



The Crankhandle

NEWSLETTER OF THE HEREFORD AUSTIN SEVEN CLUB

Nov 2025

Issue 95



David Edwards Speedex

Restoration: See p 8



David Fowler attended the London to Brighton Run, and had breakfast at the Royal Automobile Club.

Chairman's View

This is the last edition of the Crankhandle for 2025 but we still have a few events before we start unwrapping presents, with the last club Evening of the year being at the Richmond Place Club on [Thursday 27th](#) November, and the Annual meal on Sunday 7th December at the Bunch of Carrots. Although details of each event have been sent out, be sure to make yourself aware of times, etc. to avoid missing out.

As I mentioned in the September edition, October was to be a busy month. The Shed Night at Riddings Farm was on decoking your Austin Seven, which is going to be repeated on the first Club night of the year in January. This subject is in two parts, and as no chassis, wheels, etc are necessary, part one will be available on Club night. The Autumn Amble/Wye Valley Wander was 'damp' but very enjoyable, and our thanks go to Peter Hewitt for organising a great run which, unfortunately, he was not able to attend. The bowling and steak evening was, as always, a great success due to the diligence of Pat Caine. Our final event for October was the fascinating talk given by Annie Peake on 'The Chummy Ladies'. A greater number than usual for a Club evening indicated the popularity of this. Thanks go to all those responsible.

Reflecting on the last few Club evenings, I am heartened by the amount of chat going on. I know that any club will have lots of interchange, but it is noticeable how integrated members are. N talks to L because a new purchase is imminent. F talks to D resulting in a test run for size. S talks to R resulting in a purchase of a gearbox. I could go on but save to say, this is so healthy for all members; well done.

You may recall that a few months ago I was on my orange box about dazzling headlamps. Well, although not an exact answer, it is interesting to note that the Department for Transport is listening to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs and others about just this subject. Let us hope that ultimately, proper headlamp adjustment will become part of the MOT.

For those of you that are unable to be at the remaining events, I wish you a very enjoyable 2026 in your motor cars and look forward to seeing you soon.

Enjoy your Sevenning,

Michael.

The Netherlands - Austin Seven Adventure Pt Two. Michael Ward

In Part One you read of our departure from home on Sunday 11th May, 2025 and our travels to Berchem in East Holland, where we arrived at the Hotel BonAparte during the late afternoon of Saturday 17th May. Both Austins had done so well without complaint, covering the 115 miles through a variety of contrasting countryside, villages, ferries and the city of Arnhem. Now we were in thick forest.

The Gelderland area was so different to that of around Gouda and Groene Hart, where we had stayed for the previous four days. Gelderland is forest with little farms dotted around the national parks. It is mainly given over to numerous tracks and cycleways so the area is for the adventurous; how appropriate for the following day when we had been invited to join with the Dutch Pre-war Austin Seven Owners Club, for their annual 'Seven Mile Run'!

Sunday 18th May dawned bright with a clear blue sky again, ideal for our two Seven's to travel the 16 miles through mainly forest to the farm of Margreet and Jan Stellingwerff, for the start of the day's rally. We were warmly welcomed firstly by a lovely lady in a high-vis vest to signify the entrance to the farm, and then by Margreet and Jan, our hosts, who clearly were so pleased to see their UK guests. It took some time to make our way from parking in the paddock area to the farmyard, where many of the members were gathered for coffee and snacks. Although only a short walk, everyone was keen to talk and include us in the gathering. About forty Austin Sevens were gathered, and many had trailed or driven from all over the Netherlands. Although the Dutch speak excellent English, I still did not fully understand why the event was called the 'Seven Mile Run', we gathered that the distance for the day was around sixty-five miles! An hour or so later, groups of two or three cars started on the route, and at that point Marion & Peter and June & I were handed a lunch pack each, with our route instructions. This was so kind as all the others had brought their own, and Margreet knew that a picnic lunch may be difficult for us to provide. We were invited to follow a box saloon owned by Anne Marie and Andrew Fallon, which was fortuitous, as although the route sheets were informative, we still had the Dutch language to contend with.

We soon seemed to be in wild countryside and rarely saw another vehicle, although there were often groups of cyclists squeezing past from the opposite direction. After about an hour we came to a halt at a three-lane junction where we caught up with three or four other A7's. I got chatting with a lovely man who had a 1927 A7 van in remarkable original condition.

His father had bought it new, and it had been used for his green-grocery business; a rare delight to see such a specimen. After a further hour we reached our picnic spot, which was a tiny country museum, a single wooden/brick building with a typical farmhouse scene inside. There were



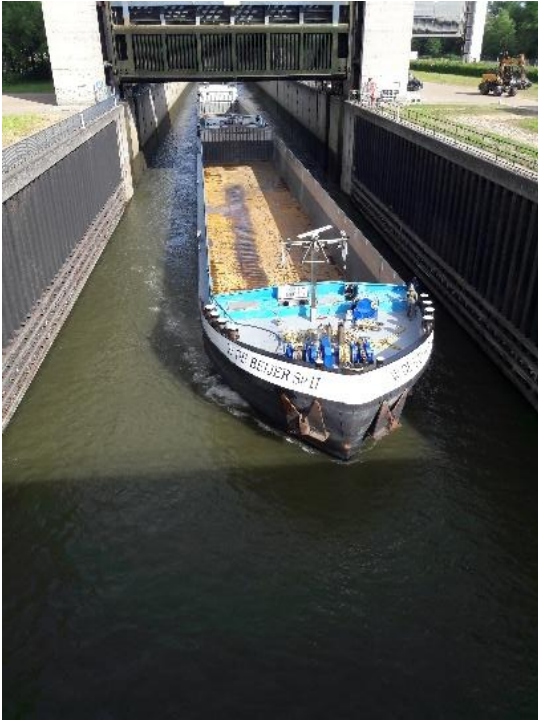
many picnic tables outside, enough to seat the whole group. In the distance, we were told that a line of poplar's marked the German border, so we were as far East as we were likely to go on the whole trip.

