



NORTH HAMPSHIRE AUSTIN ENTHUSIASTS' GROUP welcomes owners of Austins and other vintage & classic cars

CHAIRMAN'S CHUNTER

It has been a pleasure to serve as your Chairman for the last four years. It has not been without its challenges, but the committee has managed to deliver a very full programme of club events, with the support of members who helped organise runs etc.

We have also plotted a course through the vexed issue of public liability and event insurance to safeguard the club and its members.

I took over as chairman with a totally new committee and the process of renewal continues as Denise and I need to spend more time together.

It's unfortunate that John & Jeanette have resigned for similar reasons, but I'm confident that the established expertise in the new committee will sustain the club – and that you will support them with help on events.

Special thanks are due to Alan Pickett for his role with membership and runs, Colin for the parts directory, John for the newsletter (and the long hours put into it), Jeanette for organising the Christmas dinner, Val for the monthly raffle, John & Jill for the French trip, Richard, Trevor, Colin & John for the Nightjar and Steve, the New Inn Landlord, for use of the Tap Room – a massive team effort!

Happy motoring in 2019,

Simon

JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER CLUB NEWS

Auction Night 12th November

We had a packed Tap Room for the annual ritual of getting rid of our garage junk. The dynamic duo of Colin and Don kept us entertained as they tried to identify what some of the items were! As usual 10% of the proceeds went to club funds.

Christmas Dinner Tuesday 4th December

The Downshire Golf Club was the 2018 venue by popular demand. We all had a good evening with some stunning raffle prizes on offer.

Club Night Monday 10th December

As a bit of light-hearted fun, we showed a short 45-minute film, 'Der Marmite Krieg' featuring two members' cars. Luckily most people saw the funny side of the very amateur acting even if the sound system struggled in the crowded room.

The AGM on Monday 14th January

As a result of resignations due to personal commitments, we have lost two couples from the committee, Simon & Denise and John & Jeanette. Adrian Walker was elected and will continue as Membership Secretary. He will join Andy Barker, Pete Kendrick and Richard Long to form our 2019 Committee, along with Harry Breakspear, who has since come forward.

Although the outgoing committee has mapped out the programme for 2019, the new team will need more direct support from members to help plan runs and to find speakers for club nights.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR WANTED

John Pratt writes, "As you might guess, I have thoroughly enjoyed editing the club's newsletter for the last 3 years and I hope it has proved a worthwhile read for you. It is now time for me to hand on the baton, in the hope that one of you might like to take on the mantle of editor – and perhaps bring some fresh thinking to it!

"It can be as simple or complicated as you like – the basic requirement is to report club news, including the diary of events. I introduced Aunt Brassica in an attempt to broaden the readership and bring a wry smile. However, it has started to cause me to question my own sanity!

"I have particularly enjoyed writing the member interview and exposing the many talents and Austin experiences of our members – a big thank you to everyone who took part in this and a big thank you for voting me the Annual Group Trophy again."

The Nightjar Saturday 17th November 2018

Richard Long was the new organiser this year, with the support of Trevor E and Colin, who will be retiring. This year (2019) he's on his own, but says he will call on Trevor, Colin and John when needed. He reports that the Nightjar 2018 was such a resounding success due to all the marshals and hall helpers - especially the hours that they spent out in the woods or in the hall. At least the weather was dry if a bit cold, but it was so much easier than in the last couple of years when the heavens opened.

The feedback he received from competitors was that they all really enjoyed it and many of them were regular entrants. The Nightjar is now part of their yearly car calendar. There were several first timers that did not seem deterred from trying again next year and have said they will enter again. The pictures that follow show part of the story, but a navigator's tale follows them...





The 'Nightjar' Navigational Scatter Rally is ideal for modern cars and for novices as well, as navigation help and guidance is available on the night. A new feature this year was a class for Post-war classic cars (up to 1978), suiting Morris Minors, Austin Healey Sprites, MGBs etc, as well as the usual classes covering Pre-war Vintage Cars, and Modern Cars (1978 onwards). This year 11 pre-war cars took part, the oldest being a De Dion Bouton.

This rally is the Austin contribution to the series of events making up the Inter-Register Championship. It is open to pre-war cars belonging to the various one-make car clubs who are members of the Inter-Register Club, as well as other classic cars (Class 2) and modern cars (Class 3).

There were prizes based on the number of points scored in each class; for the best Beginner, Novice and Expert and other sub-groups like the oldest driver & car, the youngest navigator, an all-woman crew, etc. There was also a raffle, in the hope that everyone goes home having enjoyed the whole evening.

