversed garrulously with O’Brien, his PR officer. They passed the brandy back and forth. Churchill urged such reckless speed that Clementine Churchill cried: “Please let me out. I refuse to continue this ride.” With the utmost courtesy, Churchill stopped at a country railway station and escorted her to the platform. Then, plying the brandy bottle, he ordered the driver “down the road like a bat out of hell for Cardiff.”

By the time they arrived, what with the brandy and his nerves, O’Brien was “done up—out practically cold. Churchill supervised the laying out of his PRO on a table in the rear of the hall. Then he went ahead and made a rouser of a speech. Afterward, he appeared confused about the origin of O’Brien’s trouble, and expressed the opinion that it was ‘probably something he ate.’”



TRADING COLUMN

To advertise, please use the contact details on page 2 of the magazine. Ads for vehicles must contain registration, engine or chassis number, as well as a full description, contact name and location for the car. Ads will run in the



magazine and appear on the website for two months unless otherwise requested. Please let the editor know if a car or part is sold.

For Sale

Hillman Hunter \$Free Appears to have been prepared for rallying. It has a cast iron 'yella terra' head, roll cage & 2 Saas seats. Has rust in driver's door, probably elsewhere too. Deceased estate, needs to be removed asap. Located Sale, contact Mal 0411 072 585

Last Month

1966/67 Hillman Minx Series 6 \$3000 Red upholstery in excellent condition, 4 sp manual. Mag wheels. 141000 miles. Been in one family since new. Good straight body. Been sitting over 15 years. Needs clutch cylinder & brake work from lack of use. White paint work has surface rust on paint, may clean up as a patina paintwork or respray if desired. Lovely little car, one of the most original around that would be a great project car. Has spares including original wheels, sports steering wheel & diff centre. Please note radio will be removed prior to sale. Located Launceston Tas. Phone Murry 0413 597 188 or Roxy 0439 367 497



Hillman Hunter Royal \$10,000ono Comes with a lot of parts. Contact Mark Jolley on 0459 350 977 or markjolleyconstructions@gmail.com



1937 Hillman Minx Mark I, \$25000 4 door sedan, restored to original condition, on club reg, excellent condition. Owned 50 yr. Contact Pam 0403 509 025 Sunshine Coast.

1932 Hillman Wizard. Chassis # A755497 Contact club member Ian on 0432 167 064 or wrihian@yahoo.com.au

Mark Hillman

parts mainly carbys and fuel pumps, also a good assortment of many workshop manuals and various other items including No 14 & 42 Chrome Rootes Club of Victoria Badges. Contact member Martin Young Juliayoung1@bigpond.com or 03 5987 3149 (Doncaster East)

Humber Sign. Plastic sign in fantastic condition. Letters are painted on, not stickers.

Would look great in a man cave or shed. Measures 1225 wide x 430 high. Pick up only due to the fragile nature of it. Drouin. Jodie 0447 541 020 or snakegully@hotmail.com



Wanted

Hillman Minx ADL (Series IIIC) undamaged LH front quarter mudguard panel wanted by Neil Lauritzen - neilshas@bigpond.com

Hillman Minx Series 1 Convertible – Seats & door cards Contact Ian Moist on 0408 340 048 marinproe@gmail.com

‘Paddle’ type heater control knobs for Hillman Super Minx. Contact Mick Lindsay on 0417 304616 or micklin7@optusnet.com.au

Overdrive gearbox to suit the 1725 motor for a future project. Contact Bernie 0412 392 470 or meehanjb@gmail.com

Cars & Churchill: Blood, Sweat & Gears Richard M Langworth



Richard is a Senior Fellow of the Hillsdale College Churchill Project. He is a writer, historian and car enthusiast. Having written about cars and Winston Churchill for fifty years, he has finally produced a piece on them both. From exotica like Daimler, Napier and Rolls-Royce to more prosaic makes like Austin, Humber and Wolseley, the story was three decades coming.

The first section featuring Humbers is reproduced below, while the whole article is also available online in three parts beginning here: <https://bit.ly/3Cmkv2O> (or use the QR code).

There's safety in Humbers

In London during the World War 2, Churchill became attached to his bullet-proof Humber Pullmans, government cars skillfully driven by the Royal Army Service Corps. Again Churchill's fondness for the horsedrawn age was reasserted. When ready to leave on a trip, he would ask not whether the chauffeur was behind the wheel but, "Is the coachman on his box?"

William Rootes founded the Rootes Group, which embraced the marques of Hillman, Humber, Singer and Sunbeam-Talbot. He was a close admirer. The July 1945 election left Churchill out of office and needing a car. Prying him away from his allegiance to Daimler, Rootes sold him a new Pullman. The company let him garage it at Devonshire House, its London headquarters.



Daimler Chauffeur John Bullock at Churchill's London residence, 28 Hyde Park Gate, with the 1954 Humber Pullman on permanent loan to WSC. (Rootes Motors press photo)

When Churchill required a chauffeur, Rootes loaned him John Bullock, a company driver who became a favored part of his entourage. Whenever the boss wanted the Humber he would say, "I think I'll have the Bullock Cart."

"The constables saluted humbly"

A biographer recorded Bullock's frequent experience: Habitually late, Churchill would typically "pile into the Humber around 5:30 for a 7:00 speech a hundred miles distant. As his chauffeur swings into the high road, Churchill crouches, with a flask, on the edge of the back seat and urges him to greater speeds. 'But the machine is traveling at 85 now,' the chauffeur will protest. 'Faster! Whip it up a bit!' comes the answer."

Once, doing 80 on a curve, a rear tyre blew and "a van full of irate constables screeched to a halt alongside. They had been trying to catch the runaway for miles." Realizing who it was, they helped fix the tyre.

