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NEWSLETTER OF THE HEREFORD AUSTIN SEVEN CLUB

Car of the month:



David Edwards' Speedex being unearthed from a barn 3 years ago

Chairman's View.

Welcome to a new year. We finished 2023 in style with our annual lunch at the Bunch of Carrots, a superb visit to the Prior's Motor Works, and a really interesting talk by Tim Bradley on how he went about building his Austin Seven Special. The latter was also a trial run with the newly purchased Club projector and screen. Now, we have entered 2024 on the very first day at the VSCC event at Much Marcle.

Our January club meeting will also feature a speaker as the feed-back we are getting shows that this is a popular activity on club nights. Not every future meeting will feature a speaker of course, but I am aware that we have a great deal of talent amongst the membership, which should be shared for everyone to enjoy and benefit. To complement our monthly meetings on the last Tuesday evening of each month, Kip Waistell has kindly agreed to arrange a mid-month meeting at various lunch time pubs around the county. The venues and dates can be seen either on e-mail communiques sent by Jan Haywood but also on the club website updated regularly by Roland Alcock. A chance to use our Seven's during daylight so why not give it go?

Next month, we have our AGM on Tuesday the 27th February, at the Richmond Place Club starting at 7.30pm prompt, followed by a 'Noggin and Natter'. This will not be a long drawn-out affair but it is everyone's opportunity to have their 'say' on any Club matter. Please support this annual event as any feed-back on the way the club is run is very welcome by the committee. Our Secretary, Bob Garrett, will be issuing the formal notice nearer the time but please note it in your diary.

Finally, a very warm welcome to all of our new member's that have joined us in the past few months, we look forward to seeing more of you and your Seven's in 2024, whatever the activity may be.

Happy Sevenning,

Michael Ward

Monthly Country Pub lunchtime meets 2024

We shall be visiting the following pubs for our first Noggin and Natter meets. You should book direct with the pub concerned if intending to have lunch. This will mean that we may not all be sitting together, but of course anyone can book for any number of people. All meets start at noon, on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Do try to come by Austin Seven if possible, please, and if you have time to notify me that you will be coming, it would be appreciated.

15th February - The Skirrid at Llanvihangel Crucorney 01873 890258

14th March - The Black Swan, Much Dewchurch 01981 540295

11th April - The Royal Oak, Much Marcle 01531 660300

9th May - The Butchers Arms, Woolhope 01432 860281

Do feel free to nominate a pub near you for future meetings.

Kip (01981 550293 and kipcarwaistell@hotmail.com)

Secretary's Corner

It was lovely to see a jolly good club turn-out for the Christmas lunch at the Bunch of Carrots, where most of us enjoyed the delicious carvery. Interestingly, two members opted for fish & chips, which left us wondering if they knew something we didn't. We were of course very concerned when Gerwyn became unwell and was taken to hospital, but mightily relieved to later learn that tests suggested nothing was amiss and it was nothing to do with the carvery. As usual, the prize for greatest distance travelled went to Graham & Janet Baldock, who recently moved even further from Hereford to guarantee they continue to retain this accolade. Our thanks to Michael and Gill for organising another excellent Christmas event.

A number of members thoroughly enjoyed the club visit to 'Martin Prior's Motorworks' in early December, kindly organised by Michael our Chairman. Martin and his son David, generously gave-up several hours of their time to show us around the workshops and describe their many (mostly Austin Seven) projects. Several of us, mostly in Sevens, then sought the local pub for lunch. I will try to forget the car park incident where a 'modern', despite being equipped with a reversing camera, managed to back into my parked Chummy. Thankfully, only a broken rear LED light board.

As usual, the Hereford A7 Club was well represented at the Royal Oak, Much Marcle vintage car gathering on New Year's Day, where mercifully, the rain held off for the entire morning. As usual, there was an extraordinary collection of tasty vintage machinery on show – obviously, enhanced by a huge turn-out of Austin Sevens. Incidentally, I understand one person nominated my car as the one they would most like to take home. Clearly, a delightful and unexpected compliment, but if you know anything about this, you might consider the need to contact Specsavers.

Cold damp weather and reduced daylight hours have mostly kept me out of the workshop lately, but I was delighted to recently acquire, a treasure trove of Austin Seven spares, that included engines, gearboxes, axles, hubs etc and even a good chassis with a V5C. Do please let me know if you are looking for anything – I might be able to help.

Please remember the 2024 Club AGM is planned for 27th February and it would be great to have a full turn-out. More details to follow after the Committee meeting on 23rd January.

Finally, we know things move slowly in Herefordshire but this road sign still surprised me.

Happy motoring Bob Garrett



Special measures--Speedex 750

New member, **David Edwards**, writes:

It is 1968 and I am in Cardiff College of Education following the wing course in Physical Education and a degree in English. I have just bought an Austin 7 Special for £40 from a garage in Matson Gloucestershire. I had learnt to drive and taken my test in my sister's Morris 1000 but the diminutive 1933 Special with its plain engagement gearbox and notional braking was a challenging first motorcar.



David on the day he bought the car

Nevertheless it took me through college up to the point when Essex Education Authority offered me employment, whereby it was replaced by more practical transport that looked less like a prop for a

circus act, and made crossing London on a regular basis less of an expedition.



David's first girlfriend just off to the Sorbonne, Paris, 1968. The girl, not the car.

David perpetually having to adjust the carburettor

There now began a seemingly endless search for storage locations, because I could not part with the Austin. Initially It stayed in my parents' garage until my father sold all my spare parts to a passing scrap dealer, and threatened to do the same with the car unless I took it away. My uncle reluctantly agreed to store the car and chalked the date on the bonnet, giving me a look that made it clear that this was a temporary arrangement !!

Twenty years later In 1991 with the death of this much loved, tolerant uncle, and the clearance of his house, I retrieved the Special from its catacomb at the back of the workshop. I transported it in the rear of a Luton van to my house and garage in Oxfordshire, where I squeezed it in beside a collection of ongoing projects in the form of a TR3 , a MG TD , two Arkleys, and the usual detritus that garages collect. A subsequent house move, and the loss of garage space necessitated relocation of all my automotive responsibilities to not just one but two barns. Yes, the ubiquitous barn storage is still out there.



Jem Marsh of Marcos, in a Speedex



With both the TR and the MG running well, and the MG Arkley specials sold, I thought to turn my attention to that first car. The attraction of owning a prewar car, and the spectre of semi-retirement, nudged me in the direction of another restoration. Lets get it running at least, make it come alive, and justify dragging it around the country for fifty years. It was time for a little research, Austin Seven Clubs, and a visit to the NEC Classic car show, to track these people down was the first route taken. Let's keep it short here— Colin Danks, on duty at the show, and standing next to his exquisite Austin 7 hill

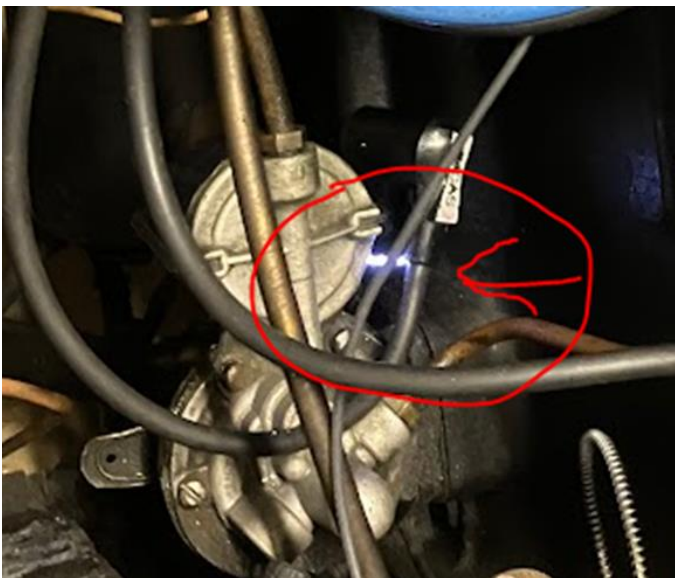
climb special, took pleasure in identifying my car from a photograph as a Speedex 750, the product of the early creativity of Jem Marsh of Marcos cars. My £40 sixties roller skate had provenance, and seemed to justify my irrational inability to part company. The list of parts for such a kit in 1958-62 included, independent front suspension, a steel frame sheathed in aluminium, an alloy high compression head, a cut down radiator and alloy wheels (allegedly the first to be offered as an accessory). The time had come to toddle along to the Austin 7 club in Herefordshire, and drain a little expertise from some holy adherents .

