



THE NATIONAL HISTORIC  
VEHICLE SURVEY

# CLUB FACT FILE

## HISTORIC VEHICLE CLUBS

# 2020





## ARE BRITISH HISTORIC VEHICLE CLUBS HAVING A MID-LIFE CRISIS?

This short fact file contains results from 248 club surveys which form part of the National Historic Vehicle Survey.

The average age of Clubs since formation that completed the Federation's 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey is 41 years. The survey reveals there are potential problems ahead for clubs who are not prepared and starting to take action - read on...

## IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS...



We know from the enthusiast part of the 2020 Survey that of those responding to the survey 87% of owners and 50% of non-owners are members of at least one historic vehicle club. This is a small decline from comparative figures of 90% and 56% in 2016.

We also know from the enthusiast survey that the average age of Club members is 64 compared to 59 for enthusiasts that are not a member of a historic vehicle club.

## DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

In addition we know that 43% of Clubs expect the average age of their membership to increase over the next 5 years, while only 5% expect it to decrease.

We also know that 1 in 3 Clubs overall expect a decline in membership over the next 5 years, when in 2016 they were predicting an increase.

All this when the number of historic vehicles on the DVLA database has increased and the estimated number of enthusiast owners has grown from around **500,000** to over **700,000**.

## WHY MIGHT THIS BE?

### Lack of enthusiasm for historic vehicles? Probably not.

We know that in 2019 21 million of the population saw historic vehicles as an important part of the Nation's heritage.

We also know that in 2019 around 10% of the adult population, 5.1 million people, do not have a historic vehicle but aspire to own one. Indeed the interest was strongest amongst younger adults.

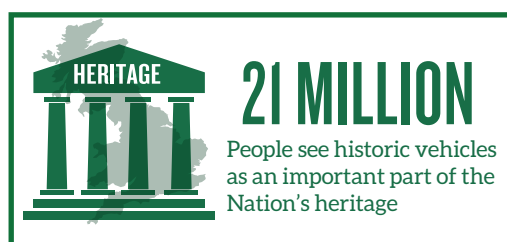
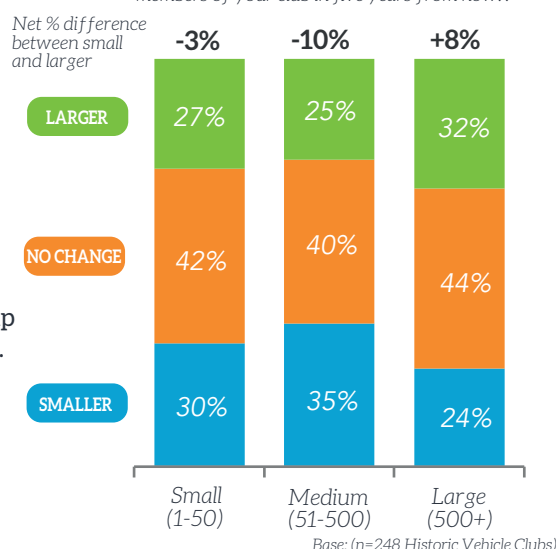
### Is it too expensive to join a club? Probably not.

In 2016 the average cost of club membership was £20 per annum. In 2020 it has risen to £25.

*Beertoday.co.uk suggests that the average cost of a pint of beer is currently around £4.00. Membership of a historic vehicle Club for the price of five or six pints, hardly a night out!*