RGCC Calendar

MAY 2023

Wednesday 3
Sat 6-Sun 7

Bill's shed day, Bayswater. Noon to 4pm. Contact Bill on 0404876236 to visit Lake Goldsmith Steam & Vintage Rally, Carngham-Lake Goldsmith Road. 8-4, \$15 entry (5-16yo \$5). 65 display sheds, lots of displays etc.

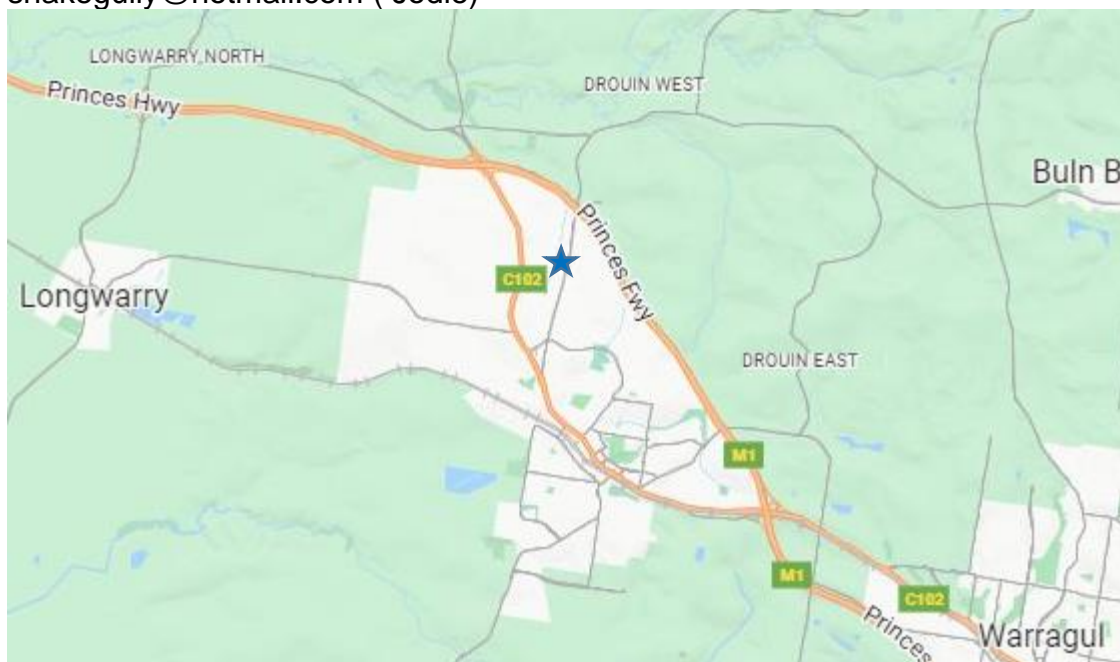
www.lakegoldsmithsteamrally.org.au

Wednesday 10

Member's Meeting, Murray & Jodie Brown's house - 34 Amberly Drive Drouin (exit freeway at C102 Princes Way). Look for the porch lights in Rootes colours of blue and yellow, there is also parking around the back if needed.

5pm for dinner and a few games of pool ⑧ & shed tour, meeting 7.30.

Pizza dinner, \$10 per head, BYO alcohol, please RSVP Murray or Jodie with numbers and dietary requirements. urraymay@hotmail.com (Murray) / snakegully@hotmail.com (Jodie)



Saturday 13

Geelong Bay City Swap Meet (Westⁿ Dist Hist Veh Club), Showgrounds, \$10

Wednesday 10

Social Meeting, Gateway Hotel Princes Hwy Corio. Please RSVP to Neil neil@swanbay.com.au or 0429 295 774 for booking purposes.

Fri 19-Sun 21

Veteran Drivers Club Pre-WW2 Weekend, based in Bendigo (flyer was on page 19 last month) https://veterancarclub.org.au/?page_id=6771 Events include runs to Maldon on Sat 20 and Inglewood on Sun 21, with displays at lunch time.

Sunday 21

National Motoring Heritage Day "Cavalcade of Transport" – Two events are being run by the AOMC, at The Maffra Shed (Gippsland Vehicle Collection) and at Trentham Railway Station, gates open at 10am for display cars & 10:30 for spectators at both venues, entry by gold coin donation, catering by local groups.

Friday 26

Benalla Historic Vehicle Tour, starting point not yet announced, 9:30am approx. Finishes at the Benalla Art Gallery to enjoy the Hot Lap Exhibition by Eamon O'Toole.

Fri 26-Sun 28

Historic Winton races, includes marking 90th anniversary of the Singer Nine, 70th of Sunbeam Alpine & 60th of the Hillman Imp.

Sunday 28

Kinglake Heritage Motoring Exhibition, Kinglake West Oval & Heritage Centre, 1055 Whittlesea Kinglake Road, Kinglake West (2km from Whittlesea-Yea Rd), 10-3, gold coin donation. History of Transport display & Mechanics Institute open.

JUNE 2023

Wednesday 7

Bill's shed day, Bayswater. Noon to 4pm. Contact Bill on 0404876236 to visit

Fri 9-Mon 12

Hamilton & District "Welcome Back Tour" Hillier Lane, Hamilton

- Wednesday 14 Members' Meeting**, Rosstown Hotel, 1084 Dandenong Rd (cnr Koornang Rd), Carnegie (Mel 68 J3). Dinner from 6:30, meeting from 7:30pm.
- Saturday 17 AOMC Club Management Seminar, at the Jaguar/Austin Healey Clubrooms 21 Rosalie St Springvale.
- Saturday 23 Combined Morris Club Run** Visit Bill's shed at Burgess Road Bayswater North including morning tea provided, then head to the Bayswater Hotel for lunch and potentially a visit to the nearby Ambulance Museum in the afternoon. Please RSVP to the club or Tim (timothychristie@bigpond.com) for catering purposes.