During the afternoon, in very hot sun, we came across a road closure, where about a dozen A7's were stopped with most people looking at maps; no houses and no people around! Eventually, one A7 turned right but the remainder turned left and we followed. After a dusty ride on a forest track resembling a 4x4 course and many left turns, we arrived back at the road closure junction! All part of the fun. A few hours later we were back at the farm of Margreet and Jan, where soup and bread rolls were provided followed by 'thank-you' speeches and a few presentations. Very surprisingly, both Marion & Peter and ourselves were presented with a bottle of wine for being the furthest travelled cars; such a generous gesture. A very pleasant evening meal in Vorden was shared with our guides for the day, Anne Marie and Andrew Fallon, before a lovely warm evening ride back to our hotel. Our total for the day was 83 miles, a little more than the 'Seven Mile Run'. Oh well, perhaps we will have to go back to find out more!

Our destination the following day was near the small town of Doorn in the mid-south of the Netherlands and south-east of Utrecht. Once again, we made good use of the ferries across the canals and at one point stopped at a farm for their homemade ice cream; sumptuous. During the early afternoon we were driving alongside a large canal when we came upon a busier road which went over our road and the canal. We drove under the road only to discover that we were driving along a cycle track with cyclist coming towards us. Fortunately, everybody thought it was funny; what mischief Austin Seven's get you into! We also stopped at Rozendale Castle and although closed to the public, it was a spectacle as we were permitted to go around the gardens which included a huge Tulip tree. On departing from the castle and driving west through a national park, it was a surprise to me to descend a long gradual hill with hairpin bends, I always had the idea that Holland had no hills. We arrived in Doorn after a very warm pleasant ride and only 76 miles today. We were to spend three nights in Doorn and had plenty to see by way of castles and surrounding interesting towns and pretty villages, which all seemed to have their own share of windmills.

I think my favourite town was Wijk bij Duurstede. Its natural harbour, windmill built on a bridge and moated castle, gave it great presence and charm. It also had a good selection of cafes and restaurants which we made good use of over our three day stay in the area.





During one of our days visiting the area, we passed over the Amsterdam-Rhine canal which has the biggest lock I have ever come across. There happened to be one of the massive barges going through at the time, so it was doubly impressive. Historically, the village of Amerongen nearby reminded us of times past, as it is at the junction of the canal and the River Lek. Its castle had been rebuilt in 1682 after being demolished by Louis XIV.

Time passes quickly when one is enjoying oneself and our time to head for the Hoek of Holland soon came. Thursday 22nd May was our last full day as we were booked on the 10.00pm ferry to Harwich that evening. On our route we stopped off in the pretty

little town of Nieuwpoort. Peter corrected me by informing me that it had been given city rights in 1283. A fascinating bit of construction was the city hall built over the canal which passes through the centre. A sluice gate was built so that the city centre could be flooded as part of the defences for the inhabitants. With its cobbled streets it made for a really historical place to visit. Our onward route was to pass through Delft, stopping for our evening meal before the last leg of the journey to the Hoek. Unfortunately, our timing was not the best as we hit the Rotterdam peak, at School/Business closing time. This was partly due to a ferry closure earlier, but we did see some more of the countryside before being ground to a halt by thousands of bicycles in Delft! The result was that we lost Marion and Peter at a junction, and so made our way into the centre. Thank heavens for mobile phones, we made contact and were reunited in the main square.

We made the overnight ferry in good time having travelled 81 miles and had a flat crossing to awake in Harwich harbour.

We drove from Harwich the couple of hours to Marion and Peter's house for breakfast and then on to Wendover in Buckinghamshire for an overnight stay before finally arriving home on Saturday afternoon. Our total mileage for the whole trip was just over twelve hundred miles. Neither car misbehaved, the sun shone on us because we are so righteous. Would we do it again? Yes, without doubt.

Since the last newsletter, I had already mentioned that the Austin was getting a strange subtle vibration. Then I noticed one of the half shaft nuts was loose, the split pin was still in position. Peering at it, the hub was mangled and the halfshaft had similarly suffered. As a result of this I sent the car off to Gerwyn to have the axle stripped and inspected. I really could not face having to take a back axle out of an A7 again, I am too arthritic and weak these days.

The difference in the smoothness of car when progressing is still a matter of wonderment to me!



Both the MGBs are taking up maintenance time. The GT has had a new steering lock fitted. Also the brake master cylinder and front brake hoses have been replaced as I was occasionally having to top-up the reservoir. I thought that it was leaking into the servo as there were no signs of external leaks anywhere on the car. Well there was nothing wrong with the master cylinder and the leak turned out to be on the front flexible hoses which didn't show signs of leaking until I really pressed hard on the brakes.

The MGB Tourer is now back on the road making lots of loud exhaust noise (sounds like a tuned V8!) from the stainless-steel silencers. There was a noticeable lean to the offside. Changing the front springs for the correct specification ones (Mk2 springs had been fitted instead of Mk1) has nearly fixed that.

Below, new member Ned Buck, brought his MGA over to visit me.



All my motors are now squashed into the garage, now that maintenance and repair work is (touch wood) completed.



I continue to update the website, distribute the Crankhandle and also the Grey Mag. Plus occasional emails to the membership. As ever, contributions of material for the web site will be gratefully received. Roly Alcock – Webmaster and Dogsbody.

Autumn Wander

Five A7s, one Austin Cambridge, one MGTD, one classic Fiat 500 estate, and several moderns met on a rainy Sunday at Oakchurch Café on the Brecon Road, going to the Carpenter's Arms Walterstone for lunch. Sid Earl (an apprentice classic car restorer, age 16, rebuilt the blue Ruby above left, in 6 months, and has added a gadget to intensify the spark. Two A7s got stuck on Dorstone Hill and had to be towed up by a modern. Frank broke down on a high-rev



ascent of the hill up to Urishay Castle, and was trailered home.

