



# THE AUSTIN SEVEN CLUBS' ASSOCIATION



**President:** Bob Wyatt  
Past Presidents: Donald Doughty, Stanley Edge, Bert Hadley and Freddie Henry

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD AT THE HERITAGE MOTOR CENTRE, GAYDON

AT 11.00 AM ON SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

<b>Present</b>	Andy Lowe	Chairman A7CA; MA7C
	Bob Wyatt	President
	Chris Garner	Vice Chairman A7CA; PWA7C
	Howard Annett	Magazine Distribution and Back Issues; A7OC
	Roger Brown	Registrar A7CA
	Hazel Gore	Advertising A7CA and MA7C
	Chris Heeley	Treasurer A7CA; PWA7C
	Phil Baildon	Archivist A7CA
	Hugh Barnes	CA7 & VCC
	Nick Beck	SA7C; BA7C
	Brem Bremner-Smith	MA7C
	David Charles	A7 Special Register and Cornwall A7C Rep
	Steve Hodgson	Worthing Gp
	Dave Martin	Asst Archivist A7CA; PWA7C
	Charlie Plain-Jones	PWA7C; 750 MC
	Stuart Phillips	SWA7C
	Roger Price	Online A7C
	John Williams	SWA7C
	Bob Prophet	Secretary A7CA; MA7C; PWA7C
<b>Apologies</b>	Graham Baldock	Public Relations A7CA; EA7C; HA7C
	Chris Charles	Website Co-ordinator A7CA
	Bernard Griffiths	Events & Projects Co-ordinator A7CA
	Ed Waugh	Editor The Grey Mag; PWA7C
	Gerhard Brenneisen	A7C Deutschland
	David Cochran	Pram Hood Register
	Gill Davis	750 MC; CA7VCC
	Arthur Davies	MA7C
	Ruairidh Dunford	Gordon England Register
	Paul Maulden	Norfolk A7C
	Lorna Mountford	Swallow Register
	Les Morley	EA7C
	Dave Orange	EA7C
	Mike Tebbett	Mulliner Register

<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>1. The Chairman welcomed the meeting, especially Bob Wyatt, the President, to The Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon. He hoped that all would have a "Happy Austin 7 New Year". The Secretary explained the reconstruction and modernisation of the Heritage Motor Centre and advised that catering facilities may be less than desired and warned that the museum was closed.</p> <p><b>Minutes of the previous Meeting</b></p> <p>2. The Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2015 were accepted as a true record of proceedings and were duly signed. The Secretary apologised that the Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2015 had still not been approved and signed (but had been circulated) and said that he would arrange for this to happen in due course.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>3. There were no matters arising.</p> <p><b>Chairman's Report</b></p> <p>4. The Chairman reported that he had had active meetings at Lubenham and that progress was being made in the Archives. The Restoration show had taken place at Stoneleigh where the MA7C carried the A7 word to the world at large. Three clubs had exhibited at the NEC Classic Car Show: PWA7C, OA7C and MA7C featuring various A7s and a flying A7. He reported that there would be a meeting in 2016 at Laon in France to celebrate the "World of Austin". He went on to say that he had spoken twice to Bernard Griffiths who was happy to continue to act as Events co-ordinator and handle the calendar. However, he would send the details on to Chris to go on the website by post as he didn't use a computer. The Chairman had explained that he had put in the current list as he had it but the updates would be added to the website and, in future, would not put in the magazine at all but on the website only as they were easier to update. The Chairman noted that dates in The Grey Mag were for the main events and rallies not for club nights etc.</p> <p><b>Secretary's Report</b></p> <p>5. The Secretary explained the system of booking a room at Gaydon whereby A7CA would be allocated a room based on the numbers attending. He went on to say that, having asked Clubs who wished to attend this particular meeting, some 14 had volunteered: nearer the day, a number had cancelled and he had offered vacancies to others resulting in 19 souls attending. Therefore, he had booked a room for 20 and A7CA would be invited to pay £151.12 for the privilege. A7CA would pay the same amount for each of the July and October meetings and that he had to book in advance in case rooms were not available. He told the meeting that, for the AGM in April, he had booked a room for 60 which would cost £433.12. He questioned whether or not A7CA was spending Association money wisely. The Treasurer confirmed that, in 2015, A7CA had paid some £900 for rooms and tea/coffee etc at Gaydon. A brief discussion ensued about possible alternative (and cheaper) venues and the Secretary asked all to let him know if anyone could think of somewhere.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p>
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## Treasurer's Report

