

## Triumph Stag Owners Club History 1979 - 2009

The Stag Owners Club was founded in November 1979 by Tony Hart, proprietor of Hart Racing Services, who had been specialising in the Triumph Stag since 1974. In response to questions from customers about forming a club, Tony first handed out questionnaires at the classic car show at Alexandra Palace, to ask if people were willing to help run such a club. Receiving encouraging replies he arranged a meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November at his home. It was attended by nine people, including Ken Hudson whose first job for the new club was as its Treasurer. June Armstrong, Tony's secretary, was appointed Secretary and also handled membership, Kim Gollard took on the role of Newsletter co-ordinator and Tony Hart became chairman.

Around this time Ken Hudson received a telegram from the Swiss club congratulating the UK for setting up their club and asking "What took you so long?" As more and more members joined the UK club, area meetings were arranged. Stuart Lowe arranged the first one in Newcastle on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1980. Norfolk, Bedfordshire/Warwickshire, Kent, South London/Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Avon, South Wales, Northampton and Birmingham all established their own areas soon after.

The Newsletter continued to be published monthly. One endearing feature of most issues up till the end of 1985 was the cartoon stag on their covers; these were drawn by Tony Hart's father. A competition was held to give this stag a name, and in October 1981 Jim Freyler's suggestion of 'Socrates' was deemed the winner. Although some colour had been used on the cover since April 1983, it wasn't till December 1987 that Jean Vesey, the then Editor, introduced the first full colour photographs. It was now definitely a magazine rather than just a newsletter.

Competition was encouraged from the start, and the first national Concours D'Elegance was held in Coventry in September 1981. Twenty Stags were entered in five classes. The first National Day was held at Weston Park, Shropshire, on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1984, with some 125 Stags in attendance. In May 1982 the UK club hosted the second European Stag Meeting, based in Canterbury. Enthusiasts attended from the three other European clubs in Holland, Germany and Switzerland and no less than 85 Stags travelled in convoy from Canterbury, via Chilham, to Leeds Castle.

Technical support was and still is the strong point of the club. The Stag gained a poor reputation when it was in production, mainly due to quality control problems in its manufacture, but the Club, together with specialist Stag dealers has solved all of these, and the car became the reliable, powerful, comfortable sports-tourer that it was always meant to be. A genuine four-seater, it appeals to families, who can continue to own one even when the kids come along. Remarkably, many members have owned their Stags from new.

Membership rose to over 5000 at its peak, and is still well over 4000, making it the largest single model club in the UK. 40 branches cover the whole country, with nearly 400 cars attending the Annual National Day.

Come and visit us on stand M16 to get a taster of the club and to view our cars on display.

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