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ASTON-MARTIN
OWNERS' CLUB

13th November 1998

53/46/1

Dear Mr. Sewell,

So sorry to bother you again, but having discovered, in the ES, journalists who can actually write, I, unusually and now, read the whole paper. Thus I read your article in today's ES Magazine about the Hillman Mix - a name I well remember.

Before my marriage in 1954 I'd worked for seven years for the old Amalgamated Press, in their Advertisement Dept Talbot Street - opposite the Guildhall, where a student orchestra regularly got stuck at precisely the same bar in the same bit of 'Lohengrin'. Little did I know then that I really did have a world-famous tenor (John Sims Reeves) as a greatgreatuncle, & that, presumably towards the end of his performing days, he became Professor of Singing there - the very place where my niece (contralto) trained & went straight into 'The Sound of Music' on the West End stage, with Olive Gilbert & Co. I didn't know either, that when I discovered what my diaphragm was for, I too, could sing (mezzo).

Couldn't resist mentioning that somewhat uncanny discovery, but the real point is that at AP I worked for & with Dudley Coram, Secretary of the Aston Martin Owners' Club & my adored Honorary Uncle. His brother, Bob Coram, whom I met briefly, was the cartoonist Maroc. The AMOC was a grand crowd - I went to one or two race meetings & helped at the odd conference.

I'd love to know if the AMOC still exists, & who is the secretary if it does, & would like to know where Uncle Dud's son Breck is nowadays - he would be in his late fifties now, I imagine. Sadly, Uncle Dud died several years ago (incidentally, everyone called him Jerry - & he hated singers - had been overexpressed to them

in his youth!) It's possible that Jeannie, his wife, is still alive, though - when I last saw the family they were living at Horssocks with Jeannie's parents; her father was a very good artist (surname Stewart) - they were a delightful couple.

I shall never forget my Uncle Dud. He took me, a 20 yr. old innocent, under his wing, gently pointed out various facts of life, & took me to my first cocktail party. I remember his passing me a letter from an old girl friend. I read it & said, "You're going to marry her." He did, & very happily, I'm glad to say. I still have, displayed in my home, photographs of Uncle Dud & of myself taken by Jeannie, & one of Boed taken by his Pa. (They were both excellent photographers.)

So really this is a 'where are they now?' letter. I expect, if an A.M.O.C. still exists, its secretary would be very interested in a couple of old Club magazines (in one of which I'm mentioned!) & in the original AMOC badge before they pinched my monogram for a new one. I have one of each. (I'm a secondhand - can't-afford-to-put-it-on-the-road-yet-red-Mini-automatic-owner!). Uncle Dud presented me with them, & bought me a Gieves beret on which he solemnly pinned the new one. I don't think they make them like Dudley Saville Bay Coram any more.

My psychic streak tells me you'll remember some of the people I've mentioned. I do hope you'll be kind enough to find time to let me know.

With many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Alma Owen

v. rough! -
(drawing, I mean!)



Their old one

(blue background, silver red, red ASTON MARTIN)



Theirs

red
white with red flouk



Mino (drawn originally by his brother)



ASTON MARTIN OWNERS CLUB

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53/46/3

6 January 1999

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Dear Mrs. Olive,

Brian Sewell of the *Evening Standard* has forwarded to me the letter you wrote to him on 13 November last year - and what a lovely surprise it was to have another slant on early post-war AMOC life.

Dudley Coram was the moving force behind the re-construction of the Club in the early post war years and, apart from being Secretary, was also Editor of the Magazine and Chairman of the Club for 22 years from 1953 to his death in 1975. His widow, Jean, remains a Member and still attends occasional events, as does Breck who is now rebuilding the family Aston Martin DB2 convertible. If you agree, I will be very happy to forward correspondence although I am unable to disclose Members addresses or telephone numbers.

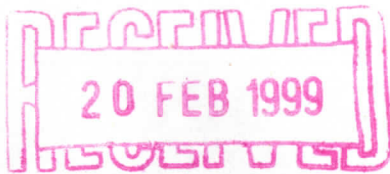
Club lore has always credited the current Club badge to Jean Coram, so I was intrigued to read of your involvement - and I am sure our archivist (to whom I have forwarded a copy of your letter) would like to see more details of the "old" badge which you sketched since this is different to anything I have seen.

