



100 year Anniversary Edition



A celebration of 100 years of the Austin 7 at Moreton in the Marsh, July 2022

A line up of Austin racers including two cars that raced on Southport Beach pre-war

To celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our favourite car I have put together some text and a few photos of the Moreton in the Marsh event.

I was able to attend two days of the 100 Year Celebration of the Austin 7 held at the Fire Service College at Moreton in Marsh. This is an ex WW2 RAF Station that has now been taken over by the Fire Service College and other government bodies. It is a vast site which is well serviced by roads and evidence of it's original purpose can be seen in a number of areas.

This event was the culmination of 2 1/2 years of work by a large group of Austin 7 enthusiasts, it included entries thought to be around 1000 cars and a number of Austin racing cars loaned from both private individuals and a number of museums.

There were also several rooms in the main building dedicated to a Pop Up Museum where Austin's history was displayed in both art form and in historical display panels telling the story of both the cars and the men behind the cars.

The operation and organisation of the Rally was excellent with many volunteers involved in getting people on and off the site in a safe and orderly manner.

The plan was to have 1000 Austin 7's on the site and around 2500 people in attendance. The general public was not admitted and bookings were frozen in February when the sites' owners maximum numbers were reached.

Many people camped on site and entrants were parked up in roughly age and type order.



THE DAVID MAWBY COLLECTION

My collection of cars started back when I was just a boy, my father had had many different classic cars over the years, but when I was aged 8 years old he purchased an Austin Big 7, this car became special to me from the first moment I saw it. I spent many hours helping my father recommission the Big 7 and he promised that the car would be mine when I turned 21 years old. When he gave me the Big 7 he also gave me a copy of the Original Austin Seven by Rinsy Mills.

My father and I had always been interested in unrestored cars, with the Big 7 and the book becoming my inspiration. Over the next few years I was fortunate that the business that I started became quite successful and this meant that I was lucky enough to be able to purchase a few very original Austin Sevens. I am now aged 45 years old, and with the encouragement of my wife and three sons, my collection has now become quite substantial, we are proud to be able to display some of them at the Centenary Rally.

Amongst those we are displaying is a 1923 AB Tourer in superb original condition having covered only 18500 miles from new and boasting its almost completely original paintwork, hood, upholstery and carpets. Also on show are 4 commercial vehicles in unrestored condition, along with a Rosengart that was requisitioned by the German Army in France during the second world war, a very rare Austin Seven Mulliner coupe

and an 1930 American Austin. We do use the cars that we own and I am always in search of an unusual original Austin Seven.

David Mawby

CARS ON DISPLAY:

1923	AB Tourer	NK 6548
1928	RF Fabric Saloon	UE 6994
1928	Mulliner Coupe	XV 4756
1930	AE Tourer	PG 9557
1930	American Austin	BF 9173
1931	Milk Delivery Car	JF 9620
1931	RL Van	YD 1745
1931	Rosengart LR4 Van	128-B.64
1931	Swallow Saloon	EG 198
1933	RN/RP Van	KX 9797
1933	Rosengart LR4 Saloon 4	709FN2
1935	AAK Tourer	WS 3910
1938	Big 7	HPD 594

It is fair to say that every type of Austin 7 was on display, and in some cases many examples of the more common body styles were on display.

In one of the commercial garages at the back of the site was the David Mawby and Norman Purvis collections of early cars. These cars were the most interesting, David Mawby has been collecting Austin 7's since he was a young boy

and he brought along 13 cars to display at the Centenary. This collection was an amazing group of cars and David's aim is to keep the cars as original as possible, In the collection three cars stand out to me as being special.



These are two of Norman Purvis cars, OK6995 a 1922 A tourer and KC9023 a 1922 A, with a Doctors Coupe Body.

The third car is NK6548 a 1923 Scoop Scuttle Chummy which was featured recently on

the front cover of the Automobile August edition and includes an amazing article on the car written by Zack Stiling. This car is just as it left the factory with original paint, no starter motor, and its original choke control sticking out from the front of the radiator.



