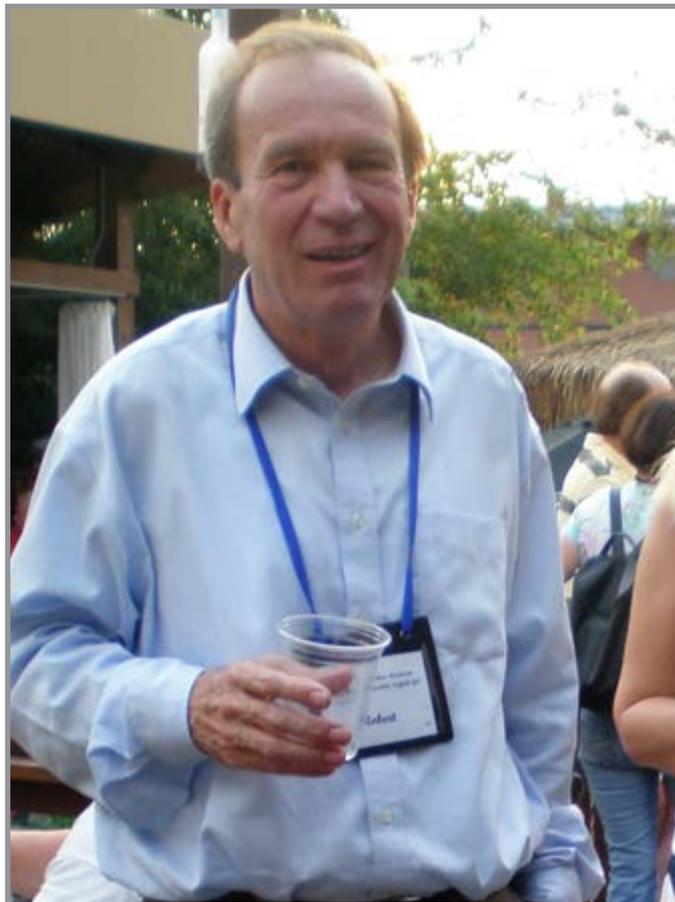


Cadillac

OWNERS CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN



ROB MAIDMENT
1943 – 2016

JULY – AUGUST 2016

Cadillac Owners Club of Great Britain

(Affiliated to the Cadillac-LaSalle Club of America)

C O M M I T T E E

Club web-site (with international links): www.cocgb.dircon.co.uk

(For Cadillac LaSalle Club membership, contact Mike or Nancy Book on: 001-614-478-4622 or CLCoffice@cadillaclasalleclub.org)

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EDITOR

Very Temporary Editor

Bob Thomas.



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Cadillac
"Standard of the World"

From the Very Temporary Editor.....

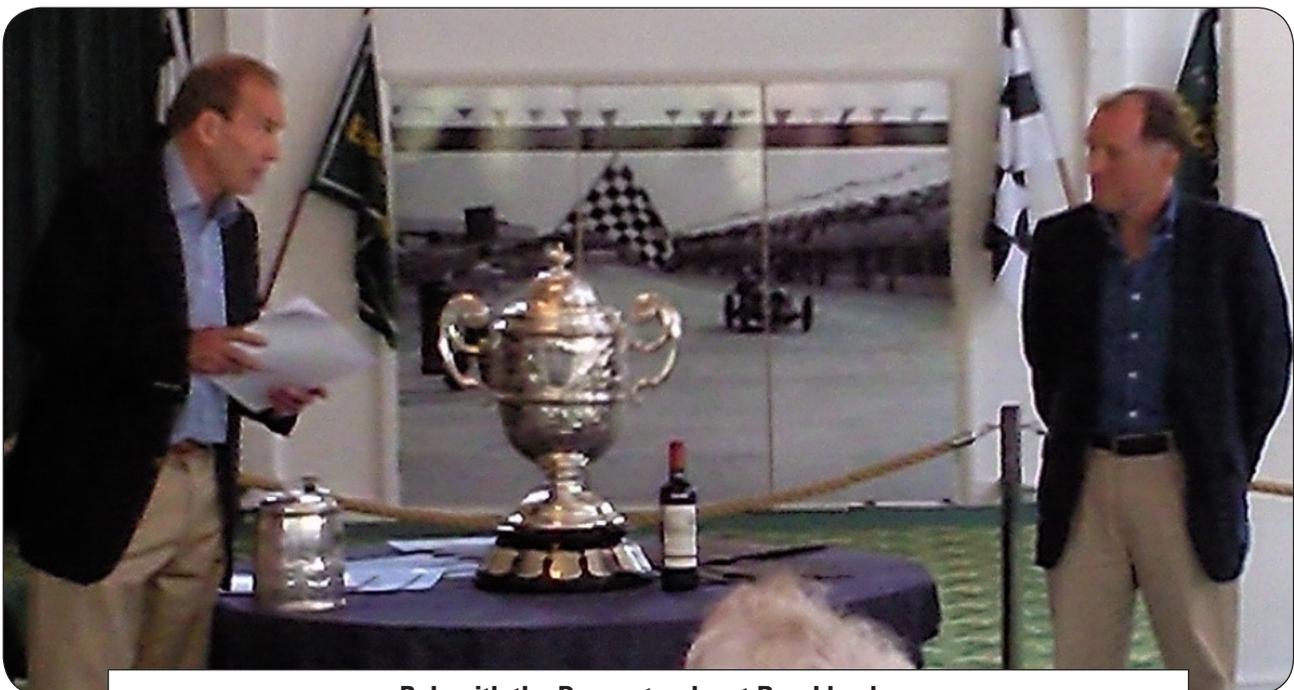
It is with great sadness that I have to announce, in this special issue of the magazine, that Rob Maidment, our esteemed editor passed away in August of this year. He will be greatly missed.

