



Founded 2009

# The Crankhandle

Nov 2024

Issue 89

**NEWSLETTER OF THE HEREFORD AUSTIN SEVEN CLUB**



***Our technical advisor road-tests his amphibious version of an A7***

## Chairman's View

I hope that you have enjoyed at least one of the club activities since the last edition of 'Crankhandle'. Despite the gloomy and sometimes wet Autumn weather, we have still managed to use our 1930's cars regularly (see Bob Garrett's report below).

Kip Waistell's lunch-time meet in the picturesque village of Pembridge was well attended and very enjoyable. Then there was Pat Caine's Bowling evening at Leominster which included a steak meal for the sixteen or so members. Shed Night at Sue and Frank Sibly's farm was also well attended, and members were provided with an insight into Austin Seven Electrics by Eddie Loader. Finally, we had a most interesting talk given by Tim Bradley on 'Historic 750 formula Racing' at our last Club meeting which was illuminating to what is involved in competing in such a sport. Well done to all those folk for providing us with some great opportunities.

Looking forward, our last Club meeting of the year on **26<sup>th</sup> November** is being made special by the inclusion of '**Skittles and Nibbles**'. The Richmond Place Club management have very kindly gifted the Skittle Alley for the evening and you are invited to bring along something savoury or sweet to help the evening along.

Our **Annual Meal** at the Bunch of Carrots on **Sun 1<sup>st</sup> December** is the time to wash the Austin Seven grease from your hands and enjoy a sumptuous carvery in delightful company.

Finally, we have a lunch-time meet on **Thurs 12th December** at midday at the **Cottage of Content** at Carey, HR2 6NG, about 4 miles SE of Hereford. 01432 840242. Tell Kip if you want to go.

Details of all the remaining events and some into 2025, can be viewed on the website.

**May I wish you all, an enjoyable festive season and a wonderful Austin Seven New Year.**

Happy Sevensing, Michael Ward.

## Secretary's Corner

I very much enjoyed Tim Bradley's talk at the October Club Night about his first 750 race. It seems 750 racing has become quite expensive and a good deal more complicated in recent times. Nevertheless, he left us all admiring his bravery and enthusiasm. Thank you Tim for sharing this extremely interesting experience.

Unfortunately, it rained on the morning of the Autumn Amble, causing many of the confirmed fourteen cars to withdraw. Happily, most let me know they were unable to attend but several members simply failed to turn-up. In future, it would be helpful if everyone who finds they cannot attend a run, lets the organiser know – this would avoid mucking-up the lunch arrangements.

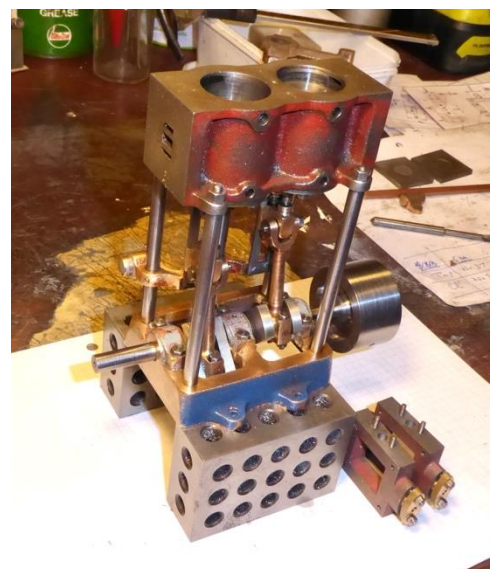
Nevertheless, nine cars enjoyed a run of just over an hour in gradually improving weather - along some of Herefordshire's less-known country lanes. Interestingly, the run included a splendid ford running particularly well, where the depth board seemed to somewhat underestimate the actual depth of eight inches (*frontispiece photo*). Finally, we joined several others who went straight to the Carpenter's Arms Walterstone- and seventeen of us enjoyed a generous Sunday Roast lunch. My special thanks to Kip and Carmen for braving the run despite feeling unwell following a recent trip to Africa.

[Frank Sibly adds: Bob's run was 16 miles through far west Herefordshire, starting with coffee and cake at the Nags Head Peterchurch. Although the mileage may not sound much, Frank's total mileage for the day, including the travel to and from the run, was 88 miles (4½ hours). We were 5 A7s, Michael's Austin Cambridge, David Edwards MG T type, and his friend's Morris Minor convertible, and Mike Smith's 1962 Rallying Volvo PV544.]

Finally, I wish all our members a very Happy Christmas and an enjoyable New Year. Also, a quick reminder to put the Club's AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> February in your new 2025 diaries.