Choke control

Obviously if the only method of starting the car is cranking it, you need to have the choke close by the starting handle !!



This car is known as the Snoxall car as it was found by Stan Snoxall in 1934 and purchased by him for £5.00 !

Another car that took my eye was a very early Doctors Coupe which was owned by Norman Purvis and looked absolutely stunning. It was built on chassis number 95 and I think it was one of the prettiest closed cars on display.



It was adorned by a dummy mascot which were produced in the 1920's as a nod to the Austin being the "baby car" ! (dark blue car images on the previous page)

The winged wheel mascot fitted to a fabric bodied Top Hat is the Austin "Winged Wheel" mascot that Austin used on a number of their models, this is an intricate casting shown above. I would be interested to know if these are being replicated today. (my email is on the last page)

The car was fitted to an early chassis, based on a scooped scuttle body made by John Heath a number of years ago. I

understand that a drawing, thought to have been done by Stanley Edge was used to produce this Top Hat Fabric Saloon. The vehicle is fitted with carriage door catches, with the top of the body done in linen which had been doped as in the aircraft tradition.



I understand that Martin Prior had done the woodwork on this car and Creative Metalwork had done the panels and wings.

So the vehicle is a creation of what a saloon might have looked like if Austin had produced one in 1922, a very handsome car which is a credit to its creators.

I found my portable cycle ideal for getting round

the site as these days my arthritic feet are not up to walking great distances.

Another car on display with the Mawby collection was Norman Purvis's light Green Scoop Scuttle Chummy chassis no 71 which has been restored to "as new" condition.





The registration is OK6995 and is a credit to the restorer, the attention to detail is amazing, these early cars were not fitted with a speedo or windscreen wipers, so the top rail of the windscreen should not be drilled.

This car had a proprietary windscreen wiper fitted that is in the shape of a "U" section and fits over the top rail of the windscreen. The driver then operates this by moving it side to side ! David showed me an example of these devices off the car and I have included a photo on the left.

David had also bought along his 1931 very original Swallow Saloon, this car is beautifully preserved in its original condition and its full history is known,



being purchased by Miss Alice Jordon of Peteborough on November 17th 1931 !

The cars design is based around an Austin 7 chassis and the body was designed by Sir William Lyons who first designed sidecars under the name of Swallow Sidecar and Coachbuilding Co. This company went on to become SS Cars Ltd and later the Jaguar car Company.



At the Rally there was an area set aside for Swallow cars and I was surprised at the many body styles the company produced, some open some closed.

David had also bought along an American Bantam and a German Rosengarth both

based on the Austin 7 but produced under licence, his examples were in “as found condition”, mainly original.

There were many single seaters cars both old and new, some produced to a very high standard.



On the Wednesday of the Rally the cars encamped to Prescott Hill Climb where many of them were driven up the hill to celebrate.

I decided I would only do two days as I knew my ailing feet would not allow me to go to all the



events on offer. The website of the Association who organised the event has video from the Wednesday visit to Prescott as well as other video shots of the field at Moreton in the Marsh, this is the link:



<https://a7centenary.com/>

Most of the cars on display were organised by age and type, there was a line up of Opals and a nice line up of vans with one of them in Uncle Joe's livery. Mark Jagger tells me this was restored by Brian Johnson, co-founder of

the West Lancs Group, and past president. There was a large car park in the centre of the complex



which was brimming with Box Saloons and other 7's including some AD Tourers and all manner of other Austin 7's. One area was assigned to Specials, and these were fascinating.

There were 15 or 20 RTC Specials in lots of



different styles and one special with a flat twin engine in the style of a GN.

The chassis was clearly Austin 7 but I am unsure what engine was fitted. It was running on Castrol R oil and

when the car was started up it was completely enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke !

The smell that accompanied the car reminded me of the days I used to go to Oulton Park in the 1960's when many of the cars ran on Castrol R.

On the main drive into the site was this 3/4 scale Austin 7 lifted up in the air as a welcome to all entrants.



