THE AUSTIN SEVEN CLUBS' ASSOCIATION



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



COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON ZOOM

Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 7.00pm

MINUTES

Attendees

Chairman – David Cochrane, Vice Chairman – Nick Salmon, Secretary – Paul Lawrence,
Treasurer – Chris Roberts, Archivist – Gordon England, Registrar – Peter Hales, Magazine
Distribution to Member Clubs and Back Issues – Howard Annett, Magazine Editor – Howard
Wright, Advertising – Sarah Mason, Publicity Officer – Steve Earl, Webmaster – Roger Brown,
Insurance Liaison Officer – David Mawby

- **750 Motor Club** Charlie Plain-Jones
- Austin Seven Owners Club (London) Howard Annett
- Bongtree Austin Seven Club nil
- Bristol Austin Seven Club Chris Roberts
- Cambridge Austin Seven Club Paul Lawrence
- Cornwall Austin Seven Club Sarah Mason
- Devon Austin Seven Club David Aylmore
- Dorset Austin Seven Club John King
- Essex Austin Seven Club Peter Lawson
- Hereford Austin Seven Club Roly Alcock
- Midlands Austin Seven Club Andy Lowe
- N. E. Club for Pre War Austins nil
- Norfolk Austin Seven Club Paul Maulden
- Online Austin Seven Club nil
- **Pre War Austin Seven Club** Nick Turley
- Scottish Austin Seven Club Ruairidh Dunford
- Solent Austin Seven Club nil
- South Wales Austin Seven Club Peter Hales
- Vintage Austin Register Ian Brough

Big Seven Register - Norman Clare
Pram Hood Register - David Cochrane
Gordon England Register - Ruairidh Dunford
The Irish Austin Seven Club - Peter Clayton
Ulster Pre-War Austin Seven Club - N. Ireland - Geoffrey Livingstone
Austin 7 Special Register - David Charles
Historian - Phil Baildon

1. Apologies for absence

Chairman/Secretary

- a. Solent A7 Club, Bongtree, Austin Ex Apprentices Association, Rosengart Register, Arrow Register, IT Rep. (Chris Charles)
- b. Member Clubs absent without apology: On-Line A7 Club, NECPWA

2. **Introductions** Chairman

a. Name and Club represented were listed on the Zoom screen ID - prior to the meeting.

3. **Minutes of last Meeting** See link (below) Chairman

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UpmF84_27-Q727U0nNG7070qtpLGBfRrJLnEsIwz cno/edit?usp=sharing

a. proposed: David Charles (Cornish A7 Club)

b. seconded: John King (Dorset A7 Club)
Carried as a true account.

4. Matters Arising from previous meeting

Chairman

a. Proposal for the following to added to the Constitution:

Arrangements for signing off expenditure that has not been agreed at a full committee Meeting:

- 1) Up to £100 requires written approval from **one of the following Officers:** Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary
- 2) Over £100 but under £1000 requires written approval by **two of the following Officers:** Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary
- 3) Over £1000 requires written approval by **three of the following Officers:** Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary

(if one of the above Officers in unavailable another Officer may deputise for them)

Proposed: PWA7C.

Seconded: Essex A7 Club

Carried

b. **Editor - Proposal**

Howard Wright has put forward a proposal to create a searchable electronic version of the Association Magazine back catalogue - this will be discussed and voted on, as part of his report.

c. **Stanley Edge Memorial** – David Cochrane to chase John Stubbs, Chairman of The Austin Motor Company Ltd (Electric Cars). DC has e-mailed him twice and left a message with no response, so assume that he's no longer interested. Andy Lowe has been in touch with the local vicar who is making enquiries about the procedure for moving his ashes.

A member of the Midlands club visited the site and spoke with the local vicar reporting back that the ashes may be hard to recover, so they are looking at moving the stone instead. There may be costs involved that need further discussion.

5. Officer's Reports

a. Chairman (David Cochrane)

We're now in the middle of the VSCC trials season, with 3 down (Welsh, Lakeland and Cotswold) and 4 still to come next year (Exmoor, Derbyshire, Herefordshire and Scottish). Many Austin Sevens compete in these events and I have to admit they are my favourite sort of motor sport. I'm afraid that I can't really explain the attraction of getting cold, wet & muddy in 90-year-old cars, but perhaps it's that I think of them more as social events with old cars in beautiful scenery.