6. The Treasurer explained the accounts for Sep – Dec 15 (attached) after which Hugh Barnes asked that all expenses connected with the digitisation of the Archives be kept separate from the rest of the accounts: this was agreed and the Treasurer noted the meeting's decision.

Treasurer

## Information

10. Magazine. Ed was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report:

"First of all, a Happy New Year to you all. Sorry I am not with you all but this is your quarter break from me. As always, the A issue is a quicker turnaround due to the Christmas holidays and this quarter was back to the old days spending most of my time back at Dad's due to the Bridge being attached to another object by an inclined plane wrapped helically around an axis. So not even 5 months into married life and I was back at my Dad's; even the neighbours were concerned...

This quarter has a couple of great articles, one of which I first put in the Pre-War A7 Club mag a few years ago. After trawling through my archives, the article was found and I got in touch with the magazine again to request permission to reprint it in a different publication. After a bit of chasing, I was able to get special permission from them. Again, my thanks go to Classic Bike magazine for allowing me to reproduce it.

The second article was in relation to Mark Stewart's beautiful van at the NEC show. I had seen an article in Classic Car Weekly so got in touch with them asking to reproduce it along with the photographs. They happily agreed and upon receiving payment of £250 they would send it over. After recovering from choking on my lunch, I got in touch with Mark and asked if he would pen something for the Grey Mag. He replied saying that Chris Garner had already asked him to do something for the Pre-War mag but I was welcome to use it along with the article that had appeared a few months earlier in regards to its restoration. After a fair bit of editing to stitch the articles together and getting photos from the actual photographer from the NEC, we have a great article.

The main problem I had with this quarter's issue was the events. As it had been discussed at the AGM last April, as far as I was concerned it was agreed that events would no longer appear in the Grey Mag but on the website. I had to pull all the events together myself from various sources and do the insert as per last year. As there was some discrepancy, some events went in this issue. Some other Clubs had supplied their events through the proper channel via the Events Co-ordinator and, the day before the press date, an e-mail came from the events co-ordinator asking Club Secretaries to send me the dates direct. For the second year, I had to collate all the dates and put them in order. Collating the events dates isn't really a job for the editor so I would like to again propose the following:

'Club events, apart from appropriate adverts for main Club events, are no

longer published in the Grey Mag. All local Club events/holidays/weekends away are collated by the events co-ordinator and published on the Association website.' [Secretary's Note. This has been agreed].

Also, I ask that no one should promise anyone that something will appear in the Grey Mag without first speaking to the editor and having the courtesy to ask if it is possible: even then there are no guarantees.

Because the events had to go in, I had to remove the advert prepared by Charlie Plain-Jones for the Track Day. I have been in touch with Charlie to apologise but would like ask that the Track Day is given a mention during the meeting [Secretary's Note. The advertisement is attached to these Minutes].

See you all at the AGM."

All

11. Website. Chris was unable to attend but sent the following report:

"Between October and the end of December, 16,489 page views have been recorded on the website (a 25.43% increase on the previous quarter) from 5,178 visitors (11.97% increase). As usual, the Chassis Register is the most popular page with 3,345 views and 2197 searches using the Online Chassis Register Search (39.51% increase). Details of the member clubs and their meeting details is the second most popular with 446 views (10.54% decrease). With the new website being mobile compatible, we have seen 409 visitors on mobile devices, a 33.50% increase on the last quarter.