Pop Up Museum

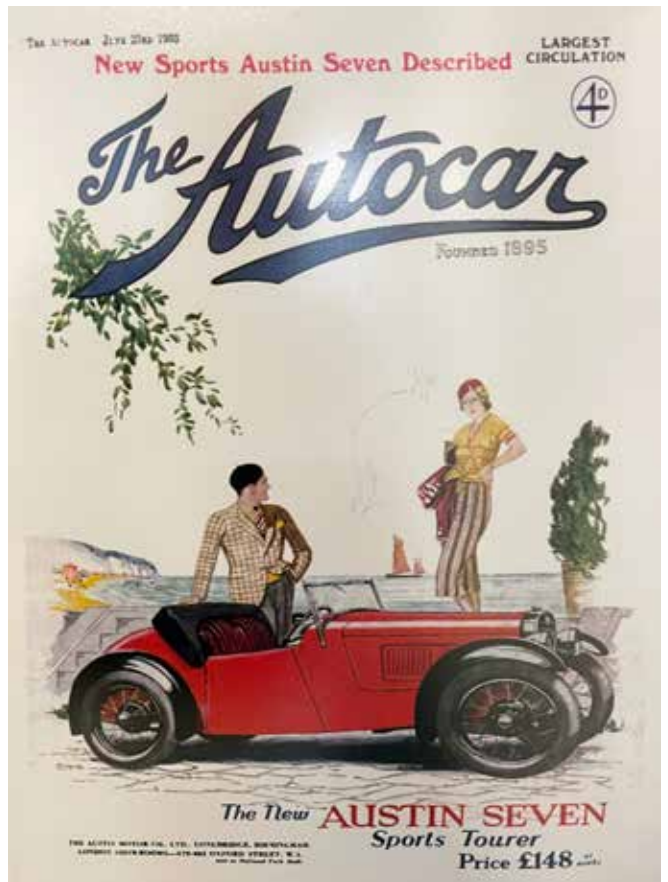
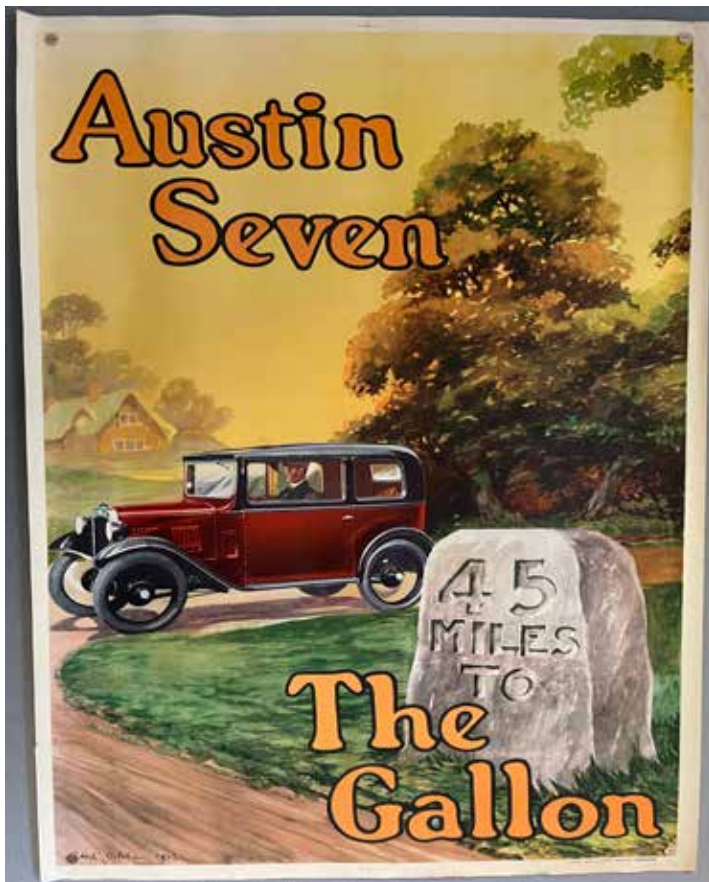
In the main administration building on the first floor there were a number of rooms were dedicated to a Pop Up Museum.