A Navigator's Tale entitled 'Lost in The Woods!' provided by Derek Bell

Tony Westhall and I took part in Tony's 'The Duchess' 12/6 Ascot saloon, as we have done for quite a few years. This year we were blessed with good weather, i.e. no rain, ice or fog, and an almost full moon that proved to be a valued asset! The ATDC team was made up with Team Winney (Peter & George) in Peter's Cambridge (driven all the way from Bath), and Simon Worté & Rod Walker in Simon's 10/4 Lichfield from Midhurst in Sussex.

As the name suggests, the 'Nightjar' is held in the dark to make it extra challenging, particularly for those with rather primitive pre-war lighting! It starts and finishes at Old Basing Village Hall, just outside Basingstoke. The idea is that we are given a series of grid references to plot on two OS maps, denoting the location of 6 unmanned (easier?) checkpoints where bird names may be found, as well as 6 manned checkpoints where puzzles had to be solved to get bird's names. Two of the manned checkpoints had to be found by plotting a series of clues on the map. All of this plotting time comes out of the allocated 5 hours to complete the event. Having done this in the comfort of the hall we then had to decide which 9 we would visit, and a rough route between them. Then it's out into the cold to follow our route.

The manned checkpoints have a number of points allocated for just getting there, plus further points (a higher number for increased difficulty of the puzzles given on arrival). The puzzles are done on foot, using torches and a compass.

Having successfully found the clues at 2 unmanned checkpoints, we decided to have a go at the manned checkpoint with the highest score. This turned out to be a series of compass directions and distances, taking you along paths in a wood. It then sent us off the path into a thicket of hawthorn (ouch!!) where various wooden posts could be found with numbers on them. We had to either add up or multiply the digits to get a number which could be converted to a letter of the alphabet.

Some of these posts were quite close together, giving plenty of opportunity for error. We soon had a list of consonants, but no vowels, not much help when you have to make up a bird's name! We then decided to make our way back to the car park, but as we were not on a path, we were not sure which direction to take. Checking our compass, we made a decision and soon hit a path. The problem was that we met two other teams who were also lost - and we couldn't agree which direction was right. Together we followed a path which led to a gate into a meadow, and the gate had a map! Sadly, it didn't show our position.

Tony & I checked the compass and headed across the meadow, whilst the others turned back. Some time later we hit a road, which must lead to the car park, however a decision on which direction to follow it was made by checking the moon, which was south-ish. We passed a house that looked familiar, and shortly afterwards we were delighted to see the car park entrance, an hour after we started, just as Team Winney arrived via the 'proper' gate from the woods. We had to put an answer down for the bird's name, which we knew had 5 letters, so after looking at our set of consonants, including 2 H's an R and an N, Tony suggested HERON. To our amazement we were told this was correct, earning us 80 points!

Having spent so much time on this one puzzle we were unable to complete the planned 9 checkpoint visits and had to hurry back to base, after visiting only 6, arriving a few minutes later than our target, losing some penalty points. After gratefully devouring our pre-ordered fish/chicken & chips, the results were announced. Riley won the individual and team prizes, we were 8th out of 11 cars, with Team Winney 9th and Simon Wort 11th. We were delighted to win the shield for the best placed NHAEG member car, and another for the best placed 'Novice' team.

Although not doing as well as we hoped, the night was enjoyable and a credit to Richard Long, Trevor Edwards and their team for a lot of hard work. The Duchess, as always, performed faultlessly.

Derek Ball



2018 NIGHTJAR RESULTS

CLASS ONE

No	DRIVER	NAVIGATOR	VEHICLE	POINTS	CLASS POS
2	Adrian DUCKER	John DAVID	Riley 9 hp	381	1
5	Mark PACEY	Rachel PACEY (aged 15)	Riley 12/4Falcon	333	2
1	Tim BRITNELL	David BRITNELL	De Dion Bouton	302	3

CLASS TWO

10	David BURTON	Helen BURTON	Morris Minor	383	1
14	Ed BOWDEN	Aline ROGERS	MGB GT	292	2
13	Lewis GENT	David COAN	Jaguar Mk 10	259	3

CLASS THREE

18	Rob HICK	Julie ASTIN	Nissan Primera	434	1
17	Marcia OLIVER	Peter OLIVER	Ford CMax	382	2
19	David BARTHOLOMEW	Robin APPLEBY	VW Touran	379	3

