

AMERICAN AUTOPARTS



NEWS AND CHEWING GUM FOR THE EYES

July 2025

Compiled by Mike Lintern with help from Wojtek Samoszuk

A RETURN FOR THE CHEROKEE

America's automotive press has given a round of applause to Stellantis/Chrysler for planning the Stateside re-introduction of Jeep Cherokee SUVs towards the end of this year, and for showroom sales to be available early in 2026. These will be the first Cherokees since the model name got the chop in 2023.

The new reincarnation is almost certain to look like the offering you see here, a boxy design with flared fenders and a traditional seven-section grille. Engine specs are yet to be revealed, but will be headed by a hybrid setup. The first Cherokee was introduced in 1974 -- a re-badged Wgoneer



Ian Allan ceases car sales

Family-owned Ian Allan Motors, who have been GM authorised UK Cadillac, Chevrolet, Dodge and Ram dealers, closed their doors in Virginia Water, Surrey, to future business on March 5. The company has had a vehicle sales and service operation as part of the Ian Allan Group since 1976, but only been involved in the American scene in recent years.

Unofficial word is that GM withdrew their support due to lack of vehicle sales.

Founder Ian Allan started producing a train spotters' booklet at the end of the Second World War, and this led him to start a railways-based publishing business. Arranging rail excursions for enthusiasts was so successful it became the beginning of a travel business that ran for 24 years, with a chain of 35 branches, while Ian Allan Publishing went on to produce a mass of books covering cars, boats, military vehicles and, not least, aircraft.

Handy-sized I-Spy spotters' books were extremely popular with schoolboys (including myself) in the fifties and sixties. Many years later I found myself joining a number of Ian Allan Aviation Tours, venturing everywhere from Alaska to Siberia and even North Korea. Nowadays Ian Allan Aviation Tours are operated independently by aviation enthusiasts, but the name lives on.

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America shuns battery power : The V8 burbles on

Only 4pc of Ford's US sales are electric

Shock figures announced by Ford at the end of August revealed the company suffered a \$1.9 billion hit due to its decision to cancel a planned 2025 full-size American electric sports utility as a result of decreasing interest by US buyers. The un-named SUV, whose launch had already been pushed back two years to 2027, will be replaced by hybrid variants. This is a further sign the American public is increasingly unwilling to ditch gas-guzzling V8s or diesels in favour of battery-powered machines. A lack of charging stations in many rural areas is making driving electric vehicles impractical, while in California electricity has been in such short supply it has had to be rationed. Also, the United States charges a 100pc import tariff on Chinese-manufactured government-subsidized models. (At the end of August Canada joined the US in imposing a 100pc tariff. The European Union charges 40pc, while, at the time of writing, the UK charges just 10pc).

The August-released figures showed that a total of 52,422 electric vehicles had been sold by the Ford Motor Company so far last year -- just four per cent of its total production. This is expected to cost the business around \$5 billion and comes about as the company has been pushing heavily into EVs, including the Mustang Mach-E and F150 Lightning. The electric Lightning initially had 200,000 sales reservations when it went on sale in the US earlier last year. Hybrid sales have risen faster than those of electrics.

Deliveries of next-generation electric Ford F150 pickups are now being pushed back until 2027, with workers being switched to plants making gasoline models such as profitable V8-powered F-series Super Duty trucks.

The company also now plans the first electric variant of the Ranger downsized pickup to appear as a 2027 model, a year later than initially planned. Ford should then be in production of also-delayed "Project T3" -- a second-generation electric pickup built at the company's new BlueOval City tech complex in Tennessee. New-generation pickups, plus a van, are to feature cheaper batteries and hybrid technology. Ford already

offers the Explorer electric seven-seat SUV and also unveiled a battery-powered mid-sized Capri in Europe. It's marketed as a sporty SUV, is a four-door and uses a Volkswagen platform. Lovers of the classic seventies Capri coupe were horrified.

Ford had 200,000 sales reservations for their electric F150 Lightning, when it went on sale earlier this year, but interest waned. It was never planned to be available in right-hand-drive form for the UK.

Meanwhile, Ford did confirm plans to debut RHD UK versions of a restyled conventionally-powered Mustang coupe last year, after similar-spec LHD models now offered in Continental Europe. It has a refreshed 5-litre (302) V8 for GT models, which retain the existing six-speed manual transmission, or an optional 10-speed automatic. EcoBoost 2.3-cylinder versions come solely with the auto box. It's claimed the V8 will go zero-to-60 in exactly four seconds and hit 170mph. With a Performance Pack, you get 20mm-wider rear tyres, adaptive shocks, 19-inch wheels rather than 18s, plus heavy-duty Brembo brakes.