Here you could find a vast quantity of art and display boards illustrating many aspects of the life and times of the people involved in creating the 7.

Herbert Austin's life was illustrated explaining his involvement with Wolseley and the Sheep Shearing company in the time before he set up the Austin Motor Company. There was a room set aside to archive films and one room to posters produced by the Austin company to help sell the vehicles.

I was impressed with this collection, some of which had not been seen previously and had been loaned by the artists' family specially for this event.



THE AUSTIN 'APPRENTICES'

It is quite extraordinary how many major figures in British motorsport have spent their earliest motoring years honing their skills on the humble Austin 7. Here, we look at just six who went on to have a huge impact on sporting and domestic motoring. Being constrained by space an apology is made to those many others not mentioned...

Arthur Mallock

Arthur Mallock was simply one of the greats of the 750MC. He bought his first Austin 7 at 17 in 1936, beginning his association with the vehicle that literally provided the building blocks for the 750 Motor Club, of which he was a founder member.



Arthur Mallock at Prescott 09/05/1948

While serving in WWII Arthur developed his special based on a 1932 van which he nicknamed "Bren", after the gun. With independent front suspension and motorcycle tyres, it was one of only two to clean the hill at the Full Moon Trial in January 1946 followed by further successes that year. However, Arthur decided that he needed more power and less weight and a car that he could use for speed events as well as trials.

The result, "Bombsk", was also Austin based and included many ideas from "Bren" plus a supercharger for the 750cc motor, 19 inch wheels and a weight reduction. "Bombsk" was built with assistance from Jack French around a short chassis A7 frame and later rebuilt around a long chassis frame. Gradually he competed in more speed events and fewer trials so, by the early 50s, he was racing full time.

By the late 50s, Arthur had designed his first 'U2' which, according to Rod Ladbrook of Motorsport, throughout six decades and 30 iterations, U2s have done more to help draw newcomers into motorsport than perhaps any other design. Many of them still race today and are constantly being modified and improved, an approach that Arthur would have fully endorsed.

Alec Issigonis

Issigonis started his motoring career in 1925, taking part in the JCC Reliability Trial. By 1929, he was racing at Brooklands in a Gordon England Cup model. By 1930, he had migrated to a supercharged "Ulster" Austin Seven, later fitting it with a front axle of his own design. The attention this brought saw him gaining employment at Austin.



Alec Issigonis in the Lightweight Special at Luton 100 29/03/1948

Next, Issigonis and his friend Dowson built a radical special completed in 1939, constructed of plywood laminated in aluminium sheeting. The suspension was also of advanced design, incorporating many rubber components.

With a 'Works' derived supercharged side valve Austin Seven engine, Issigonis usually won events, even when entered in the 1100cc class if there was no 750cc category.

This car, weighing 587 lb of which the engine contributed 252 lb, was of course, christened the 'Lightweight Special' and can be seen in the Gaydon Museum and still regularly takes to the track.

With his experiments in suspension systems on Austin cars as his background, he went on to design both the post-war Morris Minor and, of course, the Mini – launched as the 'Austin Seven'. Both ground breaking cars in their own right. The Mini, the best-selling British car of all time with 5.3 million cars sold, set the benchmark for just about every small car designed since.

With sincere thanks to Michael Hammond of the Guy Griffiths motorsport image library for the use of images.



THE AUSTIN 'APPRENTICES'

Bruce McLaren

Bruce's father, Les, restored an Austin 7 Ulster which, in 1952, 14-year-old Bruce used to enter his first competition, a hillclimb. Two years later, he took part in his first real race meeting.



Bruce McLaren

From local hillclimbs and club races in and around his native Auckland, he earned a bursary to Europe where he raced for the Cooper Formula 1 team as understudy to Jack Brabham.

He won his first grand prix in 1959, at the tender age of 22, becoming the sport's youngest-ever winner – a record that astonishingly would not be surpassed until the 2003 Hungarian Grand Prix.

