



## Dear Members

I hope that some of you managed to get your cars out for National Drive it Day on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April ? It was a fine spring day and an excellent opportunity to get your historic car out of its winter slumber, or give it a good buff up and polish. Our thanks go to the Basingstoke MG club for arranging the route which consisted of two loops around Winslade - Upton Grey – Southrope - New Alresford- and returning via Alton. Overall mileage of about 64 miles but you could join anywhere or just do part of the route. In order to comply with Covid restrictions there were no organised stopping points for social gatherings.

( If anyone has any pictures of the event please forward them to the editor.)

## Slowly, but surely, (we all hope ! )

The prospects of a return to some form of normality gets stronger each day and the recent 'Drive It Day', although inevitably not in the format we're all familiar with, was, by a few accounts, encouraging evidence that some of us, at least, are venturing cautiously out once again into the big wide world in our old vehicles.

It's sincerely hoped that those who did enjoyed the drive on a fine, if a little brisk and windy day and completed their excursion uneventfully which, for two of our members, it sadly did not. As can be seen in the image below some thoughtless, utterly inconsiderate individual managed to re-arrange the rear end of Andy Ranson's Austin Ten after he and Do had parked up and gone for a walk and picnic along a cliff, near their Weymouth home on Sunday and having done so the miscreant evidently left without leaving any message owning up to his (or her) misdemeanour. Furthermore, the damage was not noticed until arriving back home when they walked round the rear of the vehicle.

Evidently Weymouth, like many other resorts no doubt, was heaving with visitors on the 25<sup>th</sup> April (D.I.D.) and the culprit was thought most probably to be a *Grockle*, as 'foreign invaders' are termed in the West Country, whose mindless action has now left Andy with the task of dealing with all the consequent, unnecessary hassle associated with it, not to mention the £100.00 excess on his insurance.

Fortunately, such instances are mercifully rare amongst the 'old car fraternity' and in this case the outcome certainly *could* have been considerably worse since it appears that damage was confined to the luggage rack and spare wheel (which was jammed forward and trapped in such a way as to prevent its immediate removal) and the vehicle body itself was spared any damage. Had it been so repair costs would, of course, be significantly greater.



Also, the distinctive rear lamps were miraculously spared any damage which must be a blessing since those of such a design are difficult and costly to source. We wish Andy well in his efforts to get JU 2145 in fighting fit condition again speedily, whilst wishing the anonymous perpetrator a double puncture on the M3 at 3.00 a.m. on a wild and stormy night!

As has been publicised earlier a Run is being organised for Sunday May 23<sup>rd</sup>, this being the first weekend opportunity following Step 3 of the Government-announced Lockdown Easing programme. If all goes to plan we will still need to strictly limit numbers to 30 and thus far, 27 members, (in 15 vehicles), have indicated an interest in participating. **Please note that if anyone else is interested in joining in on the day in question they are encouraged to let me know as soon as possible but by Monday May 10<sup>th</sup> at the very latest.**

The Run itself will commence from that well-used location, *Conkers Garden Centre* on the A30 in Hatch and cover a distance of roughly 30 miles to a choice of *two* destinations, both very close to each other – one free and the other at a modest cost for entry. Those on the Run may choose which one (or both) nearer the time when details will be announced. Till then, keep guessing!

Similarly, it is hoped to reinstate Club meetings at the 'New Inn' in June, this being the 14<sup>th</sup> i.e. the second Monday in the month. Again, we will be limiting numbers to 30. Thus far, just 11 have let me have names. It is, however, important that we stick to Government guidelines and must not be oversubscribed. To avoid this, if you would like to start meeting up again on that date please do let me have your name(s) and note carefully that, for the time being at least, Club meetings will be **day time activities, commencing around noon**. Steve, our landlord, has kindly agreed for tables/chairs for 30 persons to be set up within the white-fenced area outside for our exclusive use which, providing weather permits, should suit us perfectly and keep things 'legal'. Fingers crossed for none of the wet stuff!

There's another quiz accompanying this month's Bulletin, similar to last month's. Please keep the entries rolling in! Just a mention here that the 'day of reckoning' is beginning to appear on the horizon when all those who have been submitting quiz entries with IOU's attached will be respectfully requested to honour their debts, (in aid of the RNLI). As of now something in excess of £40.00 is outstanding so that will make for a modest addition to that worthy charity's coffers. You all probably know who you are but don't worry, a careful record is being kept and I'll let you know how much in due course!

Meanwhile, please don't forget to let me have any further input re both Club activities mentioned above.

Above all please continue to take care and stay safe! Not too long now before we're able to greet each other in person again!