I enclose a recent magazine so that you can see that we are still very much alive and well (you can see an example of the only car badge before the current one lurking between the lights on the very gloomy photograph on page 18).

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

James Whyman,
Secretary.



16th February 1999

53/46/4

Dear Mr. Whyman,

I was delighted to receive your charming letter re my forever-beloved A.M.O.C., & apologise for the delay in replying - the flu bug got me, & I eventually had to give in & take to my bed for 10 days, the worst part being that Cassia, my darling Golden Retriever bitch, didn't get her daily 10-mile 'walkies'! (I was thoroughly spoilt by some very good friends, but they rather jibbed at that little job, even though they all love Cass, & she loves overgirding that morsel, & some that don't, including FOOD, especially her Mince!)

(Hope this pen is better than that last one!)

Brian Sewell, besides being a very good writer, is obviously a *heltava nro chappi*; he took a great deal of trouble tracking you down for me. He said you sounded very friendly & kind, & your letter bears that out. So, as an obviously worthy successor to Uncle Dud (I can't possibly think of him as anything else), you may stay as Secretary! (So I can distinctly hear laughter in heaven at that piece of cheek!) [I seem to have found a decent pen at last, too!]

To compensate for the cheque, I'm sending you with this letter the cherished old AMOC badge given to me by U.D. with the new one. Quite probably Jean did have a hand in the design of the latter, but I remember U.D. sketching out the final version, & my saying that he'd pinched my monogram - perhaps that's when he put the 'O' around the 'AM'. It's a great design, anyway.

I also enclose for your archive an old copy (50 yrs old!) of the former AMOC magazine (Christmas 1948, & pretty good for a post-war mag, when everything was still in what supply & one could actually carry home the Sunday newspaper without pulling a tendon), plus a 1953 News Sheet - a rather special Coronation edition. I attended that Southerton meeting - a delightful AMOC member, whom I'd never even met, collected me in his immaculate Aston; we had coffee in Newmarket, he found me (ref 12 30)

↳ insisted on buying me lunch, & later ran me all the way back.

I occasionally took down Minutes for the Club's official meetings - straight onto a manual typewriter with a carriage a yard long which could well have decapitated the kind Member to whom I hissed from time to time, "what's his name?" Great fun!

I was highly amused at Snettleton at the change of 'gear' (cush!) from 'progressive stockbroker' (well, Astons do cost a bob or two) to scruffy jeans, bright T-shirts & beanie caps! They were exactly like excited teenagers (1940's vintage) having the time of their lives! Control Point was an old red double-decker bus from which yards of rather suspect (I was a Flat Air Arm electrician!) wiring trailed - I said nothing, but I was distinctly aware that if someone tripped over any of it, the whole lot would blow up!

I love vintage cars, so homed in on an old Bentley (an B.R.L. of course) which seemed, quite literally, to be held together by its bonnet strap. I jumped at the offer of a ride, sat on a seat which consisted of a slab of bare wood, & was extremely puzzled by the 'controls', which seemed to consist of just one large wooden gear lever plus a prayer or two from the driver (or his passenger!). The whole contraption reared & shook like Concorde starting up; speed was wasted, though I did hear the driver, bless him, offer to run me home, & was relieved to be able to say it was most kind of him, but I'd already ^{a lift} ~~had~~ ^{arranged} a lift.

On rather a yaw with ^{that} was when Vado Dad thought it behoved him, as Amoc Secretary, to actually own an Aston, so to get rid of his Lancia (?), & if the Aston he acquired is the same one Breck is now 'rebuilding', you've chosen the right word! He gave me a lift along the Embankment in it once - there were clouds of smoke just ahead of us, & I said excitedly, "Vado Dad, I think that car in front of us is on fire!" In reply he muttered, "No it's not - she always does this for the first mile or so." I decided it would be tactful to stifle my laughter. (I ignore the howling draught whistling through the partly-detached 'cowling'; or to leave the problem of how to get out of the bucket seat until later).