With his restless ambition, he soon founded his own team, Bruce McLaren Motor Racing Ltd, in 1963, and took the marque into grand prix racing in 1966.

There was great shock through the racing world when in 1970, while testing the team's new Can-Am car, he lost control when the rear bodywork came loose. The car crashed into a marshal's post and Bruce was killed instantly.

But from acorns mighty oaks do grow and the legacy that McLaren left we see in Formula 1 races now. A marque with an enviable record built on humble beginnings.

Colin Chapman

In 1948, Chapman entered his Mk1, a modified Austin 7, into trials with great success. The prize money enabled him to develop the Mk2, now with a Ford 1172 engine.



Colin Chapman in his Lotus at Great Auctum 23/07/1950

In 1951 he was racing his MkIII model in the 750 formula and began to show his ability to become more competitive while remaining within the letter of the rules.

He realised that better breathing could be achieved by reversing the port functions and de-siamesed the old inlet ports.

With these mods, his engine outclassed the opposition until the rules were changed to outlaw them.

It was with the Lotus 7 in 1957 that things really took off, by selling them as kits for home assembly and there have been over 90 different Lotus 7 clones, offered to the public, Caterham still manufacturing a version today.

By 1958, only a few short years after cutting his teeth on Austin 7 specials, he ran his first F1 entry in the Monaco Grand Prix and by 1963, won his first F1 championship with a Lotus 25 with Jim Clark at the wheel.

In 1965 it was Clark again, driving a Lotus 38 at the Indianapolis 500, who drove the first-ever mid-engined car to victory in that race.

It was Chapman who in 1966 persuaded the Ford Motor Company to sponsor Cosworth's development of what would become the DFV race engine which remained competitive until the mid 80s



The one of a Chummy out in the countryside gives the impression that there was piles of room in the back seats of a Chummy, but as many of you will know you are lucky to get two small children in!

STANLEY HOWARD EDGE



Top left: Stanley Edge (the boy second from the left) just after he joined Austin. Bottom left: On his motorbike - the leather coat can be seen in the display. Above: Stanley in his later years.

Stanley Howard Edge, was born on 5th August 1903 at Haden Hill Cross Villa, Haden Hill, Old Hill, Staffordshire, and died peacefully at his home in Oswestry, Shropshire, two weeks short of his 87th birthday. Stan, and his parents and grandparents were Black Country people and proud of it.

I first met Stan in 1972 when, as one of the organisers of the "Golden Jubilee" events, we placed an advert in the motoring press and were amazed to receive a response from the designer of the Austin 7 itself.

Later I was even more surprised when, whilst visiting him, Stan casually said, "I don't suppose anyone is particularly interested but I do have quite a few of the original drawings and my notebooks in the Summer House." The drawings were subsequently restored by the Somerset County archivist and the books etc. retained.

These items became the origins of the Association Archives

Stan was just 18 years old when Sir Herbert invited him to Lickey Grange in Sept. 1921 to work on the design of the Austin Seven. The drawings were completed by the following Easter and during the next 6 weeks 3 prototypes were built in time for Whitsun, a phenomenal achievement. Stan left Austin twice in 1925, firstly to the Standard Motor Co. in Coventry, where he was not particularly happy, returning to Austin at the end of his annual holiday. At the end of 1925 he left for good to work for Clayton Wagons Ltd at Lincoln. He continued working as a designer and engineer well into the 1980s.

He was a meticulous man who had a prodigious memory and kept a copy of everything he wrote. He was a perfectionist as an engineer; if a thing was not exactly right then it was wrong, and he would often say that "Good enough is never good enough."

Stan had a wonderful passion for the Austin Seven in his later years

and immensely enjoyed going to all the rallies that he could manage. He said that it revitalised him. He had a particularly soft spot for the Scottish A7 Club whom he visited often, and he spoke warmly of the welcome he always received north of the border.

He was a mine of detailed and interesting information, always freely given, but if you were silly enough to ask the same question twice then he reminded you that you already knew - even if you had asked it 15 years before.

With grateful thanks to Jan Dunford for his memories of Stanley Edge.