I have taken it upon myself to put together this memorial issue of our Club magazine in memory of Rob and all the work and effort he has given to the Club over the last 20 years. On the following pages you will find messages and memories I have received from people in the Cadillac “family”. I have also reprinted Rob’s article published in the July 2000 issue of the Self Starter as a tribute to his enthusiasm and dedication to all things Cadillac, especially his beloved “altered” Seville, not to mention his writing skills.

We have now lost our Editor and Website Administrator so you will also find an appeal for assistance.

This issue may not be presented to Rob’s normal high standard but I hope where ever he is he will flick through the pages and be pleased with it.

**Bob Thomas.
Treasurer.**



Rob with the Dewar trophy at Brooklands.

Chairman.....

Peter Griffith

As we all know now, we have lost our temporary editor (as he called himself) Rob Maidment and it is a great loss to our Club. Rob could spirit up facts and figures about Cadillac at the drop of a hat. We thought we new it all and out of the blue would come some facts that we never knew about. I got to know Rob at the time I was asked to be one of two candidates for "Chairman". Rob preferred Chairman as every one else has a President he said. So the next Chairman I became with plenty of encouragement from him. He was always very constructive in his investigations and he left nothing to chance. A good example was when he investigated the story and obtained pictures of the Queen of Norway's baby Cadillacs. I and I think every one else in the Club had never heard of them. He also revealed in the re make of the Late Fred Bennet's "Bennet Run" when Fred Bennet, the first Cadillac dealer in the country decided to visit a coastal town every day for seven days to prove Cadillacs reliability. Rob researched it and at our Grand National which he arranged at Crystal Palace he managed to have Sir Stirling Moss, (at reduced rate I may say) to attend and was very pleased when "Sir" and I discussed his amateur days.

He also arranged, with our late Treasurer Ray Giles who I also miss, (Rob referred to him as the gentle giant) for a visit by Cadillac La Salle Club (USA) members to come over. A bus was arranged to take them to various places including a large Rolls Royce dealers, RAC headquarters, and then for the week of the Bennet run. There seemed to be nothing he could not find out or arrange.

His younger life was spent in South Africa, and he often talked of the "Chicken manure car", which was a Cadillac of 1939 vintage that had been used as a coop for a farmers chickens. I have a great picture of him sitting on the top of it.



Alan Reed and Rob discuss camera operation at the AGM.

Then there was his pride and joy, the Cadillac Roadster he had built out of an early Cadillac Seville. He said the rear Seville doors were used as the 2 doors on the roadster, reversed. He took me for a ride in it one day, its still a blur. That thing just leapt away.

His long standing editorship of our magazine will be very much missed, and he never let us down it always appeared on time.

