

passions

Classic Cars

Ever since childhood, **Jonathan Harding** hasn't been able to get enough of classic cars. Whether it's Inspector Morse's Jag, an unassuming Morris Minor or a wedding Rolls-Royce, this man wants a shot behind the wheel.

I've been into classic cars all of my life - my father had the garage in the local town. I joined the Gay Classic Car Group (GCCG) last year when I saw them at their first appearance at the Motorshow at the NEC in Birmingham. I had one of my classic cars on another stand, but I knew people at the GCCG stand, and then just decided to join.

I love being a member of the GCCG. It's a truly friendly club with a real mix of cars and people. I enjoy the opportunities to go to places that I wouldn't normally consider in the UK and Europe - all with the bonus of being surrounded by fun and interesting people. Next year will be extra special as it's the GCCG's 20th birthday and 200 people will be celebrating with other European clubs on a long weekend near Oxford.

I'm about to purchase my 112th car - I must be addicted!

It's great being with other gay people who share an interest in classic cars. It's not stuck-up, which is nice because some other car clubs can be quite snooty. There are lots of Rolls-Royces, but the people are really friendly.

For a 30-year-old, I've owned a vast number of cars. I'm about to purchase my 112th car - I must be addicted! Obviously I don't own all of them now, but I still have seven classic cars.

I recently bought a 1980s Renault 30. When I was young my parents took me to a Renault garage when they went to buy their new car and they bought me a model of a Renault 30, which I still have. I always wanted the real thing and when one came up for sale recently I couldn't resist. It's one of only three



A bevy of bridal car beauties.

left on the road in the UK.

I also own an Austin Maxis, a Rolls-Royce and a Daimler Limousine. The next purchase is a 1923 Willy's Overlander (no sniggering). It's an American car and the only one of its type in the UK.

I had an odd experience with my first classic car. While I was at a car boot sale with my 1960s Daimler V8 250, a man came up to me and offered me a very generous £10,000 to buy the

car. Frequently, people come up and make silly offers, so I made nothing of it. But since it was a good offer, I politely agreed and off he went. Thirty minutes later he came back with the money in cash. He took the car and left me standing in the field!

Once I went to buy a car from a wedding hire company. I didn't buy the car but I ended up working for them as a chauffeur. During that time, I experienced driving luxury classic Rolls-Royces and Bentleys. For me, it was the perfect job, as I love being a chauffeur and I love weddings. I moved on from that job, but to help fund my com-

pulsive car buying, I started my own wedding car business. Gay ceremonies are great to do too.

Owning the cars is only half the story. I am an active member of five different car clubs and am a committee member of one. The GCCG likes to socialise together. I've met a nice bloke through it, and this Saturday we're going on a night out to Nightingales in Birmingham.



From toy car to reality: Jonathan with his beloved Renault 30.

Jonathan's Top 5 Classic Cars

- 1 Morris Minor**
(I own a lilac Morris Minor Million, built to celebrate the millionth Minor)
- 2 Jaguar Mk 2**
(Inspector Morse car)
- 3 Daimler Empress**
(very rare)
- 4 VW K70**
(even rarer)
- 5 Ford Cortina Mk3**

How to join

Membership of the GCCG costs £20 per year, plus a £2.50 joining fee. Beginners are welcome.

Contact:
Gay Classic Car Group, BM Box 590, London WC1
email@gccg.org.uk • www.gccg.org.uk

• Jonathan's Bridal Car Company
www.hardingsbridalcars.com



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