Unfortunately most of the posters were behind plastic sheets, so as you can see the reflections tend to show through.

In one of the rooms were a number of boards and the two at the top of this page made interesting reading.

So many racing drivers of the post war period had an association with Austin in one way or another.

No history of the Austin 7 would be complete without mention of Stanley Edge who when he was 18 was asked by Herbert Austin to work on the design of the Austin 7.

He had been employed by Austin in 1917 at the tender age of 14 ! Stanley spent a few short months in 1921 working up the design, away from the Austin factory at Longbridge in the drawing room of Her-



bert Austin's Lickey Grange house in Lickey Bromsgrove, South Birmingham. Today the house is in private use but Herbert had bought the house in 1907 and lived there up to his death in 1941.

He was to go on to work for many of the 1920's and 30's car giants and contributed a lot to both car and commercial vehicle design. Later in life he became involved with the Austin 7 preservation movement and appeared at many events organised by the var-



ious Austin 7 groups.

Also on display were several unusual Austin 7 items, one of these was an early hand starting device. These were only fitted in the very early days, with the driver engaging the starter by pushing a button and then pulling the cord to turn the engine over.

I imagine these were not easy to use and shortly after an electric starter was introduced.

Another accessory on display was an oil filler for mag engines.



Anyone who has tried to fill up a mag engine car will know it's at best a difficult task and this device must have made it much easier.

Getting the container of oil low enough with all the controls in the way is difficult and I usually end up using a piece of drainpipe and a funnel





to get the oil in the correct place !

The Box Saloons come in all colours pink and yellow being just two colours on display.

The Pink car was owned by a couple who had owned the car for many years.



I have been watching on Facebook the development of the car shown below, the car has been produced over the lockdown period by two people up in Scotland.

The two people are Peter Naulls (woodwork) and Ruairidh Dunford (the chassis engine and running gear) , the car has been named "The Highland Coupe" and they have made a super job of the car

with echo's of the late 20's and early 30's with a slight nod to the Blue train Bentley.



In my opinion it is a superb car and they have managed to get the proportions just right.

The interior is finished in red leather and the instrument panel set in polished wood which has also been inlaid with a discreet line by Peter.

The car has a big lift down boot lid with the spare

wheel mounted to the lid. The boot is large enough to take enough luggage for a weekend with lots of spare room.

The door windows are two-piece sliding and there are inset pouches in the door for storage of maps and small items. Even I managed to get in the car





easily!

There were a number of Austin works racers in the main building on display along with an early Austin racer that was raced in the mid 20's at Brooklands and known as Mrs Jo Jo seen here below.

The car has lived many lives and was very successful starting life with Gordon England as Streamliner No 2 in 1926.

Boyd-Carpenter purchased the car from Gor-

don England and at his first race at Brooklands came in 2nd at the 90 mph short handicap at a speed to 78 MPH.

It was used by GGL Willis in the early 30's and in 1932 is recorded a flying lap time of 94 MPH in the Nottinghamshire Short Handicap with E F Philips at the wheel.

An outing at Brooklands proved too much for the engine and a broken crankshaft meant she was retired from active racing and changed hands several times. She was restored in the 1960's to the body style we see today and has raced in VSCC events from time to time.



I made mention on the front page of the racers on display in the foyer of the main building.



Two of these cars had raced at Southport and were called Rubber Duck cars, Austin had produced 4 racing cars from 1931 and these cars were very successful.

My hero Percy Stephenson (who was a director of Hattons the Austin dealership in Southport) obtained one of these cars XA1012 (seen here on the left) for the 1935 season and raced it that year but it proved to have a number of issues.

He had previously (in 1934) obtained XA1010 and raced it very successfully on the sands winning the 100 mile race and taking the 100 guineas prize.

