



# WESSEX VEHICLE PRESERVATION CLUB

FOUNDED 1971



[www.wvpc.org.uk](http://www.wvpc.org.uk)

## 'WESSEX WAYS' NOVEMBER 2020

### VEHICLE OF THE MONTH - JENSEN HEALEY



When production of the Austin-Healey 3000 ended, Donald Healey opened discussions with Jensen Motors, who had built the bodies for Healey's Austin-Healey cars. The largest Austin-Healey dealer in the U.S., San Francisco-based Kjell Qvale, was also keen to find a replacement to the Austin-Healey 3000; Qvale would become a major shareholder of Jensen, making Donald Healey the chairman. The Jensen-Healey was developed in a joint venture by Donald Healey, his son Geoffrey, and Jensen Motors. Hugo Poole did the styling of the body, the front, and back of which were later modified by William Towns to take advantage of the low profile engine and to allow cars for the U.S. market to be fitted with bumpers to meet increasingly strict U.S. safety regulations. The unitary under body was designed by Barry Bilbie, who had been responsible for the Austin-Healey 100, 100-6 and 3000 as well as the Sprite. It was designed to be easy to repair, with bolt-on panels, to keep insurance premiums down. Early cars (1973-1974.5) were fitted with two-piece steel and chrome bumpers originally designed for the Jensen-Healey. Later cars used redesigned black rubber bumpers to comply with US government regulations and meet the new 5mph crash standard.

Various engines were tried out in the prototype stage including *Vauxhall*, Ford and BMW units. The Vauxhall 2.3 L engine met United States emission requirements but did not meet the power target of 130 hp (97 kW). A German Ford V6 was considered but industrial action crippled supply. BMW could not supply an engine in the volumes needed. Colin Chapman of Lotus offered, and Jensen accepted, his company's new 1973 cc Lotus 907 dual overhead cam, 16-valve all-alloy engine. This multi-valve engine was the first modern dual overhead cam 4 valve per cylinder engine to be mass-produced on an assembly line. This setup put out approximately 144 bhp (107 kW), topping out at 119 mph (192 km/h) and accelerating from zero to 60 mph in 7.8 seconds (8.1 seconds for the emission controlled U.S. version).

Suspension was simple but effective with double wishbone and coil springs at the front, and a live rear axle with trailing arms and coils at the rear. Brakes consisted of discs at the front and drums at the rear. The suspension, steering gear, brakes and rear axle were adapted from the Vauxhall Firenza with the exception of the front brakes, which were the widely used Girling Type 14 Calipers.

## **BSA BANTAM**



**Bantam D1**



**Bantam D7**

The D1 (the original model) 125cc was available initially only with a rigid rear suspension, although within three years the range was enhanced to include an optional plunger rear suspension. The front suspension of all D1's possessed no damping and resulted in a bouncy ride quality. D1's were available with a variety of electrical lighting systems. Wipac systems were available either in 6v AC (known as direct lighting) or DC. The AC system used a small dry 'torch' cell battery to illuminate the forward facing 'pilot' bulb within the headlamp shell, the remaining lighting was only available for use when the engine was running and the dry cell had to be regularly replaced. The DC system incorporated a lead acid battery and operated in a conventional manner. For a short period some D1's were equipped with Lucas lighting systems and these operated in a similar manner to the Wipac DC system. The D1 continued to be available to the public right up until 1963 and was still produced for the GPO (General Post Office) for at least 2 more years.

The D3 Major represented the first step in development of the Bantam, although the D1 would be produced for many years to come.<sup>[2]</sup> First produced in late (most likely October was the first released) 1953 with a 150cc engine, the D3 continued in production until 1957. A modern-style foam-filled pillion seat was fitted as standard, an economy and comfort breakthrough that had become popular as an option on the D1. It replaced the original standard fitting of a parcel carrier behind an individual sprung rubber seat.

In addition, the front suspension was made more substantial in volume and the cylinder was not simply bored out but was enlarged with distinctive larger thermal cooling fins. These larger cooling fins was also added to the post-1953 D1 models, albeit they maintained their smaller bore.

The D5 Super was a further development of the Swinging Arm D3 with a similar frame but with lengthened rear section which gave more upright mounts for the rear suspension. A more rounded style of tank was fitted. The engine was further increased to 175cc. The D5 model was only produced for the 1958 season.

The D7 Super was introduced for 1959, had a similar 175cc engine to the D5 but had an entirely new swinging arm frame and hydraulically damped forks which incorporated a nacelle mounted headlamp. The D7 continued in production until 1966 with at least 3 different styles of tank and alterations to the Wipac powered electrical system including a change to battery powered external coil ignition.

Pre-1958 (D1 to D3) had 19 inch wheels and 4.5 inch brakes. The 1958 D5 had 18 inch wheels and 4.5 inch brakes. 1959 D7 and later models had 18 inch wheels and 5 inch brakes front and rear.

## **WVPC COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2021**

Chairman – Doug Cronk – [duggcronk@btinternet.com](mailto:duggcronk@btinternet.com) – 01202 895387  
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FBHVC Representative – Dennis Jones  
Committee Member – Mo Cronk

## **IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE:**

As you are all very aware, 2020 has not been the year we would have wanted. Car shows and opportunities to get out and about in/on our pride and joy have been few and far between. Without our monthly club nights at Cobham and Bloxworth it has been difficult to catch up with friends and like minded club members.

2021 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wessex Vehicle Preservation Club. Your committee will be thinking hard about how to celebrate this with our Club members, Covid permitting.

## **CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER.**

Hi Everyone,

Well here we go again, another lockdown with everyone blaming everybody else, when all they had to do was keep their distance and wear a mask in a confined space, but you tend to think that the most important ingredient missing is common sense.

Due to this new lockdown us poor old farts who enjoy the same things will have to wait a lot longer before we can return to normal.

As to 2021 and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club we are hoping that we may be able to have a celebration show within a show if you know what I mean but more on that in the months to come, in the meantime all we can do is look forward to December 2nd and hope things improve, if you do any driving or riding then do it with care make sure you stay safe and take care.

Doug.

## **NOTE FROM THE EDITOR – Dennis Jones**

I apologise for the lack of content of the last few Newsletters but due to Covid and the Club's lack of events there has not been much to write about lately but if anybody out there has some interesting stories to tell then please forward them on to me at [djones4990@gmail.com](mailto:djones4990@gmail.com).