I will miss him as will the rest of our committee along with long standing members. He was a great asset to our club and will be hard to replace. I hope he rests in peace but I think he will be finding out things were ever he is.

Our "Temporary" Editor Rob Maidment.

Treasurer,

Bob Thomas

Rob Maidment 1943-2016.

The first time I spoke to Rob was on the telephone, 20 years ago, nearly to the day. The phone rang in the evening, I answered it and for the next ten to fifteen minutes I listened intently to Rob explaining how he came to be interested in Cadillacs, how he built a roadster out of two 70's Sevilles, how he was researching distant family links with Henry Leland, how he was researching Rolls Royce links with Cadillac. I didn't say one word during all this. Then he asked "Do you think it is worth me joining the Cadillac Club?" I replied "You

he believed in and what he was interested in, always very positive and he always said about me "you're from Yorkshire, you say it as it is, black and white, and to the point."

Rob's work for the Club has been invaluable over the years. Always there to help with the shows we organised at Coombe Abbey when we had our own show each year. Then taking on the Editors roll for the magazine and sorting out the website. He was chief organiser and fundraiser for the Bennett Run in 2003. He liaised with the Americans when he and I were sorting out the affiliation with the Cadillac La Salle Club. One thing is for sure, the Club would not be half what it is without his work and input and he will be sorely missed.



Rob Maidment in conversation with Sir Stirling Moss

On a personal note I will greatly miss our occasional evening telephone conversations. Sometimes it was Club business, other times just a chat. The last time I communicated with Rob was an e mail a few weeks ago asking if the piece I had done on the Cadillac Museum was OK for the magazine. "Looks great to me" was the reply.

had better join and find out" There was silence at the other end for quite a few seconds. Then he said " You're right! I will." There began a twenty year relationship with the Club and mutual interest and friendship with myself. That initial conversation on the phone summed us both up really. Rob was passionate about what

I wish I had telephoned now, instead of e mailing, for one last chat.

Bob Thomas.
Treasurer.
COCGB.

METHOD OR MADNESS?

BY ROBERT MAIDMENT

Before I begin this article, I really should admit to being a fraud. There you are, all you Cadillac-LaSalle Club members with your various original Cadillacs, either using them daily as always intended or spending hours maintaining them to perfection. And, here am I, also a member, but only because of having cut one up. What, you may ask, possessed anyone to commit such a crime? I will attempt, as requested by Editor Michaline Larson, to explain, in under 2,000 words, a project that took over 6,000 hours to complete and is the subject of a yet-to-be published 70,000-word book.

Although our intentions were always entirely honourable—if not entirely sane—I still fear your reactions. Will you, I wonder, respond like veteran CLC National Chief Judge Carl Larry Steig? On first meeting Carl, I told him he would probably shoot me if he saw what we had done. To this, he replied: “Go on then, tell me.” I did; to which he took a pace back, raised an outstretched finger from his hip and, with a commanding “No further comment,” simply said, “Bang, Bang!” So, you see my dilemma.

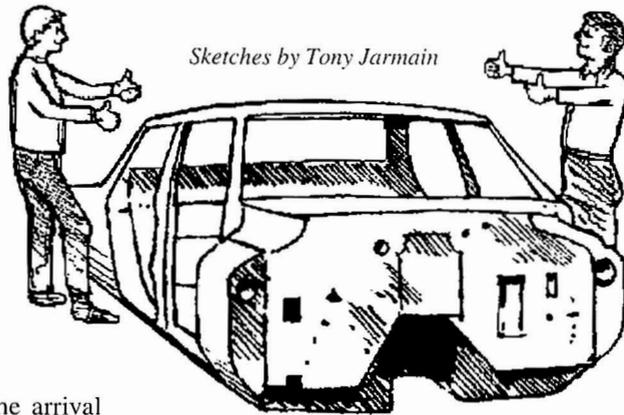
The idea was in fact sparked off by the arrival through our letterbox in the late nineteen-eighties of a promotional postcard showing a Mercedes 540K Special Roadster for which the auctioneers were expecting a mere £800,000 (\$1,263,200.00). In the end, despite being an unrestored rust heap, the car fetched double that amount. The temptation was too great—a group of us, all enthusiasts and engineers, decided to join the ever-growing ranks of specialist carmakers. While I will take most of the blame for the project’s conception and some of the credit for the design and engineering, I no more made the car described and depicted in this article

than I did any other Cadillac. The credit for that goes initially to Cadillac itself and afterwards to a team of individuals in England, who not only had the knowledge and intuition of how to overcome some very complex structural problems

but also the skills and determination to carry them out. All the same, with ages

ranging from nineteen to seventy-plus, at times, the verbal interchanges tended towards the extreme.

