

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CLUB

Reliant started to build Sabra sports cars for the Israeli market in the 1960s. Capitalising on their success Reliant then started to build cars for other markets, including the UK.

The sporting pedigree of the early cars produced by the factory started with Sabres, followed by the Scimitar GT Coupés and then the GTE and GTC models, and finally the Small Sports range.

By 1972 a small band of enthusiasts were meeting to share their interests in several of the Reliant Models. There is a photograph of the group's first meeting in our archives showing members with their Sabres, Coupés and Scimitars. The meeting happened as a direct result of Reliant Motor's sponsorship and support for the Club. A strong relationship with the factory helped the Club in our formative years. There is more on this in our Brief History of the Sabre and Scimitar in another part of our Website.

At this point we can stop to look at the various models that Reliant produced, and that are part of the history of the Reliant Sabre and Scimitar Owners Club. In addition to a wide range of what might be termed 'economy cars' (the Three Wheeler, etc.) Reliant produced several sports cars. Our Club caters for these fine sports cars, from their first true sports car, the Reliant Sabre – a 2-seater open topped and later GT style – through to the later Scimitar Sabre produced towards the end of Reliant's history. Although there were fewer than 400 of the early cars built (and few exist today) the Sabre was the prime reason for the existence of the Club in 1972 as there were a considerable number of enthusiasts with these cars.

In 1965 Reliant introduced a very popular GT Coupé, and logically (continuing the 'sword' theme) named it the Scimitar. The Coupé production line ran for five years before being joined by the acclaimed Scimitar GTE model in 1968.

The founders of our Club had been meeting for some years before the Club was actually formed. Much of the purpose of meeting was to do with competition, as the Sabres had been campaigned by the factory in the Monte Carlo Rally and other rallies in the sixties, and by owners in sprints and hillclimbs throughout the country. It took Reliant's help to get the Club us off the ground for the first meeting at Silverstone.

So our Club had started. Very soon, the Club had proven to be just what was wanted by the owners of the new style of GRP car and a thriving economy developed around the models. There were many dealers around the country, all known to the Club, generally receiving our approval. Indeed, the Club became the focus of attention as trade and private owners alike looked to us for support for insurance, valuations, maintenance and parts.

The Constitution of the Reliant Sabre and Scimitar Owners Club Ltd. and the Rules of the Reliant Sabre and Scimitar Owners Club say much the same. The Objects Clause states that the Club exists to further interest in motoring and motor sport; in the Reliant Sabre 4, the Reliant Sabre 6, the Reliant Scimitar GT Coupé, the Reliant Scimitar GTE, the Reliant Scimitar GTC, the Reliant Scimitar SS1, the Reliant Scimitar SST, the Reliant Scimitar Sabre and the Middlebridge Scimitar GTE. Furthermore we promote interest in any other motor cars produced by the Reliant Motor Company or its owners currently and in the future.

The Club has given support to a wide range of Reliant models; there were about eighteen 4-wheel car styles and many more modelled around the ubiquitous Reliant Robin 3-wheeler. Our Club refuses entry to none of the Reliant marques, although in fairness the smaller 3-wheeler and 4-wheeler types would be out of place with us and are probably better served by their own specialist clubs.

Whilst stating that we cater for a wider range, where no specific Club exists for some of the prototype cars, our policy is to state that we mainly cater for the owners of Reliant Sabre and Reliant Scimitar motor cars.

However, because of its rallying history, the Sabre is the only Reliant car that can be raced in open competition against other cars (except for sprints and hillclimbs in which all marques can compete) and as such competition is a very important part of the history of this Club and of British motoring heritage. For this reason, we are recognised by DVLA and Motor Sport UK as an official source of information. We are also approved by Motor Sport UK to conduct sprints, hillclimbs and race meetings. The Club is affiliated to Motor Sport UK as Ordinary Members of the General Council.

Our relationship with the factory changed in the 1980s when Reliant decided to shed the GTE production line and concentrate on 3-wheelers and the smaller Scimitar Small Sports models. The entire production of the GTE and the convertible GTC models was sold to Middlebridge Scimitar in Nottingham.

Sadly, Reliant's fortunes never recovered and after several incarnations and administrations, production of the Scimitar Sabre ceased, due to technological advances and loss of engineering technology during an earlier receivership, and the company stopped trading in the 1990s.

With the end of Reliant the Club is now generally recognised as the main source of information for Reliant sports cars and as a rule we are able to help with technical and other enquiries as we have a vast archive of information, much of which was obtained from Reliant.

Middlebridge Scimitar also got into financial difficulties and did not survive. The company was ultimately sold to Graham Walker Ltd. in Chester who has committed himself to keep the marque alive and will, if asked manufacture a new GTE using the latest technological advances in motor building.

Graham Walker Ltd and Queensbury Road Garage (QRG) are the major traders associated with the Club and give support to owners with the continuing supply of original pattern parts and the remanufacture of parts and are therefore the companies with which the Club has remained closely associated.

For further information about the Reliant Sabre and Scimitar Owners Club see the other Club Documents available.