After very many years of looking after the Big 7 Register, Robin Taylor has reluctantly decided that it's time to hand over to somebody else, and so we welcome Norman Clare as the new Big 7 registrar. Robin will be a hard act to follow, as he has been the Big 7 man for as long as I can remember! I would like to thank him for all the work that he has put in over the years to promote the Big 7 and to provide help and parts for Big 7 owners. The excellent turn-out of these cars at recent events such as last year's Centenary rally and the Beaulieu rally in July are a fitting tribute to his efforts. It was a pleasure to meet Norman at Beaulieu and I am confident that the Register is in good hands.

I would like to congratulate David & Karen Witton on their success in driving Route 66 in their 1932 Tourer. It was a magnificent effort, and it was great to see their smiling faces (gradually getting more sun-tanned) via social media as they progressed across the USA. David & Karen are now safely back home, while Molly is on her way.

The rôle of the Club representatives has been looked at and the results of this can now be seen on the website here: https://a7ca.org/about-us/committee/. This was ratified by the Clubs at this meeting.

Gordon England and the Archive Team have been working on a formal Austin Seven Archive Acquisition and Disposal Policy which is a splendid effort and sets this out very clearly and comprehensively. More about this in his report.

A welcome change to the running of the quarterly A7CA meetings has been formulated by Paul Lawrence and Ruairidh Dunford so the agenda for each meeting is now available online and can be added to and amended in the run-up to the meeting.

b. Secretary (Paul Lawrence)

After 43 years running The Austin Big Seven Register Robin Taylor will be standing down as Registrar from 1st January 2024. Over many years Robin has become synonymous with the Big Seven and is well known to many Big Seven owners world-wide. He will be handing over the reins to Norman Clare so, for any issues regarding the Austin Big Seven Register Norman can be contacted on norman@austinbigseven.co.uk Tel: 07540 747056 (mobile) or 01332 679501 (landline). Thank you very much to Robin for all his efforts over a very extended period of time and welcome to Norman who we all wish well in the role.

The Austin Seven Clubs' Association has again arranged a discount for the Silverstone Festival over the bank holiday weekend of Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th August 2024. Our 'Car Club Display Package' represents excellent value and includes heavily discounted tickets for two people, a dedicated Austin 7 display area inside the circuit and a fantastic weekend of classic motor racing. There are many other attractions for the whole family to enjoy including a fun fair, stalls, celebrity chef demonstrations and a concert every night to name but a few. This year's acts include Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Busted and Olly Murs!

More details can be found on the Silverstone Festival Website.

https://www.silverstone.co.uk/news/2024-silverstone-festival-tickets-going-sale

The code for the Austin Seven Clubs' Association Car Club Display Package is 151CCCDP24 and should be entered when booking your tickets.

I will be standing down as Secretary at the next AGM in April. I have really enjoyed my time as Secretary and been very grateful to have had the opportunity to get fully immersed in the hobby that I love so much! The opportunities I have been presented with as Secretary and, more importantly, the people I have met and the friendships I have made have been incredible. If you are interested in the role then please can you submit a written proposal to me by Friday 1st March 2024 to be shared with clubs ahead of the AGM.

i. Proposed A7CA Meeting dates 2024/25

- 1. AGM 16th April 2024
- 2. 25th June.
- 3. 8th October 2024
- 4. 14th January 2025
- 5. AGM 15th April 2025

c. Treasurer (Chris Roberts)

Bank Balances (14/12/23)

Lloyds Main £41,314.5, Lloyds Centenary £5054.04, PayPal £117.86

Annual Invoices

All Members and Associate annual invoices for 2024 annual fee and 2023 magazines (bar 1) have been paid. Thank you very much for your prompt payments.

Annual Review

There is a requirement in the constitution for an annual Review of the accounts by an External Examiner before the AGM. I don't know when this was last done but not for a few years. I would like to ask for a volunteer to review the books who is at least External to the Treasurer and free!

I set out to have an entirely paper free set up and I think other than about 4 cheques everything is on a computer (and those cheques are scanned) so I think the audit could be carried out from anywhere. Any Volunteers?