Sketches by Tony Jarman

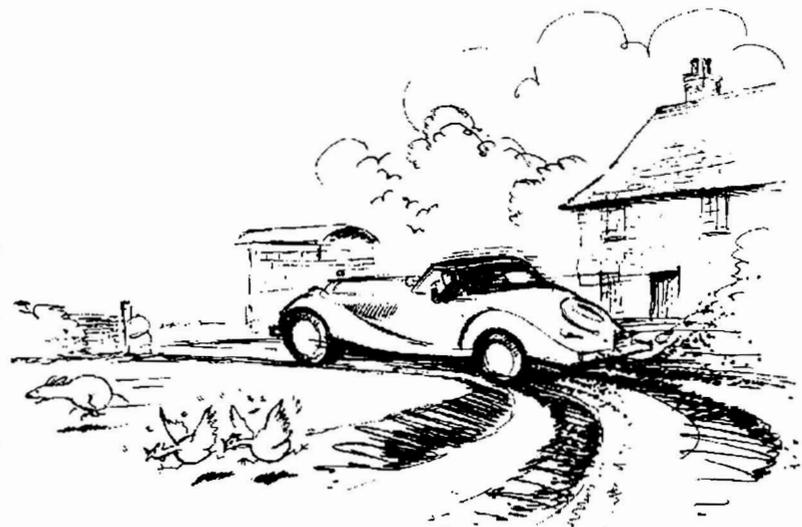
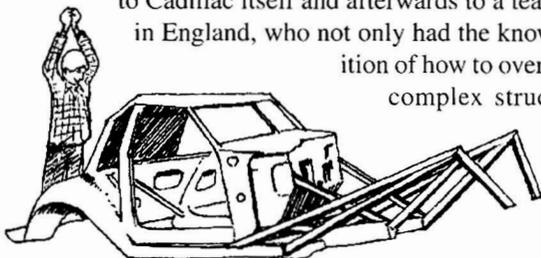
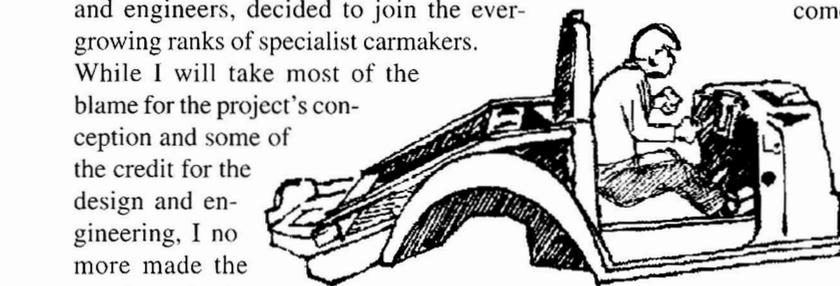


The model on which the Courier-Cadillac is based, the 1976-79 rear-wheel-drive Seville—and as such, is still legally registered—has to be one of the most underrated vehicles built in the second half of the twentieth century. For any car prior to computerization to be able to boast so many

luxuries, be quieter than a Rolls-Royce, equal the comfort of the rest of the best, and yet able to out-handle almost all-else while weighing in at two full tons, has to be quite remarkable. If you doubt that weight, just put your '78-'79 Seville on a weighbridge and, even with a minimum of fuel, see if you can come up with a figure of less than 4,480 pounds.

Furthermore, for our resulting roadster to be equaled in 1996 with the current Bentley Brooklands on Goodwood’s unbanked circuit has to be as much a measure of the original Seville’s capabilities as those of the altered car itself. The wheels and the overall struc-

CONTINUED, SEE “MADNESS” ON PAGE .





The present interior of the Courier-Cadillac shows all Seville components greatly modified to fit. Note that left-hand-drive was retained in this one-of-a-kind custom British creation.

ture of the roadster are still in the same position as some very clever GM engineers put them in the nineteen-seventies. The car is not, in fact, a convertible but a rigid fixed-head coupe. All we have really done is alter the framework, change the weight distribution—which has both disadvantages and advantages—tweak the suspension and transform the appearance to be unrecognisable for what is underneath.