*P.S. Just a reminder that Tony Westhall's 'virtual' rally on the Isle of Wight takes place over the weekend of 8/9 May, for which he is guaranteeing a nice sunny day!*

*This will involve a Google Maps tour of the island, using directions starting from Norton Grange and during which there will be a number of questions to answer. You have a leisurely few days, until the 15<sup>th</sup> May, to get your answers in to Tony who should be contacted at [tonyandpatw@btinternet.com](mailto:tonyandpatw@btinternet.com) (or 01420 87450) to register your entry. If you haven't used Streetview before, check it out on your computer/laptop etc., and have a go.*

*This rally should be enjoyable and probably almost as good as the real thing!*

*Hint: Those who may have been on one of our several Club trips to the Isle of Wight in the past should be fairly familiar with the area covered on this occasion!*

**Trevor E**

## Are your sparks where you really want them ?

As a 'go-to' person for car electrics I have witnessed many issues that could have been avoided with a few minutes of care and maintenance. In some cases the owner of the car has narrowly missed a fire – or worse I've been presented with the aftermath of one, which results in wholesale replacement of large sections of the car's wiring at some considerable and mostly avoidable expense. There's no 'black magic' to car electrics and some simple observations and remedial work can make all the difference to reliability and the avoidance of sometimes catastrophic outcomes.

Winter is a good time to think about your car electrics, you have some downtime time in which to execute some remedial work. Old cars shake and vibrate, which often leads to chafing and sometimes complete failure of old wires and suspect joins. Continuous temperature changes under the bonnet conspire to harden insulation, which cracks and allows the ingress of moisture. Our cars tend to issue oil into areas that can affect the electrical integrity of joints – much of this can be attended to before it results in a long wait on the roadside for the inevitable recovery ride home!

Here are few things you can easily take a look at and remediate where necessary.

- 1) **Battery leads:** are they in good condition and free from obvious signs of chafing on the insulation? Are they connected to the battery nicely without corrosion or that horrible white fluffy deposit? Are there any visible signs of stray strands that need to be tidied? If you've lost a few strands – re-make the connection, or buy a new lead!

Is the earth connection to the chassis clean and well made? Is the engine properly earthed? It's surprising how many poor starting cars can be remedied with a new earth strap, easily fitted between a bell-housing bolt and the chassis (or body in the case of a monocoque)

- 2) **Wire integrity:** Any hard and cracked insulation is a failure waiting to happen, any wires that look suspect should be replaced – don't take chances or wind tape around them, that is not a solution! Take a look at places where wires go through bodywork, drillings in the chassis, headlight bowls etc. Can you see any missing grommets or signs of chafing? Deal with it now and not on the side of the road! Thin pieces of rubber can be folded around wires and slid into exit holes then held in place with a cable tie – there's often no need to disconnect anything to get a gromet over the wires.

Are there any joins that have been made to extend wires or make connections to additional accessories? Are the joints secure and well-insulated? Twisting wires together and winding tape around them is a big no-no! Crimped joints are also not ideal because of vibration and continuous temperature fluctuations. Soldering and heat shrink sleeve is a permanent and robust solution – someone you know has a soldering iron!

If you have any wires that are just wound around screw terminals – fit a proper ring terminal, it takes a few minutes and reduces the risk of connections failing while the car is running.

Check the fuse box and make sure that there is no corrosion or heavy tarnishing around the fuse clips – a little bit of WD40 can work wonders (but don't drown it!)

Are there any tight wires? Always ensure there's some slack and that wires are not pulled around sharp corners or edges – if it's not long enough, replace it or extend it properly with a soldering iron and some heat shrink! Look at screw terminal joints and make sure there are no stray strands – if you've lost strands re-terminate, don't just cut them off!

- 3) **Your dynamo:** (make sure the car is switched off) – don't be scared to remove the dust band and take a look inside. Take time to look at the internal connections to each of the brushes – if you see insulation problems or suspect connections deal with them – or seek advice from a specialist.

Make sure the brushes are not worn right down or that any of them have worn unevenly, and that they are free to move in their guides against the retaining spring pressure – a seized or tight brush will result in a charging failure.

Take a look at the commutator, you'll see a series of copper segments interspersed with insulating material, the gaps between the copper segments should be free from copper particles and carbon dust (that will have worn off the brushes) – if it looks clogged carefully scrape the debris out with a small jeweller's screwdriver or pointed (but not sharp) tool, go easy and try not to scratch the commutator surface. Make sure any debris that comes out is not left in the dynamo.

If there is any oil or grease covering the armature and/or the brushes remove the dynamo from the car and carefully clean it with clean rag and white spirit or methylated spirit – DON'T use thinners or any other solvent.