JULY 2023

Wednesday 5 Bill's shed day, Bayswater. Noon to 4pm. Contact Bill on 0404876236 to visit

Wednesday 12 Members' Meeting, Venue TBA. Dinner from 6:30, meeting from 7:30pm.

AUGUST 2023

Wednesday 2 Bill's shed day, Bayswater. Noon to 4pm. Contact Bill on 0404876236 to visit

Fri 4-Sun 6 Winton Festival of Speed

Wednesday 9 Members' Meeting, Rosstown Hotel, 1084 Dandenong Rd (cnr Koornang Rd), Carnegie (Mel 68 J3). Dinner from 6:30, meeting from 7:30pm.

Saturday 26 Bendigo to Castlemaine Run. Starts at Bendigo Veteran, Vintage & Classic Club, 118 Inglis Street, Bendigo with breakfast provided by the club from 8.30am (\$5 donation appreciated). Run leaves 9.30am for Western Reserve, Castlemaine. Enjoy exploring the vibrant art & culture, heritage streetscapes, quality food & beverages. All enquiries Ph Neil Athorn 0408 033 839

Sunday 27 Federation Picnic Marong, 41 Malone Park Road, Marong. Veteran Vintage & Classic Cars, Engine Display & Tractor Trek. Show your Club Newsletter mentioning the Marong Picnic for free Entry into the oval from 9am. No Vehicle movement on the oval between 10.30-1:00. Catering by Rotary.

27 Aug-1 Sep Federation North-West Tour, starting at Marong and travelling via Kerang, Swan Hill and Echuca to Shepparton. Please email expressions of interest (with car details) to jw-magoddard@bigpond.com

FURTHER EVENTS

October 60th Birthday of the Hillman Imp, based in the Yarra Valley area

11-12 November Bendigo Swap Meet. Featured Displays: 4 Wheel Drives, Barn Finds & Survivor Cars, Die-cast Models & Toys, plus over 1700 Sites

Always fill out your logbook when driving your club plate vehicle!

If there are any suggestions for club events through the year, please suggest them to Tim Christie

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- Brenda Elmes on the 13th
- Phillip Elliott on the 15th
- Davarkhah Kourosh on the 30th

We would like to thank Malcolm McLaren and family for their donation of Imp parts to the club. Malcolm bought his first Imp in 1971 and it is still within the family. There is a good mix of Mk I and Mk II items available, please reach out if you are interested.

Imp Photo of the Month



A unique racing Imp with lift-up body



It's Automatic...

At the NEC Restoration Show (24-26 March) there was something rather different; the Imp Club were fitting a factory prototype automatic gearbox into a car. The last time this gearbox, owned by club stalwart Richard Sozanski, was seen in public was at the 50th celebrations at Coventry.

After a hectic two days the engine was fired up with the car on stands and the transmission seemed to work – all that was allowed to be done in the exhibition hall. After the show finished it was driven out! This is a bigger deal than it sounds, as the operational condition was unknown – the prototype car the gearbox came from hasn't run for something like 30 years.

Here is a better view of the gearbox with its torque converter (at left) – you can see the size of it which makes the gearbox about 3" longer than standard. This pushes the engine back and required a modified rear crossmember and engine lid to fit it in (seen sitting below the car in the photo above).



The gearbox was built by Ferodo and has the standard first gear blanked off as it is not needed due to the torque multiplication of the converter. It is actually only semi-automatic, as gear changing is still done using the lever although it isn't strictly required. A switch in the gear lever mechanism operates a solenoid which allows hydraulic pressure to activate the clutch (wet type), much like pressing the clutch pedal normally.

You could also use it like a normal automatic at least in town, leaving the shifter in Drive (3rd gear), but the O/D position (4th is actually an 0.852:1 overdrive) would be needed for highway speed. Note the first gear position is just left out! 2nd is now Low and Reverse is normal.

It was originally intended to be part of a major facelift for 1968, including boring out the engine to 930cc for extra torque plus many other changes – most canned by Chrysler.





Above right – a Belgian Sunbeam Imp with the front grille painted in the blue colour chosen to mark the 60th anniversary. At least 60 cars were present in all permutations from basic to Stiletto, standard to modified.



This was followed by a run to the Great British Car Journey museum, 50 miles north past Derby. This coupe really shows the Imps Scottish heritage – if you include the wheels there are 3 saltires just on each side!

Stay tuned for more local events; we should have a few Imps at the Winton Historic races for starters...

President's Report

Hello Club Members,

As we start to move towards some colder weather it feels good to have been able to get out on the road a few times this past month in my early Mk1 Imp. The rear-mount design of the Imp radiator does certainly favor the colder weather, just not the driver without a heater. One benefit of the colder wetter weather is less time needed in the garden and more time available to spend in the shed on the next project.

This year sees 60 years since production first started on the Hillman Imp in May 1963. I've been around Imps, or more so had them around me, for the past 25 of those years.

On a quick finger count I got up to around 17 Imps I've had a hand in over the years. Some very nice specimens, others pulled from blackberry-infested gullies for a trim or singular part. Some I think 'why did I let that one go?!', while others it's more 'why did I get that' - but all of them I do enjoy.

Our roaming social meets in the East and West have been getting some good turn outs and it's great to see new faces as well as those we don't see often. Keep a look out for the details as this month we move even further East. If getting to a gathering proves challenging for you, why not put your hand up to bring a gathering to you? Please contact us if you have an idea or would like to nominate your local as a venue.

Now grab a drink and enjoy this month's magazine. On a different note, it has been a real joy seeing so many of you getting out to the club meeting and social dinners.

Colin Warren
RGCC President

This is Colin's Imp when purchased back in 1996, and the same car today



June Event!