### News from the workshop .....

I'm struggling to maintain enthusiasm for constructing the A7 Special in a cold garage. So, I have been spending time in the heated workshop making a model twin cylinder marine steam engine. Every home should have at least one of these! Happy motoring ..... Bob Garrett





*Note the negative terminal of the battery (on the bottom left), which is a smaller diameter than the positive terminal on the top right. Also the massive difference in size in the cable to the starter, compared to the thin cable for the lights and dynamo, arising from the same +ve terminal*

**Battery Fluid:** The battery has one-part sulphuric acid diluted with two parts distilled water. The water can evaporate from the battery because the dynamo can overcharge it, as the A7 does not have a constant voltage regulator, only a simple cut-out. This is especially the case if the third-brush is set for an unnecessarily high charge.

Keep the plates covered by 1cm, by topping-up distilled water (never use tap water). The sulphuric acid isn't lost, as water has a lower boiling point than the acid. The battery is difficult to lift out of the box in the floor of the car, and it is best to put a flexible plastic strap

under it (*see above, coloured green*), which helps lifting it out.

**Chemistry** The fluid cells in the battery are isolated from one another, and each contains a pair of electrode plates, one Lead (-ve) and the other, Lead Dioxide (+ve). The sulphuric acid reacts with both electrodes to form Lead Sulphate, water, hydrogen and electrons. The reaction is reversible, hence the ability to re-charge the battery. The battery gives off hydrogen gas when being over-charged. This can cause a dangerous explosion.

**Restoring a battery** that is suspected of having failed:

Disconnect the battery and remove from vehicle. Fully discharge the battery by connecting a very low wattage test bulb to the battery terminals, leave this illuminated until the battery is exhausted. Then check the electrolyte level, and recharge the battery at the lowest possible charge rate.

This procedure will remove the excessive hydrogen from the battery plates, and, with luck, should give your battery a new lease of life.

## Electrical usage on an A7

Starter Motor:  $\approx 150\text{A}$  ie about 1kW. This huge current is only needed for short bursts, and can be carried through a  $55\text{mm}^2$  wire (8.5mm diam) from the battery to the starter

Lights  $8\text{A}$  ( $2 \times 5\text{W}$  rear lights +  $2 \times 18\text{W}$  headlights =  $46\text{W} \div 6\text{v} \approx 8\text{A}$ )

There is a separate live cable from the battery to the lights, which is tiny in comparison to the cable to the starter, being only about  $2\text{mm}^2$  ( $\approx 1.6\text{mm}$  diam).

To save the battery, the early cars turned off one headlight when dipped. In 1956 a law was passed that cars had to have lights showing the whole width of the vehicle as there had been accidents in the dark where another vehicle thought the single light was a motorbike, and thus much narrower.

The max output of the dynamo is 8A, ie about 50W. and it uses about 1% of the engine's power

The spark plugs use only 0.03A, (but 25,000V!!) The high voltage is produced by the magneto in the pre-1928 cars, and thereafter a coil was fitted in place of the magneto.

## Earth

The earth wires need to be the same diameter as the live, so an 8.5mm diameter earth to the starter is recommended.

If the A7 needs electrical work, take the opportunity to fit earthing wires to each component, rather than relying on the factory system of return through the bodywork, with the battery earth only connected to the chassis at the battery box. Eddie found a 2V drop in a 6V lighting system when going through the body, compared to  $\frac{1}{2}$  V drop when going through an earthing wire.

Eddie's 1936 car with a positive earth has never needed to have the battery terminals cleaned in over 30 years. He attributes this to the reduced corrosion in the positive earth system, compared to negative earth.

## Kip Waistell: Birth of a Passion: Part 2

The first car I bought was a 1946 TC MG, when I was about 20. It cost £120. My University, Southampton, had entered the University Drama Competition with the play “Caligula”, about



the Roman Emperor of that name. I had two parts... a slave, and a poet. My one line, as the poet, was “In their dim cave, the fatal sisters three...” which resulted in being stabbed to death before the second line. We succeeded in the heats, and had to go to Nottingham for the finals, with Caligula’s Empress agreeing to take a lift with me in the TC from London to Nottingham. It was late in the year, very cold and icy. Overtaking a car in a north London street, it suddenly turned right to

get to a garage, causing me to swerve to avoid a collision. Which I did, only to slide along ice in the gutter, then mount the kerb to hit a concrete bollard between right wheel and chassis—bending the chassis. Pick-up was arranged, onward journey was by train, and we won the competition, and had a week performing at St Martin’s Theatre in The Strand, London as the prize, being killed each night. But then Caligula ended up dead too. That student’s performance was so outstanding, that he changed his university course from Social Sciences



to Drama, and we know him as John Nettles (Bergerac, etc).

