

Tim Hearley - RIP

10 March 1942 to 13 August 2021

A Quiet Man

by Byron International

Aston Martin has always been about people – from Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford, through David Brown, Victor Gauntlett of course, and even your engine builder's name engraved on a plaque under the bonnet. In August 2021 when we saw the passing of one of our old customers, Tim Hearley, we thought the spotlight should have fallen a little brighter on this quiet but remarkable man who was an unsung hero of the marque.

The term polymath comes to mind when you look into Tim's background. Sitting with two of his sons, Philip and Richard, to reflect on the man was enlightening.

A concert-grade pianist tutored by the husband of a niece of the great composer Elgar, he completed his education at Malvern College before studying Maths and Physics at Oxford University - subjects that brought discipline and an analytical approach to a future business career. Academic involvement continued in later life, with his membership of the Rector's Advisory Council at Lincoln College Oxford.

Tim's business career began in the City of London as an analyst, a stockbroker, and a major contributor to the formation of the Alternative Investment Market (AIM). But it was not long before the entrepreneur in him took his father-in-law's company onto the acquisition trail under the new name of CH Industrials. It was originally The Coventry Hood & Sidescreen Co. Ltd (formed in the 1930s) who made their name making hoods and other soft trimmings for MG, Triumph, Austin and Morris, accumulating companies like Tudor Webasto along the way.

Tim's successful and established company offered the kind of support so necessary in the challenging world of high end and unique vehicles, which probably led to his most famous business investment.

He was approached by Alan Curtis, then one of the owners of Aston Martin, to look at the possibility of investing in the company. He took an equal investment alongside Victor



Tim with wife Pauline and son Philip at Goodwood for the launch of Nimrod in 1981

Gauntlett of Pace Petroleum, acquiring the company with Peter Cadbury joining as a minority shareholder.

Jointly chairing the company, Victor took an executive role with his office based in Newport Pagnell. Tim was very much the non-executive, retaining his business base in Cavendish Square in London.

To Tim's son Philip, these were halcyon days of being collected from school in the latest William Towns designed Lagonda, the

trips to Goodwood for the launch of Nimrod, Aston Martin's return to the racetracks, and the Hearley family camping out at Le Mans with the Gauntletts in 1982 for the 24-Hour Race.

Tim's role in Aston Martin was very much on the engineering development side, taking the Tickford brand across the M1 from Newport Pagnell to Milton Keynes under the CH Industrials umbrella. A highlight of this era being the famous Tickford Capris.



The Volante that Tim bought from Byron in the 1990s

It is easy to forget the financial market's rollercoaster of those times and CH Industrials fell victim to its vagaries. But the Tickford name lived on, as did Tim's enthusiasm for classic British sports cars.

The family album reflects that enthusiasm: not just Nimrod and the

Lagondas; but also Tim's Triumph Spitfire as a young man in the '60s, Astons from his time at Newport Pagnell, the V8 Volante bought from us in the '90s, and that automotive drive lived on with his efforts to regenerate the Jensen marque in the noughties.

As we applaud Fernando Alonso as the

latest name to relight the flame of glory in Aston Martin, Tim Hearley is another name to remember – to Philip, James and Richard, he was just Dad; to Aston Martin his was an important and timely partnership with Victor to ensure we enjoy the vibrancy and history of the marque today.