

Staff Car Sagas

MGA • Reliant Scimitar GTE • Austin A35 • Mk 10 Jaguar
 Fordson Van • Morris Pick-up • Trojan Bubble Car • 123E Anglia
 Wolseley 6/80 • Triumph GT6 Mk III • Hillman Californian



Michael Brisby
 reflects upon 'his'
 fleet

As many long-term readers of *Practical Classics* will know I used to be the magazine's editor and have since been editing *The Automobile* which is concerned with pre-1940 vehicles. Moving in those circles it is interesting to note that the Reliant Scimitar is a popular choice as a "modern" car amongst the vintage car folk.

Those vintage and veteran car enthusiasts are not as "anti-classic cars" as you might think. I have taken the MGA to many pre-war events this year and it has been given a very warm welcome. Since the Rover's departure I have been using the MGA every day, just as I

know whether I like it but a very brief run was most impressive. The pedals and gear change are nice to use, the power assisted steering just a shade light for my taste but the new engine is very good indeed. I know that virtually new Jaguars are hardly the thing for a classic car magazine but it is nice to see that Jaguars are still with us and producing such fine cars – a pity that other classic names don't have a John Egan to preserve and build upon their reputations.

The Rover 3500, registration mark POC 617R, is now settling in with its new owner – a customer of DAK Autos and, as I discovered a regular reader of my Staff Car Saga contributions during my spell with the car. I hope that it continues to give him the good service it gave me.

The reason for parting with the Rover was merely that I was due for a change of car and not, as some may think, as the result of the letter published in the October issue in which Mr Foley, P.R. Officer of the Rover P6 Owners Club mounted a spirited defence of the make and model and laced it with a few barbed comments aimed at myself. I should add that Mr Foley was treated to a reply from me which should have answered most of the points he raised.

At my request the replacement for the Rover will be the Reliant Scimitar GTE – the car

which has been rejuvenated before your very eyes in the pages of *Practical Classics* following a long and fairly hard-worked career in the magazine's advertising department's hands.

As you know Eric Gilbert has carried out the overhaul and it was he who painstakingly transformed my staff car Triumph TR4A from a disaster area (following its rebuild in other hands) to a good, house-trained example of the model. The nice thing about having a car which has been given the "Gilbert" treatment is that Eric is extremely good at tailoring a car to suit my personal tastes – he knows just how I like things done.

I chose to have the Scimitar on the basis of road-testing one in my newspaper days and driving one owned by my father – not on my experience with the *Practical Classics* example! I drove it not long before it was taken off the road to await its rebuild and it was quite horrible in just about every department.



Chris Graham
 collects
 his classic.

Well, its finally happened, after just over a year with the magazine I have at last earned my chance to join the ranks of those privileged few who recount their motoring milestones in the columns of 'Staff Car Sagas'. All that I had to do was collect and take control of the latest addition to our fleet, a 1958 Austin A35. "It will do you good" they all said, like brushing your teeth every day and not eating sweets between meals I suppose — "you will be glad you did . . . one day".

The car had been bought by Paul Skilleter from a private owner in Poole, and that was where I had to collect it from. The train journey to Dorset gave me a chance to reflect upon my own experience of driving classic cars, however, as you can easily count the number of 'classic miles' that I have covered on the fingers of one hand, these noble reflections did not last for long. A couple of all too brief drives in my father's Lotus Elan S2 and Marcos 3 litre V6, added to a crawl around the back streets of Beckenham in the com-



did in the "old days", and it really has had to work for its living. It needed a re-bore and new re-conditioned carburettors when I bought the car in 1972 but though it leaks and throws more oil than it burns, it goes and stays in tune remarkably well and it is reliable. On top of that it is, as Wilson McComb the MG authority says, a car with very safe and enjoyable handling characteristics – everyone should have one but mine is definitely not for sale!

Just to round things off I must mention the Jaguar XJS I was recently allowed to take around the block. This was the new 3.6 litre six-cylinder fuel injection version with a manual gearbox. I did not ask the price – what does that matter when you cannot afford it!

Having worked with and driven a number of E-Type Jaguars (and liked the good ones) in the past this was an interesting outing. The more recent a car is the longer I take to get to