There's to be a V8 RHD F150 too, but it's a factory-approved Australian conversion for the local market only.



The Mustang GT displayed at the 2023 Detroit International Motor Show

Tesla's Cybertrucks (and sales) falling apart

After years of tinkering, Elon Musk ruled his Tesla Cybertruck concept was ready to hit the road at the end of 2023. With looks akin to the "slant-back" military Humvee, or a stealth fighterjet, the bare-metal pickup was offered as a 600hp dual-engine basic 4WD at \$80,000 or as a three-engine Tesla Cyberbeast putting-out 845hp and a whopping 13,960Nm of torque with a \$100,000 price tag. Up to this March a total of 46,096 have been sold, but deliveries are now on hold after a ninth recall, this time due to glued stainless-steel body trims falling off, affecting every one sold. The plan is to use studs to fix the problem.



Within weeks of going on sale, there were five recalls relating to faults with the truck's equipment – including thousands of examples with possible rear-view mirror vision problems. Sales started to fall heavily, while the Tesla share price fell by 38 per cent during the first three months of this year.

More colourful Mopar muscle, and the V8s are going down fighting !

Mopar's 2023 Dodge model line-up heralded the biggest change ever applied to the brand – the end of gasoline-powered passenger cars and the onset of a transition to electric power. But the V8 is going down fighting, with the return of a Durango Hellcat sports utility in SRT form – packing a supercharged 6.2-litre, 710-horsepower hemi coupled to an eight-speed automatic – and a line of last-chance-to-buy Challengers. The Challenger offerings include SRT Hellcats and a convertible variant from approved “third party” specialist converters Droptop Customs.

There are no less than 14 body colours available for the Challengers, including retro “heritage” delights such as Go Mango, Destroyer Gray, Hell Raisin’ (purple), Sublime (green), Pitch Black and Frostbite.



2023 Challenger in Plumb Crazy purple recalls the cool early seventies

Also alive and surviving for just one more year in V8 form are four-door Charger sedans. Heading the pack is the most powerful Charger ever to be offered by the factory – the King Daytona, which is a Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Widebody with a blown 6.2 pushing out no less than 807 brake horsepower. This model is not just awash with words, it's got the eight-speed auto and rides on 20-inch Satin Carbon Warp Speed wheels (“Warp Speed wheels”. We like that!) Go Mango orange body paint with black graphics and matching orange Brembo brakes. The King Daytona nametag is a tribute to sixties and seventies LA street racer “Big Willy” Robinson, who built and raced the original hemi-orange King Daytona Charger.



King Daytona Chargers can be any shade of hemi orange so long as it's Go Mango

The first electrified Dodge released was the 2023 Hornet GT, a plug-in hybrid which is also stated to be the first all-new Dodge in a decade. It's a 4x4 SUV that sells for less than \$30,000 in basic gasoline-only GT form, with a 2-litre turbo four and nine-speed transmission. And it's quick. Like zero-to-60 in 6.5 seconds in "Sport" mode. Hornet was an AMC compact model of the seventies. Now it's become a sub-compact sports utility sharing the same platform as the Alfa Romeo Tonale. Remember, Dodge, Chrysler, Ram, Jeep, Fiat and Alfa Romeo are all part of Stellantis.

R/T 4x4 Hornets feature higher levels of trim and start from \$40,000. They have a 1.3-litre turbo engine, and in electric mode, produce 285 horsepower and 383 lb-ft of torque. The R/T Hornets have a six-speed box.



Hybrid Hornets run on pump gas or electricity and are Alfa Romeos under the skin

Redhill's 2024 Cruise was mega!

August 17 last year saw the running of Dream Cars' 5th and biggest Redhill Cruise Nite, with literally hundreds of American classics making the scene. The invasion had started by mid-afternoon and by 9pm the town was in virtual gridlock, with participants ranging from battery-powered kiddy cars to a Diamond T wrecker. Great to see so many fifties and sixties American cruisers draining en-route fuel stations, guys and gals scoffing burgers from local outlets and the ever-supportive Redhill and Horley residents once-again out with kids and cameras to enjoy a thankfully-warm evening.

Where else would you see a 500bhp "sit-up and beg" Anglia van with 20-inch-wide slicks on the street? Or Willy E. Coyote with Road Runner cruising by in the back of a Mopar?

So, make a note of Saturday August 16, that's the date of Redhill's 2025 Dream Cruise.

