



A new book tells the inside story of the British Leyland/Rover collaboration with Honda

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Triumph Acclaim (Project Bounty), introduced in 1981.

‘The Viking and the Samurai’ is a new, eyewitness account, book telling the story of an unlikely automotive partnership...



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THE VIKING AND THE SAMURAI

The inside story of the collaboration between
British Leyland/Rover and Honda



John Bacchus



The Rover 200 & 400 Owners Club (publishers of the book) tells us:

(All words and images from the Club).

In the 1970s British Leyland was navigating tough times, with regular industrial action, lack-lustre products, financial challenges and competitor pressure piling ever more burden on its business at home and abroad. In the midst of this period, a relationship with Honda was forged, vastly improving BL's engineering and manufacturing technology and product quality to deliver a new generation of vehicles that would transform the company's fortunes for over a decade.

'The Viking and the Samurai' is an eyewitness account of these events, telling the story of the crucial relationship between British Leyland/Rover and Honda, through the eyes of John Bacchus, the man who negotiated it in the 1970s and then managed it for the next 16 years, until it came to an end with the sale of Rover Group to BMW in 1994. John was at the heart of events throughout the turbulent era of mergers, strikes, nationalisation and privatisation, all overlaid on the challenges of cultural differences.

This account was written in 1996 when events were fresh in the author's mind, but it was never published. Thirty years on from the BMW takeover, its historical importance has grown. It is now time to share this fascinating story with everyone who has an interest in the history of the British automotive industry. The production of this book is itself a collaboration by ex-employees and friends.

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PURCHASING THE BOOK

'The Viking and the Samurai' is a high quality, 160-page softback book illustrated with around 100 photographs, including pictures of prototypes which have never been published.

The book is priced at £15 (excluding post and packaging where applicable) - ISBN



978-1-3999-8614-4.

The Rover 200 & 400 Owners Club has produced the book and is managing its distribution.

It is available to purchase online from the Club's webshop – <https://rover200.org.uk/shop>.

At the request of the Bacchus family, all profits from the sales of this book will be donated to Dementia Research UK

For more information please contact:

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About John Bacchus – The book's author

Now aged 87, John Bacchus retired from the position of Director, Honda Collaboration, Rover Group in 1995 having spent the previous 25 years working for the Group and its predecessor companies. A dedicated car man, he worked for Ford and Chrysler before joining the newly hatched BLMC in 1969. In a company notorious for what he calls 'Management by upheaval', his own record of continuous service at a senior level is probably unmatched, reflecting the pivotal role that he played in making a complex and difficult 'marriage' work far better than many people thought was possible. Internal conflicts and dilemmas are discussed, while the mutual respect which developed between John and his Japanese counterparts is obvious throughout. The products resulting from the collaboration are also described, including their reception in the marketplace.

The Publisher – The Rover 200 & 400 Owners Club

The Rover 200 & 400 Owners Club, which also covers 25, 45 and Streetwise models, is open



to all enthusiasts. Its primary aim is to promote and support the use and enjoyment of these cars, and encourage them to be preserved for future generations. This is its first book publication and follows the booklet *"The Real R3 Story - written by those who were there"*, released in 2020.

The club has a website - <https://rover200.org.uk/club/about-club> - and is active on Facebook, YouTube, X and Instagram, in addition to organising and attending many car events throughout the year. It has made charity donations of several thousands of pounds, largely from sales of Rover cars donated to the club and restored by club members.

Dementia Research UK

DR UK is a grant-making charity, raising funds for research projects across the dementia community in all regions of the UK. It provides grants to national research bodies based at universities and hospitals and to regional centres delivering services and support directly to those suffering with dementia. Its website gives more details of its important contributions in this field - <https://demruk.org/>