If you're not comfortable with doing the work and the dynamo is a mess inside have an experienced person take a look for you, most dynamo failures result from maintenance neglect – do it now, not when you want to be out in the sun with the roof open!

- 4) **Coil and Distributor:** Check that any connections to both the coil and the distributor are sound – again soldering is better than crimping. Distributor wires are very prone to hardening because of engine heat – if the wires feel rigid or look cracked replace them now! If you've used the live terminal on the coil for a supply to another ignition-switched device – then think about how that switched supply might be tidied up. Having multiple connections on the coil is not good practice especially because that circuit is often not fused.

- 5) **Non-fused consumers:** It's a dangerous game to play! Often old cars are 'upgraded' with such things as spotlights, cigarette lighter sockets and electric cooling fans – MAKE SURE these are all fused with the right value, any electrical breakdown could cause a short to earth, which unfused will probably result in a fire. If necessary, fit an auxiliary fuse box. Tapping off an existing circuit with a high fuse value does not protect your car!
- 6) **Lamps:** Remove lenses and inspect bulb sockets – sort out any corrosion or heavy tarnishing. Make sure the light unit is not wet or damp, and that it is properly earthed. On vintage cars it's not good practice to rely on the mechanical connection between the light unit and the body of the car because any corrosion will increase the resistance of the path to earth. Where possible run an earth wire from the light unit to the chassis and make sure you have a sound paint-free connection.
- 7) **Peace of mind:** It's never a good idea to leave old cars unattended with the battery connected, old wires and old consumers with aged insulators break down and/or get damp, you can never be 100% sure that when you walk away from the car something is not waiting to fail. Fit a battery isolator and switch the car off when you leave it. Battery isolators come in all shapes and sizes, some fit directly to the battery terminal and take minutes to fit – a few minutes work might save you much heart ache!

A few simple tricks and a couple of hours will pay dividends! As an old instructor once told me *'when trying to resolve an electrical problem, use your eyes and your nose first, 90% of problems can be resolved without the need of flashy test kit'* and he was right!

Happy Motoring, Andy Seager

## Entertainment on TV

Austin 7 Special - Ulster

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eeiV7NX8\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eeiV7NX8_s)

**TV – Yesterday Channel** ( Freeview, Sky, Virgin ) :

1) **Bangers and Cash** – Mathewsons, Auctions ( Thursday at 8pm)

Classic & Vintage cars and vehicles for sale. Regular car and memorabilia auctions in North Yorkshire.

2) **Secrets of the Transport Museum** ( Tuesday at 8pm)

Filmed at Brooklands

3) **Warbird workshop** (Thursday 9pm )

Restoration of planes from WWII

Episodes also available on catch up via UK TV for the above

## And now for something different – the Riley RM



No-one we've asked is able to say what the RM in, Riley RM actually stands for, but the RM really is the essence of immediate post-war classic motoring in a single package. Indeed there is even a lot of pre-war spirit here, but in a car so much easier to drive and live with than many of its contemporaries. Forget MG. To many a motorist in the 1930s and beyond, Riley was the purveyor of affordable and innovative sports cars. 'As old as the industry, as modern as the hour' was the company's motto. Ground-breaking engineering, turbo-cooled brakes (in 1919) and superb engines characterised the cars. That was until Morris took over in 1938.

Fear ye not, for Riley was allowed a fair degree of autonomy in pre-BMC days and the first RM, the 1½-litre RMA, had the great twin-cam, overhead valve engine, along with other bonuses such as front torsion bar suspension, rack-and-pinion steering and hydraulic brakes. Our test car here is a later RMA, with some improvements such as a larger rear window. There's just about every styling cue you could want from this era on these vehicles: sublime, flowing, running boards (on most models, though not our 1954 RME), a split windscreen, centre hinged bonnet and a wonderful chrome radiator. Open the rear-hinged 'suicide' driver's door and you are back in a 'proper' car cabin, with beautiful, soft, green pleated seats, a vast spoked steering wheel you'd expect to see in something pre-war at Brooklands, more polished woodwork than a Victorian library and a lovely instrument panel featuring what appears to be a line-up of town hall clocks, both round and square. Actually one is a clock but we also have a speedometer, ammeter, oil pressure gauge and fuel level dial.

Activate the starter, ease the delightful short throw gearlever into first, dig for the handbrake and we're off. Performance from the 1½-litre engine isn't going to subject you to G-forces but it is a lovely flexible unit with an urgent sound, accompanied by wonderful gear whine. What a place to be, looking out through the split screen over that bonnet, the wings gently falling away and... well, it's almost all too much. It's Ruddy Marvellous.