He reported to Eddie that the Chummy was revving normally, the clutch was not slipping, and the transmission was functioning normally. Recent work on the Chummy engine had consisted of: two new fan-belt pulleys, new fan-pulley spindle and a new fan-belt. Eddie assisted Frank with a Post-Mortem, and discovered that it was impossible to start the engine either with the electric starter or hand-cranking!

Then Eddie noticed that the top Fan pulley was seized, so what had caused this?

Firstly, this pulley had been supplied with a new Brass Bush, so the engineering tolerance between the two were at the very minimum clearance. Secondly, the new fan belt had been adjusted far too tightly, a combination of these resulted in a seizure of the fan assembly. During the period whilst the fan assembly was stationary, the fan-belt was still being actuated by the crankshaft pulley, causing it to slip around the seized fan pulley. Eddie strongly suspected that the slipping fan-belt was responsible for a huge amount of friction, causing major loss of engine power. Remedial work was carried out to the seized pulley shaft, and the fan-belt correctly tensioned, afterwards the car's engine started easily, both by battery and by starting handle and road testing was successful.

The Boyer Bransden Ignition kit

Sydney Earl



This small ignition kit can be fitted to any 6 or 12 volt vehicle as long as it has a coil and distributor. It was originally made for use on motorcycles. It has four wires, one of which goes to the coil on the side which would normally go to the distributor, another goes to the

distributor, there is then an earth wire which should go to a good earth, and the last wire goes to the ballast resistor. However, an Austin 7 doesn't have one of those, therefore that last wire goes to the positive side of the coil instead. The unit is sold for negative earth (the black box) and positive earth (the red box) but both are fitted similarly, although please check the instructions, as I've only fitted the negative earth variant, so the steps may be slightly different.

The kit creates a stronger and more consistent spark, giving slightly more power because of a more efficient burn. It also improves starting. On some engines it may raise the tickover slightly, but that can be easily adjusted.

Personally, I haven't noticed much of a difference with starting, but I do know people who have. At top speed my Austin 7 was quite jumpy, however with this fitted, it pulls much better, and the jumping has stopped, giving us a higher top speed, and it will sit at the higher speeds more comfortably. Another positive is that the points wear away much slower, saving money long term, and of course you don't need to check the gaps as often.

It also helps with diagnosing ignition problems with your car. The small box has two LED bulbs, the green one lighting up when the ignition is turned on, as long as the coil is sending out power. Therefore, if the green bulb isn't lighting up you have a damaged coil, or poor power supply to the coil. The red bulb lights up every time the points open, showing that you have a spark.



This is where the kit is located on my Austin 7 Ruby. It is quite visible, but isn't large, so doesn't stand out too much. I did have to lengthen the wire that goes from the box to the distributor however that isn't tricky. Of course, if you would rather keep the engine bay looking more original, then the box could be hidden away, e.g. in the battery box.

The reason why I picked this device rather than electronic ignition is that if the latter goes wrong, then you are stranded. There's nothing you can fettle with to get it going again, unless you carry a spare distributor. However, with this device, because it just goes between the coil and the distributor, if it goes wrong you can simply put a wire back between the coil and distributor, like it was originally, and you will be away again. Plus,

I've never known one to stop working, however I have known electronic ignition devices fail.

Sydney is one of our newest members, and is 17. He restored his Ruby in just a few months!



David Fowler attended the London to Brighton Run, and had breakfast in the RAC club

Thursday Lunches



A most enjoyable monthly lunch was held on 13th November at The Bridge Inn, Michaelchurch Escley, now under new management. They did us proud...good food, beautifully presented. No less than nineteen members attended.

No lunch will be held in December, but Thursday 8th January will be at The Nag's Head, on the outskirts of Peterchurch, heading towards Dorstone (01981 550179). Thursday 12th February will be The Alma Inn, Linton, (01989 720355), and Thursday 12th March will be at The Black swan in Much Dewchurch (01981 540295). Please ring the pub direct to book your place.

An Invitation

We need a representative to attend the next Club Expo on behalf of the Hereford Club. Club Expo is the annual meeting for the FBHVC (Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs) I attended last year and found it most interesting as there were about a hundred delegates present from many historic vehicle clubs. It is a one day event held at the British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, between 9.30am and 4.00pm on Saturday 17th January, 2026.

There are many topics in the programme including Insurance and DVLA matters. There are trade stands and of course your visit allows you to view the exhibits in both buildings of all the British historic vehicles.

If you would like to attend, please let me know and I will furnish you with the details.

Many thanks,

Michael Ward (Contact details: inside back cover).

Speedex 750 Progress

David Edwards

So what happened next? I can tell you have been disappointed by the delay and desperately need updates on the restoration of the 750 Speedex.

With the car officially recognised as an Austin Special-750 Speedex and the engine and gearbox confined to the professional hands of Gerwyn Lloyd's classic car business. I set about removing the body, frame and aluminium body-panels. I dismembered the axles, separating them from the chassis, and with the wire brush attached to the angle grinder, I reduced all to bare metal. Naked, as conceived in 1935, the chassis protected by years of neglect and errant oil distribution, looked sound and serviceable. Three coats of liberated ex-War Department drab green paint applied with a 1" brush seemed appropriate.



The rear axle was removed with the great persuader, and replaced in its chassis sockets, initially with sash clamps, and subsequently with heavy duty ratchet straps, all before attending the Eddie Loader lecture on the subject.

I took the rolling chassis ten miles to the Hereford workshop, with the help of a towing frame, and another chapter of "Special" transportation was added to the black list. The chassis became the test-bed for the engine, and I returned to base, to work on the body frame and panels.