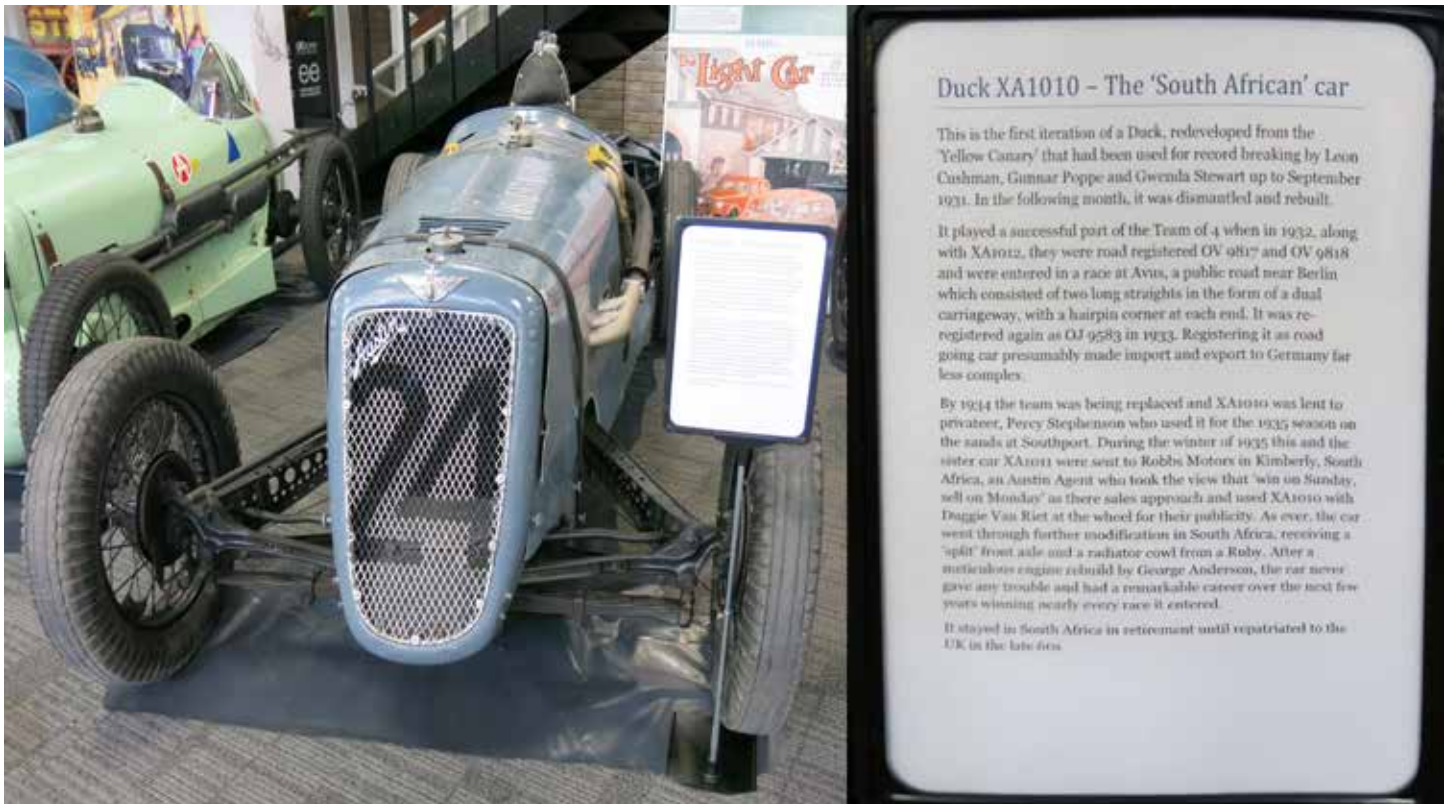
These cars were well sorted out under the watchful eyes of Austin engineers like Jamieson, and Had-

ley but were side valve cars and not the twin cam racers that Murray Jamieson is known for.

One of the cars was known as the Works Sand Racer, and the image below shows Stephenson at speed during the 100 mile 1934 race.

These cars are difficult to tie down as they changed body shapes from time to time. Stephenson ran one of these cars in the 1936, 37 and 38 seasons, he then retired from racing and concentrated on his political and business interests for which he was Knighted in 1971.

