

JOHN OLORENSHAW 1926 - 2012

ONE OF THE EIGHT FOUNDER MEMBERS OF THE SPORTING CAR CLUB OF NORFOLK



John Olorenshaw, along with seven other car enthusiasts founded the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk in 1951. Petrol had become more readily available after war-time rationing ended in 1950, and the country was looking forward with great optimism to better times in the years ahead.

Sadly John died on 28th December and his funeral at Christ Church, Eaton on 17th January was attended by over two hundred people, including SCCON members Jim Deacon, Damian Conway and Peter Riddle.

John shared his father Frank's great interest in Veteran and Edwardian cars and they ran a 1901 De Dion Bouton and later, a 1913 Sunbeam. In 1988 John organised The 'Very Flat' Norfolk Rally for the Veteran Car Club of Great Britain and for which he obtained sponsorship from the Eastern Daily Press. Participants were offered a choice of route of 37, 69 or 89 miles, to suit the varying capabilities of their veteran (pre-1905) cars. One of the highlights of this event was to recreate a scene that had been photographed on 23rd June 1903 at Eaton Grove, Norwich. Eaton Grove was then the home of J. Dawson Paul, one of the founders of Boulton and Paul Limited, and it is now part of Norwich High School for Girls. The 1903 photo shows the 27 cars that had gathered for the third meeting of the Norfolk Automobile Club.

At SCCON's 50th Anniversary Dinner held at the Assembly House in Norwich, John gave an impromptu speech about the history of our club, telling us about the prestigious first annual dinner in 1952 when one of the guests was Councillor Leonard Howes, the Sheriff of Norfolk, and the main speaker was the Chief Constable. John recalled that the guest speaker at the club's 25th Anniversary dinner, held at the Hotel Norwich in 1976, was Stuart Turner who'd just been made a Director of the Ford Motor Company after masterminding so many motor sport successes for the Ford Escort. John recalled spending happy times with SCCON and helping to organise many road rallies. He surmised that they were perhaps easier to run in those days. John remembered many U.S. Air Force servicemen who competed on rallies and autotests during the 1950's in their M.G. and Jaguar XK120 sports cars, and he maintained lasting friendships with American former SCCON members 'Woody' Corkran and Harry Wise.

More recently, SCCON was so pleased that John, accompanied by his wife Sylvia, was able to attend the club's Diamond Anniversary celebration event at Kimberley Hall and the current members of SCCON really appreciated that he also brought along one of the "special cars" for our main display.

Charles Cowlin is now the last surviving founder member of SCCON. Charles conveys his sadness at hearing of John's passing, but still remembers, with great fondness, navigating for John in his factory-prepared Sunbeam Talbot 90, one of 450 cars that were entered in the 1951 Daily Express National Motor Rally.

For most of his working life John was managing director of The Norwich Motor Company in Prince of Wales Road and, at his funeral, his friend David McCall asked "Would you buy a second-hand car from this man?" For a man with the honesty and integrity of John Olorenshaw, the answer was a very definite "Yes".

All of us who have gained so much enjoyment from SCCON events over the past sixty one years, owe a debt of gratitude to John who retained a continuing interest in our club. Thank you John.

Peter Riddle January 2013