Treasurer Cover

When I was doing the annual billing recently there were a number of clubs affected by holidays/sickness or the like making it difficult for them to pay bills. At the moment I believe I am the only person able to access the bank accounts and make payments that it would be useful to have at least one other person who is able to operate the accounts and keep the books so the Association can handle similar events and continue to pay the bills. As pretty much everything is by computer now some basic IT skills are needed.

<u>VAT</u>

VAT have asked for further financial information for the year to November '23. It looks positive as the request says it is to show that the income returned to a low level after the Centenary. Hopefully this is a sign that if it has dropped below the VAT threshold that they are minded to finally grant the Association an exemption. This is a very long process as it has taken near 6 months to hear back from the last submission so there is still a risk but we are advised that we have a strong case and an Advisor willing to argue it for us

Corporation Tax

The Association has an "interesting" corporate structure. Is there anyone who is able to review the current arrangement especially from the mutual trading taxation perspective?

Initial Review of '23 and Forecast for '24

With the year nearly over (writing on 14th December) it is possible to make a good estimate of the Association's finances for 2023 and this is shown in the table below

(2023 Estimated). There are some outstanding payments to the association and scope for unexpected bills, the outstanding invoices are assumed paid in the estimate.

The Association was very close to break-even (£59.08 overspend). That's taking into account the 4 quarterly magazines (2023 A-D) and the subs for 2023. Actually the 2023A magazine costs were paid in Q422 and the 2023 subs being income was also in Q422).

With cost inflation (assumed at 10% for this purpose) and no increase in the income (Subs, Magazine and advertising kept at 2023 price) and with keeping the Archive spend to the £2000 budget and assuming no spend on binders (there is now stock) then 2024 is forecast to make a £1000 surplus (see the table 2024 Forecast)

Things to be aware of:

It is clear that the Association is reliant upon magazine sales and the sale of the advertising placed in the magazine. Membership fees/subscription being a tiny part of the finances. This is something to be aware of when considering electronic publication and the opting out of members from the magazine

The Association has very skewed cashflow with the majority of income being in Q4 whilst its spend is spread across the year. At the moment the Association has a healthy cash reserve (about £20k in the bank in October when cash-flow is at its worst) and the PWA7C have moved to quarterly invoicing which will improve the Association cashflow in any event.

The Centenary Account is still receiving money from "BeeBranded" and this isn't included in this work (less than £100 a year) and I am not sure why they are paying or who they are!

2023 Estimated

Item	Costs	Income	Net
Insurance	£2,474.00		-£2,474.00
Other CLUB Admir	£355.60		-£355.60
Archive Rent	£3,800.00		-£3,800.00
Archive Spend	£4,270.55		-£4,270.55
Magazine	£15,092.41	£23,618.00	£8,525.59
Advertising	£107.00	£2,678.00	£2,571.00
Binders	£1,001.52	£341.00	-£660.52
Subscriptions		£405.00	£405.00
Total	£27,101.08	£27,042.00	-£59.08

2024 Forecast

Item	Costs	Income	Net
Insurance	£2,721.40	£-	-£2,721.40
Other CLUB Admin	£391.16	£-	-£391.16
Archive Rent	£4,180.00	£-	-£4,180.00
Archive Spend	£2,000.00	£-	-£2,000.00
Magazine	£16,601.65	£23,618.00	£7,016.35
Advertising	£117.70	£2,678.00	£2,560.30
Binders		£341.00	£341.00
Subscriptions	£-	£405.00	£405.00
Total	£26,011.91	£27,042.00	£1,030.09

Chris will report back on the necessary actions that need to be taken so that two further signatories can be added to the A7CA bank account and will reach out to Club membership to see if somebody would be happy to independently examine the accounts, as per the Constitution.

d. Archivist (Gordon England)

The work carried out since the last report has been focussed on cataloguing and conservation. Cataloguing is a very big task but we are making some progress. All the books in the Archive are now in the catalogue with locations and with catalogue numbers referenced in pencil in each book. We have had donated two new books recently (for which many thanks to Howard Wright and Ed Herridge) which will be added during January. We are continuing with cataloguing photographs, magazines and magazine clippings. In the descriptions in the Catalogue we are making sure that any registration numbers (or competition numbers) are included. This is fairly easy for a single article about a specific car but gets more complex when the article is about a group test or even more when the magazine is a VSCC bulletin with a lot of trials reports. As a result, some descriptions are now quite long. However, the additional information will help people who use the Archive in the future.