Webmaster Roly Alcock

I continue to regularly update the Events page (<https://www.ha7c.co.uk/events.html>) as and when I receive new information from Pat. I also publish monthly by email a pdf version of the events list to the membership.

Any input from the membership for the website will be gladly received. Particularly if you want to say something interesting about your car, with photos of course.

The TR3A had some grumbles by suddenly running very rough. Fuel was pouring out of the overflow of the rear carb, so I just spluttered the half mile home and picked up the Austin instead. Next day I went to address the fuel issue but still had a dramatic misfire. I then found one plug lead had dropped off and in a very unfriendly manner it was sparking directly to the fuel pump! The battery failed recently, end of life I expect and is replaced with a nice new one. All is good now.



The box saloon decided it was not running at all happily. I cleaned the SU carburettor out and then discovered that the fuel level was far down the main jet. I reset the float level so that fuel now nearly broaches the top of the main jet. Engine runs far more enthusiastically now.

Membership & Financial Reports for Hereford Austin Seven Club dated 2nd January 2024

Julie writes:

Membership..

Thank you to all the Members who diligently renewed their subscriptions within the allotted time frame, that helped me enormously.

Membership currently stands.. at 87 (97). Figures for last year in red for comparison

Of that 87...

- *46 (51)... Paid up Members
- *4 (3)..... Honorary Members
- *34 (39)....Registered family members
- *1 (4)Free member (to pay next October)
- *2 (0) Awaiting payment (both contacted).
- *14 (24) ... Subscribe to the Grey Mag
- *56 (62)....are signed up to receive internet communication, please update your circulation list as required

The Club has lost 13 Members from last year... 7 paid up members, 6 family members

We have gained 2 new paid up Members plus two family Members. There is also another possible Member I am waiting on his completed form.

Financial...

The Club remains in a healthy situation, opening account 1st October '23 was £942, currently Lloyds Account hold £1162 on our behalf.

Expenditure to date £475, this for Federation Subscription, purchase of a Club projector, plus Pin Badge purchase. This will change as the year progresses I have no doubt..

Regalia..



As mentioned above I have a quantity of Club Pin Badges (see below) at £2 each. Everyone that has purchased a badge to date appear pleased with them. Get in touch if you like to reserve one!

I also hold a quantity of windscreen stickers, which every Member is entitled to two free stickers, let know if you have never received yours.

Vintage Sports Car Club New Year's Day Event.

Miraculously, the sun shone for the first time in days, perhaps weeks, on a crisp morning with blue skies. It was one of those events that one wondered how many vehicles would attend as it was 1st January and some revelling may have taking place the night before to see 2024 start! There were well over one hundred vintage vehicles and probably about two to three hundred people on the car park of the Royal Oak at Much Marcle and it was very good to see a great turn-out of the Hereford Austin Seven Club; I am aware of twenty two members present. We are grateful to Barbara and Ray Moses who did a tremendous job of getting everybody from the HA7C parked together, as well as fitting in all the other attendees vehicles.

I was there well over three hours and still did not get to see all the wonderful pre-war machines that arrived. There were eleven three wheeled Morgan's and one of these was owned by an ex A7 owner who I sensed, regretted getting rid of his Nippy. When I went back to the 'Buggy' there were a couple looking at it, both with A7 Centenary badges on. I was delighted to meet Charlie Plain-Jones at long last, rather than on Zoom during the two years of A7CA Centenary meetings. Charlie was instrumental in organising the presence of Austin Seven's at the Prescott day during the Centenary week at Moreton-in-Marsh. He was also the lead in relocating 'The Jack French Garage' to the Atwell Wilson Museum in Wiltshire; well worth a visit.

Unfortunately, I had to get home for some friends that were coming to see us that afternoon, but others took advantage of the reserved lunch that Eddie Loader had organised at the 'Full Pitcher' down the road on the outskirts of Ledbury.

A great start to the year and my thanks to David Southcott for providing the picture above.



Michael Ward

The following are details of an event that is not only for a good cause but a lot of fun. Although it try's to encourage younger drivers as an introduction to Austin Seven's, it is open to everyone.

A7 BACK TO THE TRACK

Will be back again for 2024!

No De Loreans allowed.....

This will be the 10th year that a group of Austin 7 enthusiasts book a day at the Curborough Sprint Course solely for the use of Austin 7s and A7 Specials

– this is **A7s Back to the Track**

Saturday 16th March 2024

Any car with an Austin 7 (or Reliant side valve) engine is eligible.

This is a non-competitive Track Day so MSA licence and Race suites are not required and is open to all, novice and seasoned drivers alike. Passengers are also allowed.

We'd particularly like to encourage younger drivers of all ages to get to know Austin 7s.

The use of the track is 'unlimited' and you get as many runs as you can fit in!

The fee is per car regardless of the number of drivers.

We guarantee you will still not get better track value anywhere else – just ask previous participants!

The Curborough on-site Catering will be providing hot meals and the legendary Bacon and Egg Baps!

Watch Liam & Beth's A7 Adventures – Episode 6 – Curborough

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bCoRPrUcFQ>

Spectating is free so please bring your Austin 7 along to watch the fun.

Entries will be accepted from 2nd January onwards; but do not delay because previous years have been over-subscribed.

Make a note in your diary now and email us for more details

Charlie & Jeanine Plain-Jones

Cplainjonesaustin7@gmail.com



In aid of

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
JOIN US.





This will be the third Hammerwich gathering, only open to veteran, vintage and pre-war post-vintage cars.

It is free to attend but you will need to register by phone, email or through the Facebook Group by scanning the QR Code or searching for 'Hammerwich Pre-war Car Gathering'.



The event will be raising money through voluntary donations to the Burntwood Lions.



Hammerwich Cricket Club
Burntwood Road
Hammerwich
Burntwood
WS7 0JQ

You can contact us by email at klaxonhoard@gmail.com or on 07850 799791



Battery Polarity and how it dictates the correct way the

distributor is wired into the ignition system via the high tension H/T coil. **By Eddie Loader**

Firstly , what is battery polarity ?

Answer : all car batteries have two terminals , these are positive & negative , these can be identified by several ways , physical marks near or on the battery post ie : + positive - negative , or if there are no marks, the larger of the battery posts is always positive, and of course the smaller is negative. To establish polarity , check what terminal connects the battery to the bodywork of the vehicle, this then indicates the battery polarity. So now we come to the history of the Austin 7 battery polarity, the first Austin 7s from 1923 were negative Earth (polarity), this continued until the 6th of Dec 1935 (Chassis No 236310) during the Mk 1 Rubys, when battery polarity changed to positive earth.