ML



Ian Hunt provided this shot of a gorgeous '59 Caddy during the 2024 Redhill Cruise

*Ford's Bronco a born-again
"Bobtail"*



Ford's sixth-generation Bronco sports utility entered production in 2022, complete with retro looks clearly taken from the still-sought-after original 1966 short wheelbase "Bobtail" Bronco. The newer offering, which comes in two and four-door styles, is a direct competitor to the Jeep Wrangler. Unfortunately, unlike the Wrangler, the Bronco is not scheduled to be marketed in the UK with right-hand-drive, despite it being based on the current Australian-designed Ranger pickup, which is built in Thailand for export to RHD markets. Base engine is a 270hp 2.3 Ecoboost turbo, while a 2.7-litre twin-turbo V6 is available as an option.

In the meantime, Ford are talking about offering a hi-performance version of the Bronco with a more powerful EcoBoost V6, suspension upgrades and more-aggressive styling with a big, bold Raptor nameplate filling the grille. Separately, the company has registered the name "Warthog" for use on SUVs and other vehicles, though this might be intended for a new F150 variant.

A Tale of Three Big Beasts

You've heard of The Beast from the East. We all know who that is. Well, this is a tale of three beasts from the west. Our first two Beasts refer to each of the United States Presidential limousines – a pair of heavily-armoured Cadillacs initially built for ex-President Donald Trump and debuted in New York in September of 2018. These particular Beasts – and there have been several since the first to bear (forgive the pun) the unofficial title was created for George W Bush in 2001 – sport grilles similar to Cadillac's Escala concept and headlamps from an Escalade, but are essentially GMC TopKick medium trucks under their super-thick skin.

In addition to laminated steel/aluminum/ceramic bodywork of up to eight inches thickness, the Beasts' windows are five-inches thick and the doors are understood to weigh as much as those of a Boeing 757 jetliner, with handles that can be electrified to prevent entry by the uninvited. Other goodies include run-flat tyres, smoke screens, tear gas cannons and a 007-style ability to dump oil slicks in front of unwanted pursuers. All this kit adds up to a total weight estimated at between 15,000 and 20,000 pounds and a build cost between \$300,000 and \$150,000, depending on who you believe.



Presidential tour, the second car being on hand as always in the event of any technical issues. Word is that Joe Biden far preferred to be at the wheel of his beloved 1967 Corvette, but for security reasons he was allowed to enjoy it until he left office. President Trump is not known to be a auto enthusiast, but is probably happy so long as his limo burns oil.

Our third Beast from the West is the mighty Merlin-powered Beast auctioned-off in March of last year for £72,500, following creator/owner John Dodd's death at the age of 90. John was well-known to the American car fraternity as a specialist re-builder of automatic transmissions. John's Beast used a GM TH400 box, initially mated to a 27-litre Rolls-Royce V12 Meteor (ex-Centurian tank) engine, and later replaced in re-designed MkII form by a more potent (though un-supercharged) Merlin aircraft variant

Both MkI and MkII Beasts were based on a chassis originally put together by engineer Paul Jameson, who sold it in body-less form to John. A succession of weak Jaguar manual gearboxes had by now been replaced by a TH400 automatic and the next requirement was for the design and construction of a suitably-exotic body. That's where Fibre Glass Repairs owner and Santa Pod Raceway co-founder Bob Phelps came into the picture, using his flare and practical ability to design and build a fantastic two-door coupe, aided by son Roy. When the Beast suffered a major fire it was re-bodied by FGR as a station wagon. (FGR were also responsible for creating a beautiful glass fibre slingshot body for the A-Fuel dragster The Commuter, plus transformation of a '59 Plymouth sedan into a pick-up that acted as push-truck for the likes of "Big Daddy" Don Garlits during the 1964 International DragFests). The Ford-powered Commuter – basically a major re-work of Mickey Thompson's Harvey Aluminum Special – is preserved today in mint condition in the custody of Antony Billinton, son of Commuter's late technical wizard Peter. Unfortunately, the unique Plymouth pickup is no more.

*A natural publicist (and exaggerator), John Dodd, was often seen driving a Rolls-Royce saloon around London emblazoned with "The Secret of Shift" signwriting to promote his transmission repair business. He also insisted on the installation of a trade-mark Rolls-Royce radiator grille on his Beast, resulting in a High Court case against him brought by the Derby-based company for misuse of the grille. John lost the case... but reveled in the publicity. **ML***

Below: The MkII Beast, sans Rolls grille



Word is the gentleman who bought the Beast at auction found he couldn't bear driving it because it wasn't possible to hold a conversation in the car due to noise levels, so back to auction it went. Enter vintage car enthusiast and blower-Bentley man Martyn Overington, who stepped-in as new owner, treating the car to a smart new paintjob and reinstalling a Rolls-Royce grille.