Social Media has really taken off recently with a steady flow of 'likes' on the Facebook page: currently, we have 293. In August 2015, we hit the 200 mark so our online following is growing, especially from enthusiasts around the world.

This leads me on to Events. Last year, this page was viewed 599 times so please do add your club events to this listing. Please send these in the format of Date, Event Title, and Club. The Club name will link the visitor to your club website. Please note that this calendar is to display club rallies and events which you are organising and attending and not for regular monthly meetings.

Please don't be shy about sending in any news reports or other updates for the website."

12. Advertising. Hazel told the meeting that advertising space for 2016A had taken 8½ pages; payments for Oct 15 to 10 Jan 16 had netted £1269.14. Further income of £418 is expected when advertisers receive the invoice with 2016A.

**Archivist**

17. Phil showed some new acquisitions (magazines) and some new Depper photographs which he asked the President to identify. He went on to say that he had received some plans which had been conserved by Wigston plus a report of what they had done for A7CA paid for from the insurance claim. He quoted prices from Wigston to scan and print 47 plans. Discussion ensued about the advisability of

<p>allowing a viewer to manufacture an item from these plans when it was known that some plans could produce an item which could fail. This could render the Association liable. It was agreed, therefore, that a form of words be attached to these (and other) plans which released A7CA from any liability: Phil would look into this. He mentioned the possibility of re-publishing Bryan Purves' Source book as he had some 30 years' worth of corrections. He told the meeting that Bryan now had publishing rights (returned from the publisher) and that A7CA could make corrections and re-publish the book if Bryan were to pass on the copyright.</p>	
<p>18. Hugh Barnes told of the work being done in the Archives. He said that he was being open and transparent about what was being done and how. He said that, at the moment, the team was trying to produce a high quality catalogue and to list all magazines etc. He mentioned the countless trophies which had been cleaned at a cost of £150 and which Nick Turley will photograph free of charge. He then mentioned a one day course in Winchester run by Hampshire County Council and suggested that five people (Phil Baildon, Dave Martin, Chris Garner, Chris Charles and Hugh Barnes) be invited to attend the course. He suggested that the cost would be in the region of £700 (including expenses, which were not specified) for which he sought Association funding. This was agreed by all present. He said that archiving work had not yet started as the team was busy working out what had to be done and how; Nick Beck said that, when the flood was discovered, the Triumph staff – with the best will in the world – had removed everything to a position of dry safety; they were still separating and sorting this out. He estimated that work proper would start in Mar/Apr. Hugh went on to say that quotes had been sought for restoration and preservation work and he invited members to read the Minutes of the meetings held at Lubenham to be found on the Association website.</p>	Phil
<p>19. The Chairman then told the meeting that, since the flood at the Archives at Lubenham, there had been much hard work and progress. The amount of work completed by a very small group on behalf of the Austin 7 movement had been outstanding. Many members will not have visited the Archives or even be aware of them; they hold an important collection of items about the development and history of the Austin 7 and its passage through time. The work achieved by 'amateur' but trained volunteers had been excellent. However, it was now time to move up a level. The Association had been building up its funds for quite a while; the time was now appropriate to spend some of that money to secure the Austin artefacts for the future and to make preparations to develop the Archive using newer techniques of preservation and presentation. He told of his attempts to sell or even give away his own collection of 48 years' worth of Motor Sport. In the end, he had thrown them away and had bought a CD which was much more comprehensive than his own collection.</p>	All
<p>20. The Chairman then proposed that the Austin 7 Clubs' Association allocate an initial budget of £5000 to start the process of digitisation of the Association Archives. He asked members to note that this sum was likely to amount to much more before completion of the project - possibly in the region of £17,500. At a show of hands, twelve clubs agreed to the proposal, no clubs voted against and none abstained. The Secretary had received one vote in favour by e-mail.</p>	
<p>21. Hazel Gore suggested that a bid be put to HLF: Hugh Barnes replied that the team was due to discuss that at a meeting that afternoon; he noted that the Archive project ticked most of the HLF boxes.</p>	All

## Registrar

22. Roger Brown told of having processed 77 submissions which had resulted in the recording of 29 new cars. He asked whether or not any member objected to the register no longer being in colour and whether or not members downloaded the register. The general consensus was that colour had not been missed and that few, if any, downloaded the register, simply referring to it on screen.