CLUB DIARY & EVENTS JANUARY 2019

NHAEG Events Planned	2019 Dates	Details	Arranged by, or details from
Club Night	Mon 14th Jan	AGM	Committee
Club Night	Mon 11th Feb	Quiz	TBC
Club Night	Mon 11th March	TBC	TBC
Club Night	Mon 8th April	Spring 'Airing' with ATDC Chairman	Richard Long
Club/ATDC Event	Sun 21st April	Drive-it-day	TBC
Club Night	Mon 13th May	Speaker:	TBC
Club Night	Mon 10th June	Half Gallon Run	TBC
Club Night	Mon 8th July	Coveted Car Evening	TBC
Club Night	Mon 12th August	Natter & Noggin	TBC
Club Event	Sun 8 th September	Heritage Day Run	TBC
Club Night	Mon 9th Sept	Speaker:	TBC
Club Night	Mon 14th Oct	Shoebox Challenge	TBC
Club Night	Mon 11th November	Auction Night	TBC
Club Night	Mon 9th December	Film night:	TBC
Event	Mon 2nd December	Christmas Dinner, Downshire Golf Club	TBC

Other Organisers	2019 Confirmed or Expected Dates (shown in red)	Events & locations	Contacts
Brooklands	Wednesday 1st January	New Year's Day gathering of Pre-1988 Vehicles & Modern sports and supercars.	www.brooklandsmuseum.com
VSCC	Sun 27th Jan	Winter Driving Tests, Brooklands	www.brooklandsmuseum.com
Brooklands	Sun 17 th Feb	Winter Classic Breakfast from 07.30am; Hill Ascents	www.brooklandsmuseum.com
Brooklands	Sun 28th April	British Marques Day incorporating Austin Morris Day	www.brooklandsmuseum.com
Practical Classics	Fri 22nd-Sun 24th March	Restoration Show, NEC	www.necrestorationshow.com/
Brooklands Museum	Sat 18th May	Vintage Festival: Vehicle displays, Live Music, Re-enactment, Trade Village	www.brooklandsmuseum.com
Brooklands Museum	Sun 19th May	Brooklands Spring Classic Breakfast	www.brooklandsmuseum.com
Thornycroft Society	Sunday 12th May	Thornycroft Society Basingstoke Festival of Transport	www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/page.php?PgID=734167&ClubID=1523
Beaulieu Museum	Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th May	Spring Autojumble	www.beaulieu.co.uk/events/spring-autojumble
Old Basing	Saturday 15th June	Annual Carnival	Denise