*Nettles, playing Caligula seen in the centre*

The TC was repaired, and then in my last University year changed for a 1930 12/50 Alvis (see below). A bunch of us piled into that for a trip to Longleat one summer's day, and on leaving,



the brakes failed, we exited the road in the park, scattered picnickers and came to rest next to an oak tree. The final indignity for that car was when I was trying to impress a girlfriend in the New Forest (once again coming back from Longleat) racing a 3 litre Bentley, when there was an enormous bang, and a piston came through the side of the block. Girlfriend not impressed, but we are

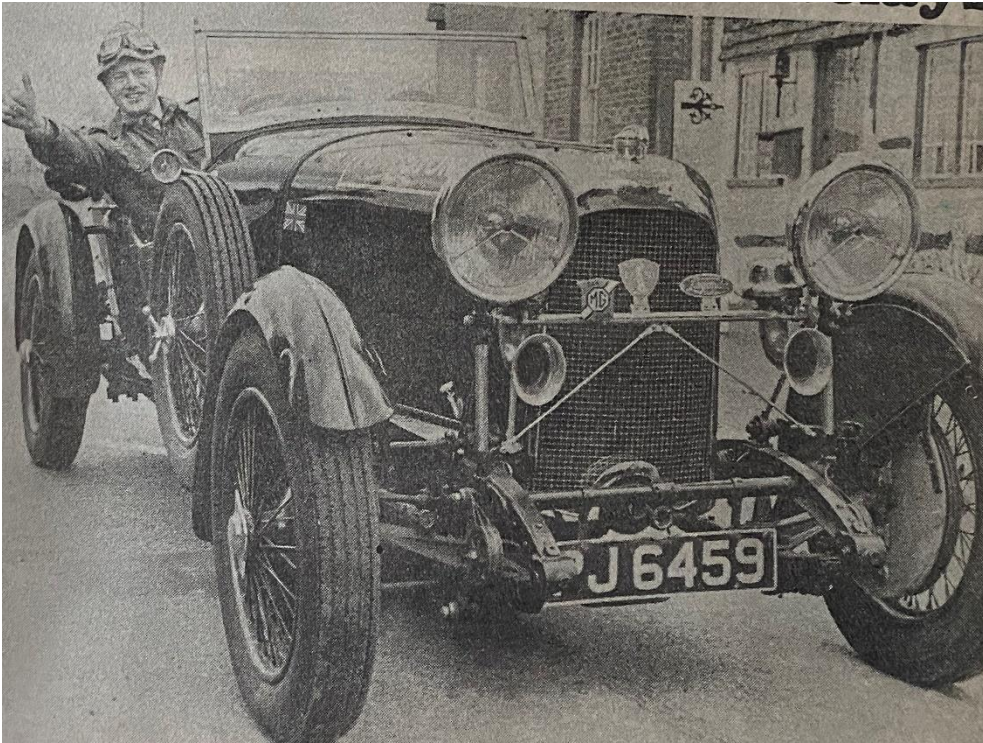
still in touch 58 years later.

After that, back to another TC, and marrying Carmen, who, (unfortunately for wanting to watch a bank balance), loves old cars as much as me. We married near Zurich in a castle's church, and honeymooned in the tower of a castle in N.E Italy. Steering came apart going down a mountain pass, with a severe drop on one side- I luckily managed to stop before the drop. On the way home, we stayed with Carmen's parents near Zurich for a night, but the car broke down after a few miles next morning. Carmen's father towed us 60 miles to Basel, where we found a garage whose owner had a pre-war PA MG. Condenser replaced, car fine, but then had to drive the whole night on poor country roads back to Calais (no motorways then), and ended up singing nursery rhymes to keep awake.

Cut ahead to 1980, and our first visit to France for a Rally after which we were totally hooked on going there. Rallies in France every year thereafter, son persuaded to go to a University in Paris, married a French girl, and now we have a French family and four French grandchildren.....thanks to old cars.

One last little foot note- we have had our 3 litre Lagonda now for 44 years. In 1960, it was rescued from a potentially ignominious end by a fellow called Tom Pinguet, after it had been thrashed by being raced for several years by a London newsagent. Tom sold the car in the mid-sixties. Having bought the car in 1980, and as we then lived near Brighton, each November we would follow the veteran cars in the Lagonda during the London-Brighton "Race". It would probably have been about 1988 when we ran out of petrol near Handcross, and coasted to a halt at the side of the road, near a bunch of spectators. I lifted the bonnet to switch to the spare fuel tank, and as I was turning the fuel tap, felt a hand on my shoulder.

"Hello- I am Tom Pinguey, and this used to be my car- have you got a replacement dynamo cover yet...oh no, I see it is still missing. I have the original at home—I will post it to you". Which he did.



cover yet...oh no, I see it is still missing. I have the original at home—I will post it to you". Which he did.

### *3 Litre Lagonda*

Final word - old cars have enabled us to meet wonderful people at home and abroad, and have wonderful experiences. And if you want to be green, go and get a 90 year-old Austin, buying reliability and

sustainability (horrid word!).

## **Webmaster's spinnings**

## **Roly Alcock**

I continue to update the website, distribute the Crankhandle and also the Grey Mag. Plus occasional emails to the membership. As ever, contributions for material for the website will be gratefully received.