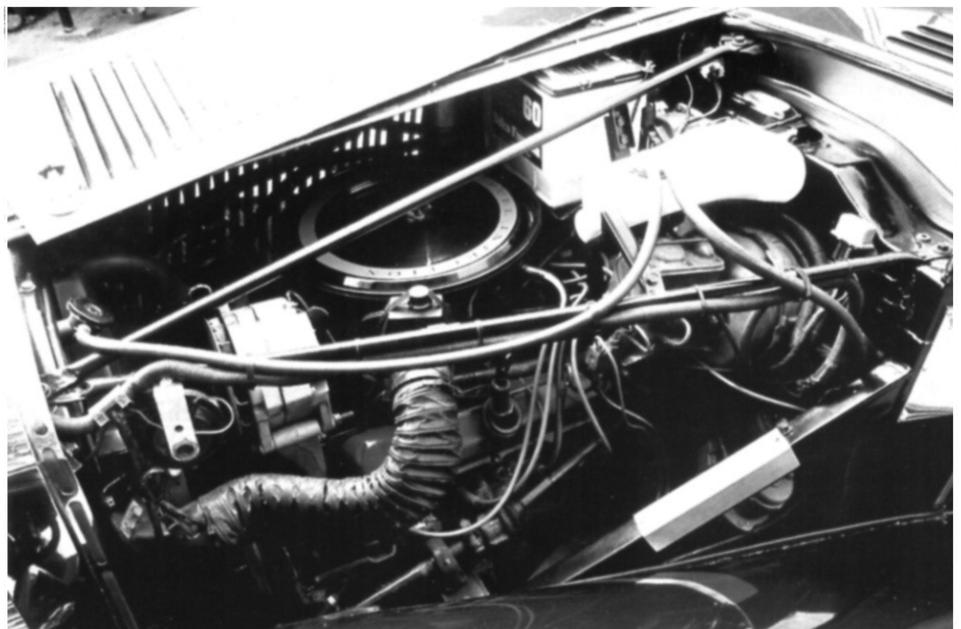
True, we have also swapped the 350-cubic-inch block for the 403-ci alternative, reverted to the earlier bigger exhaust-valved 350 heads—which also increases the compression—fitted the 1976 intake manifold with its larger throttle-body, doubled up on the air-cleaner and changed the diff ratio from 2.56:1 to 2.93:1. On top of that, a member of the team has made some interesting alterations to the exhaust system, which at the flick of a switch adds a whole lot of noise and a lot more oomph when required. These later changes were in response to a respectful article about our cherished machine in a UK magazine, but which claimed the car to be a “. . . sheep in wolf’s clothing.” Understandably, as Cadillac enthusiasts, let alone as normal human beings, we felt unable to ignore such blasphemy.

How, though, did we set about such an undertaking? To start, serious thought had to be given to the overall proportions of what we intended to create. We had to be sure of ending up with something of character but at the same time, able to accom-

modate two people in the comfort and style to which any Mercedes, Rolls-Royce or Cadillac owner was accustomed. The price tag of our intended limited-edition retro supercars, even back in those days, was to be more than \$150,000. Over the top, you might think? Not really: the Panther de Ville, with its girder-like chassis and Jaguar mechanicals, sold for even more and had limited handling characteristics to boot. For all that, I must confess that what we eventually produced turned out far better than any of us had any right to expect.

What we had envisaged, in our euphoric 1980’s optimism, was *all* the luxury of a modern age, together with *all* the best attributes of a one-make marque, combined with *all* the fun and glamour associated with the classic era. With obvious similarity to the 540K, yet of necessity very

different, we *borrowed* anything and everything from the great cars of the age—such things as Bentley louvres to the sides of the bonnet, Hispano-Suiza fronts to the wings and Duesenberg two-tone blue paintwork—but, finished off with a taller but narrower ’78 Seville grille. What we entirely overlooked in our blissful ignorance and limited foresight were the almost



Ingenuity was required to make all the necessary components both fit and be serviceable in the engine compartment.

insurmountable problems of altering a massively pressed-out unibody structure—in which nothing is effectively straight in any direction—and the ultimate collapse of the market into which we were attempting to sell our fifty or so supercars. Yes, we intended to ship redundant ’76-’79 Sevilles from the rust-

free states of America and, having jiggled up wherever possible, remodel and renovate them in the small industrial town of Haverhill, Suffolk, England. The parts, both structural and mechanical, were all easily available then: Central Cadillac in Cleveland, Ohio, was well set for the exercise and still supplies occasional parts to this day.