## Any Other Business

23. Jack French's Garage. Charlie Plain-Jones explained the background to Jack French, his garage (and its salvage), 750 MC racing and the subsequent development and creation of the Formula 1 industry in UK. He reminded members that the aim was to produce a working exhibit inside the garage when a suitable location had been found. The exhibit would include a working model of an A7 chassis, as many examples as could be mustered of the tools which Jack French would have used and a video explaining the story (a plasma screen has been donated already). After trying a number of museums (Avoncroft, Coventry Motor Museum, Bicester Heritage amongst others), which were simply not suitable or which had made unacceptable demands in order to accept the project, an approach had been made to the Attwell Wilson Museum near Calne in Wiltshire; the staff had shown themselves to be very friendly and positive, suggesting a location and indicating that they would be happy for A7CA members to do the work of installation; the Chairman then proposed and Howard Annett seconded that A7CA make a formal approach to the museum. The 11 clubs represented voted in unanimous agreement [Secretary's Note. Since that vote, the Chairman has written to the museum who have responded by saying that the request will be put to the Museum's Directors in the near future; whilst the project is nowhere near being accepted, the Chairman asked whether or not an Austin 7 club member in the vicinity of Calne would be prepared to volunteer to become A7CA liaison officer for routine matters if the project should go ahead]. Charlie continued that he would be seeking donations of all sorts if the project were to go ahead – cash, skills, effort, time. The question of the legal position vis-à-vis the ownership of the garage etc was then discussed: the outcome was that legal advice would be sought in conjunction with the Museum. As a by-product, it was noted that the Museum's conference facilities could be available to A7CA. Finally, Charlie agreed to produce a press release which the Secretary would circulate around A7CA.

24. A7s Back to the Track. Chris Garner made mention of a Track Day purely for Austin 7s: non-competitive and open to anyone with the only requirement being a suitable (not necessarily racing) helmet to be worn. This Track Day would be held at Curborough near Lichfield on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016: he said that notable entries received so far included David Morgan in the Cooper Special, Clive Danks giving his superb TT Replica its very first outing and Olly Sanders who would be bringing along the fabulous Bill Williams-created Willis Special from 1937. He invited all members to attend this family day out [a poster is attached].

25. Grey Mag Index. The Chairman told the meeting that Ron Hayhurst was working on an Index of the past 10 years' worth of the Grey Mag and sought support for the project. Hugh Barnes suggested that A7CA should support it because of the amount of work already done and the Chairman suggested that, in future, this index

Charlie  
Plain-Jones

All

<p>should be produced electronically. Howard Annett suggested that advertising be allowed in the index to reduce costs and then mentioned that one of his members was spending a great deal of time updating the Red Cross booklet. Much discussion ensued about whether or not either booklet should be produced in view of the likely cost; in the end, it was agreed that Howard would talk to his club member and that the Chairman would talk to Ron Hayhurst. Brian Hughes then said in a doom-laden voice that all Austin 7 owners worried about what would happen to their cars after the owner had hung up his spanners and suggested that all members should aim to inspire younger enthusiasts to step into members' shoes.</p>	Howard Chairman
<p>26. <u>Public Liability Insurance</u>. The Chairman noted that the A7CA insurance was due for renewal shortly and suggested that, before renewing the policy, the Treasurer and Secretary should compare policies from other Brokers. Howard Annett recommended Aston Scott although he admitted that they did not cover spares. However, a show of hands revealed that few clubs sold new spare parts, this being left to the specialist suppliers.</p>	All  Treasurer Secretary
<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>27. The next (committee) meeting will be held at 11.00 am in Syndicate Room 7 at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon on Sun 10 Jul 16. The Secretary will invite attendance in due course as he has had to book a room for 20 already: failure to do so could mean that no room was available nearer the date.</p>	All
<p>28. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.19 pm.</p>	

Chairman: .....