The actual reason for this change is lost in the mists of time, several reasons are possible, e.g. to reduce corrosion on the battery terminals, or there is a theory that positive earth reduced chassis corrosion due to galvanic action, anyway the Austin company employed Positive earth well into the 1960's. The idea that it may prevent battery corrosion has some credibility, because the battery terminals on my 1936 A7 Ruby have never necessitated cleaning due to corrosion!

Next we come to how battery polarity dictates the correct wiring connections to the distributor, let's first look at the history of the H/T coil, almost all the coils were manufactured by Lucas in a 6 volt or 12 volt format. To assist with the correct wiring to the distributor the coil connections were marked SW on one side and CB on the other, SW is short for Switch Wire, which connects to the ignition switch, and CB (contact breaker) is the connection wire to the distributor.

This makes it sound really easy to wire the distributor, except for one thing: nearly all Lucas coils were designed for vehicles with a negative earth system, Lucas made a specific coil suitable for later A7s which had changed over to Positive earth.

So if the two types of coils are mixed up, it will result in reduced efficiency output from the H/T coil. In the early 1950s, Lucas changed the coil markings to plus and minus (+ & -), from then on it was easy to establish the correct connections to the distributor, ie : if the battery earth was positive, then the distributor is connected to the positive side of the coil, and if the battery earth is negative the distributor is connected to the negative side of the coil.



An early HT coil, showing the SW and CB connection
Typical early Lucas, 80% of which were for -ve earth



Modern coil, now marked + and -.



The underside of a 1936 A7 positive earth coil. This is from
Eddie's Mk 1 Ruby, and probably 'Type L' indicates +ve earth
The 536 refers to 5th month of 1936.

Mystery Object



Following the interest generated by the previous mystery objects, we invite you to let us know what you think it is! editor@ha7c.co.uk . Our suggestion is later on in this newsletter.

PRIVATE LIVES

Robert Mayow was showing his car at Gloucester Retro, when he was approached by Sam, the director at Stroud Playhouse, to see if she could use his car, in a short film, to be shown during a scene change.

It all started in March 2023 with a lengthy telephone call during which Sam said she would like to see the Austin Tourer.





During the next six months it was a waiting game with two dates for filming postponed, until, on the 17th September, it was on. Filming was going ahead at 7 pm Sunday evening. Robert was parked up outside the Queen's Hotel in Cheltenham at the top of the Promenade, waiting to take part. It did not take long before there was quite a large group of onlookers! Robert had made a request that the actors did not drive his car, and as a result he was given the part of Stunt man, dressed as the main character, to drive his car.

Filming finished that night about 12.30, by which time Robert was very tired, and the film crew followed him home, one car in front, and the other behind, for safety.

Robert agreed with the Playhouse that he would take his car over to the Theatre in Stroud, and park it in the Foyer of the Theatre while the play/film was being shown, so visitors to the Theatre could have a close look at the Austin Tourer used in the production.

On the 8th October he was given tickets to see the play, which he attended with his partner and sister.

Autumn Wander

Please would someone volunteer to organise a route, with pub lunch. Date could be around Sunday 20th October, with a route of about 35 miles. Please contact Michael Ward, or any committee member. Assistance with all aspects can be provided!! **Please help out.**

Drive It Day

Sunday 21 April. Pat Caine and Brian Bedford have kindly agreed to organise.

Please order before 2nd April an optional CHARITY rally badge now from Julie James (treasurer). Price £12.50 or £30 see <https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/>



£12.50

Drive it Day Fundraising Plate - Small

150mm x 75mm - pre-drilled with four holes and two cable ties. All profits to be donated to NSPCC Childline.



£30.00

Platinum Drive it Day Fundraising Plate - Regular

290mm x 145mm - pre-drilled with four holes and two cable ties. All profits to be donated to NSPCC Childline.

Welsh Hill Trial October 14/15th 2023

By Annie and Minna Peake



For enthusiastic triallists, the Welsh Trial is THE must-have weekend in the vintage calendar. Almost impossible to secure an entry, the list is restricted to 115 or so cars, with 15 hills over 2 days, culminating in the 3 final sections at Cwm Whitton.



A quick explanation for those who aren't familiar with a trial. It is untimed, and competitors attempt to climb 15 set routes up muddy sections. Every car will receive a score between 0-25 for each hill, depending on how far they make it. Additional points are given for Stop and Restarts. Each car must carry a bouncer, one for 2 seater A7s, 3 for larger cars, and they also navigate the driver between sections on public roads. Good bouncing gives the car more grip, and in my Chummy, the bouncer just wiggles furiously, hoping the car will keep going forward to a higher score. Trialling is the most fun form of vintage motor sport; it's social and hugely successful within the VSCC.

The Welsh Trial has been run since 1939, and until recently, entrants had to cover 200 miles prior to scrutineering, just to prove that the car was roadworthy and not just a 'special' for mud and hills. Now we cover about 25 miles to one of 3 scrutineering filters, before returning to Presteigne to pick up score cards. (Nevertheless, the reduced mileage felt long, even before the start of 2 days competing).

Cars are divided into categories, and until this autumn, there were over 70 short wheelbased, modified small cars in one class. These were mainly Austin 7s in one form or another. Cars like mine stood no chance of doing well in such a field, but they now single out those who never drop a point, into a new category, termed 'Expert'. Phew.

Getting round the hills by road must be done with an eye on the clock. You can be disqualified if you arrive when the last hill has closed, and whingeing that the queues were too long doesn't cut the mustard. Getting round the sections, as far as I am concerned, requires a degree in orienteering, and we often have to turn round as the map seems to be the wrong way up.....! Another role of the navigator (me this year) is to let the rear tyres down on every hill, if required. 7 psi is the minimum allowed, and it helps to have the rear tyres stuck to the rims with Gorilla Stick. My driver constantly remarked that I was rather slack at this small request. Too busy chatting Mummy. What cheek.



I had been ousted out of my own car again, in favour of Minna Peake, but I wasn't the only parent to give way to her children. Duncan Pittaway's daughter Charlie drove their Austin 7 saloon, Archie Collings (age 17) took the family Bentley, and James Blakeney Edwards (age 15) drove the family

Ulster. Our little group was Austin 7 and kid heavy, which was encouraging, and brothers Simon and Patrick Blakeney Edwards drove a racy Top Hat Saloon. (They seemed definitely over 40). The Collings' Lea Francis, driven by 19 year old Tom Reynolds, completed our party.

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Our group of 6 or 7 just wanted to beat each other, not the entire pack, and above all, to have a laugh, while ruthlessly torturing their (our) cars of course. However, trialling is a fiercely competitive sport, especially if you aim not to drop more than a few points over the weekend. Archie's young bouncers were a bit embarrassed to be seen in a vintage Bentley, so they made a point of nonchalance. We spotted them gawping at 2 open porn magazines in the back seats as the Bentley took its turn, just to show they weren't 'bovered'. This was on a hill where young VSCC members traditionally marshal. (The youth danced to their music in the middle of the field, hangovers everywhere. We noticed and smiled that it was the white haired contingent that actually did the marshalling work, but it didn't matter much, the hill still functioned fine).

The randomly-allocated start hill, on the morning of Saturday and Sunday, is very important, and this time we were lucky. For once, both our start hills were in the Forestry, where conditions are pretty constant, not too dewy or slippery. It was a fine and sunny weekend, and after our early start hill, we could select which section to attempt next. Waiting for a slippery hill to dry out confers a definite advantage, especially on grass. Malcolm and Jenny Lyon's start hill was all but impossible and they paid the price.