THE NORTH HAMPSHIRE AUSTIN ENTHUSIASTS' GROUP – JANUARY 2019

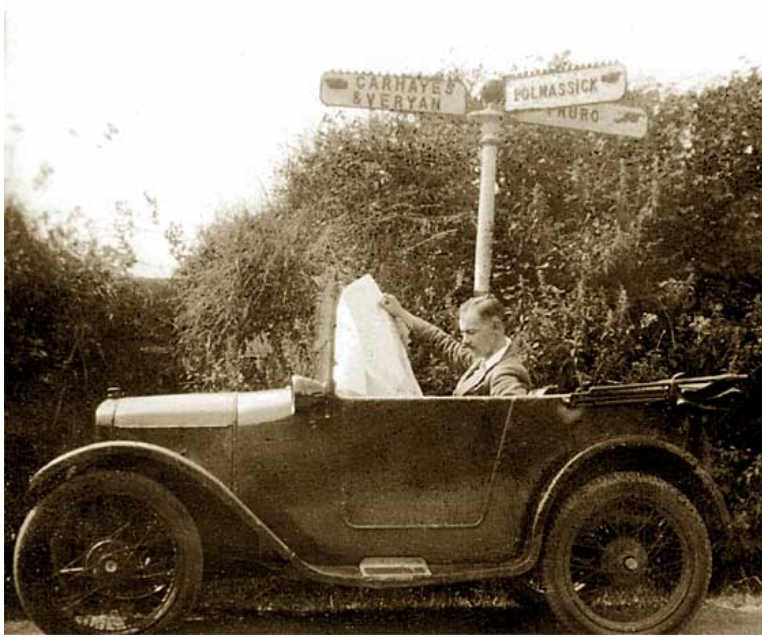
Hartley Wintney Festival	Saturday 8th June	Classic Car Display at the Village Festival with procession theme 'Heroes & Heroines'	Entry Form from David Preston: classiccars.hwf016@btinternet.com
Watercress Line	Sat 15th & Sun 16th June	War on the Line: vehicles & revival dress	www.watercressline.co.uk/product.php/26/war-on-the-line
Classic & Sportscar Show with Flywheel	Sun 23rd June	Classic & sportscar Show & Flywheel Festival at Bicester Heritage	www.bicesterheritage.co.uk
BEN Charity	Sun 29th June	Drive through Windsor Great Park, BBQ & Concours	
Brooklands Museum	Saturday 15-16th June	Brooklands Double Twelve Motorsport Festival	www.brooklandsmuseum.com
750 MC/ Beaulieu	Sunday 7th July	57th National Austin Seven Rally at Beaulieu	www.750mc.co.uk
Macmillan Cancer Support	Sunday 7th July	Classic Motor Show at Clandon Park Estate (Henchley gate entrance)	email: macmillanclassiccarshow@hotmail.com or tel Barry Brown 07932869876
Broughton Festival of Transport	Sunday 14th July	Free entry if displaying a classic car at Broughton Sports Field, Buckholt Road SO20 8DA on B3084 4m west of Stockbridge	Email to register: motors@broughtonpageantoftransport.co.uk or www.facebook.com/BroughtonPageantofTransport
Thames Traditional Boat Festival	Friday 19th - Sun 21st July	Display of pre-1970 cars and vintage vehicles, Henley- On-Thames. Fawley Meadows	Lyndon Yorke at vehicles@tradboatfestival.com
ATDC	Fri 12th - Sun 14th July	54th National Rally	www.austintenddriversclub.com/events
Brooklands Museum	Sun 21st July	BTM Classic Car Show & Retro Jumble	Tim Morris, BTM 01932 867381
West Berks Classic Vehicle Club	Fri 9th-Sun 11 th August	Newbury Classic Vehicle Show, Newbury College, Monks Lane, Newbury RG14 7TD. £6 entry pp	www.classicvehicles.org.uk or email show@classicvehicles.org.uk
Milestones Museum, Basingstoke	Sat 10th August	Science/combustion event with classic car/vehicle display 12-3pm. Entry form link opposite	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSerPXD0q6EEWz4P9CgnuggNa8JAGEOfJatTL90O8_6uhWYLw/viewform?usp=sf_link
Camberley Car Show	Saturday 17th August	Vintage, Classics, Customs, Hot Rods, Motorbikes, in town centre in aid of The Kidney Fund	By invitation only: contact Ken Bonner: kenbonner@btinternet.com
Swallowfield Horticultural Society	Sunday 25th – Monday 26 th August	Classic cars, bikes, tractors, lorries etc at new location in Swallowfield Park	email Rod Stean: swallowfieldwheels@outlook.com or tel: 01252 625305
Bealieu Autojumble	Saturday 7th-Sunday 8th September	International Autojumble	www.beaulieu.co.uk/events/international-autojumble
Shooting Star Chase	Sunday 2nd September	'Family Fun Day' display at the Children's Hospice, Christopher's, between Guildford and Godalming	By invitation only - contact Phil Dunford phildunford@dunfords.co.uk

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Goodwood Road & Racing	Provisional dates Fri 7th - Sun 9th Sept	Revival meeting (20th Anniversary)	www.goodwood.com
Heritage weekends	6-9th & 13-15th September	Open days at historic locations	www.heritageopendays.org.uk
Surrey Classic Vehicle Club	Sunday 16th September	Classic Vehicle gathering at Rural Life Centre, Tilford (500 entries in 2017)	Application form at www.surreyclassicvehicleclub.com or contact Phil Dunford
Basingstoke MG Car Club	Sunday 23rd September	Doughnut Run: 65 leisurely miles through back roads & lunch stop. Start/finish at Milestones, Basingstoke	Adrian Walker or www.BasingstokeMGClub.co.uk for entry form
West Green House	Sunday 23rd September	Classic cars in a Concours D' Elegance at West Green House, Thackham's Lane, Hartley Wintney	Book online https://festivalticketkiosk.cloudvenue.co.uk/home
Classic Motor Show	Friday 8th-Sunday 10th November	NEC Birmingham	