Tim has organised a combined run with the Morris Car Club, visiting Bill's shed in Bayswater with morning tea, then lunch at the Bayswater Hotel and hopefully also a visit to the nearby Ambulance Victoria Museum.

More details next magazine, or contact the club.

Please RSVP for catering.

Editor's Note

Hi everyone,

I don't know about you but it seems like the month has gone by very quickly again, and the end of Daylight Savings really marks the progress through the year.

Fear not however, there are still some great events to come such as many options on Sunday 21st for National Motoring Heritage Day – get your car out for a run! Tim Christie has also organised a combined event with the Morris car club for June.

Thanks to Bernie for sending the report from the GT Day. Hopefully I haven't left anything important tout this month, I did receive a couple of other photos which I'll run in future.

John



Vale

We are sad to note the recent passing of two of our long-standing members.

Leo Gee from Terang passed away on April 23, seen with his 1935 Minx



Peter Ford from Launceston passed away on April 13, pictured here with his wife Margaret and 1913 Hillman.

Sincere condolences to family and friends

L2P Programs

Are you able to volunteer as a Mentor Driver in the L2P program? L2P is a state-wide program funded by the TAC, with nearly 60 around Victoria (based in local council areas).

L2P volunteers mentor young Learner Drivers while they build up hours and skills for a driving test, but don't have other means of getting the hours they need to qualify for a licence test.

The program includes lessons for the Learners with qualified instructors at each stage, followed by practice drives with mentors, who also get training. In the Frankston L2P program for example, they have three Toyota Yaris' that are used for the drives, so you don't need to use your own car.

If you can spare a few hours a week your local L2P Coordinator would love to hear from you. Have a look on the [VicRoads L2P page](#) to find your nearest L2P program. It's useful and rewarding.

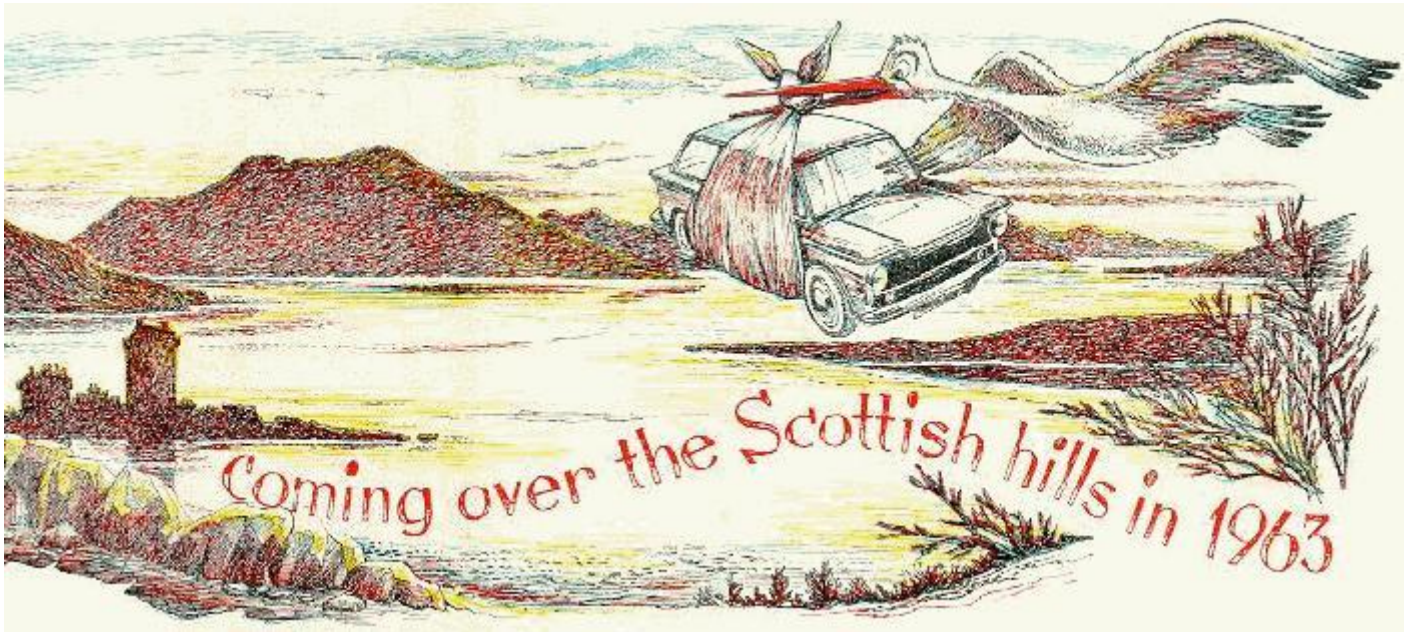
1966 Hillman Super Minx Wagon

For sale on Gumtree - [Link](#)

Four speed manual.. It comes with original Hillman Venetian blinds. Brand new interior which includes carpet, ceiling panels, new seats and timber panelling. Baby seat bolt in floor has been professionally installed by Seatbelt Kings. Exterior has had a full repaint and new rubbers on windows.



Hillman Imp turns 60!



The Hillman Imp was launched on 2 May 1963, in basic and De Luxe models. Note the image above from a “birth announcement card” doesn’t show the final styling but an earlier version with the bumper mounted much lower! As you might imagine there have been many functions celebrating the milestone, kicking off with the Imp Club’s “Imp Ecosse” weekend in Scotland (below left) and a run at the Curborough race course (right) on the 27th.



Then for the main event, at the Coventry Transport Museum.



other similar Rootes models. We liked the layout of the instruments and their clear markings; Rootes are one of few firms to mark metric equivalents on their fuel gauges. The “piano-key” switches are new to Rootes and were widely appreciated; our testers would have liked them even more if internal illumination was supplied at night. The multiple-purpose steering column switch for indicators, horn and headlamp flashers is retained, but the headlamp dip mechanism has now been moved to the floor. The “eyelid” covers over indicator and headlamp warning lamps are perhaps a “gimmick”, but one which the driver values greatly.