## MEMBERSHIP TREND

Q. How do you envisage the number of members of your club in five years from now?





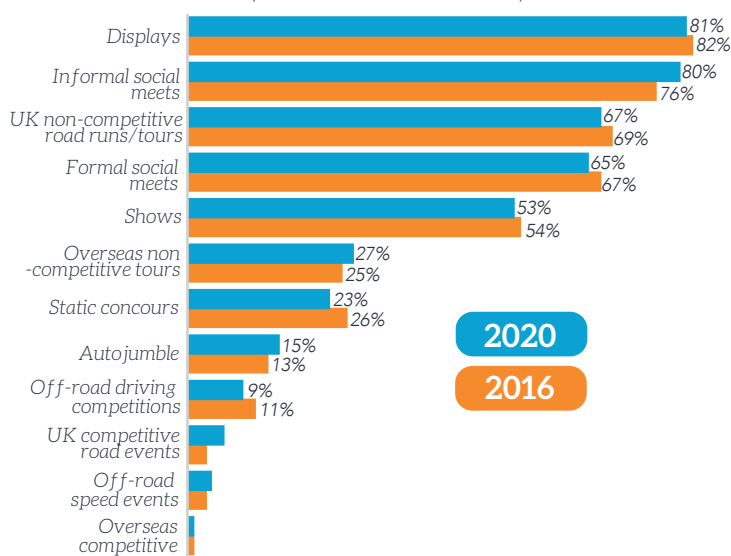
# IS THERE A PROBLEM?



**What then is the problem?** Are Clubs just not seen as relevant to today's historic vehicle driver? Clubs were mostly started by like minded individuals with a shared interest in vehicles, whether generally or specifically by make or model. Clubs offered the opportunity for enthusiasts to compare notes on their vehicles, seek help with problems and often obtain assistance with repairs. Clubs provided magazines and social meetings or events for the interest and benefit of members. Our survey shows that Clubs are continuing to do all these things:

## CLUBS ARE STILL VERY ACTIVE!

Q. Please tell us if you organise the following types of event?  
(n=248 Historic Vehicle Clubs)



But in fact is that the problem? Clubs are doing what they have always done yet most are not thriving and growing. We have to conclude: **'if clubs keep doing what they have always done the results will always be the same'.**

Communication between a club and its members has changed. 85% of Clubs have a website, similar to the number in 2016 (86%), but managing and maintaining this resource with relevant content must be challenging.

There has been a **significant increase** in the use of Social media where now over two thirds of Clubs have a presence against barely half in 2016. There is an emphasis in use with larger clubs far more readily adopting social media than small clubs (80% vs 45%).

One major change is the reduction in the number of clubs offering a library service, down from 40% of clubs to only 23%. **Are Clubs finding members do not want the library service now that so much information, mostly free, is available on the web?**

85%  
have club websites



Club websites are a valuable tool for clubs

69%  
offer Facebook content



Around 7 in 10 clubs now provide content on Facebook

23%  
offer library facilities



Around 1 in 4 clubs now offer a library service to members

## ATTRACTING YOUNGER MEMBERS

Our research does show that 11% of clubs either have a youth group or make special arrangements for younger members. Set against that 89% that do not. It is the larger clubs that cater best for younger members (24% do so), which perhaps contributes to the potential for a polarisation effect - the large get larger, whilst medium size clubs get smaller and smaller clubs eventually disappear.



11%



89%

Around 1 in 10 clubs have special arrangements for younger members

## HOW ARE LARGE CLUBS DIFFERENT?

**Large clubs** tend to be single make and benefit from the 'halo' effect of current vehicle production. These larger clubs tend to be national or international and have well developed communication routes. They are more familiar with social media and tend to have some dedicated staff or volunteers helping. **Small clubs** tend to be less formal groups. Many are multi-marque clubs based in a specific area or region. In these clubs communication by social media has fallen from 2016 to 2020 (from 50% to 45% of clubs).

Large clubs also offer more activity, for example, 93% of large clubs participate in displays (on average 23 per annum), where 76% of small clubs do so (on average 6 displays per annum). This pattern repeats down the range of club activities from informal social activity to static concours. The impact of this may influence membership patterns or perceived value of club membership.

In conclusion, some clubs will be thriving, many are not. This overview starts to illustrate some of the reasons that are in play in the club scene. The FBHVC is available to advise and share experiences between clubs, contact us at [research@fbhvc.co.uk](mailto:research@fbhvc.co.uk)

For more information on the survey, or other opportunities to get involved  
[research@fbhvc.co.uk](mailto:research@fbhvc.co.uk)  
Pic Credit: John Retter, Brooklands Motor Museum