July 2016

Secretary: .....

<b>Austin 7 Clubs' Association</b>				
<b>Financial Report 1 Jan to 31 Dec 15</b>			£	£
Balance 1 January 2015				33,543.48
<b><u>Receipts January-December 2015</u></b>				
Magazine sales		12,824.25		
Sale of back numbers		0.00		
Subscriptions for 2015		305.00		
Magazine distribution recharged to clubs		430.35		
Receipts Identifying Austins Booklet		383.38		
Receipts Warwick DVD		306.02		
Advertising		1,689.01		
Interest received		63.42		
Receipts for Jack French Garage Project		0.00		
Sale of binders		16.00		
Insurance Payouts		4,500.00		
Archive sales		0.00		
Digital Archive Receipts		0.00		
Other miscellaneous income		129.65		
Total receipts		<u>20,647.08</u>		
<b><u>Payments Jan-Dec 15</u></b>				
Printing magazines		6,544.59		
Magazine distribution		892.60		
Identifying Austins Booklet Costs		870.00		
Subscriptions (ie FBHVC)		30.00		
Room hire for meetings		889.84		
Binders Costs		816.64		
Insurance		2,288.42		
Archive costs		7,166.54		
Archive purchase		797.98		
Digitisation of Archives Project		0.00		
Website cost		78.62		
Officers expenses		1,248.30		
A7CA contribution to Jack French Garage project		0.00		
Total payments		<u>21,623.53</u>		
Balance 31 Dec 15				32,567.03
<b><u>Analysis of Account balances at the end of Dec 15:</u></b>				
Lloyds: A7CA Funds		10,969.22		
Lloyds: Jack French Garage project fund		1,711.90		
Scottish Widows		<u>19,885.91</u>		
		<u>32,567.03</u>		
<b><u>Payments Oct-Dec</u></b>				
Dave Martin Expenses	06/10/2015	42.50		
Archive Room Hire Triumph Sports Six	14/10/2015	2,520.00		
Expenses Chris Garner Exp meeting travel	19/10/2015	19.80		
Expenses Roger Brown meeting travel	19/10/2015	25.20		
Expenses Ed Waugh Exp meeting travel	19/10/2015	121.90		
Lavenham Press Postage	26/10/2015	146.54		
Lavenham Press Magazine Print	26/10/2015	1,552.00		
Expenses Ed Waugh Exp meeting travel	26/10/2015	74.60		
Expenses Roger Brown meeting travel	26/10/2015	16.80		
Expenses Chris Garner Exp meeting travel	26/10/2015	13.20		
Expenses Chris Charles Meeting travel	26/10/2015	25.40		
Expenses Roger Brown meeting travel	26/10/2015	33.60		
BMIHT Room Hire October meeting	27/10/2015	137.94		
Leics CC Records Office Conservation	02/11/2015	191.00		
Expenses A Lowe reimburse	06/11/2015	35.90		
Expenses Howard Annett Travel/Postage	06/11/2015	165.88		
Expenses Hazel Gore Postage/Stationery	03/12/2015	64.22		
Expenses Dave Martin Archive Travel	11/12/2015	59.00		



# A7 BACK TO THE TRACK

***will be back in 2016!***

***No DeLoreans allowed.....***



***A7s Back to the Track is a track day solely for Austin 7s and A7 Specials at Curborough Sprint Track near Lichfield on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016***

It is a non-competitive Track Day so MSA licence and Race suits are not required - just a road legal crash helmet (goggles and gloves are advisable) - and it is open to all Austin 7-powered cars with novice and seasoned drivers alike. Passengers are allowed so bring along the family to join in the fun.