Inter-Register Club Events	2019 Confirmed Dates and Expected dates (shown in red)	Events & Locations	Contacts for each event
MG Car Club	Sun 17th March	"Navisat" Scatter Rally Crowborough East Sussex	Peter Lamb email: peterlamb27@talktalk.net
The Alvis Register	Sat 30th March	Scatter Rally + tour West Sussex	James Campbell jamesiscampbell@btconnect.com
The Jowett Register	date to be confirmed	Treasure Hunt Gt Dunmow Essex	Richard Keil email: richard@richardkeilphotography.com
The Riley Register	Sun in August to be confirmed	Super Scatter Rally Sonning Common, South Oxfordshire	Richard Scott email: rscottok@btinternet.com
VSCC Invitation	Sun 12th May	Pub meet social day, Barkway Herts, top RH corner	Jim Dalton email: jimdaltan509@gmail.com
The Crossley Register	Sun 22nd Sept	Treasure Hunt North Yorks	Stephen Weld Tel. 01765 658569
MG Car Club	Sun 6th Oct	Autumn "Navisat" Kent	Steve Cherry stevecherry@virginmedia.com
The Riley Register	Sat 26th October	Rally, Worcestershire	Greg Nicholas gregnicholas@hotmail.co.uk
ATDC/NHAEG	Sat 16th November	"Nightjar" Scatter/Orienteering Surrey/Hants/Berks	Richard Long email: richard_d_long@hotmail.com

NOSTALGIA CORNER – THE DAYS BEFORE GPS



THE DAYS BEFORE MOBILE PHONES



THE MEMBER INTERVIEW – JOHN PRATT

This month we take revenge on our retiring newspaper editor, John, who is interviewed by Denise.

Denise: When did you first realise that you had an interest in cars (and how)?

John: From a very early age, I was inspired by my grandfather, who was a motor engineer and had a garage business. At weekends my older cousin and I would 'help' him – mainly serving petrol and paraffin. He was a motoring pioneer and was among those motorists fined in 1902, for exceeding the 12mph speed limit and failing to stop for a horse. In 1904 he drove from London to Vienna in four and a half days. Subsequently he set up his own garage business in Kilburn, London in 1905, maintaining cars and manufacturing motorbikes and cycles. His interests extended to planes and, in the post WWI period, he would regularly meet friends at an airfield at Park Royal, London (now a large industrial estate) and although he didn't



fly, he was actively involved in their construction. For a time, he also manufactured accumulators and wooden 'Eifel Tower' radio masts, before being bankrupted in 1926, having guaranteed a friend's loan. However, the garage business continued in a smaller guise until 1955, during which time he owned a 1914 Renault DM Tourer and a 1920 Mercedes Benz 'Mountain Sports' in which he attended VSCC meets. (I just noticed in the original photo that it had no front brakes!)

Denise: What was the first car that you owned?

John: I couldn't wait to have a car and purchased a 1939 Standard Flying Nine for £20 in 1961, while I was still at school. After initial difficulties trying to cold-start it (as the Solex carburettor didn't like any throttle with it), it served me well for a year. However, the cable brakes always pulled to the right which was dangerous, and it leaked a horrendous amount of oil because some



of the sump bolts had stripped the threads in the aluminium block. So, before I went to university, I sold it and bought a 1948 Morris 8 Series E, which was very reliable and had decent brakes!



Denise: What other interesting cars have you owned and how did you come to buy them?

John: Eventually the demand for more speed led to the Morris 8 giving way to a Morris Minor, which ran its big-ends, and then to a Mini, which was prone to brake fade on rallies and I broke the crankshaft through over-revving the motor. Then the gearbox seized, so it made way for an MG



Midget Mark II in 1968, which played some part in attracting a girlfriend who became my first wife in the same year. Then as we all find, the pressures of family life drive you to saloons, in my case a Fiat 128 which didn't handle in the wet and I put into a large hedge. Then followed an endless stream of dull saloons and company cars that could pull a caravan, mainly Fords and a terrible Rover SD1 that literally fell apart as I drove it.



As a relief from company cars, I bought a 1955 MGA 1600, after feeling flush with some redundancy money. Although it had an MoT, underneath the spurious grey paint, it was a rust bucket and needed a nut and bolt restoration. This process took nine years and the disassembled car filled our double garage. We even moved to a new house with it twice in various stages of disassembly! During which time, I learned to weld, braze, spray paint and how to recondition the gearbox, all as the children grew up.

Having completed it, it was a total disappointment to drive and so it went to the auction in 1988. My plan for a Morris Minor convertible restoration died when I used the proceeds of the MGA to start my own business.



After a year of using my old company car as business transport, I was emboldened to buy a decent vehicle that was 4 years old – a BMW 635i. These were made in small numbers and almost hand-



built, so it didn't stand up to business use very well. I certainly hadn't reckoned with repair bills of £250 per month, so when there was no more metal left to weld the exhaust system together (as the replacement was listed at £1,000) and all four tyres were badly worn, she had to go.