Minna appeared to be a fearless driver, and her scorecard for Saturday showed excellent points for most of the hills. The most challenging and exciting of the day for us was Ednol in the Forest. Keep your foot to maximum revs, choose your rut and stay in it, slide your mother into the bracken and overhanging trees, and go for it. Whoa!



We returned to Presteigne on Saturday afternoon to hand in score cards, and drink lots of beer in the high street, everyone exhilarated by their day, although there were some inevitable car failures, and the firing up of a few trailers could be heard faintly in the distance.

Presteigne is pivotal to the success of the weekend and the town generously gives itself over to the VSCC. The petrol station in the middle of town still has attended

service, and the pubs and restaurants were full. The pressure on places to stay is immense for a small town, but Wilkie Collings (former president of the VSCC) offered to find accommodation for anybody needing it. One resident just handed over her house keys to go away that weekend, and Andrew Tarring, the competition secretary was the lucky recipient of the beautiful house by the church for Saturday night. Wilkie also found accommodation for a further 16 young members.

We squeezed into the town's pizza restaurant for supper, and I retired for an early night knowing what was ahead. Archie, and many others stayed drinking in town until about 2 am, and annoyingly managed to be right as rain on Sunday.

Sunday's hills were fairly straightforward, although the new course on Cwmhehope was all mud and wet grass for much of the day, and most people were stranded quite early on. My poor car! So much blue smoke for not enough points achieved. (However, when the results came out, I uncharitably noticed that over half of the Short Wheelbase 'Experts' scored less than our Chummy on this hill. Competitive, moi?)

Our final destination on Sunday was the 3 hills at Cwm Whitton, swarming with spectators and competitors alike. The location is a great end to the weekend, especially with a cup of tea and large slice of cake in hand, having dispensed with the score cards.

Fortuitously I was introduced by Malcom Lyon to Adam Oliver in the tea queue, and he subsequently bought my yellow Chummy. AND it even turned out that all the Austins in our little group (apart from Charlie Pittaway who retired), won a prize. How about that for the Austin 7s? They are the most extraordinary little cars.



It should be pointed out, however that there is a price to be paid for so much fun and whipping the living daylight out of an unsuspecting Austin. My dynamo sheared (only noticed on the final hill thankfully), but it turns out that it is a tricky part to find. Also, due to some shoddy trailer loading by me, the rear light cluster was smashed. Oh dear. Worth it though.

Gareth Prosser and his Life with a Conquest Century TTG 23

Club member Gareth has two Austin 7s, but is more usually found on club runs in his Daimler, as it has more legroom. Here he tells us about his introduction to Daimlers, which was a pure accident. Gareth says....At that time we had a family of two small children, and our Austin 7 Ruby saloon was getting a little too small for the things we wanted to do. It took us everywhere, to the Lake District, up Hard Knot Pass, Pembrokeshire and The Forest of Dean, but it was too small to go camping. I tried towing a trailer, but with only 17 bhp it was a bit of a struggle.

So we needed something bigger. I found an Austin 16 hearse in a local scrap yard, this was just the job, but the owner wanted too much money, and some of the engine was missing. I told my mother about our possible new car. She replied that she would not be seen dead in that!

The next find was a Citroen DS 21, but the mechanics frightened me off, [*Shame, Ed*] and it was a lot of money.

One day I visited another local scrap yard for some Morris 1000 brake bits for my other Austin, this was a Special, and I saw a strange radiator grill belonging to a large saloon in the dead car compound. We paid £210.00 for it as a non-runner, on condition it was delivered. This was paid for by Ursula's first month's salary on her return to work at Kingstone High School.

So, on the 10th December 1978 we officially owned a 1956 Daimler Conquest Century. A steep learning curve had started. Having played with cars for many years I had some idea of how they worked, so the first job was to get it running. I discovered that some of the valve push rods were bent. So I straightened them with a mallet, and the engine ran, after a fashion. The next thing to do was to find out more about these strange cars, so I joined the Daimler and



Lanchester Owners Club. This gave me contact with Masons and a Mr. Boyd-Carpenter. These two supplied me with some of my wants, the latter would reply with letters written in green ink, if everything was OK. I did have a red ink letter on one occasion, and have kept it as a memento.

Also, at that time, the DLOC stores was a valuable source of spares and advice from Alan Jones, who was the club storeman. The car came back on the road in 1981, after a body-off restoration. The chassis was in the garage, and the body was outside on trestles. Welding of the body took all of the winter of 1979/80; I have avoided any outside work in winter since then!

Now that we had a larger car we could go anywhere on holidays. Our usual trips were to France, (mainly Brittany), Holland and Belgium. The car attracted a lot of attention from French drivers- my lack of French was not a help, but Ursula helped in making up an info sheet for me. Once on a visit to Bruges, I noticed that a large truck was following us. We were looking for a parking place, but he kept following. When we finally found some street parking the truck stopped, and the driver came over to speak to me. "I've got one of these" were his first words! When we were later returning to the car, we saw two people looking at the car, obviously wondering what it was. As we got nearer to them, we were overtaken by a young man who addressed us all with "Es ist ein Englischer Daimler". On another occasion we were parked in a supermarket car park in France. Ursula and the children were shopping, so I sat in the car minding my own business, when I spotted a little man with a beard wearing a beret, looking towards the car. He started to walk over to me; I thought I'm on my own now with my French. He started to speak, but it was not French, and it certainly was not English, it was Welsh! He had spotted the Glamorganshire registration number, and he came from Swansea!

By the early 90's our children were nearing University age, their choices were Durham and UCL. I did a number of trips to Durham, costly in petrol and time, so we decided to get a modern car with longer legs, so the everyday use of TTG came to an end.

She now does local shows , DLOC rallies etc, and has been back to Holland and Belgium twice. She won a workhorse prize at the rally at Tatton Park, in 1982, which was quite a surprise. I think the judges were keen to keep a new member!

We still have the two Austin 7s, and then there are the other two Daimlers, a Consort and the Majestic Major. The Major is in a class of its own! The restoration of the Consort, with its 2.5L ohv engine, and pre-select gearbox is another story!

HA7 Club's 15th birthday picnic

We hope to celebrate the 15th anniversary with a club picnic in the summer. Watch this space! Probably Sunday 7th July by the River Wye.

Prior's Motor Works

Frank Sibly

The Club visited the works of Martin Prior and son (David), at Withington. Martin started out constructing garden sheds, but handmade sheds began to be undercut by mass production, so he moved into working with heritage railways, making carriages and signalboxes etc. This was heavy work, and in 2014 he started making up ash frames and parts for A7s. Martin's interest in A7s started when he and his brother bought an A7 each as teenagers, from our very own Eddie Loader.

The Ed was not sure how much wooden framing is involved in the A7 variants, and Martin tells me that ALL

A7s had ash framing in the bodywork. Prior to the introduction of steel bodies in 1930, the wooden frame was structurally essential, and remained so for vans, sports and tourer models. The various forms of box saloons and Rubies had considerably more robust welded steel bodies, but still relied on timber frames to maintain their rigidity- much more than merely fixing points for trim. Curiously with the RN box and the Mk 1 Ruby, there were forays into using pressed steel more extensively, but subsequent models reverted to more traditional ash-framed construction; indeed the very last A7, the Mk2 Ruby, has a greater quantity and complexity of woodwork than any other model.