The Hunter ventilation system is unchanged, and as excellent as ever. There are still opening quarter-windows in the front doors for smokers and diehards who must have their fresh air the old-fashioned way!

The boot is completely carpeted with good quality material, and there are covers over rear-lamp holders and wiring that protrude into the boot, but the spare wheel is still supported only by its wire cradle under the rear parcels shelf. To give strength to the rear body, the boot sill is high, necessitating a good heave to get a big suitcase inside; the flush-fitting petrol filler cap locks.

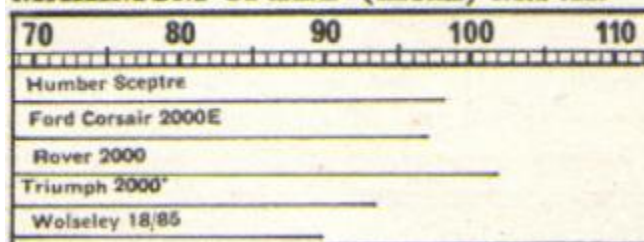
Service requirements are few, but the owner-mechanic should be able to reach everything under the bonnet with ease. The brake servo is hidden under the big twin-carburettor air cleaner, but distributor, plugs and oil filter are all handily disposed on the driver's side.

Though the Sceptre is a strictly conventional car closely linked with the Minx and the Hunter, it has been thoughtfully equipped and modified for “young executive” use. Its £1,139 recommended price includes overdrive, which means that the optional automatic transmission £43. The new Sceptre is a worthy successor to previous Humbers and its comfortable appointments, luxury finish and attention to detail, coupled with its lively performance and spritely handling, will undoubtedly earn it an enthusiastic following.

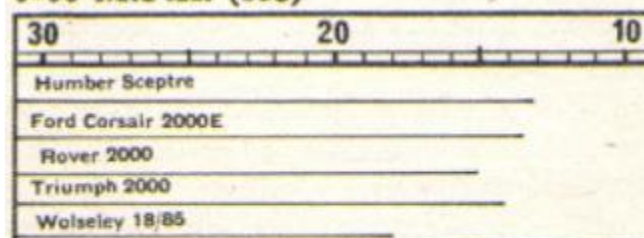
From the equipment listing an odd omission is no heated rear window available; and it is interesting to note the 97 octane requirement for the 9.2:1 compression ratio – pay attention anyone with a higher-performance engine!

HOW THE CAR COMPARES:

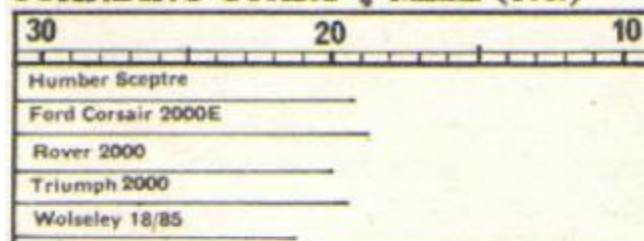
MAXIMUM SPEED (mean) M.P.H.



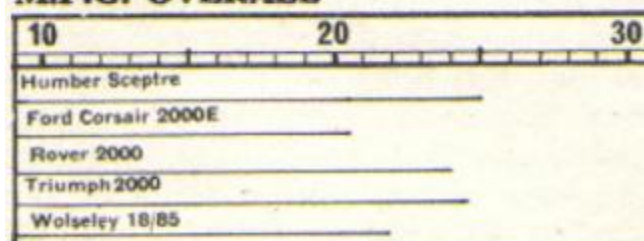
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STANDING START ¼-MILE (sec.)

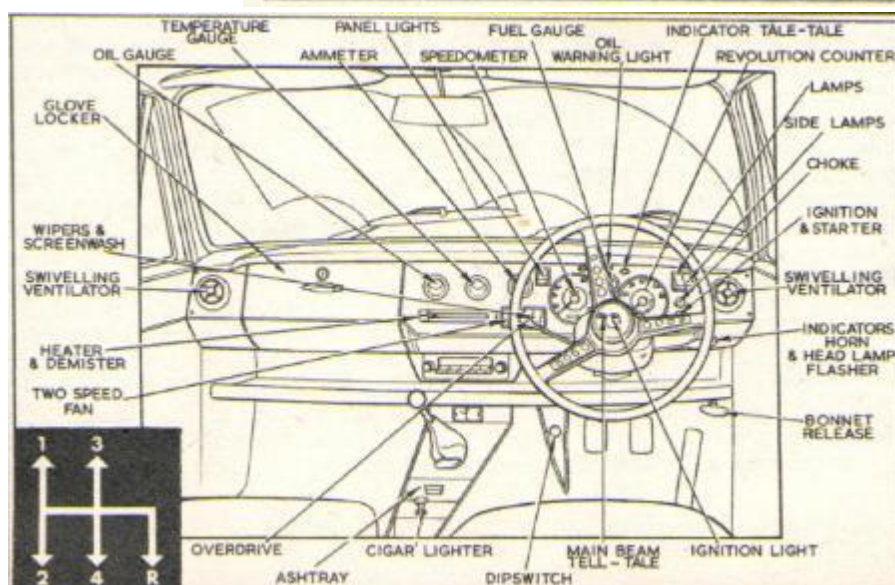


M.P.G. OVERALL



PRICES

Humber Sceptre	£1,139
Ford Corsair 2000E	£1,008
Rover 2000SC	£1,357
Triumph 2000	£1,198
Wolseley 18/85	£1,040
(Automatic £1,135)	



Rootes GT Day – Sunday 16 April

It was a wet start from the Stamford hotel in Rowville for the twenty two participants who turned up. Unfortunately the wet weather caused quite a few to leave their classic cars at home and come in their 'modern'.