## DAILY DRIVING

So if you are lucky enough to own a Riley RM, is it really suitable for everyday use in modern traffic? Well, a lot of owners tend to use their cars regularly, and a 2½-litre RM will more than stand its own in modern traffic.

Bear in mind that 31 seconds officially elapse before the smaller-engined version hits 60mph and it's maybe not the best motorway transport. The car will cruise at 60mph, though, and the engine has plenty of low-speed torque which is useful for those urban roundabouts, and the brakes are excellent for a car of this era. It may overheat in long traffic queues, so it's worth fitting a Kenlowe fan.

## LOOKING AFTER IT

Your local Halfords auto centre might not relish the prospect of setting its apprentices onto a pre-war design twin-cam engine, but all is not lost. The Riley RM Club ([www.rileymclub.org.uk](http://www.rileymclub.org.uk)) staunchly believes the cars should be used, and its spares operation, the Riley RM Centre is British Motor Heritage-approved – it really is that good.

Everything from condensers and other service items to steering racks and manifolds can be supplied, as well as access to expert help. You might not always get next day courier delivery but they are quick. Once set up, the cars are straightforward to maintain and work on, but they do need regular greasing as dictated in the service book.



## ON THE SHOW CIRCUIT

The RM is surely one of the best ambassadors the classic car movement has, and you could take it to just about any car gathering that doesn't centre around drifting.

These are the type of classics that just make friends wherever they go. The cars are so usable that there's no need to just gingerly drive one to a local static event and spend the day squatting uncomfortably on a deckchair by the car, wondering if you'll get home. Nah, get out there on a classic run. The car will happily hold its own in any traffic and you'll love every minute of the event, as will many others!

## THE LONG WEEKEND

You could almost spend a weekend just sitting in an RM savouring the ambience and let your mind enjoy a seemingly endless loop of 1950s imagery as The Billy Cotton Band Show echoes from the radio. But it's far better just to press the starter and point the car anywhere. It'll be happy. An RM is comfortable and there's loads of room for four inside. Even the ride is good, and relatively soft and cosseting considering that underneath you lurks a rigid chassis. You should emerge from a long journey not shaken, but with emotions happily stirred. Expect around 25mpg by the way. There's plenty of space for both spares and suitcases in the boot, and who needs air conditioning when you can open a window?

## ON THE B-ROADS

No roads should disturb an RM from getting on with the job, though if we're blasting along, the larger-engined cars might be best. Any RM will give you handling and roadholding far above not only contemporaries but many newer cars.

The steering is nicely weighted and precise, an excellent rack-and-pinion set-up in fact. Once you're used to the size of the steering wheel you can happily thread it through your hands. There's a lot of communication from the steering. Obviously you get some understeer but judicious use of the accelerator almost eradicates this, and body roll is kept to a minimum. The clutch isn't too heavy, the brakes are good and the only problem is choosing which of your favourite B-roads to put your RM through its paces.



## WHAT TO PAY

**Project: £5000-8000**  
**Usable: £6000-12,000**  
**Good: £10-19,000**  
**Concours: £20,000+**

cc - Classic Car Weekly



## Events – All dates subject to Change !

### Club Drive it Day Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021

Club event combining DiD and the Half Gallon Run

### Club meeting 14<sup>th</sup> June

Outside at the New Inn - details to follow.

### Basingstoke Festival of Transport – 22nd Aug 2021 (New date)

The Basingstoke Festival of Transport will be held at the War Memorial Park, Basingstoke, RG21 4AG. Parking is available at Old Common, London Road (use RG21 4BY and follow the parking signs) for £2.

NHAEG is organising a parking area for club members and those wishing to attend should complete the Car Club Registration Form which may be obtained from

Trevor Mulford (01252) 620435 or by email [trevormulford1942@gmail.com](mailto:trevormulford1942@gmail.com)

### The Beaulieu 2021 International Autojumble.

The autojumble planned for the 15-16<sup>th</sup> May is now **CANCELLED**

The event planned for 4-5<sup>th</sup> September is still on schedule.

### Hartley Witney Festival – (Postponed until Sat 4<sup>th</sup> September)

This will combine the following events:

Procession / Classic Cars / Arena Events / Stalls / Catering / Animal Farm / Morris Dancers etc  
If you wish to show your car, please contact:

Trevor Mulford (01252) 620435 or by email [trevormulford1942@gmail.com](mailto:trevormulford1942@gmail.com)

### Classic Motor Show

12-14 November 2021, NEC, Birmingham

### The Austin 7 Centenary Celebration & Rally

This is due to take place between 19th-24th July 2022 at the Fire Service college, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire. As provided in the magazine of the Scottish Austin Seven Club. For more information, please visit [www.a7centenary.com](http://www.a7centenary.com)

Stay safe

NHAEG Committee