Bodies built by outside coachbuilders varied considerably in methods of construction. Of the principal firms, Swallow built several thousand very robust, (and heavy!) bodies, with a great deal of solid ash, including the floors, and aluminium panelling; on the other hand, the other large-scale manufacturer, Gordon England, built their bodies from very thin plywood, with minimal solid timber and the whole lot covered in fabric. The relative survival rates of these two companies' products tells the tale! Numerous other coachbuilders built bodies in smaller numbers, and with a variety of specifications, but most relied on conventional ash framing. Very few A7 bodies were built by any of these companies after about 1933/4.



Martin constructs curved components out of thin strips of Ash, that are glued together with resin, rather than using a steaming technique. In the workshop was a Swallow Ulster, with a boat tail. This boat tail was reconstructed out of several pieces of shaped meta welded together. The original had completely rotted, but was intact, and could be measured in 3D by sensors fed into a computer, and a buck was then formed using a CAM technique. Metal sheets were cut and welded, resulting in the egg-shaped tail. This is re-inforced internally with a bulkhead, and the internal space is accessed by tilting the seatback forwards.

David Prior with Swallow Ulster, heritage railway signalbox in background.



An SS Mk2 was being restored. This was based on a Standard 12, with a 1200cc engine. It looked magnificent, but apparently is not particularly fast. It had spent about 20 years in the open on a scrap heap before someone realised what it was. It has a solid roof, with vinyl externally, and a dummy mechanism on the rear pillars to look as though it has a fold down hood.

Henry, Martin's grandson, who is 12 years old, keeps his Ruby there, which has been much in the press recently.

There is a lot of interest in Ash framed vans, to be attached to derelict A7s. They make good transport when going to a show, especially as very few people actually travel with more than one passenger anyway. A van also has large body panels that can be used for advertising. The van bodies are made to order.



Other more common parts are made in batches, ready to supply customers.

I asked Michael Ward how much wood framework he came across in his Opal restoration. There were the two door frames, and the boot space had some frame work, together with the part where the hood attaches. Michael did all of that in well-seasoned Ash. The Morgan is still built on the same principle, with a steel chassis, ash framework supporting aluminium panels. Ash is used because it grows straight, with very few knots, and is easy to work with. Wood is lighter than a steel framed car.

The Committee and Club would like to express their sincere thanks to Martin and David for a very informative visit.

Mystery Object

We think this is the securing bolt for the bonnet stay on Mk1& Mk2 Rubies. But please get in touch with any other ideas! editor@HA7C.co.uk

Insurance for Young Drivers

ERS' standard underwriting guidelines for the A7CA members who insure via the RH/A&CA scheme:

- * Standard Minimum age (solo driving) is 21
 - *Minimum 1 year driving experience full UK licence
 - *Must be claim/conviction free
 - *Must have their own everyday vehicle and usage will be social, domestic and pleasure (no commuting)
 - *Drivers 17 - 20 - Warranted Accompanied driving (ie not allowed to drive solo) - to be added to an existing client's policy as a named 'Warrented Accompanied' driver via endorsement. SDP usage only.
- Young driver excesses are as per policy wording.

Emma has been working with myself and a couple of other members to add our children to our policies as solo drivers from the age of 19 years old, this is on a case by case basis and cannot be guaranteed, also an additional premium may be required. So far, I am aware of 2 Young drivers that have been lucky enough to be granted this privilege, and I would suggest contacting myself before trying to sort it.

I must just point out that following conversations with Ruairidh Dunford, we would expect the young driver and their parents to act in a very responsible manor and not make minor claims, for example, if a bit of paint got scraped on a wing.

TAIL LIGHTS



This picture is thought to be of Annie and Eddie in their first car

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rosemary Lillico (a founder member of the HA7C) wrote to me, wishing all members of the Club a Happy Christmas.

She no longer owns a Seven, but her Dad did, (UY 6426), and when she looks back on her childhood, the Seven brought back many happy memories, including driving all the way to London from Preston Wynne for the Festival of Britain in 1951, and also of driving round the fields at home with her little brother.

She likes reading the Crankhandle, and she comments that the article in the last issue about cider making brought back one memory that would be best forgotten. She would have been 12 or 13 at the time, and along with her family, lived in a cottage over the fields at Preston Wynne, owned by Mr Ken Ford. She was attending Withington School, and it was her habit to leave her bike in the cider mill, and walk over the fields to her cottage, (Dad also would leave the Seven close by).

Arriving at the cider mill one day after school, she couldn't put her bike in the mill as there were a couple of farm workers leading a huge horse round the apple crushing wheel, making cider. Curiosity made her watch, and she told them that she usually left her bike in the mill, and they told her to come back later.

Some time later, when she judged they would have knocked off for the day, she went back to the cider mill with her little brother tagging along (Mam and Dad did not get home from work, in the Seven, 'til about 6.30pm). Arriving at the cider mill, she found it empty, but inside were several buckets filled with liquid,

which she thought was cider. She, and her brother, couldn't resist the temptation, and had their fill, tasting the different buckets, and then she put her bike away and went home.

No-one would be any the wiser, but later on she and her brother began to have terrible stomach pains and were sick all night. Mam was so worried she didn't go into work the next day, and gave her a good telling off. That put her off cider for life, even though what they had been drinking was, of course, apple juice rather than cider itself.

Jon Edgar (jonedgar@btinternet.com) who lived in Goodrich prior to 2007, but now is in W Sussex writes:

Could you let the HA7C know about my website <https://ulster7.wordpress.com> which is an archive, or register, of the **A7 sports 1927-1932**. Anyone can post an article in it. Even old logbooks, or numbered engine remains, may help identify clusters of the cars which were in the lost A7, B1, B4 and B5 ledgers. "Ownership not necessary to be known, or to be promoted"...

Comment on the November mystery object! That wooden object looks suspiciously the same as the wooden end for retaining the leather cover for the carden joint on older cars too - most lost as they get replaced for plastic ones. I can see the scale may be different though.



Mick Hobday. mihobday@btinternet.com writes:

I feel I should correct the identification of the Mystery Object.

It is in fact Part No. BP54, "Packing Piece for Leather Universal Joint Cover". It is grooved to take the "clamping clip" (Part BP55 and the predecessor of the jubilee similar clip). I have one on my 1925 Chummy. If used as a pulley I would expect it to part company with the propshaft the instant that the car is driven! It was shown in the Lists of Spare Parts until 1933 when the leather cone was shown to be replaced by a modern style rubber cover which was designed to be clamped directly to the propshaft. The spares lists were often very slow to be updated so the actual change from leather cone to rubber boot may have been any time between 1925 and 1933 - I would make a wild guess at about 1929.

Eddie comments: Thank you for the feedback on my mystery object, yes the above is correct. It was thought to be a split wooden pulley fitted to the very early Austin 7 drive shaft to the rear wheels which drove the speedo via a flat belt. However, I was unsure what the object actually was, so I thought I would throw it into the melting pot of knowledge of our club membership: it did cause some interest and speculation!

Tim Braby from Australia (timbraby108@gmail.com) writes:

What a delightful and epic read! I loved the Cider Press and its 1 horsepower "engine"! Mum told me her father used to say "Oi come from Devon, where the Cider Apples grow!" He was born near Killmington in Devon, and he was 6 when his family sailed from Plymouth to Sydney on the "Tartar" in 1857.

My friend Peter with the Doctors Coupe lives up at Gympie, two hours north of Brisbane, the Gold Coast is 1 hour south of Brisbane, but that is ok!

FOR SALE

1937 Austin 7 Opal Tourer

Bodywork and chassis in good condition, engine runs well. Some minor work needed. More pictures can be provided.
Rob Price 07713777905
rob.price1967@gmail.com

£6,000 ovno.