We have purchased some even thinner card which has been used to make folders for oversize items like some of the spare parts lists. This will keep the documents clean and secure even if they don't end up in boxes. We now have 5 items in custom made boxes which feels like slow but real progress. Plenty more still to do.

In trying to catalogue photographs in the Archive, we discovered a number that are curled. Investigation suggested that there is a procedure for uncurling them and we hope to try that out in the New Year.

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy has been published and should be up for discussion at this meeting. Once this is approved, it completes the initial work for the Ten Year Plan.

Finances for the Archive for the Quarter are as follows:

1	Purchase of items for the Archive up to Q3	£1,528.60
2	Archivist expenses – approved at last meeting	£185.44
3	Conservation materials - card	£113.40
4	Conservation materials - boxes	£166.67
5	Subscription for online video hosting	£59.94
6	Labels for boxes and shelves	£22.90
	Total to year end	£2,076.95

Proposal to accept the Archive Acquisition and Disposal Policy - as detailed here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vlbLt4QkhDhPG64eIaKjsw-p10DQ_ryZYxEveldCOUg/edit?usp=sharing

Proposed: Cambridge Austin Seven and Vintage Car Club

Seconded: Cornwall Austin Seven Club

Carried.

e. Editor (Howard Wright)

Issue 2024A should be with you in the next week or two. A packed issue with four travelogues to give you ideas for the coming summer!

The 'theme' for 2024B (copy deadline date 27th February) is Sporting Sevens. Any article, letter, photo on a sporting theme considered. I'm particularly interested in 'hands on' experiences such as individual race reports or specific car construction. All sporting events not just track and trial!

At the last meeting I was tasked with the following:-

Howard Wright to put forward a proposal to the next meeting about creating a searchable electronic version of the Association Magazine back catalogue. The proposal is to include what the 'system' will be that comes out at the end i.e. how it will be used

There are over 200 'Grey Mags' published since 1970. Early indexes exist but currently there is no means of interrogating magazines from the last few decades. Shortly after taking on the Editor's role I set myself a brief to come forward with a proposal for an up to date index for the magazine. This would allow me (and

members) to find an article, quotation, car, engine part etc., written about over the last 53 years.

Technology has changed and simple indexes now seem not to be the way to go. I was advised that by scanning the whole collection of magazines into PDF format a searchable digital collection could be created.

Scanning documents to PDF format creates an electronic copy that can be searched. For those unfamiliar with the search tool on PDF files it is simply the 'magnifying glass' icon at the head of the document. Entering a word or phrase results in that word or phrase being automatically navigated to and highlighted in yellow. Further instances of the search term can be navigated to by a pop up bar at the base of the document.

I envisaged that the scanned files are held in a folder (possibly on Dropbox or on the Archive computer?) that can be accessed via a 'time limited' link. (by time limiting the activity it is unlikely that large sections of the magazine archive could be copied). Individuals wishing to search the database can apply for access to the link. I am suggesting that this is done via the Archive. (the Editor will have permanent access).

I have been provided with quotes by Pearl Scan Solutions and Genus. Pearl Scan's quote is £1244 and Genus £3561. Both quotes include the addition of TIFF image files. The disparity between these appears to be in the quality and extent of image scanning. Pearl quotes an extra £2000 for post scanning processing which is included in the Genus quote. This extra money allows for the magazine images to be recognised and text, numbers returned in the scan results. Both quotes assume destructive scanning, ie the magazines will have to be de-stapled by us before being scanned. Timescale on both quotes is likely to be around 2 months.

I have a sample scan with no image recognition (by Pearl Scan Solutions) of one magazine that I can forward to anyone wishing to see it. Bear in mind it is 27Mb and has to be sent by file transfer not as a simple attachment.

For my purpose (as Editor) I don't think that the quality of the scans are important and I could live without the need for image recognition. However if this exercise is to be used as an archive tool then quality is important and we would have to consider the extra cost of post processing.