I drilled out in excess of 250 rivets to remove the aluminium panels, then ran wild with the angle-grinder wire-brush, re-welded a few joints, applied the paint (a surprisingly protracted task), put the frame on the Mitsubishi roof rack, and headed for Hereford once again, providing entertainment for the commuter traffic. Sometimes only school-age passengers spot the weird cargo, but are unable to convince an addled parent that a man has a large pram on his roof!

It's the dilemmas that exercise the brain, but with the frame attached to the chassis the question of "skinning" cannot be ignored any longer. **Do I replace the original battered panels, or do I buy two new 2 metre by 1 metre aluminium sheets, and panel anew?** Originality versus good looks; It is a 1950s shoestring



special, not a Bugatti for God's sake, but it has the potential to be a pretty little thing, with aspirations of being a miniature formula profile.

In terms of bodywork I am leaning towards a mix of old and new materials. The creation of compound curves on the rear deck and nose cone are going to be a challenge, and the flat side panels are just too damaged to retain. There is nothing wrong with the authentic battered bin look on the average special, but somehow the Speedex body shape demands more .



In the meantime electrics, cooling, braking and expensive wheel wear—the pound sign is a blur which in itself seems a contradiction to the “Special” ethos.

HA7C needs Committee Members

The current committee have done at least 3 years in post, and feel they are getting a little stale, and would like to encourage others to take on these roles, none of which are onerous. Please contact a committee member to discuss (see last page for contacts). All current Committee members would be happy to help their successor for as long as needed.

Chairman A motivator. Encourages the Committee and members to run events. Finds, guides, and introduces speakers for Club evenings. Chairs the committee meeting every 3-4 months. Apart from attending Club events, time involved is about 1 hour per week. Some say this is the easiest role on the Committee!

Secretary

The person who receives all the communications from club members and external organisations, and forwards relevant information to the membership. Arranges agenda and venue for Committee meetings, 3-4 times per year, and keeps records of agreed minutes. Time taken about 20 mins per week, then 3 hours for each committee meeting, and a further 2 hours to write up the minutes.

Newsletter editor: Produce a newsletter every 2 months. Encourage contributions from members. Write-up club events and talks, or ask someone else to do so. Time taken, approx. 4 hours per week. Need to be reasonably happy with using your computer and word-processing programme. Current editor will provide support for as long as needed! Distribution all handled by the Webmaster.

Events Collect details of events, both HA7C and external. Communicate these to members, with help from the webmaster Roly Alcock.

The full description of the roles is in the Club Constitution, Annex 1, on the HA7C website or from the Secretary.

ANGOULEME CIRCUIT DES REMPARTS – 44th VISIT Kip Waistell

Normally Carmen comes to all race meetings, and the only two times she has not done so, UK meetings anyway, I have won. Being a spectator can be boring after more than 40 years of visiting a venue, and when as at Angouleme, shrubs and bushes planted 40 years ago have grown up to an extent that much of the course is blocked from view, the alternative is to use one of the exposed grandstands, where on a hot day you just melt.

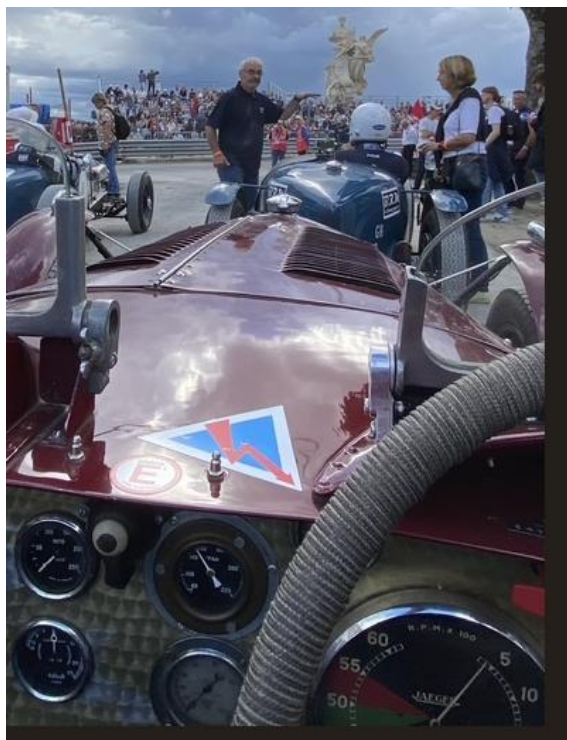
So this year she said “No”, and off I set solo, Riley racer on trailer, soon realising that a “single man in possession of a quick car must be in want of a Wife”. I tried so hard to be organised, but items such as passport, wallet, motorway tickets, and bank card took advantage of being away from the steely eyes of Carmen to go walkabout as much as possible, causing much loading and unloading of car, pockets, cases...only to turn up where you have just looked.

Thursday - Ferry from Portsmouth at 3.30pm, arrive Caen 10pm, and then ridiculous queuing to get past charming French douaniers, but at last on the open road to Le Mans for overnight hotel. At least in France you know how long a journey will take once you set out. No cones, no unattended workings, no average speed cameras. Arrived hotel 1am, to find nowhere to park other than disabled bays. After persuading manager that disabled people were not likely to arrive after 1am, I was allowed to stay put, then quick getaway at 7am.

Friday - Scrutineering at The Circuit des Remparts is serious, but good hearted, unlike the body weight thrown around by some scrutineers over here in UK. Some doubts about the age of the gas in the gas emergency fire dowsing system, but boxes ticked, car trailered and put in paddock in town centre, back to scrutineering to



leave trailer, back to Angouleme to B&B, a minute from paddock to leave modern incarcerated for the weekend as in the centre nothing moves, bar competitors, from late Friday to late Sunday.





