

WORKS NEWS



From Buckinghamshire with love

The Aston Martin Owners Club enjoyed a slice of double-0 heaven at its Autumn Concours in August, held this year at Bletchley Park, where Ian Fleming was once posted with Naval Intelligence. Club Secretary Johnny Dallow was there to celebrate the James Bond author's 100th birthday

Bletchley Park, 50 miles north-west of London, known as 'Station X' during World War II, was once responsible for the collation, interpretation and dissemination of intercepted enemy radio traffic that had been encrypted in the notorious 'enigma code'. The code was so secure that the chance of decoding it with random guesses was calculated at 150 quintillion to 1. Nine thousand staff worked around the clock at the Buckinghamshire site to break the code, eventually gleaming sufficient intelligence that was instrumental in changing the course of the war and bringing it to a conclusion two years earlier than might have been expected.

One member of staff who worked as a special liaison officer between Naval Intelligence and Bletchley Park was Commander Ian Fleming RNR, author of the James Bond novels; who incidentally found time to write much of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* for his son Caspar during his posting. This being the centenary year of Fleming's birth, and given the immortal connection between James Bond and Aston Martin, AMOC was invited to take part in the August Bank Holiday celebration event. The result was the Autumn Concours d'Etat. This attracted some 60 entries, including guests from the Lagonda Owners Club and members from France, Switzerland and Holland. In addition, well over 300 Aston Martins could be found in the car park, including the railway station, such was the interest in the day. Indeed, Bletchley Park had its highest visitor footfall ever! The general public showed great interest in the cars on display – particularly the James Bond cars kindly displayed by Aston Martin and the gyrocopter 'Little Nellie' used in



the film *You Only Live Twice* (1967). There has been an obvious resurgence of interest in AMOC's Concours events, not least due to a policy of finding 'family-friendly' venues; at Bletchley, Members had the opportunity to tour the site with its unique exhibitions of wartime memorabilia in addition to the exhibits relating to Bletchley's wartime role. Bletchley is also home to the Museum of Computing and regrettably receives no public funding, instead relying entirely on visitor income and donations. The Spring Concours at Lord Rothschild's Waddesdon Manor was equally well supported with members having the opportunity to view the house and gardens. Next year will see the Club visiting Rousham Park with its magnificent gardens by William Kent in the spring, and in the autumn the Royal Naval Air Station at

Yeovilton, where a 'dash' down the runway and dinner under the wing of Concord should prove to be highlights. Concours events create an opportunity to meet friends old and new in a social environment but, just as importantly, they help develop a pride and standard of ownership that reflects a common bond and the exclusivity of the Aston Martin marque. Long may they continue.

Further information

If you are not a Member and wish to enjoy the benefits of AMOC's friendship and social and motorsport events around the world then contact Carol Bradley, Membership Secretary on +44 (0)1865 400400 or hqstaff@amoc.org Alternatively visit www.amoc.org to learn more.

AMOC Events: November 2008–January 2009

1–2 November – USA East Winter Park Concours D'Elégance (Florida, USA)

9 November – Area 1 Go Karting Challenge, Buckmore Park (Chatham, United Kingdom)

3 December – Aston Martin factory visit (Gaydon, United Kingdom)

5 December – USA East Holiday Luncheon, Le Périgord Restaurant (New York City, USA)

5–7 December – Section Germany Goose Meeting (Salzhausen, Germany)

6 December – Area 1 Christmas Dinner, HMS Belfast (TBC) (London, United Kingdom)

6 December – USA West Holiday Luncheon, Candy Store, Burlingame (California, USA)

7 December – Club Concours Day, The Sebel Heritage, Yarra Valley (Victoria, Australia)

9 December – Area 13 Christmas Dinner, Fox and Goose, Coombe Bissett (Wiltshire, United Kingdom)

14 December – Area 14 Christmas Lunch, The Old Swan, Astwood (Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom)

14 January – Walter Hayes Lecture, given by Aston Martin Racing Team Principal, George Howard-Chapell at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall (London, United Kingdom)