Surprisingly, much of the costing was not that much out. The all-soldered wiring alterations, the trim modifications, the special fitments and even the aluminium bodywork—although the preparatory fixings seemed to take forever—were all within budget. On the other hand, when it came to moving and narrowing bulkheads to within a couple of millimetres at half-degree inclination accuracy, altering rear doors to forward opening fronts, cutting and kinking sedan roofs to look like soft-tops or making one-off stainless-steel radiator cowls and grilles, the never-ending hours started with a vengeance. Not the never-ending renovation hours of which most of us at some time have had experience, but a multiplication. Every little alteration had to be beaten, cut or welded into shape and, only then, renovated

as such. Yes, I can hear you motor industry professionals saying, “We could have told you that before you started.” I can also hear others saying, “Why be so stupid as to go that route in the first place—there had to be a simpler way?”

Maybe so, if all we wanted was a pretty car; and even then, there are problems. To be able to sit properly in modern low-slung luxury requires a pressed-out floorwell to accommodate comfortable seats, while still allowing room for the underbody components. Furthermore, to create a light enough sporting vehicle that included every conceivable extra—right down to the ATC and the AutoDim—which is stiff enough not to compromise the handling or the ride, meant either using expensive aircraft type materials or relying on the natural strength of formed sheet metal. Even with its lead ballast up front, the weight is down to 4,100 pounds and the reworked doors are strong enough for even our largest team member to swing from their outer edge. Moreover, with our better-safe-than-sorry tendency towards

The Courier-Cadillac, our incognito Seville, finds itself in an elegant setting inside the Palm Court entrance at the Alexandra Palace, London. Our diva was selected for pole position at the 1995 London Classic Car Show.



overdesign; the overall body structure ended up so rigid that, when invited to MIRA, the UK's motor industry test centre, for PR and evaluation, the engineers were unable to detect any movement whatsoever. Not only did they then try to undo the car on their pothole and bump section, but also pushed its brick-like aerodynamics up to 125mph on their high-speed banked track.

The triangulated space-frame was something else we seriously underestimated. This not only needed to reestablish the mounting points for the half-chassis where the moved-back bulkhead had once been, but also had to pick up the other two mounting points at the very front where the wings and the radiator support-frame used to be. At first, we were tempted to weld the whole lot together but soon realised that the ride would be affected if the chassis and body were not separated by their rubber isolators. That caused further problems. Having had to shorten its front extensions, the chassis had a potential to rotate on the isolators under stress—as had happened on the original 1976 Seville. In the end, we men of brains came up with a novel backwards-pointing A-frame idea, which cured both this and the unexpected problems relating to the rear transmission mounting.

I can now hear some of you asking, "Who picked up the bills to continue with such a scheme?" We did—with our time. When faced with the decision to scrap the project—not once but twice—several of us opted to continue for the challenge alone; then others came to the rescue for a mere pittance. And thus, the project remained within its original budget. "But 6,000 hours! What a waste of time," you might say. Well, maybe, but we enthusiasts spend our lives wasting time on our precious machines, so why not on this one? Furthermore, over the years, the Courier-Cadillac has more than earned its keep as a marketing tool for the company that funded the project, to say nothing of giving us all great pleasure and satisfaction. What joy, for instance, to drive through the pits at Silverstone race circuit on Bentley Boys Day and for not one of them to guess they were looking at a modern car. Al-

ternatively, what a thrill to be within two hundredths of a second of a stripped-out Jaguar at Cornbury Park on Jaguar Day and have both the Aston Martins and the Jaguars raise their caps to us. What pride, too, for everyone involved, to see the result of their hard work written up in newspapers, books and magazines around Europe and America and as far afield as New Zealand and Japan.