Denise: Have you had any scary experiences at the wheel?

John: Apart from putting the Fiat 128 into a hedge, I managed to spin a Lexus GS300 on a wet road and take out a car coming in the opposite direction – it was messy, but luckily no-one was hurt. This led me to go the safe route of 4-wheel drive with Subaru Impreza and Forester Prodrive turbos for a number of years.



Denise: Tell us about any pulse increasing adventures, not necessarily in cars?

John: I've experienced two events – neither on land. The first occasion I was on a sailing holiday with my best friend Graham through the Dutch canal system in his father's 21ft 6in Audacity class boat. This had all the sea-handling properties of a large cork, having a broad beam and a short drop-keel (ideal for cruising the Suffolk estuaries). By the time we had reached the Oosterschelde, money was low and we were trapped in harbour by a Force 7 storm. By the time that we had given the harbour-master our last guilders, the storm had appeared to moderate, so we set sail for home. As we reached the North Sea, we realised that it was still blowing a Force 7 North Westerly out there, with absolutely no chance of turning back. With darkness upon us and the jib fully reefed in, we were blown along across past car ferries heading East. The sea and wind direction conspired to create a terrible corkscrew motion and I was seasick the whole night and Graham clung to the tiller to stop us broaching.

Come dawn, we became aware of a line of breaking waves across our path and a large cargo vessel to our starboard. We fired a flare to no avail and decided the last throw of the dice was to start the engine. This inboard Petter (or was it a Lister) engine was a petrol unit and a pig to start, usually because all the electrics were soaked. However, on this occasion it fired up and using all my strength to hold the propeller drive in forwards, we managed to turn parallel to the breakers at the last minute. What we had seen was the sea breaking over a sandbank in the mouth of the Thames Estuary! We had obviously made too much leeway in the night and drifted much further south than we ever imagined. It took the best part of the day for two very shaken sailors to battle up to Harwich on the motor and to safety. We were so scarred by this experience that I never sailed again and we have never talked about it until this year (60 years later). At the time, I should have known better as I had sailed the year before in this boat with Graham and another flatmate, when the engine failed in a flat calm, just off the Goodwin Sands in the Channel. I vividly recall stripping the carburettor, cleaning the jets and setting it a bit richer, as we drifted helplessly towards the Sands. Luckily it restarted and never missed a beat. The third crew member was so traumatized he never sailed again!

The second occasion, in early 2009, after my first wife died and having sold my business and retired, I decided to learn to fly. As part of the qualification for a pilot's licence you must fly a triangular cross-country course solo, landing at two 'away' airfields. On the due day, I had the route nicely plotted, but a weather front came in from the west, quicker than expected – the low cloud and increasingly bad visibility meant that I got lost twice (missing my waypoints near Gaydon and then later at Stokenchurch) and had to request twice (as a last resort) an emergency heading from air traffic control. My erroneous diversions trying to visually locate the waypoints meant that the trip took much longer and both I and the instructors at White Waltham were starting to panic! Eventually I passed all the seven theory exams and the flying skill tests and bought a one-tenth share of a 1968 Piper Cherokee. But by the time I reached 70, the cataracts in my eyes had become so bad that I struggled to spot tall masts and decided the time was right to give up. But Jeanette and I had a lot of fun flying to various airfields round the south and midlands for either lunch or tea!





Denise: How did you come to buy your first old Austin?

John: So, clutching the money from selling my 1/10th share of the Cherokee, I started trying to find an affordable vintage car. This led me to Trevor Edwards and to purchase 'PO', who has served us well, never missing a beat.

Denise: What prompted you to buy a second Austin?

John: We didn't intend to buy a second Austin, but in our original search for one we had met Trevor Worton, an elderly gentleman who lived in Fleet. He had a couple of Austin 7s and a Morris Cowley Tourer. When he passed away aged 85, his nephew got in touch for advice on selling them. The Box Saloon wasn't as nice as 'PO', but the yellow & black 1926 Chummy caught our eye – knowing how much Trevor had spent on the car we realised this was a gem and put in an offer. As a thank you for agreeing to sell it to us, we helped clear out Trevor's garage and, in the process, found all the side-screens for the Chummy and the original toolkit.



Denise: What is the most interesting car that you have driven?