Sadly, Harry passed away in September. He was 15 years old. He was a huge enthusiast for Austin Sevens. If there was a choice of 3 cars it was the Austin he would head for. He always enjoyed the journey and knew exactly which pub we were all heading for!





## An Electrical Journey of Discovery, Roly Alcock

I am currently trying to get the fuel gauge working on the box saloon. My existing gauge is as dead as a Norwegian Blue Parrot. This caused me to run out of petrol on top of the river bridge at Upton ..... I really thought I still had  $\frac{3}{4}$  tank of fuel left. Clearly not. I made up a test rig with a Morris 1000 tank sender unit, but I was not sure if it was an early or a late sender. This is important as the later senders were for the fuel gauges that rise slowly to give a reading. A7s need the earlier sender. The first cheapo (£9) gauge I got was for a tractor. It sort of worked, albeit only running over half the scale on the gauge. Unfortunately, I shorted the terminals of the electronic gauge, causing a puff of smoke, and it stopped working. So I got another gauge, (£15), again with electronic innards, but no external live studs, and it is adjustable for different types of fuel tank sender. It seems to work, but again, only using half of the sweep of the gauge. It didn't help that I had forgotten that I had reassembled the sender unit, in such a way that when the tank was full, it showed empty on the gauge, and vice versa!

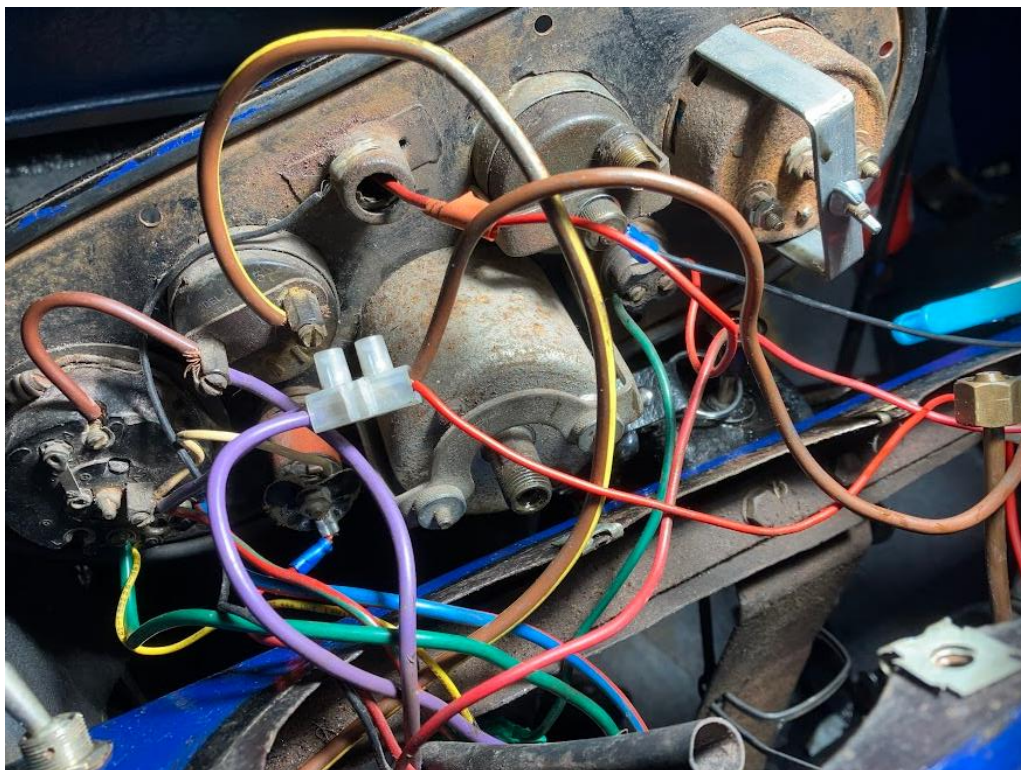
All the above paled into insignificance when I discovered that I could not switch the engine off if the Dynamo was charging! I thought I must have angered the electricians when the previously mentioned precious smoke was released.

I detached the dashboard, and fiddled and failed. The car is converted to 12V, with a RB340 three bobbin current regulator to control the charging. There was an additional fuse box with three fuses fitted, and a further 3 in-line fuses dotted about the car. A number of cables had been replaced with non-standard colours. One circuit magically changed colour from one end



to the other. There was no documentation supplied with the car about the electrics. I slowly built up a diagram of what is connected to what. I disconnected many cables, but the fault persisted. I then set to mapping out the electrical circuitry. Many photos and drawing out the wiring diagram gave some understanding, but

failed to identify how the D connection of the Dynamo was somehow connected to the ignition side of the coil. My dining room table looked like a crime scene board (*see above*).



*Back of the dashboard*

I checked that the non-operational ignition warning light was not connected, and therefore not part of the problem.