Left, you see the car when debuted at the 2023 NEC Classic Car Show

Pictures by Epic Photo Co



LITTLE BOYS' TOYS THAT SOLD FOR BIG BOYS' MONEY



A Matchbox 1963 Lincoln Continental diecast, in a pre-production green finish, went for an eye-watering £15,600 at a Vectis auction in Stockton, Yorkshire – a world record for such a toy. It was part of a “mint and

boxed” Matchbox collection owned by Graham Hamilton that made a staggering £281,000 on the day. Other American miniatures from Graham’s collection that went for record-breaking prices included a “regular production” Continental (£9,600), a Plymouth Gran Fury Police car (£3,600) and a Dodge refrigerator truck (a cool £12,000). My mint Days Gone US Coast Guard Pontiac sedan delivery, bought for £2, can be considered a steal! **ML**

Bitza News

GM has reached an agreement in principle to enter Formula One next year with a Cadillac-branded team. Initially, the new entrants will need to buy-in engines to plug the gap until their own design is ready – which is not expected to be before 2028 – and the favoured source at the moment is said to be Ferrari. Meantime, Ford is “partnering with Red Bull” to build a new engine

Current rules that exempt cars first registered more than 40 years ago from annual MoT testing as substantially unmodified “classic or historic vehicles” have come under review by the Department of Transport. Though no decision has been made, the Department is considering the introduction of MoT-style safety checks after a majority of the public backed the proposal in a consultation which had just over 1,000 respondents. There is no indication whether the current vehicle tax exemption for 40-year-old examples will change

What a beauty! \$100k-plus “Big Buck” Impala



RK Motors, of Charlotte, North Carolina, say they will “ship anywhere in the world” if someone will come up with the princely sum of \$117,000 for their fully-restored 1958 Chevrolet Impala coupe. This fabulous Chevy has been treated to a ground-up nut-and-bolt rebuild to create perhaps the best example on earth. After some 35 years in store prior to the project’s start, flooring was the only sheet metal needing replacement before application of the correct Onyx Black paint.

The original 348 big block is now mated to a TH350 three-speed in place of its previous two-speed Powerglide. And there’s now a “Posi” Following a suspension rebuild, the Impala received new 14-inch wheels with spinners, dual antennas and fender skirts added as authentic options. The new interior features the correct combination of grey/black/turquoise cloth and vinyl upholstery.

2025 Cruise & Show Dates

July 6-7

Classic American Stars & Stripes Show, including trade and autojumble stands, Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6QN www.tattonstarsandstripes.com

July 10-13

Goodwood Festival of Speed, Goodwood House, Kennel Hill, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0PX www.goodwood.com or call 01243 755055

July 10-20

American Auto Club Summer Nationals, Upton Rugby Football Club Ground, Upton-upon-Severn, Worcester WR8 0HW – close to M5 Junction 7 / M50 intersection and to the A38 -- and held in conjunction with the Upton Blues Festival. Call Clare Sharp on 07881 404449

July 28

Mustang Owners Club of Great Britain National Show, Statfold Country Park, Ashby Road, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 0BU Info@MOCGB.net

August 1-3 *Hot Rod Hayride, Bisley Shooting Centre, Surrey GU24 0NY – all-action event for traditional hot rods and customs, including oval dirt track racing and soapbox derby www.hotrodhayride.co.uk*

August 3

All American Auto Club Rally of the Giants, Stonor Park, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 6HF www.allamericanautoclub.com or John@allacc.com

August 7-10

National Street Rod Association Hot Rod Super Nationals, Old Warden, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 9DS www.NSRA.org.uk