The use of the track is 'unlimited' and you get as many runs as you can fit in!  
The fee is Per Car regardless of the number of drivers, so Family and Friends are most welcome.  
We guarantee that you will not get better value anywhere else – just ask previous entrants!

The Curborough on-site Catering will be providing hot meals and the legendary Bacon and Egg Baps!

For 2016 we would particularly like to encourage A7 Specials, which have not turned a wheel in years, to venture out onto a track once again. If you know of an A7 Special gathering dust in a garage somewhere let the owner know about this event. We might even be able to help out with transport if the car is not road legal.....

Please note that the following fees are payable in advance:

For entries received and paid by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016                      £ 45.00 per Car

For entries received from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016                              £ 60.00 per Car

Please post cheques to:

Charlie Plain-Jones  
87 Widney Road  
Knowle  
Solihull B93 9EA

Or Email for bank transfer details to:

**[cplainjones@gmail.com](mailto:cplainjones@gmail.com)**





## The Last 'Garagista' Garage?

This document sets out the case for the preservation of a 1940s, 8x 3 metre home made garage now saved from demolition as it is a key part of the Austin 7 story that leads to today's UK Formula 1 motorsport industry.....

- The Austin 7 car saved the Longbridge based company from bankruptcy in the 1920s and thirty years later formed the basis of UK motorsport as it recovered from the effects of WW2.
- The 'Make Do and Mend' Garage was born out of Post War shortages. It was one of many where family Austin 7s were transformed into exciting Specials by amateur racing enthusiasts. This Garage is believed to be the best preserved and original in existence today.
- The Garage would be an asset to any Motoring Museum because:
  - It provides a focus for a new age group of visitors
  - Young visitors would enjoy 'hands on' exhibits provided by the Clubs
  - Books, regalia and models to sell in a shop
- The Austin Clubs Association have now been offered a permanent site at the Atwell Wilson Motor Museum in Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 0NF for the Garage to be preserved. There are the funds available to move the structure and build a concrete base, under the supervision of the Museum Staff. Volunteers are now needed to help with the reconstruction and to provide restore the exhibits and to demonstrate them at summer weekends etc.

### ***\*Garagista***

*A derogatory term coined by **Enzo Ferrari** to describe the British Teams that toiled in their garages and sought to challenge the established Italian and French Grand Prix Teams.*

*Literally translated it mean Garage Mechanic.*

## The Garage

Built in 1949 from salvaged ex War Department materials by Jack French immediately after the war, the Garage was located just outside Gloucester.

It is in surprisingly original condition and has avoided almost any modifications, including re-painting, in all those years.

It was still in use as a store for lawn mowers etc. until the present owner, while not unsympathetic to its preservation, obtained planning permission to replace it with a larger brick built building.

In this building Jack designed, built, repaired and manufactured various 'tuning parts' for Austin 7 specials which competed in the re-vitalised 750 Motor Club events which proliferated after the War and fostered the talents that developed into Formula 1.



## The Man

Jack French was arguably the most influential builder of Austin 7 Specials in the immediate post war years. One of the original 'Garagistas', Jack created 'Simplicity', probably the most famous A7 Special of them all.

The picture shows Jack standing in front of the Garage while contemplating the rolling chassis of one of his Austin based 750 Formula Specials which he and others raced in the 50s 60s and early 70s.

Jack shared his technical knowledge freely and wrote copiously on his developments and techniques to squeeze every bit of performance out of these tiny cars.

He also visited and gave lectures to enthusiastic Car Clubs and it has been said that Jack 'was responsible for hundreds of specials being built around the Country'.



Simplicity, with its body in the background, and other specials under construction in the Garage.

## The Cars

- What are Austin 7 Specials?
- Why they are historically important?
- Why did so many famous names from motorsport start out in Austin 7 Specials.