I have discussed this with the Archivist and realise that his needs are more exacting than the Editor's. For example archive researchers may want to identify car number plates from images.

We have agreed that before proceeding with a formal proposal to the committee, the requirements of the Archive should be considered and that we should investigate the cost/benefit of the more expensive option.

Proposal

That a sub committee be set up comprising the editor, archivist and no more than 5 club representatives. This group should discuss, elicit opinions, formulate requirements and obtain quotations for scanning the Grey Magazines. They should come forward to the main committee with a proposal for execution.

Proposed: The South Wales Austin Seven Club **Seconded:** The Scottish Austin Seven Club

Carried

f. Registrar (Peter Hales)

So far 2023 has been a quieter year than 2022 but I have still been able to add 55 new carts to the register and update or add to the details of another 43 cars. In addition to this I have added the details of 8 Austin Sevens from old logbooks. The current whereabouts or existence of these cars is unknown but the information adds to the database of Austin Seven information.

2023	New Cars	Updates	Inquiries	Log books
January	9	7	22	
February	7	11	26	
March	4	9	18	
April	5	8	15	
May	4	2	9	
June	3	0	18	
July	3	2	9	
August	6	1	12	
September	2	1	14	
October	4	0	16	
November	3	2	18	8
December*	5	0	18	
	55	43	195	8

^{*} to 19th December

Once again thank you to all the people that have helped improve the information on the register and please keep sending me the information.

Peter confirmed that he had added information gleaned from old 'buff' logbooks to the Register (with a suitable note of explanation). Any accurate data that can be added to the Register will improve its usefulness as a research tool.

g. Advertising Manager (Sarah Mason)

I finally took over the advertising role in October in time to send out the invoices for 2024. All advertisers have renewed and we also have one new advertiser for next year. Many thanks to Ruairidh for holding the fort and being so patient during the handover.

h. Web Master (Roger Brown)

Figures for website use in the last quarter are not available this time. I don't check them very often unless I need to report, like now, when I found that for unknown reasons collection of data ceased around 5thOctober 2023. I am now in contact with our IT Officer to restore the service and expect to be able to report usage at the next meeting.

I continue updating club contact and meeting details as they are received, but only a small number, maybe 3, have been received since last October. I assume that the 50 clubs which I have contacted with apparently good email addresses, but which have not replied, are content with their details on our website. However, it would be helpful if all clubs checked from time to time that their published details were correct and let me know if change was needed.

Only one club, the American Bantam Society (ABC) does not appear to have a good email address. If anyone has a current email address for them it would be appreciated if they passed it on.

i. Insurance Liaison Officer (David Mawby)

On the 22nd November David Cochrane, Nick Salmon and myself had a meeting with Emma Airey and Peter Barrett (RH's General Manager) from RH insurance. The meeting was called by RH to discuss their business development, but gave us the opportunity to ask quite a few questions. RH are now part of the Howden Insurance Group and they explained the set up to us, the underwriters for RH are still A-Plan.

We discussed the following items:

Question: What benefits do we get as Association Member Clubs (Club members) above those people who are not a member of an Austin Seven Club? **Answer:** We get a 10% discount, but the level of cover is the same, they suggested that they do ask if you are a member of an Austin Seven Club.

Question: Do we still get any driver over 25 years old automatically on our policy. **Answer:** It is now any driver over 30 years old and only when asked for by the policy holder.

We pointed out that we were not happy with this and wanted it to be over 25 years and should be given without asking.

Question: Policyholders are being asked to list modifications, this may be difficult for someone new to the car and almost all Austin sevens have had some modifications due to their age.

Answer: Modifications should have been previously noted with RH and the newly trained staff are just doing it correctly.

We pointed out that this makes members feel uncomfortable and that unless the car is a special or one built out of parts, it should be agreed that standard Austin Seven models will all have an element of modification, and provided it does not alter the performance should not require this question to be answered.

I have followed this up with Peter having experienced the question when insuring an ordinary Austin Seven.

Question: Young Drivers on our policies.

Answer: This is taken case by case due to the nature of a young driver, but in principle a 17 year old can be added to the policy to be accompanied by the main policy holder, but the young driver will need to have a clean licence, be part of the same household and be approved by the underwriters. Once they turn 21 years old, they will be considered for use on their own.