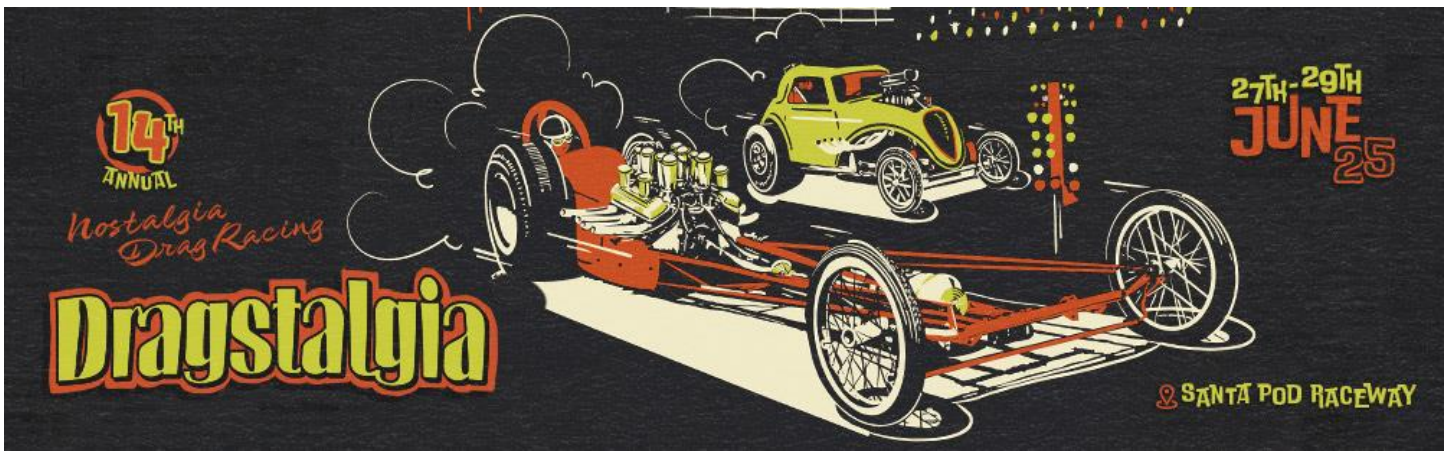
August 16

The Dream Cruise, Redhill, Surrey, organized by Dream Cars. Head for RH1 1NP for a 7pm start. – call 01737 765050, or check Facebook or Instagram for up to date info#

September 28

Yorkshire American Car Club Rod & Custom Car Show, Fort Paull, Battery Road, Paull, near Hull, HU12 8FP -- call 01709 542555 yanacs1@yahoo.co.uk

UK Drag Racing Calendar 2025



All dates should be checked and some events may have payment restrictions.

A few run-what-ya-brung meets have been included in this listing

To avoid needless repetition, at the end of this listing are location and contact details for further

July 11-12

Mustang Nationals drag meet, Santa Pod Raceway (**Sunday the 13th** is the Ford Show, run-what-ya-brung, show 'n shine, jet cars and stunts etc)

July 12-13

Straightliners 1/8th-mile Championship, Melbourne Raceway

July 18-19 Mopar Euro Nats race meet, Santa Pod Raceway

July 26-27 Velocity Vintage Summer (1/4-mile) Drags / Run-what-ya-brung for pre-1959 hot rods plus American street-strip cars, Manston Raceway

August 2-3

Straightliners 1/8-mile racing Championship, Round 5, Melbourne Raceway

August 16

Straightliners drag and drift meet – 1/8-mile racing plus drifting circuit, Dakota Raceway

August 16-17

Greenlight Nationals, National Drag Racing Championship event, Santa Pod Raceway

August 23-24

European No-prep Nationals 1/8-mile racing / Run-what-ya-brung, Manston Raceway

August 30-31

Straightliners 1/8th-mile Championship, Round 6, Melbourne Raceway

September 4-7

FIA European Championship Finals, Santa Pod Raceway

September 12-14

National Street Rod Association Hot Rod Drags, Santa Pod Raceway

September 19-21

National Drag Racing Championship Finals, Santa Pod Raceway

September 27

Straightliners drag and drift meet – 1/8-mile racing plus drifting circuit, Dakota Raceway

October 4-5

Straightliners 1/8-mile Championship, Round 7, Melbourne Raceway

October 11-12

King of the South no-prep 1/8-mile racing / Run-what-ya-brung, Manston Raceway

October 19

Straightliners Championship Finals, Santa Pod Raceway

CONTACT DETAILS

Dakota Raceway Southwest, Smeatharpe Airfield, Upottery, Honiton, Devon EX14 9RF

(www.straightliners.co.uk or call Helen on 07921 712266

Deenethorpe Airfield, Corby, Northants, NN17 3AN www.mphdrags.co.uk or email info@mphdrags.co.uk

Manston Raceway, Manston Park, Spitfire Way, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5FE -- call Paul Marston on 07831 650230 or www.velocityvintagedrags.com, the co-hosts

Melbourne Raceway, Ash Lane, York YO42 4SS

(www.straightliners.co.uk or call Helen on 07921 712266 or Trevor on 07971 172210

Santa Pod Raceway, Airfield Road, Podington, near Wellingborough, Northants NN29 7XA

(www.santapod.com or call 01234 782828)

Spitfire Raceway, Perranporth Airfield, Higher Trevellas, St Agnes, Cornwall TR5 0XS

(www.spitfireraceway.co.uk or call 01872 552856)

For information on European, Scandinavian and Middle-East events go to Eurodragster.com/Tracks and Shows

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