In the 1935 photo, from the local paper (on he last page) Percy Stephenson is no 9 nearest the camera



Duck XA1010 - The 'South African' car

This is the first iteration of a Duck, redeveloped from the 'Yellow Canary' that had been used for record breaking by Leon Cushman, Gunnar Poppe and Gwenda Stewart up to September 1931. In the following month, it was dismantled and rebuilt.

It played a successful part of the Team of 4 when in 1932, along with XA1012, they were road registered OV 9817 and OV 9818 and were entered in a race at Avus, a public road near Berlin which consisted of two long straights in the form of a dual carriageway, with a hairpin corner at each end. It was re-registered again as OJ 9583 in 1933. Registering it as road going car presumably made import and export to Germany far less complex.

By 1934 the team was being replaced and XA1010 was lent to privateer, Percy Stephenson who used it for the 1935 season on the sands at Southport. During the winter of 1935 this and the sister car XA1011 were sent to Robbs Motors in Kimberly, South Africa, an Austin Agent who took the view that 'win on Sunday, sell on Monday' as their sales approach and used XA1010 with Duggie Van Riet at the wheel for their publicity. As ever, the car went through further modification in South Africa, receiving a 'split' front axle and a radiator cowl from a Ruby. After a meticulous engine rebuild by George Anderson, the car never gave any trouble and had a remarkable career over the next few years winning nearly every race it entered.

It stayed in South Africa in retirement until repatriated to the UK in the late 60s.

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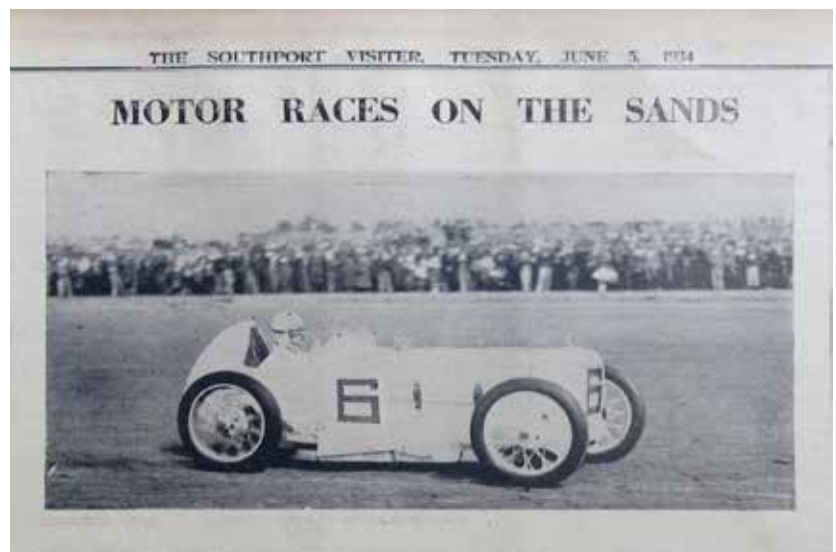
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and Beatrice Canning describes the car as one of the Ducks



.... but which one I am not sure, maybe someone reading this can enlighten me !

The photo was taken at the start of the 100 mile race on August 24th, 1935 Charles Goodacre was driving a very fast s/c Austin 7 with a Jamieson engine, Beatrice says she thought it was fitted with an 8 plug head.



In all there were 4 Austin 7's racing that day including Stephenson's G E Special that he had raced on the beach so successfully in previous years.

Goodacre won the race that day with Stephenson retiring with a fractured front axle, it's nice to think that nearly 90 years later some of the Austin 7's that were competing at Southport would be at Moreton in the Marsh to celebrate the Centenary of Austin's little 7 !

Thanks must go to all the organisers who put so much effort in to put together an amazing Show, thanks to all involved.

Martyn Griffiths - Newsletter Editor West Lancs Group, <martyngriff@gmail.com>

Note: Martyn Griffiths researches the Southport Beach Racing between the wars using the local papers which reported the races in detail. Should you have a car that had a Southport history he would be most interested to hear from you.