10 Years on

This year marks the 10th anniversary of The Aston Martin Heritage Trust. Chairman Chris Lendrum explains the purpose and priorities of a society steeped in the past, but looking very much to the future

Ten years ago The Aston Martin Heritage Trust was established by the Aston Martin Owners Club, with the support of Aston Martin Lagonda. Former chairman of AML, Walter Hayes – a vitally important figure in the modern history of Aston Martin – became the first chairman of the Trust, emphasising the close relationship between Aston Martin as the makers of the cars, the Club as the provider of competition and social activities with the cars, and the Trust charged with preserving the heritage of the company, the Club and, of course, Aston Martin motor cars of all eras.

At the time there was mounting concern that ruinous litigation might – in extremis – result in the forced sale and dispersal of the Club's growing collection of treasures. It was also recognised that the time had come to form a legally independent body, regulated as a national charity, to offer a permanent home for the preservation of all archives, artefacts and memorabilia associated with this world-famous brand. This vision has since met with the approval of many people wanting to ensure that their private collections should find a permanent home where they will be available for the enjoyment and use of Aston Martin enthusiasts in perpetuity. A steady

stream of items gifted or loaned to the Trust arrives all the time, with Aston Martin itself providing examples of all materials as they are published so that the scope of the Trust archive extends right up to the present day.

As a trust, AMHT is subject to UK charity law under the supervision of 11 trustees – six appointed by the Club, two by Aston Martin itself and up to three who can be co-opted by the trustees for their specialist input. The links with the company and the Club are very important to the Trust, and the presence of Kingsley Riding-Felce as a director of Aston Martin is particularly valued by fellow trustees. Taken together, the trustee team possesses in-depth knowledge of most aspects of Aston Martin from the earliest days right up to the present, also owning and driving Aston Martins of every era from Lionel Martin's Sidevalve cars through to today's DBS.

In the last issue, we set out our plans for the development of the archive, including full internet access to supplement the traditional personal visit. If the archive – the largest Aston Martin archive in the world – is at the core of the Trust, so too is education. The Trust puts on two major

lectures a year: the Dudley Coram lecture in the autumn, a historical talk, and the Walter Hayes lecture held at the prestigious Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall every January, which focuses very much on the present. The 2009 lecture – on 14 January – will be given by Aston Martin Racing Team Principal George Howard-Chappell, who will talk about this year's enormously successful racing season.

Conservation is another of the Trust's vital activities, of which the historic vehicle collection is an important part. As well as the ongoing restoration of A3, the oldest Aston Martin in the world, which is expected to be unveiled in the spring of 2009, two contrasting vehicles have been given to the Trust by benefactor Peter Livanos: a 1988/9 AMR1 Le Mans car and a particularly fine example of a 1981 Lagonda saloon.

But to conserve is not enough for the Trust – we also wish to provide opportunities for members to gain personal experience of historic vehicles wherever possible. The Trust's 1934 Ulster – bequeathed by a member – is no museum piece, often being taken out by members to promote awareness of the Trust and the Club, including a guest appearance this summer driven by Club Secretary Johnny Dallow as Mr Toad's much-prized motor car in an open-air charity production of *Wind in the Willows*.

All of which is not to forget publications, which remain at the core of the Trust's educational activity. In addition to the seminal *Register* published for members every four years, *Aston* is an award-winning annual journal of the Aston Martin world past and present, the 10th edition of which is due out in time for Christmas reading. Membership of the Trust is open to all with an interest in the fascinating heritage of Aston Martin, and joining now will not only guarantee receipt of the next edition but open the door to all the Trust's activities and give every Aston Martin enthusiast the satisfaction of supporting its work.

The Trust is located in Drayton St Leonard, near Wallingford, Oxfordshire, where visitors are most welcome.

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