

NORTH HAMPSHIRE *AUSTIN* ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
Monthly Newsletter and Events Update

www.nhaeg.org.uk

December 2007

Club nights at The New Inn, Heckfield, 8pm, 2nd Monday in every month

Mo's Mutterings

Just got back from visiting Marlene and Brian Grant in Cornwall so will have to put the newsletter together very quickly and get it out to you all as soon as possible.

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Maureen

Please note the current e-mail address on the membership lists for Tony and Pat Westhall is incorrect and should read tonyandpatw@btinternet.com

Colin's Column

November has been a busy month for many members with preparations for the Nightjar, more of which later. The month started off for me with my usual stint as a 'Sector Marshal', or as they called us this year 'Sector Captain' (very grand), at Hyde Park for the start of the 'London to Brighton Veteran Car Run'. This was my 20th year of doing it and I was joined as I have been for the past few years by Trevor (Edwards) and John (Hancock) who was doing it for the first time. Also there from the NHAEG were Alistair and Sue Frayling-Cork. It always involves a very early start and Trevor and John arrived at my house soon after 4.00am for the drive up to Hyde Park. Getting up at 3.15am is a bit of a struggle particularly when you have been out the previous night and not gone to bed until 1.00am.

The weather could not have been better with plenty of sunshine and for a change it was not very cold. The first cars start arriving in the paddock area before 6.00am which means in the dark with their very primitive lights it is very difficult to see which ones should be in your area. There are 30 cars to a sector but one of ours did not arrive, must have had trouble on the way. At 7.00am the cars in the first sector are sent on their way with the other sectors following at intervals, our sector leaving at about 8.am. There were well over 500 cars entered this year and it a fantastic sight to see so many pre 1905 cars together. It is amazing how fragile they look and how mechanically noisy some of them are. You wonder how so many manage to reach Brighton but only 48 retired this year although I think quite a few needed a bit of TLC on the way.

Secretary's Scribblings

Auction ~ November Club Night

As Colin has mentioned elsewhere the Auction this year was its usual mix of bidding, noise, fun and (so far as yours truly was concerned) frantic attempts to record accurately the proceedings to enable everyone to get their 'just desserts'.

In the event, the night yielded a very healthy boost to club funds of £46.95 due partly to the bids themselves (*has Dave H really got enough shed-space to house all those magazines and, if so, will he ever find enough time to read through them?*) and in no small part to the generosity of those members who kindly donated the sums to which they were entitled (i.e. 90% of the successful bids) to the club.

To all those we are extremely grateful and thank them for the gesture.

32nd 'Nightjar' Navigation Rally

Judging from the comments overheard by those competing in this year's event this was one of the best yet. Don seemed to have been able to pitch the clues at just the right level of difficulty and although one or two of the Manned Controls tasks were just a bit too arduous for some of the more 'mature' competitors, on balance everyone thought they provided just the right amount of challenge for those who like to get their teeth into something a bit devious and for those who, quite rightly, like to think they've given it their best and achieved a respectable result. At least no-one felt the need to register any 'formal complaints (which has, in fact, sometimes occurred in previous years).

In the final analysis, one of the 'real car' entrants had spent virtually the whole day attempting to cure carburetor flooding on his 1934 MG PA and, to his profound regret and irritation, was reduced to competing in a modern thus reducing the Pre-War entries (Class 1) to 19 and, as a result, boosting Class 2 (Moderns) to 9.

Also, 'two of our own' had their share of troubles. Dave Holland, as Colin has mentioned 'ran out of Amps' and had the ignominious task of calling out the AA to give him a boost. Wisely he then decided to keep going rather than stopping by at Elizabeth Hall. Richard (Scott) also had some recurring problem with his 1931 Riley 12/4 which resulted in it behaving more like a Riley 12/2.5 apparently. He and his navigator clearly laboured under difficulties and was probably dismayed with failure to attain his traditional high standard in the event, as a result. It can clearly happen to the best!

The third competitors from our club did rather better. Tony and Pat Westhall, ably assisted by their crew, came away with trophy for the Best NHAEG performance, acquiring a very creditable total of 339 points in their 1936 Austin 12/6 Ascot, despite losing 9 points because of being 3 minutes late back in Elizabeth Hall. Well done to Tony, Pat and crew!

The overall winner for Class 1 (Pre-War) was Christopher Smith in his 1936 Riley Adelphi (400 points).

A worthy second, with 398 points, was that regular stalwart from the depths of Gloucestershire, Alan Baker, in his superbly trustworthy 1932 Austin 7 Box Saloon in which he travels all the way to Hook, performs in the event and then back

home directly after all formalities are completed! What a feat! Needless to report, Alan also picked up the prize for the Best A7. Third prize went to John Tarring in a 1927 Humber 12/25, with 368 points.

In Class 2, the winner, with 408 points, was Peter Payne in a Ford Mondeo. Unusually, there was a tie for second place, both Marcia Pearce (Renault Megane) and Paul Boucher (Toyota Avensis) scoring 397 points each.

All in all, it was a very good evening indeed. Weather not brilliant but not too foul either; a decent turnout (in the end!) and a good time had by all – even those officiating, dare I say! If you have never experienced the Nightjar, why not think about it next year. Make a note in your diary – November 18th! You'll enjoy it!

A7CA Magazines ('grey/buff')

At present there are six members who have requested and paid for copies of the above quarterly magazine for this year – the last edition of which has just been received and currently is being distributed. Those members are: Colin Greig, Dave Holland, John Hancock, George Ewart, Peter Adams and Ted de la Riviere. Since renewal of our order to the A7CA for additional copies is now due could all those concerned please confirm they wish to continue to receive these and, if so, please contact me with payment of £4.00 for the full year (2008); each quarterly copy costing £1.00.