Then the weather changed to what the Germans describe as *Dunkelflaute* (darkness and weak winds) and I had no enthusiasm to venture out to the garage until the sun shone again. I knew that without inspiration and enthusiasm, I was likely to add more faults. Finally, after 2 weeks the sun started shining and I restarted the investigation. I soon found that where the D lead was attached to the control box it had an unseen second wire on it. I traced this wire to one of the three fuses on the fuse box and from there to the switched side of the ignition switch. No wonder the engine wouldn't turn off when the Dynamo was charging.

So why had this problem started when previously all had worked ok? Well it's back to the release of the precious smoke. I checked for blown fuses after that event, and found a fuse which was blown. When I replaced it, I had connected the erroneous circuit between the Dynamo and ignition switch. I can only assume that the fuse was not previously making a connection.

I repaired the ignition warning light and reconnected it using the WL connector on the RB340 and that now works. When checking the rest of the circuits work, I discovered that the headlights were wired up cross eyed. One lamp was on main beam and the other on dip. Unhelpfully the wire connections to the headlamp bulb were soldered and protected with heat shrink. So I just turned the reflector upside down. All good now. The car runs nicely.

A special thanks to Ray Moses who guided me through the various possibilities for the engine not being able to be turned off, and his description of the likely changes made to convert the

car to 12 volts electrics. I need to revisit and strip out redundant and incorrect cables, and update what I have documented.



Freya dog is delighted that the Austin is running again, it is her car of choice.

## Smoke in the Cab

The sun was very low one autumn afternoon, coming in from the left, and I (Frank Sibly) thought I saw a fine puff of smoke wafting from the floor, and out through the side of my Chummy. I stopped, preparing to use the fire extinguisher, and looked under the bonnet, but there was nothing amiss. I got home, although more smoke was occasionally seen, and I looked at the exhaust pipe: but no leaks there. I contacted the Technical Advisor, who tells



me it is the oil coming out of the breather holes in the valve chest of the engine, and finding its way through the holes in the bulkhead and floor. Some people modified their valve chest cover to have a tube that collected this smoke and fed it into a container.

## Austin Seven Threads.

## Michael Ward

In the margins of the talk given by Eddie Loader at our last Shed night on A7 Electrics, I was talking to Frank Sibly about the various threads that are to be found on an Austin Seven. This prompted him to ask me *'how many different ones are there'*? Well, I counted five to my knowledge. But I was wrong, as I was under the impression that somewhere I had come across a metric thread.

There appear to be four different threads used in the A7, which are :-

British Standard Fine	BSF
British Standard Whitworth	BSW
British Standard Pipe	BSP
British Standard Cycle	BSC

Although I am sure that I have seen a metric thread somewhere, it was probably retro fitted prior to the purchase of my 1937 Opal in 1968. The Austin Motor Co. used all these different threads for numerous applications during the build, e.g.:

**BSP** for sump plugs, oil gallery blanking plugs, and Grease nipples.

Of course, as we are all aware, changes occurred over the years of manufacture, probably due to availability so, if BSP threaded grease nipples ran out, then BSF grease nipples would be used, and so on.

**BSC** for headlight to wing retaining nuts, speedo cable retaining nut to gearbox, and to secure the starter and choke cables to the dashboard.

Perhaps this was just an extension from the early cycle cars!

I have not tried to identify every location that the four different thread forms are used, but merely give examples. However, I do find it interesting that these differing threads were used on such a variety of items during manufacture.

I am very grateful to Eddie Loader for his background information in compiling this data.

PS I believe that the Morris car company was the only British car firm that used the metric thread form. The history of this is that in the development and subsequent manufacture of the Bullnose Morris, rather than spending vast amounts of money on a new engine, Morris purchased the manufacturing rights of a French engine from Hotchkiss, which of course used metric threads.

## Water Leak from cylinder head stud

Eddie Loader responded to a query on the Austin 7 Ruby Automobiles Facebook group.  
“the second from rear centre head stud is seeping coolant”

This problem is not uncommon after an engine rebuild, there is a quick and successful remedy which I have used on numerous occasions i.e.:

1-- Drain water

2-- remove nut & washer from the offending head stud.

3-- with wire wool, clean surfaces of cylinder head and head stud.

4-- apply several turns of PTFE plumbers' tape around the area where the head stud meets the cylinder head.

5-- refit washer & nut, first ensure that the head stud and nut are clean from oil.

6-- replace coolant, warm up engine to normal operating temperature, and re-torque head to approx 20 ftlbs.

I have carried out this procedure many times with a 100% success rate.

PS , when replacing a cylinder head gasket, it is important that the surfaces of the cylinder head and block are spotlessly clean, then after fitting the gasket, but before fitting the cylinder head, smear the un- threaded section of each head stud with a light coating of non- setting jointing compound, this should prevent any future coolant leaks via the head studs, but be extra careful to thoroughly clean the stud and nut threads before fitting. This is because any lubricant on the threads will result in the torque wrench producing a false reading.

