

Buzz

The Beeston Express

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The Beeston Express is independent of any organisation, commercial or political. Our policy is to provide readers with news and information that is fair, accurate and balanced.

We try hard to avoid mistakes, but some may inevitably slip through. If you have any comments to make about the paper, or any complaint, please contact us. We will, as far as possible, try to put things right when the error has been ours.

NEXT ISSUE

Friday, 23 October 2009

Deadline for Adverts
Monday, 19 October

ADVERTISING in The Beeston Express

Classified

£3 per single column
centimetre (scm).
Minimum: 3 cm.

Notice Board

(8cm x 8cm Box)
Mono: £45
Colour: £55

Display

Price on Application

Meeting People Column

Subscription:
£24 per annum (24 issues)

www.beestonexpress.co.uk

Useful telephone numbers

Police

0115 943 0999

NHS Direct Line (24 hours)

0845 46 47

Queens Medical Centre

0115 924 9924

City Hospital

0115 969 1169

Broxtowe Borough Council

0115 917 7777

Citizens Advice Bureau

0844 499 1193

Beeston Library

0115 925 5168

Train Timetable Enquiries

08457 48 49 50

Beeston car manufacturer celebrates 20th anniversary

The company went into receivership years ago, but the cars drive on

IT'S twenty years since the first Middlebridge Scimitar was produced at a factory in Lilac Grove, Beeston, that was opened by HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne in 1988.

The Princess Royal has always been a loyal Scimitar fan and has owned Scimitars for years. Today, she still drives the fifth Middlebridge Scimitar manufactured.

Although HRH didn't turn up with her own Scimitar in the Old Market Square, Nottingham, on Sunday, October 4, about 20 other owners did come along and display their own gleaming examples of what was to become a classic car – made in Beeston.

All day long, people stopped by the eye-catching line up of Scimitars in Old Market Square and were keen to find out more about them. Unaware that Nottingham had ever had a connection with the car industry, many were suitably impressed with what they saw.

John McCauley, Managing Director and car salesman for the Middlebridge Scimitar, was at the event, which had been organised by Scimitar owner George Sampford on behalf of the Reliant Sabre and Scimitar Owners Club.

Mr McCauley explained how Beeston Rylands had come to play a part in the car manufacturing industry. "The Scimitar had been made by Reliant at Coventry until

they ceased production in 1986," he said. "Some time afterwards, I noticed a feature in *The Times* about the rise and fall of what I had always considered a rather special and iconic car that was well styled and reliable.

"I decided to see what I could do about buying the manufacturing rights from Reliant and the result was a car manufacturer on Lilac Grove, Beeston. Naturally, the route wasn't without hurdles, such as Department of Transport type approval, but we got there and production of the Middlebridge Scimitar got under way in 1988."

The team made more than 450 modifications to the Reliant model. The Middlebridge Scimitar GTE came with a larger alloy wheels, a galvanised chassis, a stainless steel silencer, exhaust and water pipes, fuel injection and a 5-speed gearbox. All were built to the client's individual specification: leather seats, Wilton carpets, walnut dash with gold-leaf insignia... no problem, sir."

All this came at a price, of course, and the average cost of a Middlebridge Scimitar was around £25,000.

Five former employees turned up at the anniversary event, armed with some previously unseen archive material. A delighted George Sampford said: "Production Manager/Engineer Phil Watchorn's stories have

had us spell-bound for ages this morning, his stories aided and abetted by Buyer Terry Hextall.

Steve Lowe built some of the cars, fitting the bonnet and wheels before adding the oils and putting fuel in the tank – then starting them up and moving them for the first time under their own power. Then we spoke to Bernie McCormack, who used to collect the individual items needed for each car and delivered the finished Scimitars to showrooms. He'd been a hairdresser in a former life, so he would also cut the staff's hair!"

However, success at Middlebridge was short-lived. The company lost a £10m court case regarding the authenticity of a Le Mans Bentley and went into receivership. It had produced just 78 cars.

Tom Karen, designer of not only the original 1970s Scimitar but also another Nottingham classic – the Raleigh Chopper – was unable to be present on October 4.

Mick Gaughran, Registrar of the Middlebridge Marque, has two of the unique cars and chose to take along his stunning, gold coloured, award-winning car, which is often featured in the classic car press.

As a footnote of interest, an enthusiast from Chester bought the Middlebridge manufacturing rights from the receiver, and now manufactures obsolete parts for the Scimitar range.

News in Brief

Attempted robbery

POLICE are hunting four men who threatened staff in an attempt to rob the Sainsbury's supermarket in Central Avenue, Stapleford.

The offenders forced their way into the warehouse area where staff were working and demanded money just before 9.15pm on Saturday, October 3. However, they were disturbed by a customer and fled the scene empty-handed.

All four suspects were wearing dark clothing. Anyone who witnessed the incident, or who has any information, is asked to contact Beeston CID on 0300 300 99 99 ext 5636 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Go green campaign

LOCAL people, groups and organisations are invited to a special 'Greening Campaign' presentation at 7pm on October 21 at the Town Hall, Foster Avenue, Beeston.

The Greening Campaign is 'an innovative idea to help motivate people to reduce their energy consumption and lower their personal and community carbon footprint'.

Broxtowe Borough Council has been successful in getting funding from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to support each of 10 Greening Campaigns in Broxtowe, Rushcliffe, and Newark and Sherwood. The funding amounts to £2000 for each campaign.

To find out how to access the funds and run a locally tailored campaign, book a place on the October 21 presentation. Spaces are limited to three representatives from each group.

For more information, contact Broxtowe Borough Council on (0115) 917 3742.

Be safe, not sorry

A LIMITED amount of money is available for Neighbourhood Watch members who are especially vulnerable to the activities of burglars or bogus callers. Persons who probably fall into this select category are the elderly, those who are less able and persons who live in older properties with little or no security as well as those on low incomes.

The 'target hardening' includes the supply and fitting of locks, window locks, shoot bolts, pad bars and padlocks and reinforcement of lower door panels to houses or flats, but not outbuildings or sheds. The fitting of intruder alarms or security lighting does not qualify for the funding.

To learn more or suggest someone who could benefit, call (0115) 967 0999 ext 812 5650.