Saturday- catching up with old friends notably those from Team Fouine (French for “Ferrett”) all of whom have a stuffed ferret displayed on their cars. Enjoyable meal together that evening, and nice to know that, for most of us, practice would not be till 11.30 with the race at 5.30- so maybe the forecast rain would have dried off before we were on track.

Midnight-enormous thunderstorm, track soaked. Much care will be

needed even with a drying track. Without care, the result is a car crumpled into the town walls. If you can race at Angouleme, you can race anywhere. It’s the most original street circuit in the world having started in the 1930’s, ending just post war, restarting 1981 (my first appearance there) and on to the present day. Racing is along, down, around and up the original stone ramparts. Highlights are 3 fierce hairpins, one at the end of a long fast straight, where some people do not seem to realise the straight has come to an end and come away with heavy repair bills as a result, then up two short climbs via two more hairpins to start another circuit.

Sunday - In the event, the only incident in our practice was a 1955 Bristol (what it was doing in our race I do not know) which crumpled into the wall at said first hairpin (no injury other than pride). Ten cars would be in the race proper- 6 Rileys including my supercharged TT Sprite, a Lea Francis, an MG, a Frazer Nash and a Talbot. I was 4th on grid, some 3 seconds behind the front 3 runners, but closely followed by all others. 5.30 race start delayed by a modern racer needing to be picked up from the track, rain clouds gathering..but we were off, and soon I was on my own, the three ahead I could only rarely see (their advantage was that all were on small/wide race wheels so on a track where acceleration is King, I shall be considering changes next year) , and no-one seemed to be behind me. Greeted back at the paddock by officials saying I was third, which I knew I was not as I had not overtaken anyone, but was Carmen working her “absence magic”- maybe 1, 2 or 3 had pulled off? No such luck, mistake admitted, official times all changed, I was 4th. Never mind- my times beat most of the Bugattis (over 40 of them- suspect many were “Argentinian”) in their two races, so a happy end, 100% complete bodily, mentally, and most important, mechanically.

Monday - Angouleme Paddock has a nasty white sandy surface that never dries out after rain..it gets everywhere. Car, clothes, you...so left in the morning in need a good scrub and brush-up for self and car combined. One abortive attempt to leave, thought I had left wallet at the B&B so returned, no wallet, then found it dropped down side of car seat. Did manage to find my home at least, and a nice welcome, but need wifely guidance next year, really. Carmeeeeeeeeeeeeen!!

1. Like-for-Like Repairs and Restorations

1. Owners undertaking like-for-like repairs—such as replacing body panels, engines, or components with identical originals—no longer need to notify the DVLA, provided:
 - The vehicle's appearance remains consistent with its original manufacture.
 - No changes are made to the V5C log book (e.g., colour, body type, engine capacity).
2. This means routine restorations can proceed without triggering inspections or risking registration suspension, allowing you to focus on preserving your vehicle without unnecessary bureaucracy.

2. Retaining Identity After Significant Modifications

1. Vehicles that have undergone significant structural modifications—including chassis alterations, non-standard bodywork, or drive-train swaps—can now retain their original Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and registration number.
2. Owners must notify the DVLA of these changes, which will be recorded with a 'modified' marker on the V5C. This preserves the vehicle's traceability and heritage while embracing innovation.
3. The DVLA encourages documentation (photos, invoices, summaries of work) to support the notification process. Processing times may vary, so check GOV.UK for details.

3. Electric Vehicle (EV) Conversions

1. EV conversions are specifically supported under the new guidance. Converted vehicles can retain their original VIN and registration number, provided the DVLA is notified. Vehicles over 40 years old may also qualify for existing historic vehicle tax exemptions, subject to DVLA approval.

This means there will be much less need for Q-plates.

Building Something Special

Ned Buck



With the crank fitted, the obvious next step was to fit the cam, However I had unfinished business on the front axle to sort out.

The king pins were an excellent fit in the 'shrunk' axle holes and I managed to fit the new bushes and ream them out without too much drama, although never having done this before I was apprehensive.



Using a vice and sockets to push the old bushes out, I also used a bolt and nut to pull them out.



The front suspension was then rebuilt again completely, hopefully for the last time!!

I had previously sent off the cylinder block for rebore and skimming of the head, so my next step was to lap and install the valves and springs, something I had done many times before on overhead valve engines. So this was fairly straight forward, although I did manage to fire one of the collets across the garage never to be seen again, which delayed things a bit.



I also decided that I had to get on with installing the new pistons, rods etc. These have shell bearings with which I was familiar, only the orientation of the offset big ends had me reaching for the phone to Tony Betts to ensure they went in the right way around.

It was interesting to note that at some point the barrels had been sleeved back to standard bore, and the top edge of the bores had been slightly chamfered. This, and the fact that the inlet valves had been increased in size from standard, suggested the engine had been worked on in the past.

When fitting the pistons I thought at first that I could put them in the barrels first and then lower the whole thing on to the crankcase. However, this proved to be quite difficult with only one pair of hands, so I reverted to fitting the barrels to the crankcase first. I had read that this joint between the two parts can be a serious source of leaks (but on the advice of a chap I bought the oversize oil pump from) I used a gasket and some Threebond sealant which he reckoned the racing boys use?? The pistons were then inserted into the barrels fairly easily.

Fitting the reworked cam came next, and I had a lot of fun trying (at least 6 times) to get the 9 rollers to stay put when sliding the cam into place. I eventually used an elastic band from a bunch of spring onions to hold them in place, along with a load of grease, and that worked. (I should have listened to the advice I had read!!). The bush for the cam was replaced with a better version and the pin that holds it in place also changed for an Allen key bolt as per Bob Garrett's advice, with a thread cut into the bush. I lined up the 'O' marks on the pinions and hopefully this will set the correct valve timing. The tappet gaps still need setting.