Hosted by the Humber Car Club, there were also representatives from the Sunbeam and Singer Car clubs. The Alpines and Tiger matched well with the Humber Super Snipes and Hawks.

After a leisurely cruise along Wellington Road through the gently winding hills, we arrived at Gembrook. After lunch we visited the motor museum opposite Puffing Billy station and enjoyed the display of old hire cars and memorabilia.

A great day enjoyed by all!

(Ed: apparently Bernie attended as a Humber Car Club member, and not as a RGCC member – boo...)

Hillman Hunter GT



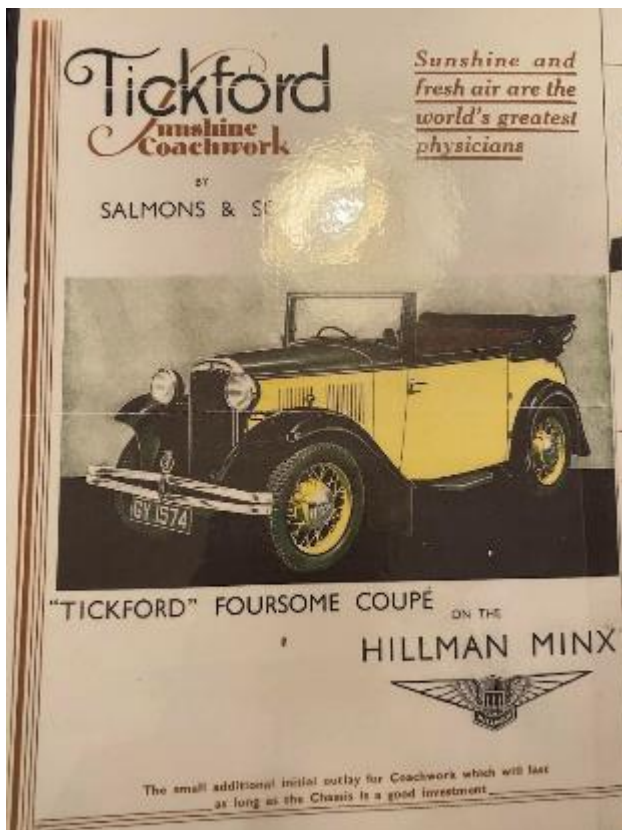
Here is a UK ad for the Hunter GT in 1971; note that the GT badge was no longer used in Australia by this time, and we didn't get this grille here either.

1933 Hillman Minx Tickford Foursome Coupe

This rare and interesting-looking Minx came up for sale of Facebook in the UK and Neil shared it with me, and with you! The car is fitted with a Salmons & Sons Patent 3-Position "Tickford" wind-down hood, one of only three examples known to survive!

The car has had a lot of restoration work, but there are some potentially tricky parts left to find. It has had a new ash body frame and aluminium panels, rebuilt chassis, engine and radiator. It requires a windscreen, running steps, door handles and glass, the hood winding handle as well as the interior re-fitted. The engine also isn't currently running but the price of £5000 leaves scope for what's needed. The car is located in Lincolnshire.

[Facebook link](#)



start was easily possible, helped by plenty of power and a well-muscled clutch.

When we tried the Hillman Hunter last year, and later the slightly less powerful Minx version, we were impressed by the new-found economy of the 1,725 c.c. engine. This was partly owed to the high compression ratio (9.2 to 1) and partly to the new carburetion arrangement; but the final improvements were due to a drastic saving in vehicle weight. Further, proportionally smaller, improvements have been achieved on the new Sceptre, though economy was not helped by the spirited driving that it positively encouraged. When we tested a manual Sceptre as long ago as 1963 (in 1,592 c.c. form) it recorded 22.8 m.p.g.; while an automatic Sceptre II tested last year gave 20.9 m.p.g.; the new Sceptre recorded 25 m.p.g. in our hands, and we would expect any owner to achieve something like 28 m.p.g.

Autocar's staff gave unqualified praise to the driving position. There are so many adjustments that any size and shape of driver can become perfectly comfortable. Apart from a generous range of fore-and-aft adjustment to the driving seat, the backrest is adjustable to fine limits, and the steering wheel itself is adjustable for reach. In particular the designers have gone out of their way to ensure that the seat does

not adjust too far forward (something all too common these days in the interests of rear seat leg room) and the steering column centre-line is pleasantly low. The wheel adjusts up and down the column through 2½ inches, locked in any intermediate position by the boss in the centre of the wheel. Only the tallest drivers thought the gear lever was a little too far forward when they were relaxing well back.

The front seats themselves are sumptuously trimmed in stretching Ambia, and have very deep back rests which give support to the average driver's shoulders; they have enough "give" to support passengers well in energetic cornering, and their springing is sufficiently dead to discourage undue jolting on bumpy roads. The compulsory front seat belts were Rootes lap and diagonal, comfortable in use and easily adjusted.

Like the Rover 2000's, the new Sceptre's rear seats are styled to give two almost individual places. Both the seat cushions and back rests are contoured to give side support, and there is a folding centre arm-rest which covers a small rear cubby box when folded down. Both rear seat passengers and the front passenger have hand straps above the doors.

Apart from the obviously high quality trim and furnishings, the Sceptre has a walnut veneer fascia panel and full range of instruments not found on the

The matt, silver-grey tail panel, matching the headlamp surrounds, is a quick recognition point



HUMBER SCEPTRE

As we tested it, the Sceptre achieved a two-way maximum of 98 m.p.h., though a down-wind best of 102 m.p.h. suggested that 100 m.p.h. might just be possible with an on-form engine and a completely still day. At 98 m.p.h., the engine is just over the peak of the power curve at 5,500 r.p.m.; when, in top gear, overdrive was engaged the car always slowed down slightly, and it is not always practicable to use more than 4,000 r.p.m. in overdrive top gear. An easy cruising speed would be 85 m.p.h., and 70 m.p.h. in overdrive needs only 3,150 r.p.m.