The history of Grand Prix motor sport (now known as Formula 1 or simply F1) in the UK is surprisingly short.

Prior to WW2 the UK took virtually no part in this branch of motor sport which was dominated by French, Italian and latterly German teams. The seeds of what was to become the UK's domination today of this multi billion pound industry are to be found in the **austerity of the immediate post war years** and in small workshops and garages like this one which used to be dotted around the country.

Starved of any real resources, newly demobbed young men with new skills acquired in the forces sought something to replace the emotions of warfare. Motorsport seemed to offer the adrenalin rush they needed but with new cars still a distant dream they looked for something more affordable and immediately available.

Many opted for the humble Austin 7 which had been manufactured in huge numbers at **Longbridge, in Birmingham**, between 1922 and 1939 and by the late 40s many of these were in a very poor state and could be purchased for very little plus spares were readily available for almost nothing. Back in the late 20s and early 30s the Austin factory had built racing versions which despite their tiny 747cc engine had acquitted themselves very well and these enthusiasts set about modifying the standard Austin "Chummy" and "Top Hat" saloons into 'Specials'.



From this.....A7 Saloon

to Jack French's 'Roberta'

and Single Seater Specials

Stripped of their rotting bodies the lightweight Austin 747cc engine and chassis clad in a home made two or single seater body made a nimble and exciting competition machine. For a dramatic retelling of this story see Peter Snow's program, "**Brits who made the Modern World – Formula One**" on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2gJQKJUqr4>

Jack French was a master of these conversions and he managed to coax huge increases in power out of the tiny Austin side valve engine by machining and supplying his own special camshafts and other tuning parts.

Amongst the many enthusiasts influenced by Jack's writings were those destined to become household names.....



## Bruce McLaren

Notable among these Special Builders and Racers was Bruce McLaren, the New Zealander who started by racing an Austin 7 and the team that he founded in the UK have so far won 20 World Championships and are now also building a series of highly desirable super cars.

This Special is now displayed at McLaren's Norman Foster designed HQ in Woking.



From this..... Bruce, his Special and Trophies



to this..... McLaren 12C Spider

## Colin Chapman

The most well known Special Builder **influenced by Jack** and his work was Colin Chapman who's **Lotus** Marks 1, 2 3 and 4 were all Austin 7 Specials and Colin used these to develop some of his radical ideas regarding suspensions and the use of materials.



Mk 1 1948



Mk 2 1949/50



Mk 3 (Hazel Chapman driving)



Colin Chapman at work in his **Lotus** 'garage'

We propose to recreate the inside of the garage to look similar to this, based on photographs provided by Jack French's son, Roger French.

### The Proposal for Preservation

Many organisations and enthusiastic individuals have offered their support for the preservation of **Jack's garage** and now have a permanent home for the building. We believe that **the Atwell Wilson Museum** will benefit greatly from having this building in the collection. The Garage has the following unique combination of features:

- It would generate a new cohort of visitors to the site from Car Clubs around the country.
- The exhibits would be aimed to appeal to the widest range of ages by being 'Hands on' and interactive.
- The proposed centre piece will be an Austin 7 Special chassis that visitors can sit on and move the controls, seeing how steering and brakes work.
- It fits in with the Post War Austerity theme which is of so much interest today
- It would be a fitting tribute to the great success story that is the UK F1 industry today.
- It could form the nucleus for Austin Car Club meetings

### The Concept for a Permanent Exhibition

The Garage should become a **permanent tribute** to the **Garagista** movement who created the basis for the British F1 industry. The centre piece will be a partially completed Austin 7 Special together with a work bench containing the 'Make do and Mend' tools that would have been used together with story boards on the walls to provide an illustrated history of this movement.

An initial photo record of the Garage has been made and this has confirmed that it is in a remarkably original and reasonably intact state.