Finally, I can only quote the farmer in whose outbuildings the car was mostly built: "That might have been a wholly uncommercial idea, but if my old father could have seen what's been produced

in one of his barns, he would have been well bucked!" So, ten years and thirty thousand miles later, I am pleased to report that the one-off Anglo-American creation—as happily accepted by Cadillac too—has done its Cadillac heritage proud. I, therefore, seek forgiveness—especially of those of you who might wish to emulate Carl Larry Steig—for vandalising a Cadillac and having proposed to do likewise to a whole lot more. □

Known affectionately in its home town as The Haverhill Car, it is featured on the web site: www.haverhill-uk.com -> Features -> The Haverhill Car.

A before and after comparison: we find a 1978 Seville, an example of the basic unit from which the Cadillac hybrid evolved, running side by side on the high-speed banked circuit at MIRA, the U.K. motor industry's main testing and evaluation center, for a comparison check that was later written up in the TIMES (of London) motoring supplement under the heading "Shh, the one-off Cadillac goes on test."



— CADILLAC MOTOR CAR DIVISION AND THE COURIER-CADILLAC —

For those who might, quite understandably, query the Courier-Cadillacs's authenticity as a Cadillac, here is some detail on that subject. From telephone discussions with Tom Murphy, Ron Dewer and John Truxel at GM Detroit in mid 1988, we were informed, provided the basic structure was retained, that "... once a Cadillac, always a Cadillac." Following the championing of the project by Peter Duggan, senior manager GM Parts Detroit, complimentary letters were forthcoming in July 1990 from Ron Theis, head of GM PR, and William O'Neil, head of Cadillac PR.

The world recession prevented further involvement with GM and Cadillac until Jim Williams, the new head of Cadillac PR, ran an article in the February 1994 issue of *Cadillac Voice*, Cadillac's in-house and dealer-network newsletter at the time. The article went into the detail of what was retained of the original Seville and confirmed that Cadillac script had been engraved on the radiator cowl in keeping with that of the 1978 Seville grille. There was also a cover letter saying the story was John Grettenberger's favorite of the month, but this, I suspect, was merely a case of *Mad Dogs and Englishmen!*

— Robert

Rod Bevan

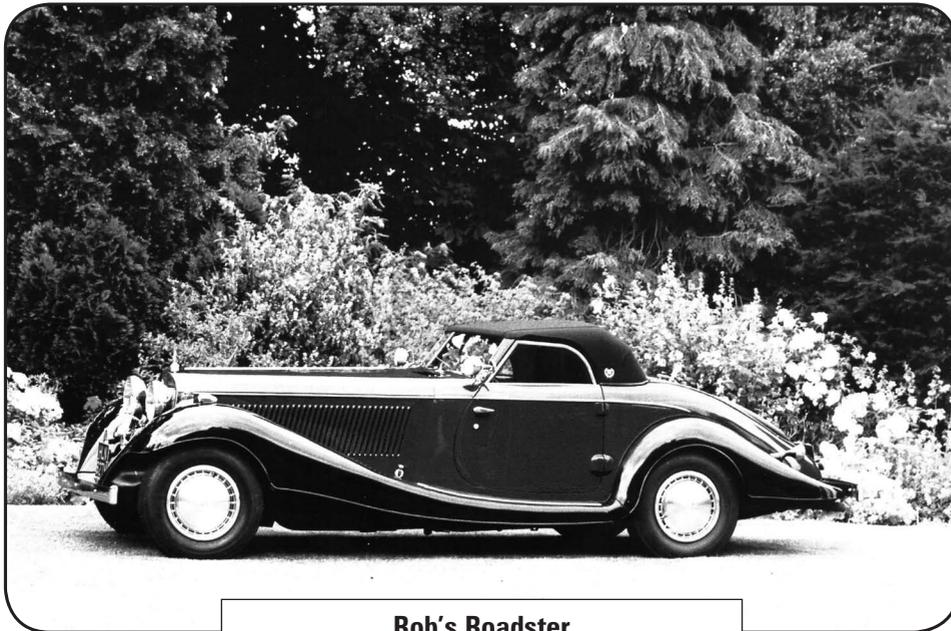
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

New members

A very warm welcome to new members this time: Andy Green of North Somerset with a 1958 Coupe Deville, Mike Palmer of Bristol with a 1959 Coupe Deville, Matthew Monks of Wigan with a 1993 Fleetwood Brougham Hearse, Neil McDonald of Stockport with a 2012 CTS-V, Mark Stephenson of Rugeley with a 1976 Eldorado convertible and Brent Humberstone with a 1990 Seville. Andy and Mike joined the club at Blenheim.