Pratt and Whitney Lathe, flat belt drive



Lathe for sale: motor on right. Rob.w-m@hotmail.com 07807 025 725 Near Staunton, Glos
Robert Mayow. £120

Available Club Regalia

Please ask the Treasurer to send you any of these items:

Windscreen Stickers £ 2.00



Sew on Embroidered badge £5.00 (Previously £10)



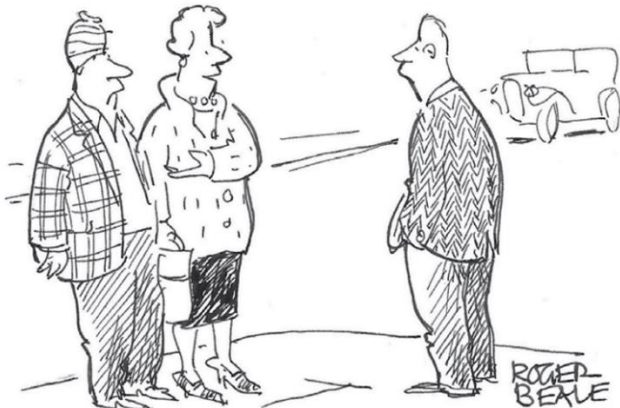
Badges available at most monthly meetings. There are limited stocks.

Brass Bonnet Badge £20

Specially made for us!



HE SLIPPED INTO HIS AFTERNOON NAP WHILE GREASING THE PROPSHAFT AND SAT UP TOO QUICKLY WHEN I CALLED HIS SMARTPHONE







Austin 7 Club Association





Meeting on 9th January, attended by Roly:

Paul Lawrence the A7CA secretary, asked clubs to:

- 1) Help find someone to carry out an Independent Examination of the Association **Finances**. It may be that your club Treasurer is willing to volunteer to assist with this or there is someone else in your club with accounting knowledge and experience who is willing to help.
- 2) Help find volunteers with experience in Scanning, Archiving and Indexing to join a working party led by Howard Wright, the Magazine Editor. This is for **digitising all the Grey Mags** since the first issue. This archive will be searchable.
- 3) Encourage people to supply Steve Earl, our newly appointed Publicity Officer, with Austin Seven content for our new **YouTube** Channel

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Events co-ordinator	Pat Caine/ Jan Haywood 07966 387 815 events@ha7c.co.uk	

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HA7C website

<https://www.ha7c.co.uk>

Herefordshire Austin Sevens Forum

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/357904524672062>

Some other useful resources on the Internet

Austin Seven Friends

<http://www.austinsevenfriends.co.uk/>

Austin Seven Clubs Association

<https://www.facebook.com/thea7ca/>

The Federation of British Historical Vehicle Clubs

<http://www.fbhvc.co.uk/>

Austin Seven Group on FB

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8069487412>

Cornwall Austin Seven Club

<http://www.austin7.org/>

Bristol Austin Seven Club

<http://www.ba7c.org/>

Dorset Austin Seven Club

<http://www.da7c.co.uk/>

South Wales Austin Seven Club

<http://southwalesaustinsevenclub.com/>

Red Cross Directory of Parts, Products and Services

<http://oldcarservices.co.uk/>

Please note that the views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Editor or the Hereford Austin Seven Club. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of technical advice and information, the Club and its officers accept no liability for loss, damage or injury from persons acting upon the advice or information given in this publication.

Hereford Austin Seven Club

Draft Minutes V2 of the Committee Meeting – 23rd January 2024 at the Pilgrim Hotel

1 Those present:

Michael Ward - Chairman
Ron Sadler – Committee Member
Julie James – Treasurer & Membership Sec

Frank Sibly – Newsletter Editor
Eddie Loader – Technical Advisor
Bob Garrett – Secretary and Dep' Chairman

Apologies – Pat Caine & Jan Haywood – Events coordinators and Roly Alcock – Webmaster

2 Minutes of previous meeting - held on 12th September 2023

The Committee unanimously approved Version 2 of the previous Minutes incorporating all comments received as circulated prior to the meeting. A 'hard' copy of the approved Minutes was signed by Michael (Chairman) as a true record for the Secretary to keep on file.

3 Matters arising –

The Secretary ran through the fifteen actions contained in the previous Minutes and it was unanimously agreed that they had either been completed or were covered by this meeting's agenda

4 Chairman & Secretary –

Chairman: Michael pointed-out that 2024 was the fifteenth year of the Hereford A7 Club's existence and wondered if this milestone should be marked by an event of some kind. After some discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the Secretary would arrange a 'Fifteenth year A7 Summer Picnic' on Sunday 7th July, near the Hole in the Wall (near How Caple) with views over the River Wye. As an act of courtesy, Michael agreed to check with the landowner that this would be OK and offer a charitable donation for its use.

Secretary: The Secretary referred to a recent suggestion by Ron that non-committee members with bank signing powers should only be used in emergency situations. After some discussion it was unanimously agreed that this should be formally incorporated into the Club's Constitution. It was further agreed that this matter was not urgent because it was already normal practice.

5 Finance and membership – Prior to the meeting, Julie kindly circulated a number of papers relating to Accounts and Membership.

a) Finance –

- Julie and the Secretary had on consideration, agreed to postpone indefinitely, the application for a Bank Card and this was unanimously supported by the meeting. It was also agreed that the corresponding changes to the Constitution would be withheld for the time being
- Julie clarified a number of figures in her 2022/23 Accounts
- Julie's 2022/23 accounts were unanimously agreed and satisfactory to present at the forthcoming AGM
- Julie reported that the Club currently has £1,206 in the Bank

b) Membership –

- Julie reported that following the Autumn 2023 membership renewal, we lost 10 and gained two. So, currently we have 52 Primary Memberships that include 4 Honorary Members. We also have 14 Grey Mag' subscribers
- Julie reminded the meeting that she very much preferred members not to renew their membership before the 1st October
- The Committee was keen to ensure that former members who have not renewed their membership, should no-longer receive club information or copies of *Crankhandle* unless specifically authorised by the Committee
- The Committee expressed its thanks to Julie for repeatedly chasing members (beyond the call of duty) for renewals.

The Meeting thanked Julie for her excellent work.

6 Events – Pat & Jan were unable to attend the meeting but pre-circulated their latest Events Schedule (via Roly) before the meeting. In addition, Michael had recently spoken to Pat who had agreed to organise our 'Drive-it-Day' outing on Sunday 21st April in collaboration with Brian Bedford.

The meeting also noted the following club events:

- 30th January (Club night at the Richmond Club) – Talk by Mike Smith on 'Timber framed buildings'
- 7th July – Club's 15th Anniversary Summer Picnic – to be organised by the Secretary
- 4th August 2024 – The Chairman's run
- 20th October – Autumn Amble. The club is looking for a volunteer to organise this run

7 Newsletter –

Frank reminded the meeting that he is always on the lookout for material to include in the newsletter and Eddie said he would ensure there was at least one technical article for each issue.

The meeting undertook to provide a quick turnaround of comments on Draft V1 of these Minutes to enable the Secretary to let Frank have a version in-time for him to include in the January *Crankhandle*.

8 Technical Advisor's matters –

Eddie reported that no 'Shed nights' had yet been arranged for 2024 but after some discussion it was unanimously agreed that he would arrange three: Spring, Summer and Autumn 'Shed Nights', all at Frank and Sue's farm. Eddie agreed to speak to Frank and circulate dates and topics as soon as possible.