John: For a time, Jeanette and I had a Lotus Elise, which replaced my Jaguar XK Coupe, which looked lovely but wasn't a satisfying drive. The Lotus was brilliant, but eventually its hard-core nature got the better of us and it went. After a year of driving my mother's Toyota Aygo (after she stopped driving aged 95), we decided we needed a fast good-handling car to supplement our SUV. We'd recently had a Christmas present of driving a Ferrari 460 back-to-back with an Aston Martin Vantage and this confirmed our Lotus experience that the mid-engine layout was hard to beat. So, after a long search, we found a dusty second-hand Porsche Boxster sitting at the back of a Lotus dealer's yard and bought it!

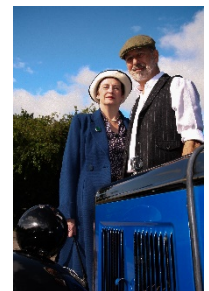


Denise: Did you always tinker with cars? Do you have an engineering bent?

John: Yes, I've always tinkered with cars and maybe instead of qualifying as a civil engineer, I should have studied mechanical engineering, but most of my career was spent in marketing and commercial roles as a line manager and as a consultant all within the construction & building materials sector.

Denise: What have been the high points of Austin ownership?

John: There have been many high points derived from owning a Seven, principally the joy of bimbbling along Hampshire's minor roads. Even the slow speed, discomfort and the challenge of double de-clutching is outweighed by the smiles and waves that we get from passers-by. We also took part in a film as extras with 'PO' and this was the beginning of a friendship with the film's producer. Luckily, leaving aside fuel vapourisation in the hot weather, we haven't had any low points.



Denise: What have you enjoyed most about NHAEG?

John: We've enjoyed meeting a new crowd of people with a common interest in cars. We've particularly enjoyed the shorter runs, because as everyone knows, the Seven is not the most comfortable car! And there are speakers on the winter nights that make it worthwhile going out on a cold wet evening! We have done a lot of shows and, last year, we got a lot out of attending Christopher's, the (Shooting Star Chase) children's hospice with 'Ophelia' – the enjoyment of the badly disabled and very ill children and their carers was very palpable and moving.

Denise: Looking back – what would you do differently?

John: Nothing – I try never to look back! I realise that in talking this through that my main enjoyment has been in driving and the pride of ownership of some great cars.

TECHNICAL MATTERS: WHERE TO PUT THE ENGINE?

In 1887 Rene Panhard and Emile Levassor established a factory to build Daimler motors and they unveiled first car in 1891. After experiments with locating the engine under the floor in the middle of the car and at the rear they opted for a front mounted power plant driving the rear wheels. The passengers all faced forwards, the steering was via the front wheels and the 'Systeme Panhard' was to set the template for motoring during much of the 20th century.

Other early car manufacturers had flirted with the under-floor and mid-engine layout to shorten the transmission drive length – often using a chain drive. But the deficiencies of easy access to the engine, cooling it and necessarily perching the driver on top of it, brought about the demise of this layout – until more recently.

The favoured engine position pre-war was at the front with drive taken to the rear wheels via a propeller shaft. Notable exceptions would include the 1928 Alvis 12-50 AWD and the 1929 Cord 810 in the USA, which was the first *front-wheel-drive car* to use constant-velocity joints.

Passenger car 'packaging' was forever changed by the 1958 Mini with its front engine front wheel drive layout enabled by the Hardy Spicer constant velocity drive shaft joint. Meanwhile the VW 'Beetle' with pre-war origins had briefly popularised the rear engine, rear drive layout.

So why the fuss about mid-engine layouts? The answer is handling performance! Starting with the pre-war Auto Union grand prix car, which smashed the opposition, it was largely forgotten until John Cooper and Colin Chapman achieved racing success with it post-war, before it then became almost universal in single seaters.

The idea then migrated to two seat sports cars. At the cheaper end of the spectrum the Toyota MR2 was a popular success and the Porsche Boxster/Cayman filled the gap up to the exotic supercars. Then came the four seaters (think Ferrari Mondial, Lotus Evora etc) which was more of a challenge to get the weight balance right.

Mounting the engine in the middle instead of the front of the vehicle puts more weight over the rear tires, so they have more traction and provide more assistance to the front tires in braking the vehicle, with less chance of rear-wheel lockup and less chance of a skid or spin out. If the mid-engine vehicle is also rear-drive the added weight on the rear tires can also improve acceleration on slippery surfaces, providing much of the benefit of all wheel drive without the added weight and expense of all wheel drive components.