Note the 'O' s – two on the cam pinion and one on the crank pinion which need to align as shown.

The nut clearly needs to be very tight.

Having fitted the barrel block, pistons and cam, I made sure that the tappets were set at the right gap. Again, this took longer than I expected, as I was slightly unsure that I was doing it correctly. In the end, after turning the engine over several times to check the gaps, I was satisfied they were done correctly, time will tell!

A trip to the Le Mans Classic in my MGA interrupted progress for a while, but I soon had the front cam and crank pinions on, and tightened up. The crank being locked in position with a steel plate and a long length of steel whilst I leaned on the dog nut with a big socket in my torque wrench and a length of pipe. I didn't trust myself to get the torque right (not sure what it should be, except very tight), so I hit the dog nut with my impact wrench a couple of times, and then ensured the lock washer was bent over.



Next came the fitting of the Cylinder Head. I had bought an 'Alta' aluminium cylinder head

earlier in the year, and now I realised I need to check that there was sufficient clearance for the valves when they were fully open. I did a quick check without the gasket in place – all was well-so

the head was fitted using the correct sequence for tightening, and also some 'Wellseal' on the surfaces. Not what everyone would do, but in my experience a good idea.

Next came the fitting of the clutch. I had had the lining recovered very early on by a company called 'Saftec' – centring it whilst fitting the clutch pressure plate was done using a tool I made to the dimensions in Woodrow's big red book. The actual fitting of the toggle levers

with 'mousetrap' springs and spigots was very difficult, until I realised I could fit the 'mousetrap' spring on the toggle arms to the outer plate before trying to fit all the clutch springs, and then it went very smoothly.



I am now looking for a larger aluminium sump which, when fitted, will complete the engine.

To be continued

Austin Seven Clubs' Association

Summary of October 2025 A7CA meeting

This is a quarterly meeting online, attended by representatives from 17 member clubs,

The meeting was chaired by David Cochrane, who reflected on a successful season of rallies, including the PWA7C event at Stonehurst Farm and the Scottish Guildtown rally. He reported increased regional activity, with new local A7 groups forming in Cumbria, Oxfordshire, the south coast, and near Shrewsbury. He also confirmed that new volunteers had stepped forward to take over the magazine editorial role and that Nick Salmon would become Insurance Liaison Officer permanently.

Secretary Ruairidh Dunford confirmed clubs' approval to raise the price of the quarterly magazine (the Grey Mag) from £2.00 to £2.05 from 2026A.

The meeting unanimously approved a proposal for Nick Turley and Chris Garner to design and install a Stanley Edge Memorial Plaque, funded by the John Stubbs donation and prior allocations.

Treasurer Hugh Barnes reported a healthy bank balance of £28,965, noting higher printing costs (up 15p per copy) and archive expenses of £1,874. He explained that £18,000 of funds were committed to the archive and discussed the need to maintain a reserve.

Archivist Gordon England detailed progress in cataloguing and conservation, including 100 new items added, ongoing work on historic films, and a travelling archive display successfully exhibited at Stonehurst Farm.

Editor Howard Wright confirmed the completion of his final issue (2025D) and thanked contributors before handing over to the new editorial team. Registrar Peter Hales reported steady updates to vehicle records.

Webmaster Ahmed Abdel previewed a redesigned, modern A7CA website featuring new visuals, improved structure, and plans for educational content.

Publicity Officer Steve Earl reported strong growth on Facebook (2,500+ followers) and YouTube (11,500 Centenary video views). Nick Salmon, now confirmed as Insurance Liaison Officer, summarised ongoing collaboration with RH Insurance and outlined plans to liaise with other insurers.

Finally, clubs voted unanimously to transfer ownership of **Jack French's historic garage**—a long-standing A7CA exhibit—to the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum, ensuring its preservation and relieving A7CA of future financial responsibility.



Chummy Ladies go to Brittany Annie Peake

I'm lucky enough to own a 1927 Austin 7 Chummy, known as CJ, and I enjoy going on the Chummy Ladies' trips, the most recent of which was to Brittany, and this was my fifth adventure with them. We were 11 Chummies, 22 women and 2 spanner men.

The usual arrangement is to allow a day either side for travel, and 3 days for the stay. This time we had 4 days at the hotel.

I should say that this little expedition was quite daunting for me, unlike for so many of you experienced long range drivers. It was the furthest I had driven, and a first to a 'foreign' country, driving on the right hand side. I'm more comfortable driving my little car off-road, up steep and muddy hills, close to home.

In fact, I was in the hands of the best map reader, companion and navigator I could wish for. Jane Sale knows exactly what she is doing, and any problems getting to Saint Quay Portrieux would be down to me and the car, not the route. (We were to have a bit of that only too soon).

My first test was to get CJ to the Portsmouth ferry, via Cheltenham to pick up Fabienne Muschamp in her Chummy. Fabienne was co-organiser with Jane Patton, who has a holiday home in Brittany. Our carefully mapped out OS map routes to the ferry weren't entirely relaxing, despite hunting out the smallest roads we could find. Many were in fact trunk roads, and with artics sitting on my bumper, the car had already started to misfire. However, I thought that a quiet night at sea with other cars would make CJ feel better, and time spent in the bar would make me feel better as well. Brittany Ferries organised a clutch of Austin parking on an upper deck in their new and sumptuous vessel. It was somewhat less sumptuous by the time we moved off, each car leaving a healthy dollop of black oil on their perfect grey floor.



Jane Patton met us in St Malo and took us for coffee at St Brieuc. It would take us much of the day to reach our hotel, several cars in convoy. After treatment of my car's electrics in St Brieuc, Ian and Stuart released me for the onward trip to the hotel, although CJ continued to behave quite badly. However, we made it to our destination at Saint Quay Portrieux, and into the bar to join the other girls.