Also, if there are any other members who would like to start receiving this worthwhile publications by the Austin Seven Clubs Association, please let me know, and I will ass your names to the list. Please remember also the payment of £4.00.

2008 Committee Nominations

It's that time again! The committee for 2008 will be determined at the AGM to be held on 14th January and nominations are therefore invited from (or by) anyone who would like to propose themselves or someone else (with their permission!) to serve on it for the coming year.

A form for this purpose is included in this Newsletter and everyone is urged to give serious consideration to the issue. Although the current committee have all indicated a willingness to serve another year the prospect of 'fresh blood' is always very appealing and would be most welcome - so think about it. Could *you* spare the time every other month to attend a committee meeting and maybe help with the planning and/or execution of one or two activities during the club's calendar? If so – or you know of anyone who can – please send in your nomination(s) to reach a committee member before 7th January 2008. Remember there is no need to re-nominate existing committee members – just new ones.

2007 and all that, or, 'A Tale of Three Pities'

As HM Queen Elizabeth would probably put it this year, 2007, has turned out to be something of an *Annus Horribilis* and has brought a trio of misfortunes to the Edwards' household.

Firstly, earlier in the year, Jean's car fell victim to the dreaded Tesco contaminated petrol saga which took a while to get resolved although, it must be said, Tesco acted in a most professional and efficient manner over the entire issue. All got sorted eventually.

Then, of course, on July 20th came the big one. The flooding, following which we are still dealing with the aftermath. The likelihood of being back in our own home by Christmas once seemed to be a reasonable possibility but that prospect now appears to be fading into obscurity and the New Year seems much more likely.

Thirdly, and this is a cautionary tale for all motorists requiring replacement exhaust systems. On November 5th (an auspicious date in itself!) I placed my Xantia Estate into the tender loving care of the *Kwik-Fit* centre in Bracknell. The front exhaust section, containing the catalytic converter, required replacement. The appropriate item was ordered and delivery promised within a couple of hours, which happened. I then waited, with increasing anxiety, whilst a youth spent the next two hours or so wielding an acetylene gas torch under the raised body of the car in what appeared to be alarming attempts to cut through difficult clamp bolts. Eventually the manager of the centre called me over and, pointing to an ominous fluid dripping from beneath the car onto the workshop floor, enquired whether I had a leak when the car was brought in; I answered him firmly in the negative! The fluid, quite obviously, was hydraulic fluid which, being a Citroen, is vital for not only braking but also suspension. Clearly the activities of the person with the 'flame thrower' had had some fairly disastrous consequences!

Then began a protracted saga which, summarising, went as follows. *Kwik-Fit* were obliged to acknowledge having caused damage to the vehicle which, technically, was then 'off the road' and agreed to pay for any repairs necessary since they were unable to assess and carry out these themselves. It was then necessary, therefore, for me to drive (very, very carefully!) to the local Citroen garage in Wokingham where, it was discovered, not one, but three separate items had been damaged by the %&\$^£* individual waving the gas torch about. It was also quickly confirmed that spares were *not* in stock and would need to be back-ordered.

Furthermore the cost of repairs was estimated at £324.00! The car was declared unsafe to drive and was left there whilst *Kwik-Fit* arranged for a taxi to take me home.

A replacement hire car was offered by *Kwik-Fit* but, since Jean and I were travelling to Norfolk for a few days and were using her car, I didn't need a vehicle just then – fortunately for *Kwik-Fit*! Alternatively, however, I proposed that the cost of the catalytic converter (£182.00) should be refunded to which, with reluctance, they agreed.

On our return my car was still awaiting spares which, I then ventured to suggest, were presumably coming from either the Planet Zog or, at least, from Outer Mongolia.

I eventually got my car back, after 18 days without it, on the 23rd November, at which point I re-visited the issue with *Kwik-Fit* to ensure they would honour all promises made previously. These discussions are ongoing!

The lesson, if there is one, of all this is, if you need an exhaust you might try someone other than Bracknell *Kwik-Fit* who don't seem to be aware that angle-grinders are considerably safer to use to cut off corroded bolts than gas torches and, even if the latter do need to be used very occasionally, some of its staff appear to lack the necessary expertise to do so without causing serious damage to vehicles. Be warned!

Phew!

Despite all the above, are we downhearted? No we are *not!* And doubtless like the rest of our members, we are looking forward very much to the Christmas Season which will inevitably feel a little bit different this time around.

Anyway do have a good one and all the *very* best for the coming New Year.

TREVOR

Don's Doodlings

As you can imagine, things were rather hectic during the build-up to the Nightjar and on the night itself. Early the next morning Brian Grant and I got up early and went off to do the LL Autojumble at Midhurst!

Afterwards, I thought it may be a good idea to go and have a lie down in a darkened room for a few days. Instead, Maureen and I went to Cornwall to stay with Brian and Marlene Grant for a week in their newly acquired house.

When with Marlene and Brian, having a lie down is the last thing to be done. There are not many things left in Cornwall to see. Every day we were up and away and Marlene and Maureen still found time in M and S for a little retail therapy, believe it or not. It was a great week and good to meet all Marlene and Brian's friends, mostly in the pub.

Back home now, wading through the 108 emails and looking forward to the **NHAEG Christmas Dinner at Longbridge Mill**. Hope to see you there.

My sincere thanks to everyone who was involved in the Nightjar organization. As far as I know, it was a great success.

Don

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Events Diary Update!

January 14th 2008	Club Night / AGM	
February	Quiz	Colin
March	Talk on Testing Equipment	George
April	Spring Airing	
May	TBA	
June	Half Gallon Run	
July	Concourse	
August	TBA	
September	TBA	
October	TBA	
November	Auction	
December	Festive Fun	

