



KEEPING THE LEGEND ALIVE

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Subject: John Chatham  
Date: 11 September 2008 16:45:42 BST  
To: nburr@talktalk.net

Hi Norman

I heard you were writing John Chatham's biography and wondered if the following contribution might be useful.

Best regards

Steve Norton

*'It was 1988 or thereabouts and I'd just bought my first Austin-Healey. I'll be honest, it wasn't my first choice but I couldn't afford an E-Type Jaguar and 20 years later I'm quietly pleased with the way things turned out. I knew very little about the BT7 MkII I'd bought, so I joined the Austin Healey Club and contacted most of the specialist advertisers in the magazine.*

*John Chatham was the only 'trader' that really made an impression on me. I visited him at the first opportunity and was not disappointed, John Chatham Cars on Gloucester Road was great, everyone was busy, but in a relaxed way, very welcoming, and the garage was an environment where you could wander about without feeling noseey. John lived just across the road and the ramshackle stores and garages at the bottom of the garden were a treasure trove, on one occasion I needed a small part and was told to grab tools and help myself!*

*It seemed perfectly natural that John would help with my 3000 restoration and over the following months and years I visited Bristol regularly, so regularly in fact that most Saturdays I'd arrive with arms full of breakfast butties and soon earned the nickname 'Bacon Sarny'.*

*There was always something going on besides the interesting cars. I remember John's son Joe arriving not long after passing his driving test, skidding to a halt in a Cooper S. Another weekend I arrived to see a new BJ8 rally car, it was ticking over on its triple Webbers, although the majority of its red bodywork was missing – no bonnet, no doors, just shrouds and wings. John could see that I was impressed and simply said 'take it round the block'. And I did! Typical JC!*

*What John and I didn't know was that in 1993 I would open my own Austin-Healey parts business and all these years later I thank John for nurturing my interest and unknowingly instilling an appreciation for these cars which continues to make me smile over 20 years later.'*