It has been rescued from the bulldozers, dismantled into 6 panels and the roof and the damaged areas repaired. It is now dry stored awaiting re-assembling at the suitable site.





### **Inside the Garage**

At one end of the Garage will be a work bench with period tools including the first generation of 1950s power tools and an ex WD lathe (we already have the offer of these items on indefinite loan).

Around the walls will be story boards telling the history of the Austin 7 Specials, the 750 Motor Club, the famous names who started out racing in Specials and of course the role that Jack French played in this story.

The centrepiece will consist of a part completed Austin 7 Special of the type that Jack created, in the centre of the garage with automatic spot lighting to provide an eco friendly presentation space. Children will be able to sit in this car and move the steering, brakes & clutch to see the exposed mechanisms function. All moving and trap points to be suitably guarded with clear polycarbonate shields.

The second phase development of this exhibit will be to create a Race Simulator based on this A7 Special. The concept is to take 'players' back to one of the first races ever held at Silverstone, including straw bales and oil drums, and 'be' Jack French in Simplicity racing a field of Austin 7 Specials!

We have studied the feasibility and costed this project carefully and it is feasible with some donations (possibly from the Heritage Lottery Fund?) to deliver this at no cost to the Museum.



The main Austin 7 Clubs in this field have offered of their support for this venture, see the next three pages:-



Dear Charles,

Thank you for alerting me to Jack French's workshop/garage. Like a lot of people, I was not aware that it still existed. I fully support this initiative and to this end have added it to the agenda of the next Austin Seven Clubs Association meeting at Gaydon Heritage Museum for discussion on how we might help.

I shall recommend that due to the importance of Jack French and his work that we should give support where we can. That could be financial or physical to move the building. It is too late to get a mention in the Association "Grey" magazine to alert the wider audience this quarter; but it needs to be included in the next one.

There are probably many people worldwide who have read Jack's writings and advice, and to this day he continues to be followed as good practical advice. The Pre War Austin 7 Club have aided this by republishing the old 750MC "Design for Competition" articles that included so much of his writings in the 750MC bulletins, in their "Austin 7 Companion".

In his way he was just as important as Colin Chapman, the Lotus cars and Grand Prix designer, to the expanding industry after the Second World War. He dealt with the small enthusiast, giving advice and supplying his well known Jack French Camshafts. I myself bought two of these over the years, and still have the typewritten slip the came with it, telling you how to adjust the valves.

Without folks like Jack French and Colin Chapman there would not have been the successful motor racing business; that is so based in the United Kingdom. Even today many designers with these companies, have started with 750MC and the Austin 7 racing, before progressing to bigger and better things.

I'm sure that there would be the possibility to equip the workshop with examples of the Cars(?) and components that would have been there in the time Jack used it. I also think with that there may be local members who would be prepared to give time to act as stewards at the exhibit.

Jack French's car "Simplicity" is still in existence, owned and competed with, by Graham Becket, who is a member of the Association.

The Austin Seven Clubs Association has 18 full member clubs, 26 Registers and associates and 20 overseas clubs, who, I'm sure will be just as delighted and surprised this important part of the Austin 7 history has survived. This no doubt will be picked up by the major motoring magazines and carried to their readers, who will be familiar with Jack French and his history.

This building must be saved and preserved and it would be good if it could attract a new generation of enthusiasts.

Andy Lowe

Chairman, The Austin Seven Clubs' Association





Dear Charles,

I write as Chairman of the Seven Fifty Motor club to endorse your submission that Jack French's Garage is of historical interest and should be saved if at all possible.

Jack French was one of the leading builders of Austin 7 based specials of his time and his engineering innovative and, for its time, forward thinking.

Yours Faithfully,

Paul Chalk,

Chairman  
750 Motor Club  
Donington Park  
Derbyshire  
DE74 2RP



It is a tribute to these great little cars that so many of them are still actively competing today, some 80+ years after they were originally manufactured.....



To this....



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*The Austin Seven*