I realised just how carefully chosen the hotel was. The car park easily took all of us, with our vehicles being parked away from the road. We were also a 2-minute walk to the harbour, which was full of cafes and restaurants.

The organisation was second to none, as it always is on a trip like this. Each day had been thought through: guides and restaurants booked. Quite a feat to place 24 people each time. An itinerary was provided each day, with clear routes on the OS maps shown, marked up by Jane and Fabienne.

Saturday was a trip to Paimpol, via the Traon-Nez railway station in the forest. The instructions were to park in the forest, all navigators would board the train and meet the drivers in Paimpol later. The forest was beautiful, completely unspoilt, with only rough narrow tracks through it. All



sounded perfect and bucolic except that my Jane was in the loo when the train arrived, and missed it. Not helped by my shouting 'Is Jane on board?' when there were 3 Janes. Then CJ decided to give up completely. More of that later.

Paimpol was set aside for a browsing/shopping day. This beautiful port and harbour confirmed to us that our 11 little vintage cars were like

Hollywood starlets on the loose. The French apparently come across very few, and even fewer driven only by women. Out came the cameras, kisses were blown, my dodgy driving readily excused; Jane and I were even stalked by a campervan driver so he could get more photos. The extraordinary Breton welcome was unleashed wherever we went. A police car came by on the pretext that we were blocking a cycle path (quelle horreur!), but they really wanted to stop and enjoy the spectacle.

On Sunday and Monday, armed with carefully highlighted maps, we took in Chateau Roche Jagu, and a private tour of a church at Kermaria, famous for its 'Danses Macabres' frescoes. Fabienne was fortunately on hand to translate for our French guide. We also visited the Plage Napoleon (*see photo on right*) where the French Resistance liberated 135 Canadian airmen back to England during WW2. The



bay was sufficiently obscured for the Germans not to notice it. A tarmac road now allows visitors access. Back then I expect that the airmen had to make their own way down in the dark, lowered by ropes over the steep cliff.

There were fish and chips for lunch Chez Tonton, and afternoon tea at the Pattons' house in St Barnabas. The great asset of an Austin 7 is its size and manoeuvrability: we could all easily make it down the narrow path into the Pattons' orchard, line up and have tea and cake at the house.

Three A7s in two parking spaces!

Now is the time to mention the spanner men (and women), given that this was the first Chummy Ladies trip where so much was required. This is my 5th trip and I barely remember seeing any spanner men before.



Quite a few Ladies are no slouches when it comes to fixing their own cars. We had a lot of impressive girl spannering: Christine's gearstick came adrift from the selector plates on her drive to Portsmouth, but with her phone for remote spousal guidance, she carefully reinstalled it and made it to the ferry. Fabienne fixed her carburettor jets, without assistance from a passerby in the Andover Lidl carpark; a nice enough man, but as a helicopter engineer he couldn't help unless there was a large rotor on her hood. Gaynor White changed her wheels twice in the car park because both had loose spokes.

Mind you, despite very competent mending from the assembled women, Ian and Stuart were about to come into their own.

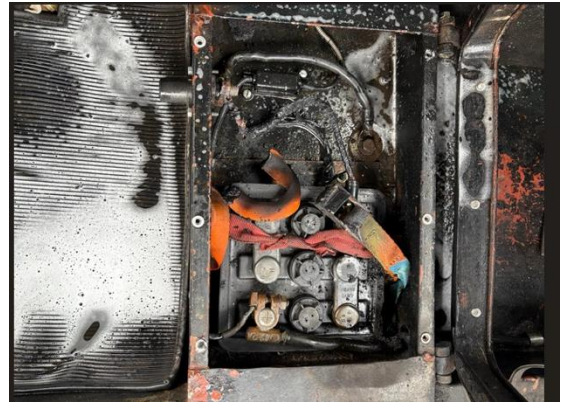
Mine was the only Chummy to fail miserably on both the first two days, and for which I was justly awarded the Plonker of the Day prize. My misfiring continued and the car just gave up on Saturday. I was Ian and Stuart's first proper casualty: they puffed out their chests, grabbed their tool kits and couldn't wait to fix the problem. For my second day of misbehaviour, we were at least in the beautiful forest, where the station was, and it wasn't raining. Batman and Robin worked out the problem quickly: the live spade connection to the coil was very loose, and with road vibration, the engine kept cutting out. I could manage fairly level roads, but not a hill. Easy-peasy for them. A tighten here and a tighten there, and we were off again in 20 minutes. Everyone by this time had left, but my RAC contingent gallantly stayed on. Ian took the lead in his 'modern' and with Stuart in my passenger seat, I headed to Paimpol with an escort. I felt like the queen going off to an engagement. I need to practise my smiling and waving.

Ann Robbin's car proved more interesting. Several people had parked up by the beach to swim, with Ann's car between two other Chummies. When in the water, she noticed steam

coming out from under her car, but quickly the steam turned to flames from below the seat. The live power cable insulation had worn away, and the bare wiring, contacting the chassis, ignited the battery. She was lucky to catch the fire before it took hold. Given that the cars all carried spare fuel cans (except mine), thank goodness for their fire extinguishers.

Battery fire

Despite the charred remains under the passenger seat, nobody seemed that bothered. Ian and Stuart isolated the battery from the car electrics, and push started the car. The following morning they sauntered off to the local ironmonger (thankfully Brittany still has such places) to purchase a 12volt 30 amp-hour lawnmower battery of the right size, plus an electric kettle. They stripped the insulation from the kettle cable, and twisted the live, neutral and earth cables together to provide sufficient amp capacity from the battery to the starter, if Ann only pressed it for a few seconds. Ian said it turned into a very effective 12 volt starter system. Only the lights and indicators would be left out, since they are 6 volt. Both spanner men were thrilled to have such a miraculous effect on 22 women. I didn't understand the physics, but it looked like genius to me.



