



Cover story page 06

06 Time warp stunner

With the un-timely passing of William Hunter at the age of 73 in November '14, many vehicle restoration projects were left behind. However, he also left a highly dedicated team who are ensuring this work is gradually being finished. With the unveiling of their stunning 1960 Leyland Octopus Shell Mex and BP eight-wheel tanker, the Huntapac crew can at last admire one of the most testing projects they have ever undertaken.

14 Ignition

News and events from around the classic commercial vehicle world.

16 Readers' letters

Your chance to tell us a story, ask a question or put things straight.

22 On location

Russ Harvey reports from the NEC and Dean Reader is drawn to a converted fire appliance at the Basingstoke Festival of Transport.



26 Commer Q4 Part 2

One original Commer Q4 has moved into its own place in history by being the oldest known, purpose-designed-and-built crash tender for a commercial airfield.

32 From the archives

Mike Forbes previews the latest in the Road Haulage Archive series, which features pictures used by lorry dealerships as sales aids.

36 The show must go on

How much thought do you give to why your local fair pitches up where it does? The chances are very little if any at all but perhaps you should. It is almost certainly there because of long held rights enshrined in law extending back to at least the tenth century and granted by Royal Grant and these are normally recorded by charter or by prescriptive right, or by custom which may not hold a charter.

44 Pocket-size perfection

The Lincolnshire based son and father duo of Ross and Paul Burchnall, were to put 12 years of their life into turning back the clock with the period restoration of their '61 Morris Minivan.

50 The Corbitt Company Part 2

Having weathered the financial storm of the Wall Street Crash in 1929 and the period of economic depression which followed, The Corbitt Truck Company was in rather better shape than many American companies and continued to introduce new and updated models.

58 Electric tilt cab KM

The KM range was Bedford's 1966 response to the new mid-Sixties Construction & Use Regulation changes that introduced heavier axle loadings and longer overall lengths. Unlike the TM that followed, the KM lacked a tilt cab. Bedford's omission has been rectified by classic truck restorers Ken and Ray Walsh, who have produced a KM makeover re-engineered with an electric tilt mechanism.

66 French connection

50 years of the charismatic Citroën Méhari

70 Workshop

Richard Lofting describes how to set the correct end float on wheel bearings.

74 HC Marketplace

The place to buy or sell anything related to classic commercials.



French Connection

PART THREE



A full protective pvc-hood with glazed panels fitted to this Méhari.
Photo courtesy Marc de Bilde MCDF.

This month, it's 50 years of the charismatic Citroën Méhari

May 1968 at Deauville, France was the setting for the press launch of the Méhari, surely no one would have predicted that a plastic utility based on the Citroën 2CV would become such an iconic vehicle with a cult following. The Méhari was designed by Roland de la Poye who headed the French company Société d'Etudes et d'Applications des Plastiques (SEAP), who were suppliers to Citroën. The prototypes were assembled by SEAP, seeing work on the first prototype commencing during the summer of 1967, it was assembled using body panels being made of thermoplastic Acrylonitrile-Butadiene-Styrene (ABS), initially of a smooth profile but these lacked strength and rigidity. The second prototype followed utilising ribbed panels and the problem was solved, the dozen or so plastic panels were bolted to a metal frame, attached to a chassis from a 2cv van!

► ENAC sales brochure depicting the options to convert to a variety of commercials.

The journalists were treated to a spectacular display of eight pre-production prototypes arranged on the lawns in Deauville, each vehicle was a different colour to symbolise different uses, yellow for golf, complete with bags and golf clubs. Blue, equipped with a beacon, for security services. Grey, decorated with flowers, for hobbyist and florists. Red was a fire-

fighters version, equipped with an orange beacon and fire extinguishers. Beige was for hunting, it was equipped with shovel on the side. Green, laden with hay for the farm use. Turquoise ready for the beach with balloons and a parasol and finally white. All of these vehicles were painted unlike production models that used dyed coloured ABS, and none of these colours



Words: Russ Harvey
Photos: Russ Harvey

“A few changes were madewheel-trims, side-lamps (rear) and the sun-visors were gone”

displayed made it into production.

Officially launched at the motor show in Paris in the October, production of the Méhari started initially with the La Société d'Exploitation Nouvelle d'Automobile et de Crosswire (ENAC), a bodywork company based in Bezons in the Paris region. They were independent to Citroën but were often used as partners. ENAC produced the first 2500 Méharis, until Citroën were ready to take over production. The name selected was Méhari, which means dromedary, it symbolizes both the utilitarian and fun aspect of the vehicle plus its endurance, although at its official launch the press release referred to it as the Dyane 6 Méhari the original all-terrain vehicle. the Méhari was conceived to be a hybrid between a beach buggy, a pick-up truck and an off-roader!

A few changes were made upon production, the wheel-trims, side-lamps (rear) and the sun-visors were gone, the rear lights were round rather than rectangular, the location of the front indicators had changed to the side of the headlights. The Méhari used the chassis and running gear from the Dyane, it was fitted with 13 moulded coloured ABS body panels, bolted to a steel frame. The utility was powered by the 28bhp version of the 602cc flat twin that was uprated to 28.5bhp in 1969 and 29bhp in 1979.