The test car needed full choke for cold starts—however warm the weather—and took some time to warm-up properly; to combat potential stalling at traffic lights when cold for the first couple of miles. The engine idled rather quickly when warm, and the throttle linkage came adrift during the test.

Gear Ratios

Since the adoption of an all-synchromesh gearbox design in 1964, we have often praised the transmissions in Rootes' medium-sized range. On the new Sceptre the gearbox ratios are well chosen, but it is a pity that they have not been modified to allow overdrive third to be a more useful ratio. The keen drivers on *Autocar's* staff would like to see a lower axle ratio (perhaps 4.22) as an option.

Gear lever movements were smooth and light; gearchanges could be made as fast as the hand could move. Overdrive engagement was almost unnoticeable; there was some transmission roughness at low r.p.m. in direct drive, which, incidentally, was also noticed on the original Hillman Hunter.

For many years, it was usual to equip luxurious saloons with very soft suspension that gave a good town ride but probably unstable cornering on the open road. The Sceptre is much more of a sporting proposition than this, and its designers made a good compromise between excellent roadholding and a supple ride. Only the thicker front anti-roll bar is different from the original Hunter's, though the tyres are a size larger at 6.00-13in., and the car's overall balance is very good. The damping is firm enough to encourage fast driving on winding roads, yet the low-speed ride is comfortable and jolt-free. Driven at normal speeds, the new car shows only a trace of understeer, which builds up as cornering speeds are increased. Towards the limit, front tyre scrub becomes noisily apparent; and when the car was thoroughly abused on the MIRA test circuit it

became clear that it would eventually "run out of road" nose first.

The nicely balanced handling is helped by light and precise steering. Initial impressions of slow response are probably owed in part to the choice of pressures and tyres, as well as the low-geared steering. There is no kick-back over bumps or potholes.

In terms of efficiency, the Sceptre's brakes were well nigh faultless. A brake servo has been added to the Lockheed disc-drum system fitted to the Hunter and Vogue range; consequently, pedal pressures are really low. Even though maximum braking needs only 60lb pressure, there is still ample sensitivity in the system to allow gentle check braking. When the brakes were used hard in our fade tests at the MIRA proving ground, there was virtually no fade, nor any increase in pedal travel. However in common with the non-servo cars in this medium-sized Rootes range, there is a slightly unfamiliar, almost spongy "feel" after prolonged dis-use (for instance on a motorway). But this does not detract in any way from the high efficiency of the brakes. The handbrake lever is ideally placed for leverage between the driver's seat and the door; it made light work of holding the car on a 1-in-3 test hill. A re-

The large boot is carpeted and upholstered to protect luggage—except, curiously, for the spare wheel fastenings which are left exposed





Meeting Notes of the AOMC Delegates Meeting

Monday March 6th, 2023 at 7.30pm

There were 70 delegates in attendance representing 62 clubs.

Guest Speaker: Leigh Booth - 'Tyre Failure can Be Fatal'.

Leigh has had a background of 37 years with Victoria Police, 28 years in the crash investigation/major collision unit. He has been involved in approximately 2,000 vehicle and machinery inspections at accident sites, including vehicles as diverse as mobile cranes, trams and a road roller. He then went through a power point presentation relating to various tyre failures that led to major accidents.

Run Flat Failure- tread separation. The tread separates from the casing due to loss of adhesion. This is caused by age (deteriorates over time), underlying previous damage (ingress of moisture), and the biggest enemy excessive heat (underinflation, high ambient temperature). Deterioration can be caused by exposure to UV, oxidation, deflection cycles, heating/cooling cycles.

Why is tread separation an issue? Rapid deflation with flexing of the sidewall and loss of traction. Front tyre failure causes the vehicle to pull to the side of the deflation. Rear tyre failure causes oversteer. Under inflated tyres can cause the same reaction.

Leigh then showed various images of vehicle incidents following tyre failure, and went through the process he used to determine if a tyre failed before a crash, including road markings, markings on the vehicle from tyre damage and damage around the rim.

Treasurers Report Mark Fenton reported that the AOMC finances are currently in a healthy position and as of the end of February 2023 the AOMC Cash at Bank is \$ 324,886.

AOMC Events.

Florence Thomson Tour 28th to 30th April. This event has been fully booked with 80 participants.

Festival of Motoring - Cruden Farm Sunday January 29th. Iain Ross reported that approximately 400 vehicles attended the event. \$15,000 was raised on the day which all goes to Beyond Blue.

British & European Show Sunday February 28th. Iain also reported that this event, the first held at Events Central (formerly Caribbean Gardens) attracted 997 cars and 17 motorbikes. The MG car club held their annual concours at the event. Iain thanked the clubs involved for supporting the day.

Engine Number Records: Philip Johnstone reported that there were a variety of vehicles covered in his search requests the last few months. These included Alvis, Amicar, Austin, Buckingham, Jaguar, E Type Jag, Land Rover, MG, Mustang, Pontiac, Riley, Holdens and Ford GTs.

AOMC Carbon Offset Scheme. Keith Mortimer reported that the reason the AOMC embarked on this program was to change the impression the general public has of the classic vehicle movement. We are proud preservers of Australia's moveable cultural heritage. International experience is that most peak bodies in other countries are going down the same path with carbon offsets. AOMC has negotiated a scheme geared for historic vehicles recognising their low impact due to low mileage with an associated low cost to participate. It is important to take the information we provide back to your club to give your members the opportunity to participate if they so wish.

Survey Of Historic Vehicle Movement. This is being organised by a group called the Australian Motoring Heritage Foundation based at Eastern Creek. AOMC have been invited to participate and are considering joining in as it is very important to gather data.