Looking back on it, Jane and I have made some general observations about Brittany:

We spotted no litter AT ALL.

The food was excellent wherever we went, even at random stops on the road.

There are still local shops within the towns, such as bakeries. (These may be subsidised to keep the town from dying.)

Fruit and vegetable markets were of the highest quality.

The roads had no potholes. They were like snooker tables.

Everyone was charming.

Car parking was free of charge everywhere we went. (Herefordshire Council please note).

We did not spot one electric car, nor any electric charging points.

I found driving on the right much easier than I thought, even if my navigator had to nudge me from time to time to Drive On The Right!

Some of the Give Way signs were a bit confusing.

Roll on the next trip. Spain anyone?

FBHVC Survey

Summary:

The number of historic vehicles registered with the DVLA has risen to almost 2 million, owned by about 700,000 people

The historic vehicle sector now contributes over £7 billion annually to the UK economy, with owners spending on average over £4,500 per year maintaining and enjoying their vehicles.

The movement supports 2,700 specialist businesses, collectively employing 34,500 people across restoration, maintenance, parts supply, museums and events. Nearly half (45%) of those businesses now offer, or plan to offer, apprenticeship programmes

Almost 10 million people say they would like to own a historic

Over 4 million attended a historic vehicle event in the last year – a 100% increase since 2020.

historic vehicles account for only 0.2% of all miles driven in the UK, with the average vehicle covering just 837 miles annually.

The average age of an owner has risen to 66,

The under-35s now show the most significant interest in historic vehicles.

Further details <https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/survey>

HA7C committee Meeting Nov 2025

Summary

1. **NEW HA7C Award:** The Roland Alcock Award. This will be voted on by private ballot at the AGM by the members present. Any reason can be given, e.g. greatest A7 mileage, most interesting A7 trip, best meeting attendance, etc, etc. To be awarded at the AGM, and returned after one year.

2. Christmas Lunch. Many thanks to Michael Harcourt for arranging. A flyer with menu and price will be circulated. If anyone does not know their membership number, then ask the membership sec (see last page). Make sure to obtain a receipt after paying the Bunch of Carrots, because there have been instances where the landlord claimed someone had not paid. The venue for next year can be discussed at the AGM, if members so desire.

3. Finance: £1,855.36 in funds

4. Membership 45 primary members, 4 honorary, and 39 partners/family, total 88. (7 fewer than last year). Members are urged to give details of their A7 cars to Julie, so that she can put members in touch (with permission) with other club members with the same model.

5. Webmaster. The editor@ha7c.co.uk email address has been attacked by spammers, so Roly has to filter these out. Roly is looking into getting an amplifier for those giving a talk. Michael Ward will also ask Gill, the Richmond club Manager, if they have a system we could use.

6. Events. Possible HA7C holidays: Mid-Wales 2026 (joint with South Wales club) and Saumur in France in 2027. Interest in these will be gauged at the AGM.

7. Technical Advisor. Would members prefer some Shed Nights to be at the Richmond Club? Shed nights at Bosbury should preferably be when the evenings are lighter.

E5 petrol often contains less than 5% ethanol, similarly with E10. It is perfectly OK to mix the two, although E5 is preferable. E10 tends to go off quicker.

8. Insurance The HA7C does not promote RH over other insurers, and it may be cheaper to shop around and use another provider. However, for those approaching 80 years of age, it may be best to stay with the same insurer, as some may refuse insurance after that age.

9. Next Committee meeting will be Jan 13th 2026

The full minutes available from Bob Garrett secretary@ha7c.co.uk

BRENCO SPANNERS

A vintage car enthusiast wrote to Eddie asking whether Brenco spanners were used by a particular vehicle manufacturer?

Eddie replied:

I can't find any history on Brenco spanners, but I think due to the thinness of construction, the metal composition must contain Chrome Vanadium.

The few I have in my collection are my favourites to use, they are immensely strong even when being subjected to extra leverage!

When I started my apprenticeship in the 1950's at an NCB Colliery, Snail brand was a popular make of spanners, these were drop forged from thick metal and incredibly heavy!

The price of Ring spanners was way out of reach of apprentices' pocket money. I had to make do with tube spanners that the Colliery blacksmith made for me out of heavy gauge steam piping.

Insurance

RH Insurance is now called Howden. They will now consider insurance cover for learner and young drivers

For Sale and Wanted, is now on the HA7C website. All adverts will last for 3 months only. Send your ads to Roly Alcock webmaster@ha7c.co.uk

Wanted

Set of rear side screens to fit AD, AF or AG Tourer. Any condition will do, or just parts of side screens, especially the hinges
If you can help please phone 01792 208986 (Swansea). Many thanks. Stuart Phillips South Wales A7 Club

For Sale

Petrol Filler Cap for Chummy, bulkhead tank, threaded type. Old one found, so this one never used. Cost £34.60 plus postage. Offers to Frank 07971 820 721



Tail lights

I was raised as an only child, which really annoyed my sister

The Lucas motto: "Get home before dark."



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

Chairman	Michael Ward	01600 890 902	07939 539 926	chairman@ha7c.co.uk
Secretary	Bob Garrett	01497 831 310	07900 496 073	secretary@ha7c.co.uk
Treasurer	Kip Waistell	01981 550293	07733 811284	treasurer@ha7c.co.uk
Membership	Julia James	01568 797 959	07748 613 110	membership@ha7c.co.uk
Events Co-ordinator	Pat Caine/Jan Haywood		07966 387 815	events@ha7c.co.uk
Technical Advisor	Eddie Loader	01432 356 841	07817 361 921	technical@ha7c.co.uk
Editor	Frank Sibly	01531 640406	07971 820 721	editor@ha7c.co.uk
Webmaster	Roly Alcock		07730 557 952	webmaster@ha7c.co.uk

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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