Originally produced as a 4-seater version with or without front doors, an option was a chain, the front seats were completely independent and mounted on slide adjusters, the rear seat had folding ability that formed a flat cargo floor accessed via a rear tailgate, it had a payload of 400kg. Many options on this utility were available, such as an integral hood fastened by snap fasteners, with removable doors and side panels, as well as transparent vinyl windows. Elasticated hoops were placed on either side of the hood, to secure it with



► Press/publicity shot of a pre-production Méhari with the chain as doors, as used at the launch event in 1968, note the sunvisor, wheel trims, front indicators, bench seat and the rear lights on the side, all had disappeared by the time production started.

FRENCH STYLE



► Sales/Publicity/Press shot depicting sales to the 'Les Gendarmes', these were green not the expected blue.



► Used as intended, as any all-terrain vehicle should be. Photo Marc de Bilde MCDF.



► 4-seater version note rear bench seat that folds flat to form a pick-up, note the additional grab handles on the rear sides. Photo: Bernard Montpellier.



Citroën Mehari 4 x 4 with ENAC hard top and sides becomes a glazed van (vitrée).
Photo: Philippe Lesur

the sides, even a folding windscreen was an option. ENAC produced all the necessary panels to convert the basic Méhari to van or a pick-up, sales literatures at the time were used to promote the options and the types of commercial use the vehicle was deployed in. It was also marketed as a fun beach buggy type vehicle or an everyday vehicle. Emergency services in France used this charming and charismatic utility, both the fire services (pompiers) and police (les gendarmes) found use for them, even the French Army used them, in fact they purchased over 7,000, incidentally, converting some to 24v system. The Citroën Méhari was on active service with the Irish Defense Forces who purchased 12 in the late 1970s.

1970 saw a two-seater version launched,

and the French tax authorities classed it as a commercial vehicle therefore tax was much less, basically a true pick-up.

Many modifications were made during production some of the changes are listed, 1973, the capacity of the fuel tank was increased from 20 to 25 litres. 1975 saw a revised dashboard layout, and driving position. Locks were fitted to the steering

column and the front half doors. 1977 saw the fitting of lap belts (front seats), new handbrake and disc brakes on the fronts from the Citroën Ami 8 were fitted. 1978, the redesigned front end was born, indicators become rectangular and were moved to under the headlights, a removable front grille was provided allowing easier access for maintenance all



▲ Press/publicity photo of a pre-production Mehari, from the launch event in 1968, this colour blue was surely meant for the police (les gendarmes), but never made production. sun-visor, wheel trims, front indicators and the rear lights on the side confirm its pre-production status.



▲ Citroën Mehari logo from sales brochures/publicity.



▲ Citroën Mehari front & rear seats. Photo: Bernard Montpellier.



▲ Citroën Mehari ENAC van version used by the local fire department (pompiers).

covered by a larger bonnet. As a result, the double-chevrons are re-positioned to the grille from the bonnet.

1979, the Méhari dashboard was modernised, it now consisted of round dials and more gauges added. It was in May 1979, exactly eleven years after the presentation of the pre-production models at Deauville, Citroën offered the Méhari 4 x 4 version, however, it was 1980 before it appeared. It featured disc brakes on all four wheels, these cars are easily recognisable by the mounting of the spare wheel on the specially designed bonnet. During 1982, these were produced with larger wheel-arches to accept a larger tyre option, the rear lights were changed utilising units from the Acadiane van. Production of the 4 x 4 ceased in 1983 not before 13,000 vehicles had been produced. The same year the Méhari was renamed, the Méhari Azur

was born with two limited editions going on sale, the blue and white Méhari Azur (Blue) and the all-yellow Méhari Plage (Beach), produced for the Spanish and Portuguese market. Overall production ceased in 1988.

The colours of the Méhari was limited as it was integrated into the ABS during production and changed throughout its build. Vert Montana AC405 (1968-1988) was an option throughout. Except for the limited-edition Azur, the official names of colours all refer to desert regions. Rouge Hopi AC201 (1968-1975), Beige Kalahari AC808 (1968-1977), Orange Kirghiz AC315 (1969-1987), Vert Tibesti AC400 (1976-1979), Beige Hoggar AC125 (1978-1987), Azur Bleu AC356 1983-1987, Azur Blanc AC811 and Jaune Atacama AC1147 (1980-1987).

The Méhari was sold in the United States

of America during 1969 and 1970, the vehicle was classified as a commercial, it differed in few ways, the most obvious was the front panel that contained larger 7in sealed-beam headlights. The rear tailgate saw modifications to enable housing of the USA registration plate and a Lucas lamp on either side, plus the fitting of reversing lights along with two-speed wipers.

The Méhari Club De France organised 50th celebrations in May 2018, and the gathering took place on the Ile d'Or, on the Loire. During its production run of 20 years, 144,953 units were made, 1974 was its peak seeing over 13,000 Méharis rolling off the production lines. Sincere thanks to the following for their assistance/information and allowing photographs to be used, Paul Brice GB Méhari Register, Marc de Bilde MCDF, Philippe Lesur, Mike Warwick and Bernard Montpellier. ♦



Citroën Méharis, however Méhara is the correct Arabic plural.
Photo Marc de Bilde MCDF