## Letter to the Editor from Robin Boyce

I have received The Crankhandle since I was editor of the A7CA mag some years ago.

You mention the village of Linton in the report of the August Lunchtime meet, when coincidentally I am reading a book that does likewise. Michael Palin sets out his family history since the mid 19thC starting with his great, great Grandfather, Edward Palin, a renowned scholar and Fellow of Oxford University who eventually became Rector of Linton church.

The story of his family's life there demonstrates the rigid social structure of that time, but the bulk of the book sets out the life of the author's great-uncle, Harry Palin, from his unsettled early life, then picking tea in India, farming in New Zealand, and going to war in 1914. He fought at Gallipoli and died on the Somme. An interesting book and only 99p to read on my Kindle.

I will have to try a lunch at The Alma if I am out that way.

## Holly Birkett – who was he?

## By his daughter Ginny



Ray Moses writes: For the last couple of years Barbara and I have become friendly with Ginny Birkett, the daughter of Holly Birkett (*left in 1951*) who, together with Bill Boddy (then editor of Motor Sport magazine) instigated the founding of the 750 Motor Club. Holly was keen to promote cheap motor racing, using cars based on the Austin Seven, and it was his idea to have the famous 6 hour handicap race that still takes place at Silverstone. I know at least one of our members (Ron Sadler) has taken part, and for a while Ginny waved the flag to start the race. That was before the 750 Motor Club lost interest in their Austin Seven heritage.

We have had many interesting conversations with Ginny about her meetings with the early members of the club at the family home. She remains friendly with Roger French, who I also went to school with, and who is the son of Jack French, the builder of Simplicity, one of the most famous Austin

Seven specials, and whose garage is now at the Attwell Wilson Museum in Calne.

Ginny writes: The 'Birkett' 6 Hour Relay race is an established 750 MC event to conclude the season's racing, and was created in the late 40s by Holly Birkett and others. But who was he?

He was Dad to my sister Eleanor and me. As a child in the 40s and 50s, I was very aware of the 'Six Hours'. An extended family of grown-ups would regularly gather, over a cuppa or stronger, at our house in Pondtail Rd, Fleet, (known as '**Pondtail**' *below*), which became the centre of enthusiastic and experimental motor sport during the post-war era of great austerity and petrol shortage. Regular club-level motoring events were created, and friends made. Many became well known in their own right, as they developed specialist careers around motor sport. On the local army ranges they held hill climbs, speed & night trials, with exotically dressed hidden marshals. The current rules & regulations had not been invented then!

The desire for an affordable endurance race resulted in the 'Six Hours', which Holly brought to



life. The handicapping system offered a fair chance for slower cars to win, or at least participate in the racing. The concept was obviously sound, because this race is well supported up to current times at Silverstone.

He was born Holland Birkett in 1916, the son of a school headmaster in North London and, according to his mother's diaries, had a secure sheltered childhood, with his older sister. When he was about 5 years old, the family had a holiday in rural Hampshire, in a horse-drawn caravan with minimal facilities, but they all enjoyed themselves. His mother records in her diary that, on the home journey, the contracted man and horse abandoned them, as the hill ahead was too much for his animal. A sturdier steed was found, and they finally got home.

In a Motor Sport article in July 1943 titled "Cars I have Owned", Holly wrote "From the age of twelve, I have been conditioning my parents to my proposed motoring career". Whilst still at school he was the proud owner of a "1922 chain-cum-belt, 2¾ h.p. Douglas", which, he wrote, often seized up, "When this happened, I would take the engine to pieces, clean everything up, and reassemble it". Rebuilding engines was a common theme in his life for many years.

While he studied to become a veterinary surgeon, at the age of 22, he married fellow student Barbara in 1939. Once qualified, they set up a practice in Pondtail Road Fleet, a disused &



largely unconverted laundry. He was devastated by the untimely death of his wife in 1942. His interest in motor sport was evident at this time, though, with a photo of them both in an open-topped Austin 7.

*HB & first wife Barbara in 1942*

During the war years he travelled the country with Bill Boddy (original editor of Motor Sport). Holly had a generous veterinary fuel allowance, and they went in search of parts for their Austin 7s and Bugattis. It was on such a visit to the

Phoenix Pub near to Hartley Witney (the birthplace of the VSCC), that he met my mother Joan, in 1944. She later moved to Pondtail, where she and Holly became the hub of a vibrant community of motor enthusiasts, which lasted until the late 50s. Holly had a large workshop at one end of the building, where he and others tweaked and tuned cars into sporting life. My grandmother described Pondtail as 'primitive' with only cobwebbed rafters to look up at,

chilly concrete floors. But it was home for us, and none of this mattered because we had motor sport to enjoy.

The 750 MC became a large part of Holly's life in the 40s and 50s, and I have the watch (*right*) presented to him by the club, as retiring Chairman in 1962. He was wearing this watch at the time of his aircraft accident.