9 Webmaster's Report –

Roly was unable to attend the meeting but pre-circulated the following:

- The website is fairly healthily accessed, getting between 50 to 80 visits a week and has between 10 to 30 downloads of newsletters and technical articles
- I don't believe there have been any recent issues with the website
- Regular updates of the Events page happen as and when I am furnished with fresh data
- Any suggestions for the website will be very happily taken by me
- Distribution of the Grey Mag continues. Currently 14 copies are being distributed and 16 ordered
- The email accounts continue to be backed up, as is the web site
- I continue to help out with technical issues as and when they arise

The meeting unanimously noted Roly's submissions and agreed his actions.

10 Approaches to 6th Forms –

Michael reported that he has been in-touch with Monmouth Comprehensive and the John Kyrle school in Ross and sent reminders. However, no response to date. He remains on-the-case.

Ron had nothing to report on his approach to Hereford University.

11 Club regalia –

- Julie reported that after ordering 50 lapel badges, 28 had been sold at £2.00 each making a profit for the club of 50p for each badge sold
- Ron handed 8 drilled brass car badges and centres to Michael, to fix together
- Car badges cost £15 each and centres £3 each, total £18 per item. So, it was unanimously agreed to sell them at £20 each
- Julie reminded the meeting that she still had plenty of windscreen stickers at £2 each

12 A7CA Update –

Roly attended the A7CA Meeting on 9th January and provided a report which is going in the Crankhandle:

Paul Lawrence the A7CA secretary, asked clubs to:

1) Help find someone to carry out an Independent Examination of the Association Finances. It may be that your club Treasurer is willing to volunteer to assist with this or there is someone else in your club with accounting knowledge and experience who is willing to help.

2) Help find volunteers with experience in Scanning, Archiving and Indexing to join a working party led by Howard Wright, the Magazine Editor. This is for digitising all the Grey Mags since the first issue. This archive will be searchable.

3) Encourage people to supply Steve Earl, our newly appointed Publicity Officer, with Austin Seven content for our new YouTube Channel

13 AGM – It was unanimously confirmed that the 2024 AGM would be held on the 27th February Club night and after some discussion, a clear majority decided that it would be held at the Richmond Club.

The Secretary circulated a Draft Agenda for the AGM which was unanimously agreed.

The only club award – the ‘Richard Youard Trophy’ for a substantial (non-committee) contribution to the Hereford club - was discussed and it was unanimously decided to:

- Retain the trophy name
- Bring the decision of who should be the recipient, back to the Committee (this follows the repeated poor response from the membership during the last five years)
- Make the 2022-23 Award to ?????? (the name will be revealed at the AGM)

Frank suggested that in future, the award of ‘life honorary membership’ should become the preserve of the Committee. After considerable discussion, this was unanimously agreed and the Secretary asked to update the Constitution in due course.

Michael enquired which members of the Committee would be happy to continue in post beyond the February AGM and all except Ron (who proposes to step down) said they would be happy to continue if elected. Roly and Pat/Jan to please contact Michael asap. It was noted that Julie wishes to step-down in two years at the 2026 AGM.

14 AOB –

- Eddie enquired whether the club had thanked Martin Prior for hosting our very enjoyable recent visit. Michael explained that he had indeed formally thanked Martin on behalf of the club
- Some uncertainty was expressed regarding Ron’s email address and he confirmed it was rsadler6@aol.com

13 Next meeting – Tuesday 21st May 2024 KO 12.00 Noon at the Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at around 3.15pm.

Summary of agreed Actions arising from the meeting -

1. BG – Arrange ‘Fifteenth year A7 Summer Picnic’ near the Hole in the Wall on 7th July
2. MW – Check above OK with land owner
3. BG – Prepare draft Constitution updates. Non-committee signatory only in emergencies and the award of ‘life honorary membership’ to become the preserve of the Committee
4. PC & BB to organise Drive it Day outing on 21st April
5. MW – Organise Chairman’s Run on 4th August
6. EL – Liaise with Frank and organise 3 Shed Nights
7. MW – Continue 6th Form contacts
8. MW – Complete car badges
9. BG – Speak to Derek re ‘Richard Youard trophy’ for AGM
10. RA & PC/JH – Let Chairman know if they are happy to continue in-post beyond 2024 AGM

Peking to Paris 2011

CHAPTER SIX POLAND AND HOME Kip and Carmen Waistell

Thursday 30th June

Had a superb breakfast. Scrambled egg, then huge plates of cheese, salad and cold meats (we sent one back as we could not manage it) ...followed by trifle, jam and two types of bread. All for just thirty pounds. Set off by 8. It started raining pretty soon afterwards, and at one stage it was so heavy that we had to stop under a bridge for a while as we just could not see where we were going. We visited an former salt mine near Cracow, and spent two hours being shown round by a dreary female guide who made even interesting things rather boring. Main point of interest was a cathedral carved out of salt, where regular services are still held. Then on to **Auschwitz**, a former Polish army barracks, and **Birkenau**, a purpose-made huge death camp killing 5,000 Jews a day, where we stood on the **siding** where mothers, fathers and children were separated, before being sent off to the gas chambers, made us feel rather glum. The Israeli armed forces were holding a remembrance service which we watched for a while.

Another excellent room tonight- the size of at least four Ibis rooms, with a magnificent bathroom: £32 including breakfast. Prices in Ukraine and Poland for hotels and meals were very reasonable, whereas that price in Russia would not necessarily get you anything much.



En route to Auschwitz today we saw a sign for a garage, so pulled off the road and came to a very modern garage, where the people looked pretty clueless, and when we went into the

service area we were just ignored- so we departed. It was probably one of those up to date "throw it away and chuck in a new part" places, which would have been hopeless for us anyway.



Then we saw a sign for another garage, and entered a scruffy industrial estate where there was a British registered car in a small workshop. The owner was a Pole, Daniel, working in Northampton for Weetabix in their logistics department, and he was home visiting

family. We explained the problem with Myrtle's prop shaft, and he explained it all to the mechanic, who went under Myrtle then said that yes, there was a problem, but it was not that bad and we should be able to get home. "Oh dear", I thought, but then he went under Kotka, and after a moment came out saying he could now see how to fix the problem. Ten minutes later it was all done, and when we tried to pay him, he literally ran off, saying under no circumstances would he accept anything! We were once again very lucky, finding someone who could speak English to explain our problem. I think Myrtle needed some sort of adjustment on the bracket holding the rear of the prop shaft.

110 miles, breaking the 6,000 mile barrier at 6,199

Friday 1st July

The first day that Poland charged people to use motorways, but it was very cheap- just 8 zlotis each for a permit- a very few pounds. Half an hour after setting out, we were into heavy rain and wind, which we put up with for two hours before pulling into a service area and putting up Myrtle's hood. That enabled me to put the bag on the back of Kotka onto the back of Myrtle's tonneau, then I could put up half of Kotka's tonneau. Kept on raining till 12.30, then shortly afterwards we stopped for lunch.

The rain, though not too heavy, was awful because of heavy traffic. Not only did we have to put up with the rain, but its volume was doubled by spray from vehicles, and the noise of those vehicles whooshing through the wet was so loud we could not hear poor little Kotka and Myrtle's engines at all.

As we entered Germany, very very few people hooted us, and a bit disconcerting to be passed by people doing 100 + mph, so we had to be extremely careful if we ever changed lanes.

Entry into real civilisation means paying for it! Our room tonight cost £60, and was nothing special, with no breakfast included.