I have got my own son on my policy under these conditions, but I explained that he owns his own modern car, has just completed his first year driving without issues, so I would like him to be able to drive my Austin Sevens unaccompanied. Since the meeting, I have had several conversations with both Emma and Peter regarding this and they are currently looking at it. They are going to report back to me in the new year, they have a meeting with A-plan early in January to discuss quite a few items and this is going to be one of the main ones. (This seems a little slow, but I am hopeful, they do seem like they are trying to do something)

Also as part of the discussion on Young Drivers, it has been suggested that 'Cherished' which is owned by the same company as RH may be able to insure an Austin Seven owned by Young Driver from the age of 21 years, provided they own a modern car. (Some other insurance companies offer this from a younger age)

Question: We asked how much it was to have the included Breakdown Cover within the policy and whether it would be cheaper without the European element. **Answer:** The European element makes very little difference.

Question: Do we always get free return of Salvage?

Answer: In most, but not all, if a car has been in a flood where raw sewage has got into the car, then it probably wouldn't be returned. Also, if the car has been in a fire, it may not be possible to return it.

We thought that this should be more clearly explained in the policy wording.

Question: Agree value?

Answer: Up to £20,000 can be agreed without an independent valuation, you would need to send 6 photos to RH of the car and then they would look at it and agree the value if they though it was correct.

Question: Insuring a vehicle for more than what you paid for it? **Answer:** For the first 6 months it can only be insure for the amount paid unless an independent valuation is carried out. If the vehicle has some improvements carried out, then the value can be increased.

I pointed out that there is an argument for where you have purchased a bargain, they said that they would consider this on a case by case basis.

Other Items we asked for included:

More clearly stating competition cover (non Speed), eg navigation rallies, etc to be specifically stated in our policies.

Multi Car Discounts

Trailer cover

Limited/ agreed mileage discounts.

The importance of Emma to us as a point of contact.

The fact that a lot of the staff from RH don't understand Austin Sevens (I have recently been asked if one ran on diesel or petrol)

RH did point out that we have spare parts cover into the value of the insured vehicle provided they are kept in a separate place.

We pointed out that there are a lot of Austin Seven owners who are currently unhappy with the service from RH, renewal notices have been slower than usual coming out and the people answering the phones lack knowledge. There have been various items on Forums and owners are looking elsewhere.

RH clearly have a lot of work to do and we also have several areas where we need to push them, especially around young drivers. My questions would be, what experience has everyone had and should be consider looking elsewhere?

Separate to this meeting Emma has been discussing setting up value bands for Austin Sevens, RH already do this with other clubs.

David reported on the successes of two 19 year olds who had very recently been insured on A7s for solo driving - this is a big step forward. David explained that these would be dealt with on a case by case basis, that we all had a responsibility to be sensible about minor claims that could jeopardise the scheme. He will, in conjunction with RH, produce a statement detailing the progress so far and some of the restrictions that might apply. This will be distributed to Clubs for publication in their Magazines. David is happy for individuals to contact him about queries relating to their young adult applying to be added to their policy.

j. Publicity (Steve Earl)

Can I ask for contributions for our YouTube channel? I would imagine that amongst the members there will be a number of people willing to contribute? YouTube will push our videos to new audiences if we satisfy the algorithm.

There are many Facebook groups already set up. Adding to these seems unnecessary. Was one created by us or for us to use?

I have made contact with Matt Coles from the ATDC Publicity. He is prepared to work with me and share information.

I have introduced myself to Alastair Clements Editor in Chief at Classic & Sportscar. He has shared Charlie Calderwood's email as he is Features editor.

I have introduced myself to Simon Goldsworthy from Classics World and he has suggested that a 'Readers Car' type feature could be a good starting point for my son and I to participate in.

No responses yet from The Automobile, Practical Classics or Classic Cars magazines.

Bob Kendall from the VAR magazine is writing an article about my 15 year old son and his journey into restoring an Austin Ruby. He is also writing an article about Henry Dukes who is grandson to Martin Prior.

- 6. AOCB None.
- 7. Date of next Meeting & AGM: 16th April 2024 @ 7pm

Secretary