The mid-engine layout makes ABS brakes and traction control systems work better, by providing them more traction to control. The mid-engine layout may make a vehicle safer, since an accident can occur if a vehicle cannot stay in its own lane around a curve or is unable to stop quickly enough. Mid-engine design is also a way to provide additional empty crush space in the front of the automobile between the bumper and the windshield, which can then be used in a frontal collision to absorb more of the impact force to minimize penetration into the passenger compartment of the vehicle.

In most automobiles, and in sports cars especially, ideal car handling requires balanced traction between the front and rear wheels when cornering, in order to maximize the possible speed around curves without sliding out. This balance is harder to achieve when the heavy weight of the engine is located far to the front or far to the rear of the vehicle. Some automobile designs strive to balance the fore and aft weight distribution by other means, such as putting the engine in the front and the transmission and battery in the rear of the vehicle. But this increases the polar moment of inertia, impairing the rate of directional change.

Another benefit comes when the heavy mass of the engine is located close to the back of the seats. It makes it easier for the suspension to absorb the force of bumps, so the riders feel a smoother ride. But in sports cars the engine position is once again used to increase performance and the potentially smoother ride is usually more than offset by stiffer shock absorbers.

TREVOR'S QUIZ: "NOEL"

Though the season has now passed all answers start with the letters N, O, E or L

- | | | |
|--|-------------------|------|
| 1. This Tchaikovsky work could damage the head | — — — — — | 10 |
| 2. A major or minor surgical procedure | — — — — — | 9 |
| 3. Perform a task that may be fatal | — — — — — | 7 |
| 4. Theatre-going US President | — — — — — | 7 |
| 5. It's not far from port to starboard on this vessel | — — — — — — — — | 6, 4 |
| 6. Not unusual! | — — — — — | 8 |
| 7. The largest part of Great Britain | — — — — — | 7 |
| 8. Right-wing volcanic ash that is a convenience | — — — — — | 8 |
| 9. An aircraft popular with Elgar | — — — — — | 6 |
| 10. Illegal football position | — — — — — | 7 |
| 11. No difference either way | — — — — — | 8 |
| 12. Luck of the draw? | — — — — — | 7 |
| 13. Highly resistant orchestra leader | — — — - — — — — — | 3, 9 |
| 14. A greasy picture | — — — — — — — — | 3, 8 |
| 15. The largest pin of a 13A plug | — — — — — | 5 |
| 16. A mad insect on the moon | — — — — — | 7 |
| 17. This sign indicates 'take away'. | — — — — — | 7 |
| 18. A layer above the earth | — — — — — | 5 |
| 19. And the rest | — — — — — | 2, 6 |
| 20. A mischievous Celtic 'being' | — — — — — — — — | 10 |
| 21. Material named after a British and an American city | — — — — — | 5 |
| 22. Where a dismissed Australian cricket team may be sent? | — — — — — | 7 |
| 23. A Beethoven work and a penguin | — — — — — | 7 |
| 24. This instrument tells 'porkies' | — — — — — | 4 |
| 25. Award for only having a knocker on the door | — — — — — — — — | 5, 5 |

Name(s):.....

*Please submit your entry, by hand or email to Trevor Edwards, 55 The Brambles, Crowthorne. Berks RG45 6EF by **Friday, 8th March 2019**. (email: trevor_c.edwards@btinternet.com)
Don't forget to do this! All entries are being logged and the member(s) submitting the highest number of winning entries by the end of 2019 will be awarded a 'grand' prize!!!*

NOVEMBER'S CAPTION COMPETITION WINNER

From Trevor Edwards:



SPANNERMAN

A tip which may be useful to someone.

If you find the screw cap on a tube of glue, such as Araldite or Plastic Padding, won't unscrew, and you are turning the tube into a corkscrew trying, pour some boiling water over the cap. The heat softens the glue, job done.

Cheers, Malcolm.



SNOW IS FORECAST...



READERS WRITE TO AUNT BRASSICA©...



Dear Aunt Brassica,
I like to take my dog 'Biffo'
for a ride, but I am having
trouble controlling him in
the car.

Please do you have any
suggestions?

Yours, 'Freda from
Farnham'



Dear Freda,

I enjoyed your picture of your lovely dog, but isn't 'Biffo' big!

I think that having a dog with you, when you take a gentleman in the car, gives you so much added protection from their unwanted advances.

But I wonder if the smell of the pipe, that your gentleman friend is smoking, is upsetting poor Biffo. But I suppose if Biffo is also a bit smelly, that may be why your passengers may choose to smoke an aromatic tobacco.

I recommend that you ask your gentleman friend to take Biffo for a long walk before your drive, which would work off some energy from both of them.

Yours, Aunt Brassica

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