Question from the floor: There has been concern at our club about the six dot points in the Presidents report in the February newsletter, particularly VIN plates, Annual Roadworthy for Heritage vehicles, Heritage Plates, Economic Value of Historic Motoring and Environmental and Fuel considerations. Our members were concerned that: AOMC were pushing for annual RWC, what is the survey going to survey?, and with the CPS fleet of only 200,000 on permit compared to 5.7 million vehicles in Victoria our environmental impact is minimal.

Keith responded that delegates raised last year that a single voice for the Victorian movement was needed. To this end, we have been meeting with representatives from VicFed to get a joint position to take to Dept of Transport and VicRoads. The six dot points that were listed in his report are the areas that were seen as a concern. Keith apologised for not providing any follow up information that has caused confusion.

Chairman Keith Mortimer declared the meeting closed at 9.20pm

AUTOCAR, 14 September 1967



Humber Sceptre 1,725 c.c.

AT A GLANCE: Rootes entry in “junior executive” class. New Sceptre based on Hillman Hunter, with tuned engine; much quicker and more economical than previous Sceptres. Excellent handling, good brakes with efficient servo. Nicely trimmed with excellent seats and good driving position. Overdrive standard. Full range of instruments, and generally well equipped.

The demand for well-finished and subtly status-symbolizing 2-litre saloons has expanded rapidly in the past few years. One or two such cars have been developed specifically for this market, but many makers are competing with faster, more luxurious versions of their slightly smaller-engined family saloons, often at surprisingly low prices. The 1968 1,725 c.c. Humber Sceptre was revealed last week as the Rootes Group contender, being based fairly closely on the Hillman Hunter-Singer Vogue range. It uses many components

MANUFACTURER

Humber Ltd., Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry, Warwickshire.

PRICES

Basic	£925	0s	0d
Purchase Tax	£213	14s	0d
Total (in G.B.)	£1,138	14s	0d

EXTRAS (inc. P.T.)

Lap and diagonal seat belts	£7	19s	9d
Radiomobile 970T	£28	9s	0d
Aerial	£2	0s	0d

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

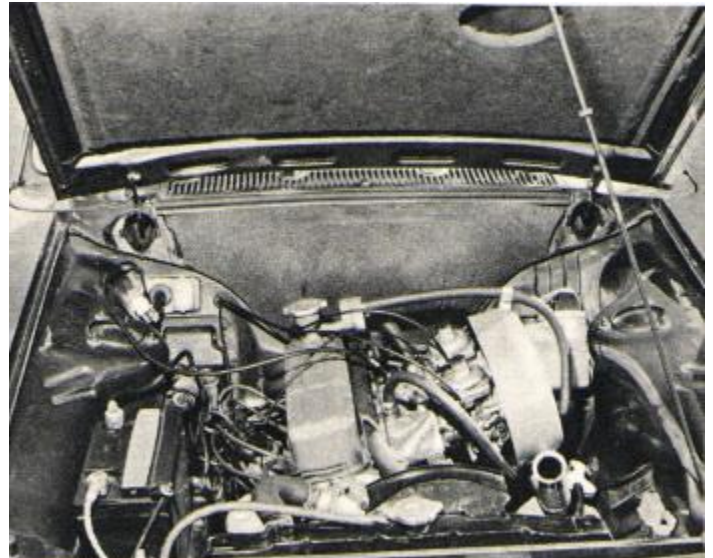
Mean maximum speed	98 m.p.h.
Standing start ¼-mile	19.3 sec
0-60 m.p.h.	13.1 sec
30-70 m.p.h. (through gears)	13.9 sec
Overall fuel consumption	25 m.p.g.
Miles per tankful (10 gal./45.5L)	230

common to these two, but is particularly well furnished, nicely presented, and very lively too. It costs nearly £90 more than the now discontinued Sceptre II, but is lighter, more powerful, and certainly better trimmed than before. Following the disappearance of the Haw and Super Snipe early this year, the Sceptre is the only Humber in the price lists.

The superceded Sceptre was based on the old Super Minx body shell, but the new car uses a modified Hunter body shell and components. Therefore it is nearly 200 lb lighter and handles much better than the previous model. The newly developed twin carburettor 1,725 c.c. engine gives 88 b.h.p. (3 b.h.p. more than before) so acceleration and, particularly, economy are improved.

Because it is their prestige car, Rootes equip the Sceptre carefully and well. The front seats recline fully, while the rear compartment is now laid out to give virtually two individual chairs. A Laycock overdrive is standard, working on top and third gears. This gives—in effect—a five-speed gearbox, as overdrive third and normal top do not differ much. Rootes have arranged for overdrive to be a relaxed cruising gear rather than an effective fifth; the test car was significantly faster in direct top than its high (3.12) overdrive gearing.

The Sceptre is really a “double-car” car; though Rootes do not intend it as a “performance” car in the medium field, we have not driven a quicker Humber before. Naturally it shows up best when driven



The tilt of the engine to the right-side of the car is common to all the 1,725 c.c. Rootes saloons but the twin carburettors are unique to the Humber Sceptre. Extensive use of sound deadening material, as can be seen inside the bonnet, results in a very quiet car

smoothly as a town carriage, and keeping down the r.p.m. Stopwatch checks at MIRA proved that it can be an enthusiast's car, for 6,000 r.p.m. is easily achieved (a red warning sector on the rev counter starts at this speed), and there are enough ratios to give a gear for every condition. Unusually for a touring car, maximum torque is developed fairly high up in the range at 4,000 r.p.m.; while the engine is silky smooth at low speeds, it lacks bite until the engine speed has reached about 3,000 r.p.m.



The separate rear seats can be seen in this view of the comfortable and beautifully appointed interior