The Gazelle Story.

One of the main planks of the Rootes take-over of the Singer Company was the promise of a brand new model the company could be proud of.

During the next year Rootes set about re-organizing the whole of Singers systems and re-financing the firm. The year-end loss posted for 1956 had risen to £600,000, but by the end of the 50’s Singer would be back in the black and making healthy profits once more.

Once under Rootes ownership, the styling and engineering teams were tasked with developing the new Singer. They quickly identified that the older 1500 cc Singer ohc engine could be shoe-horned into the brand new Audax body shell, and, with subtle detail improvements, the new car was positioned high up in the Rootes model range just behind the prestigious Humbers.

The all-new Audax body styling was a creation of Raymond Lowey’s design team in America, who had been responsible for the impressive Studebaker Hawk and Starliner models, and there are a number of similarities between the designs.

It was against this backdrop that the new Singer, the Gazelle Series I, was launched in September 1956.

Gazelle Series I.

Inside, the level of trim in this luxurious new car was pitched at the upper end of the medium sized car market. Smart, pleated vinyl contrasted with outline piping and polished walnut veneered facia and door cappings, along with deep pile carpeting and extensive sound deadening.

The Series I was available as a four door Saloon and two door Convertible. The purchase price was £898 7s 0d.

Fitted with independent front wheel suspension with coil springs, and a wheelbase of 8’ - 0” the car had an overall length of 13’ 7½ “.

The research and development teams, along with the stylists, were continuously refining the finish and engineering specifications of the model ranges, and along with input from the marketing department, Singer became more integrated into the Rootes manufacturing set-up.

Thus it was that with barely 12 months under its belt, the the Series I was replaced by the Series II, by which time 4,344 Series Is had been produced.

Gazelle Series II.

With the launch of the Series II in October 1957, the front of the car was changed to include horizontal chrome vents which incorporated side and indicator lights on either side of the oval centre grille. Side flashes were added, pointed at the front and filling almost all of the rear wing panels.

The headlights were given deep chrome cowls, and the now famous Gazelle motif was added to the bonnet.
The Gazelle script badges remained on the front doors. The capacity of the fuel tank was increased from 7¼ gallons to 10 gallons. Overdrive became an option available at extra cost. There was also a new body style - the Estate.

1,582 Series II cars were produced, making it the rarest of all the Gazelles.

**Gazelle Series IIA.**

Shortly after the introduction of the revised Sunbeam Rapier model in February 1958, Rootes decided to install the same 1494 cc power unit (with single Solex carburettor) in the Series II Gazelle, which was still using the original Singer OHC engine. At the same time a Burman re-circulating ball type steering box was added.

The outward appearance of the Series IIA remained the same as the Series II.

When the Series III was announced in September 1958, 3,824 Series IIA had been sold.

**Gazelle Series III.**

Gazelles were now available in three model variants - Saloon, Convertible and Estate.

The main changes were to the side flashes, which were narrower, less pointed at the front with the Gazelle script badges inset, not so deep on the rear wings, but extending around the rear and lower boot.

The Series III remained in production until September 1959, when its replacement model arrived, by which time 10,929 had been made.

**Gazelle Series IIIA.**

In September 1959, the appeal of the Gazelle was further enhanced by yet more subtle design improvements, these all coming in the guise of the Series IIIA.

The rear wings received a touch more of Lowey’s Studebaker styling, with the upper edges of the wing rolled over to make a pronounced fin profile.

The saloon and convertible models were given a revised rear light design, with three separate light units replacing the single unit. and chrome edged, colour co-ordinated front headlight cowls were added.
Other changes were the fitting of twin Solex carburettors and special manifolding, A close-ratio gearbox with central gear lever also became standard. The body styling was further changed by the provision of a deeper windscreen. Smiths Easidrive automatic transmission became an option available at extra cost. 12,491 Ser IIIA cars were produced.

**Gazelle Series IIIB**

With the same outward appearance as the Series IIIA, the IIIB was given a Hypoid rear axle in place of the spiral bevel type. A single Solex carburettor was fitted, and refinements were made to the gearbox, including an improved filler to replace the dipstick. Thinner front seat squabs were fitted to increase leg-room in rear. 13,272 Ser IIIB cars were produced.

**Gazelle Series IIIC.**

Launched in July 1961, this was to be the last Gazelle model to include an Estate in its lineup. The Series IIIC took the place of the planned Series IV, as during the 1960/61 period, Rootes had developed a new larger body design that was intended to replace the older Audax models. However, a last minute change of mind led to this new model being launched as a totally new Singer - the Vogue. Therefore no Series IV ever appeared in the Gazelle line up, and in its place came another version of the Audax body style - the Series IIIC.

This revised model embodied the very finest virtues of the Rootes dream, and it admirably acquitted itself on the road as an outstanding Singer car.

The new, larger Rootes 1592 cc engine was fitted, and both front doors were adorned with 1600 badges to signify this. This engine was fitted with a Zenith carburettor. Larger warning lights were fitted, and a heater became standard for the first time, while an ammeter and oil pressure gauge were options available at extra cost.

In February 1962 the Convertible was discontinued, and in March 1962 the last Estate was introduced. In July 1963 production of the IIIC ceased, 15,115 having been made.

**Gazelle Series V**

This new Gazelle was introduced in August 1963, having received a number of major modifications.

A lower roof line allowed for a revised rear screen with no wrap around, and larger rear doors with fixed quarter-lights. The fins were removed from the rear wings, and the rear lights revised back into a single oval cluster.

13" wheels and front disc brakes were standard. Borg Warner 35 automatic transmission was an optional extra.

Inside the car there was a brand new full-width walnut dashboard and side door cappings, and individual, reclining front seats.

In its new format the Series V would serve the company until 1965, by which time 20,022 had been produced.
Gazelle Series VI
This new model was fitted with the new Rootes 1725 cc 5 main bearing cast iron head engine. A lower rectangular grille was fitted. The electrics were changed to negative earth. The rear brakes were self-adjusting. 1725 emblems were placed on each front wing, with Gazelle script badges on the rear wings and individual letters spelling SINGER on the bonnet.
14,842 Series VI Gazelles were made.

Gazelle Series VII (Arrows)
Production of this final version of the Gazelle family began in December 1966, with the formal announcement being made in January 1967.
This new Singer was part of the brand new Rootes Arrow range. Initially only Automatics were available, with the 1725cc engine. Later a Manual model was introduced, powered by a 1496 cc 5 main bearing, cast iron head engine.
The Series VII also came with a new badge adorning its nearside front wing - the Chrysler Pentastar.
Only available in Saloon version, this new car had rectangular front headlamps, a single chrome waistline stripe and horizontal rear lights.
The last Singer, a Gazelle, rolled off the line in March 1970, by which time 26,846 Series VII Gazelles had been made.

Summary of the Main Identifying Features of each Series Model:
Series III - Launched Sep 1958. Centre front folding armrest. Side flashes less pointed at front, with Gazelle script inset, not so deep on rear wing panels, and extending around rear and lower boot area. Chassis Nos: A7900001 to A7910929.

(Continued overleaf …)


**(Series IV)** - In July 1961 Rootes Group announced the new Singer Vogue, using the body shell of what was intended to be an all new Gazelle. Consequently there is no Series IV in the Gazelle line-up.