The Amoc were such a lovely lot that I'm sure they would have willingly passed round the Lat & bought him a spanking new Aston - at which, of course, he would have been grossly offended. Never mind, he's probably fearing

around 'up gender' with his hero, ³ Dick Seaman, a large photograph of whom hung in his/lour office. Into which office visited Jeanne one day - my first sight of her, though I knew all along he was going to marry her (yes, I am a bit psychic!) - bearing three huge ice-cream cones. (Quite a gal. I shall, of course, write to her as well - I know the Corans socially as well as nodding with Uncle Dud ("Alma thinks the sun shines out of you", Jean said to him once. Well, it did. I think he was as much a father-figure as an honorary uncle - though he always introduced me to the AMOC socially as his niece [protection against the one & only member of the Club at the time who loomed at me & scared me stiff - one was an innovator generation]. My 'real' father was hardly ever there, - downright impossible idea he was, until I finally rebelled, & practically scared the socks off him, all bullies (easy conards).

Here am I writing to you as if you were his ^(U.D.S.) reincarnation! I do apologise. We've never even met, so I'd better endorse a snapshot of the skill-checky female who's writing this. My only defence is that one has to be a bit crazy to survive in suburbia!

I hope I haven't b-d up my chances of meeting you sometime, & the current AMOC members, who are, though, probably a little crazy too, roaring around in circles for hours! I say that only because I'd love to be roving around myself - I always was & am a player rather than a spectator. My racing driver here is Fangio - of course! & without being influenced by anyone. And I still love watching 'Genesius', so there!

Uncle Dud was invariably called 'Jerry' by anyone else but me, but I wouldn't have dreamed of using his Christian name (only it wasn't - he was Dudley Saville Gary - 'not many people know that', & the least Scottish person in the world. Snobs are ill-bred per se, & he wasn't, & I was a polite kid.)

I love the way you write (I'm a bit of a writer myself - honest!) & the phrase 'making between the lights' appeals greatly.

Actually, I'm in bed again with another touch of this very persistent 'flu, & I always get more faticious when I'm off colour, so please ignore any unwelcome 'funniness', & rather sinful sarcasm.

Somewhere or other I've another old AMOC mag (remarks scribbled on one enclosed address to another car addict - I went off him when he sold his ~~MA~~ & got a Nissan), in which N.S.C.C. thanks all past helpers, including me, of whom he utters a gross libel about what I thought a back-seat driver was!

Wrong! The enclosed is the one (see p.14).

Typical Uncle Dud,
bless him - (+ 'marco' was his brother.
Bob Seaman)

Lots of good wishes to all you lovely lads,

Alma
xxx etc. (C)

P.S. What a splendid magazine you now have! The name Dr. John Hoopool is very familiar to me. I'd have loved to see the sons at the 4th meeting. Onley, Folland's another familiar name (see old magazine), + Richard Stallobrus (Sunderb. I feel rather sad.)

The only time I went to Silkenstone was mix someone who was keen on motorcycle racing (which I found deadly boring, as I later did the other thing he had in mind, which got him precisely nowhere).

I think U.D.'s pre-Astra car must have been a Lagonda.

I wonder if Brock remembers your tiny giving him his first boxing lesson ('keep your guard up, + never hit below the belt')? He was raised during that dreadful 'children should be allowed to do as they like' period. He didn't with me - I told the youngsters to do their own thing, but never at anyone else's expense, + the grownups never to touch down to the youngsters (which is probably why my friends' ages range from 2 to 92!).

There's so much more I could tell you about 'the old days' - 50 years seems more like 50 days, somehow. Perhaps I should write a 'Nostalgia Column' for you - after all, I reckon I count as a member, even though I've no Astra, but a red Mini Automatic I'm saving up to get on the road! Also, as a Special (very! accepted by the Regulars) cop, I've directed so much traffic I could do it in my sleep, so if you ever want a hand (only I always insisted on directing traffic alone, as I'm usually a couple of jumps ahead of the other guy) getting them all out safely from a meeting, it would be a pleasure.

I should have warned you that I always talk too much when I'm tired, or tell my friends to feel free to tell me to "butt up".

With which fairly apt expression, I'll now do just that!

Amy

(Except to say the new badge look as friendly + cheery as the ones I knew)

+ that Jack Hilliam has the right ambition!
(or gets the rest of it!)

+ that I feel that old badge is now home, where it belongs, with my love.
Amy