Rob Maidment

It was very saddening news that Rob passed away recently. Very unexpected and a shock to us all. Our condolences and thoughts go to the family at this difficult time. Rob was always very helpful when I took over the role of membership secretary. He will be very much missed and very much remembered.



Rob's Roadster

Shows

At the AGM it was suggested that we look at venues for future events. 'The Stratford upon Avon Motor Festival' is one that I will be attending in 2017. Members will need to book via the festival website for this event. Hatton will continue for next year together with Tatton and Blenheim. These were very enjoyable. Billing was mentioned as a possible venue but I have received mixed reports from those

that attended in 2016. Let me know!

Interest was shown in staging a Grand European event in the future. Other Cadillac clubs throughout Europe have hosted events in France, Holland and last year Switzerland. Next year is the turn of Denmark and then France in 2019. So, I suppose we would be looking at 2021 or 2023. This would need a lot of support from members. Yes, we would have a few years to arrange it but we would need to commit ourselves this year to hold such an event. We would need to establish a dedicated group willing to fulfil this task. Those members interested in this venture please contact me so that I can put you contact with other members willing to join this dedicated group.

The club had a stand at Tatton and Blenheim. Very nice shows and of course Bob Lucas added to his trophy collection by collecting just four awards at Rally of the Giants with his magnificent 1933 model.

Face book

If you're not using the club Face book page, then you should be. Any problems logging on then let me know. I will send you the Face book link to our page. If you are using another family member's account or a pseudonym also let me know, because if I don't recognise you I can't let you in.

I have recently been sending information by e-mail to members. If you are not receiving these e-mails then please update me with your current e-mail address. This will be most important in the future as much information will be via e-mail and Face book.

That's all for now folks!
Best wishes

Rod Bevan

Parts wanted

Gorgio Goergiuie is looking for some body parts for his 1955 Coupe. He needs a boot/trunk lid and also a windscreen trim. If you are able to help give him a call please on 0208 8860565 or 07985 643998 or on e-mail gag0511@hotmail.co.uk

From Europe.....

Dirk van Dorst.

Rob Maidment.

I first met him at the Rally of the Giants, I think it was 2001, and I drove a baby blue 67 Eldorado I had just restored. Rob put my car on the cover of the COCGB magazine later on.

Then in 2003, at the Grand International, I drove my diamond white 70 convertible. I felt sad that I was almost alone from entire CLC Europe, as no one else from Europe attended and I was sad also for Rob, after all the work done.

This is when I decided I should do something, because it was a special event (the oldest Cadillac was there, driving). I thought about doing the Grand European shows.

Oh yes, Rob always spoke about his Seville project he did. In 2006 one of the COCGB members gave me a book from Robert Maidment, with the story about he's Seville project. Some times he called me (I know he also had regular calls with the founder of the CLC, Norm Uhlir) talking about his Seville (I am a great fan of the Seville, especially the bustle back). I wonder what will happen to his Seville roadster, but it would be fantastic for it to be in the CLC Museum in Hickory corners MI. Rob is part of the CLC family, and his personality should be in the CLC museum, on the wall of fame.



From left to right..Al Hass, Ron van Gelderen, Dirk van Dorst, Rob Maidment, Steve.

COCGB is an early CLC affiliate, the Cadillac Dewar trophy and more

Well, for me England was always the European anchor place for CLC US.

**Dirk van Dorst.
CLC Europe.**



With the sad loss of our Editor we now need someone new to take over the post.

Could you help out and support the Club in this important position? We also need a Webmaster to look after the website. It doesn't need to be the same person. If you know your way around a computer and have a little time to spare please get in touch. The Committee was stretched before but we seriously need more help now.

The magazine is not all that difficult. I put this one together, without special software, in a few hours over several days. With the fantastic help of our printer, Red Side Up, it was much more straightforward than

I thought. The website should take even less work as there are no time constraints and just needs updating periodically so can be done as and when convenient.

This will probably be the last magazine you receive until the Editors' post is filled so please be patient with us.

Please contact any of the Committee if you think you can help.

Thank you.

Bob Thomas.
Treasurer.