In the late 50s Holly became involved in the Mobil Gas Economy run, and was one of the key organisers for a few years. I still have some linen OS maps with his markings, relating to this event.



Holly also participated in rallying, doing the Monte Carlo Rally four times in the early 50s, with Tom Lush and others (*see left*). One wonders how he found time to be the local vet, but he was lucky to have my mother 'holding the fort' at home while he was absent.

They divorced in 1957 and, a couple of years later, he married Margaret, opening a surgery in Cove, Farnborough Hants. Around this time, at the age of 42, he learned to fly, obtaining his PPL and had a half share in an Auster. In the early 60s, he was the Chairman of the Blackbushe Aero club, and was actively involved in the successful campaign to save this airfield from closure.

In July 1963, he and Margaret flew the Auster to France for a few days holiday, but he made an "imprudent" decision, which resulted in the plane crashing and both being killed. He was 47 years old. On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I returned to the crash site on Stella Plage, near Le Touquet, and reflected on the consequences of his unwise

decision to fly into the sea mist rather than inland, as advised by air traffic control. I understand there was a dinner date to keep, but he and his wife never made it.



Pondtail was sold and demolished, and I believe my box-Brownie snapshot of it is the only image of this iconic place. I moved away, got married and had my own family. Then in 1991 I bumped into Bill Boddy at a VSCC meeting at Brooklands, and he asked me “Did you know there is a race named after your father?” No, I didn’t know, but in 1992, my son, Terry, & I discovered it at Snetterton, where we were gobsmacked to see my family name emblazoned on so many T-shirts. I attended many more ‘Birketts’, now back at Silverstone where, all those years ago, it was first created.

My father’s motto was “It’s not the winning, but the taking part that is important”, a philosophy that I have seen at the modern ‘Birketts’. Long may it continue and remain an enjoyable conclusion to the racing season.

## Tail-Lights



- Apparently I snore so loudly that it scares everyone in the car I'm driving
- There are daring drivers and there are elderly drivers. But there are very few daring elderly drivers

## Deadline for next issue: 20<sup>th</sup> Jan

Please do send in contributions! Email [editor@ha7c.co.uk](mailto:editor@ha7c.co.uk) Or post to Frank Sibly, Kyrle House Practice, 4 Kyrle St, Hereford HR1 2EU

Just a paragraph about an A7, and a photo will give other members a lot of interest.

## For Sale

- One - early ‘script’ solid centre 19” A7 wheel and tyre in OK condition ..... £20
- Pair - 3-speed gearboxes (ideal as sitting room ornaments or store away as spares) ..... £20
- Refurbished (set of four) Semi Girling brake backplates complete and fitted with new shoes, linings, springs and levers etc. Includes new front and rear cables ..... Bargain at £100

Contact Bob Garrett 07900 496073

## The Welsh VSCC Trial October 12-13th 2024 Annie Peake

Everyone loves the Welsh Trial. It's ridiculously competitive, to enter online that is, before you even hop into the driver's seat. Entry for 105 cars was full within 30 minutes and oversubscribed by 30 entrants within the hour. This could be because we can't get enough of the Welsh, we love the drinking and camaraderie in the town, or because it's the first trial of the season. Having taken part in it for a few years, I now have the opportunity to reflect



*Our racing correspondent at speed*

on what makes it stand out. I think it is several things: the drivers' tenacity, their performance, the unpredictable weather, the construction of the course, the marshals, and of course the welcome Presteigne offers.

My word, drivers are determined. Alice Locke, (a 20 something novice on her second trial, in a just-purchased Ulster that she hadn't driven more than 5 miles), was Reserve Number 13. No entry forthcoming, she and her father set off from EAST SUSSEX on Friday 11th on the off chance that a space would come free, which it did. Will Marsh broke the rear axle of his Ulster during the first day. Undeterred, he drove to Derbyshire that evening to pick up a replacement, returned to Presteigne, and worked on it overnight so it could be ready for Sunday morning. He was awarded the Leslie Winder Trophy for sheer guts. I didn't spot a

part rebuild in the High St this year, a normal feature most years, and maybe the awful weather had something to do with it.

It's common to drive round each section concentrating on one's own performance. You might watch a car similar to your own attempt a hill while you are in the queue, and take note, but I think it helped me this year to be right out of the running, and so I could appreciate other people's driving. I witnessed extraordinarily skilled car handling from a 19 year old in the family Bentley, quietly cool on every hill, despite a major drinking spree on Saturday night until the early hours. I watched Malcolm Lyon in his Standard Chummy take on hill 13A, Cwm Millward, with its ridiculously tight left-hand bend and followed immediately by a nonsense stop-restart.