305 miles today, and done easily on excellent roads: 6,504 total

Petrol Prices-

China 68p a litre

Mongolia 72p

Russia 62p

Ukraine 70p

Poland 88p

Germany- more or less same as England

Saturday 2nd July

Very cold, foul wind and drizzle, as we departed for **Colditz**. We entered the town and I missed the castle, expecting to see a gaunt, grey pile...but it was quite the opposite. The whole thing has been given a make-over, and is painted a pale cream with darker cream



highlighting, and extremely large. We arrived a little before official opening hours to find that there were no guides available as they were having a special event at the castle. No entry fee therefore either, but unfortunately a good deal of the building was not open as a result.

I have to say I was rather disappointed- absolutely nothing like I expected it to be, and we were unable to see more than perhaps 5% of the whole interior.

We had now arrived in wind farm country. They were everywhere, and we must have passed hundreds today. They do disfigure the countryside horribly. I always wonder why we cannot bore down those few miles to the molten core of our planet, which is only what, twenty miles down? Even a mile or so down there is heat- absolutely unlimited, and surely available at minimal cost compared with machines that depend on the fickleness of wind? We also saw

a few huge banks of solar panels. Clearly Germany takes alternative energy far more seriously than we do.

A lot of ups and down today as we passed through hilly country, the Eifel I think, and by lunchtime the rain had stopped at last.

Another expensive night spent in a sort of Burger Bar complex, at £63, and yes, a super room, but we had to pay for it. The meal cost £25, whereas the same meal in Poland and the Ukraine would have cost about £7.

There are motorways all over the place, and road signs not particularly helpful or clear. Luckily our Tom-Tom Sat Nav had started to work, though trying to see the picture was difficult with any sunlight shining on it! I could just about hear the lady though. Petrol stations few and far between- not what we expected in Germany. Looked forward to getting out of Deutschland.

247 miles, 6,751 total

Sunday 3rd July

Carmen was getting upset by it all. The weather had been foul since Kiev and it was really affecting her. She did not like the heavy traffic either. I could only make reassuring noises, give her a hug, and say we were nearly "there".

The morning started dull, misty and windy, but after passing Koblenz- SUN!!! On through wooded hills, with gorgeous green valleys inbetween, and vineyards. Crossed the Moselle at Trier in warm sunshine, and felt much better. Quickly passed through Luxembourg, clipped Belgium and the beautiful Ardennes, then into France to find the bar at Montmedy where we had had our first "pression" in 2007. It was closed! But no worry, we were just a bit early, and fifteen minutes later we were greeted by the lady proprietor. The local hotel was shut, being a Sunday (??!!) so we had to go on a further twenty miles to the next town, where we saw a hotel with the front door open and a lady sitting outside. We parked, went over, and were told "the hotel is closed as it is a weekend". What logic! However, we chatted a while and the lady said she would ring the owner to see if we could stay after all, and in the end we did stay, and had the whole building literally to ourselves.

270 miles, 7,021 total.

Monday 4th July

Set off at 7.45, and it was a lovely day for a change. Beautiful hilly wooded countryside, stone villages.

Came out of the woodland and into rolling corn fields, where you could see for miles. A hare dashed out in front of me, reared up on its hind legs to have a good look at Kotka, and bounded off into the fields.

Even though we were now in Champagne, there were very few vineyards to be seen, but we did see large fields of white poppies- opium?

Bought a bottle of champagne near Rheims, then on to Paris, getting rather snarled up in heavy traffic as we approached the centre. Of course, there is the French equivalent of the Highway Code, but in Paris it does not apply, and everyone is for himself. It was very difficult to change lanes, especially in old cars, but on one occasion I did notice a gap, indicated and started to pull over as we needed to turn off. A French taxi driver in that lane decided he wasn't going to let me in so accelerated, and when I kept going he did not like it at all. He pulled alongside and there was a bit of a slanging match for a while. I think the word "crapaud" was mentioned!

Thank goodness we had the Tom-Tom, though as it was very, very difficult either to see the screen or to hear what the nice lady was saying. Because I was having to clutch the Tom-Tom as well as steer and change gear, I sometimes touched the screen accidentally, so it would go blank, and I would have to stop and re-enter the details. Then the screen decided to change to a different format altogether, but we were just about in Place Vendome, so it did not matter.

Entered **Place Vendome**, where Marcus was there to greet us, and we finished off the bottle with a bit of help from the two cars, each of whom had some bubbly poured into the radiator.

Left Paris and made for Breuillet to stay with Marcus and family for a couple of days



175 miles, 7,196 total

Wednesday 6th July

The forecast was for more rain, but the sun was shining, albeit accompanied by a nasty cross wind.

One of Kotka's plugs packed up within minutes, then we were stuck behind three trainee army lorries for many miles, crawling along at a snail's pace. As the lorries kept nose to tail, no-one could pass.

There seems to be much more deliberate bloody-mindedness in "civilisation" than in anywhere east of Germany.

Stopped for a bite to eat in the market square of Verneuil, where Prince Henry saw off the French before becoming King of England and trouncing them again at Agincourt. There is this peculiar idea in some French restaurants that no matter how much space there is, as diners come in, they are placed in the same area of the restaurant, and preferably at tables within a foot or two of each other. Every word you say can be heard by someone at the next table, and vice-versa. So it was with us.

We arrived at "our" bar in Falaise at 6, to be greeted by some friends, then to our house wondering whether we would be met with a mess or a tidy garden, luckily the latter. So it seems that we have at last found a gardener both honest and useful. We have had six attempts to date, so it is about time!

135 miles, 7,331 total

Stayed at the house the next day to see the Tour de France pass through Falaise. The publicity train took just under an hour to pass, and that was quite amusing and fun. The first two Tour riders I missed as they came past so quickly, then I started to take photos of the peloton, which was gone by in an instant. How these riders keep up the energy for three weeks amazes me. None of them look that tough, but inside those small bodies there is all that power.

Friday 8th July

Set off at 6.20 pm in usual wind and drizzle, arriving at the port at 7.15, and had a reasonable meal before boarding at 10.30pm. We were off the boat by 6.45am next morning, and heading for Hereford, via Ledbury, where we stopped for a coffee, then to The Royal Oak at Much Marcle to meet a few friends, then home.

Total mileage 7,557 at an average mpg of 37, average daily time on the road 11 hours. Both very pleased to get back. It had been very, very tiring, but just as much an achievement as last time. So interesting to see how different nationalities behave towards you, and how very helpful and kind they could be...the ones with the least being the best! There is no doubt that having two such small cars made an impact totally different from what we would have made had we been in something like the Lagonda. One cannot be but friendly to a baby in a pram, and to my mind when you are in an Austin Seven, you become the baby!

It was very disappointing not to have conquered the western Gobi and the Crimea, but I am positive that the right decision was made to avoid these areas, and that had we tackled the first, two little cars would have ended up abandoned in the desert. It is also very clear that

certain things on the Austin are weak points, so if we are to make any further trips, these have to be addressed. We need:

(a) a way to avoid oil getting past rear hub seals onto brakes

(b) a way to stop the prop shaft breaking up under rough conditions

(c) standard greasers on all greasing points, and a really reliable grease gun.

(d) a way to eradicate oil leaks round the engine. I know everyone says this is impossible! Having oil everywhere may preserve your chassis, but it makes general maintenance hell, and of course that much more oil has to be carried, adding to the weight.

(e) reliable starters.

The Austins are terrific cars, with just these points needing attention in order to make them first class adventure cars. Well done Kotka and Myrtle, well done Carmen! Final total raised for Smile Train was £12,000...so hopefully 80 children's lives transformed.