I've not come across a permitted reverse before, but Malcolm gently nailed it with 25 points. Adam Oliver, in my old Chummy, also achieved full marks at 13A. This must have been hugely satisfying as it was Adam's first trial ever, particularly as the car was pulled over in a petulant mood whenever I saw it on Sunday. Spark plugs or something. Only a couple of the long wheelbase cars managed 25 points on Cwm Milward. The tight space was a lot harder for them, and Malcolm Lyon was so convinced that a long wheelbase car didn't have a chance that he bet the Bentley a bottle of champagne. Rob Hubbard in his Vauxhall 30-98 gave a masterclass, as did the Bentley. You must know the exact length, width and turning circle of your car to get it right, and there is only one attempt other than one reverse. (Needless to say on my turn I ploughed into the stop-start edifice and that was that). I think it was a very creative piece of section building, and Paul Tebbet must have been pleased with the outcome.



*Malcolm and Jenny Lyons, Photo courtesy of Joy Richings*

Of the other two in our little travelling group, David Hunt in his Austin Special retired early on Saturday with a broken differential, having started well. Gareth Graham managed a third class award, despite twice having trouble with the kill switch. It must have been down to the advice that Esme, his 12-year-old navigator niece gave him on the sections. In terms of my own performance, I have a lot to learn, and my apologies go to my long-suffering navigator Jane Sale. My scores were entirely due to Pilot Error. Plunging into the stop-start edifice at my first hill Stanlo Tump, and then a similar fate at 13A on the Sunday, was not what I had in mind, especially since our daughter Minna secured a First Class award in the same car last year on the Welsh. Ouch.

The Short Wheelbase Experts are in a class of their own, and rarely drop a point all weekend. David Golightly and Matt Price finished with clean sheets. It must be hard to set a course that will challenge them. I was very pleased to see Sarah Owen, a fellow Chummy Lady, take the first prize in Class 1b Clubman Class.

Heavy rain over many weeks had already deluged the county, and trying to second guess how the hills would dry out became very difficult. Our reduced group of four left it late to visit Badlands on Saturday afternoon. We decided that leaving the RH hill (Badlands 2) to dry out would be sensible. It was, but we left it too late, the heavens opened, and by the time we queued for Badlands 1, we were sliding all over the place. We still had Old Impton to tackle in the rain, by which time most sensible drivers were smiling and reminiscing over their pints in the High St. When Jane Sale and I handed in our score cards, both of us were cold and wet through. A hot bath beckoned. It didn't rain on Sunday, but we were still delighted to find good coffee, tea and homemade food from the excellent caterers in the Cwm Whitton shed once we'd finished. The course building this year was exceptional.

The point of any hill trial is to encourage novices and teenagers to obtain at least a few decent marks, as well as providing a challenge (if possible) to the Experts. The course designer has to offer something for everyone. We only understand his skill after we have walked the course, shared our Twix bars, dumped the tyre pressure, revved the engine and completed the section. The result is either exhilaration or frustration. He certainly provided us, and especially me, with some challenges. They spend weeks working out the shape and location of the sections, and a further week on site banging in the markers. The Welsh Forestry Commission and Powys County Council were very supportive of the trials.

We do love a nice marshal, especially when they console me for having slid publicly into the metal gate at the start of Cwm Whitton 3. Marshals thoughtfully keep the hills open after they should have closed, and are invariably positive and encouraging, even when the tow truck is summoned. We love the young marshals who take over a hill on Saturday and Sunday. However, the young weren't so much in evidence this year (were they still in the pub?), but I didn't hear about any mooning on Cwm Mawr this year. Shame. And finally, to the welcome. Presteigne is my favourite town, where my mother lived for 25 years. She loved its atmosphere as much as I do. So, an exceptional Trial this year, and better luck next year, Old Girl, if you can get entry.

The Morgan Three Wheeler club have invited us:



# MALVERN HILLS HOLLY RUN 2024

**SUNDAY, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

~ : ~  
A new venue this year with a run around the Malvern Hills

~ : ~  
Starting and finishing at



**“The Green Dragon”**

Guarford Rd, Malvern WR14 3QT



~ : ~  
The pub should be open from 8:30 for loos  
and 9:00 for bacon butties

~ : ~  
The run will start at 10:00

~ : ~  
If you would like lunch afterwards, this can be booked at the start.

~ : ~  
**About 20 miles of “country” roads**

~ : ~  
**Open to anyone with an “interesting” vehicle.**

(i.e. preferably no SUVs or modern hatchbacks please but, if you haven't anything more appropriate available, please come anyway in what you have)

~ : ~  
No booking is required and there is no entry fee.

~ : ~  
For more information contact Dave Anscombe  
on 01384 372307 or [anscombe@wollaston80.plus.com](mailto:anscombe@wollaston80.plus.com)

## Club Regalia

Available at most monthly meetings from the Treasurer

**Windscreen Stickers £ 2.00**



**Sew-on Embroidered badge: no longer available,  
But could be ordered if enough interest.**



**Radiator Badge £20**



**Lapel Pin Badge £2**



## **HA7C Committee contact details**

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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/>

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