



WESSEX VEHICLE PRESERVATION CLUB

FOUNDED 1971

www.wvpc.org.uk



'WESSEX WAYS' SEPTEMBER 2018

VEHICLE OF THE MONTH – THE AUSTIN COUNTY CARS



Austin A40 Devon



A40 Somerset



A40 Hereford



A40 Sports

From 1947 to 1954, Austin produced a series of saloons named after counties, based on a mixture of old and new technology. All were powered by 4-cylinder ohv engines with 4-speed gearboxes (with floor and column mounted gear levers). The early Devon (4-door) and Dorset (2-door) were not received with great enthusiasm by the press, and were superseded by the better styled Somerset in 1952. All were powered by 1,197cc engines producing 40bhp, which only allowed a leisurely acceleration of 0-60mph in 37 seconds and an eventual top speed of 70mph.

The larger A70 Hampshire (1948-50) and Hereford (1950-54) were substantial saloons which appealed to American buyers. With 2,199cc engines and relatively little extra weight compared with the smaller models, they could accelerate to 60mph in around 21 seconds and had a top speed of 81-83mph. Various convertible, and utility versions of all county models appeared in limited numbers, although the Somerset convertible proved to be popular. A run of 500 Somerset 'specials' were produced, with twin carburettors to give improved performance. The oddity was the A40 Sport (1951-53), which had the mechanics of the Somerset with a twin carburettor engine, and a special body supplied by the Jensen Motor Company, and based on the Jensen Interceptor of the time. Only 400 of these were made, compared with nearly 500,000 Devon and Dorset models. All of the saloons were prone to rapid rust, as were so many cars of the time, and to find one in top condition nowadays is a rarity.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

WARNING! WESSEX VEHICLE PRESERVATION CLUB LTD WILL BE WOUND UP IN DECEMBER 2018

That grabbed your attention didn't it?

Seriously though, your Club cannot continue in the present format. We currently have only 6 Committee members and no Chairman. In November we will also be losing our Treasurer.

We are a Limited Company registered with Companies House. As such we are obliged to abide by the Articles of Association which state that The Club shall be managed by a Committee which shall include the President, Treasurer and Chairman of the Club.

YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOU!

We are very lucky to have Peter Fletcher join us this month on the Committee as a co-opted member. He realised that without help from the Club members the Club is in danger of folding.

Be like Peter, volunteer to be a Committee Member and help save your club!

The only requirement is that you attend the AGM held in November each year. We do have monthly Committee meetings which last for about an hour and are held at Cobhams Sports and Social Club. If you are able to attend a few of these as well then you can have input into how your Club is run, events and generally how to enhance our members' enjoyment of this friendly Club.

Come along to the next Committee meeting with no obligation, to see how we operate. We meet at Cobhams at 7.30pm each month. Contact a Committee member for details of the next meeting date.

See you there, PLEASE!

A PLEA FROM EX-CHAIRMAN DOUG CRONK

Hi Everyone, This is just a quickie - I have not been very involved with the running of the club this year as I decided to take a step back, although I have still been doing all the talking at club night, which I should add was requested! The reason for this little bit of writing is that I am wondering if any of you have thought about coming forward to help the club out during its present crisis over the shortage of committee members? This club is very close to its 50th anniversary and I along with many of you I hope would hate to see the club fold up a couple of years short of such an important event, So if anyone could spare an hour or so a month just to attend a committee meeting to help keep us afloat then PLEASE come forward. Doug.

EDITOR'S COMMENT (for what it's worth!)

It's just a thought to all those members who would much prefer not to get too involved in the running of the club or the complexities of the committee:- Something like 25 years ago I joined the WVPC and thought just the same. Then after a while, there was a crisis just like that described above. I hadn't been a member for very long, but already I felt it would be a desperate shame if the club folded just because there was a lack of enough people helping on the committee. So like a naïve fool, I stuck my hand up when we were asked if anyone would like to give it a try. I ended up being on the committee for about 20 years, and it was something I never regretted. It was always enjoyable, especially the committee meetings held over a cup of coffee or a drink, and I like to think that I did just a little bit to keep the club alive in order to promote ownership of our classic vehicles. I would genuinely recommend anyone to give it a try too.

CREAM TEA MARK 2

On Sunday August 19th, another very successful cream tea run was held . The weather was once again kind to us and we had a total of 26 cars on the run which resulted in a total of 53 teas, I think. I am sure that I speak for everyone when I thank Mo who arranged all the nitty gritty bits of the day, just leaving me to drive. Doug

DID YOU CHOOSE THE DEL BOY OPTION? – By Paul Chasney – THE FBHVC 1,000 MILE CHALLENGE 2018

It seemed like a good idea to arrange an event to celebrate the Federation's 30th Anniversary and to highlight the new Heritage Engineering Technician apprenticeship. With a small team of historic vehicles owned by enthusiasts, what could possibly go wrong? Practical Classics have been keen to promote the Austin Westminster they have restored and will be auctioning in aid of the Lennox Children's cancer charity. Working with them as a partner enabled us to gain some publicity for the event and through their hotel partner, achieve a very good deal for the accommodation. A great start.

Jaguar Land Rover Classic Works had offered us the use of a classic Jaguar Mk X. Ideal. However that was when things started to go wrong! The Jaguar had not been used for some years. The Heritage Skills Academy at Bicester Heritage spent some time fettling the car but although they were successful in getting the car to run, very late in the day, severe problems were identified with the clutch and gearbox. The decision was made to leave the car in the workshop. With only a few days to go we were unable to find a volunteer who had the free time to join the event, although we do have a number of volunteers for next year!



The final choice of vehicles – MG Midget, Ford Model A, Austin Westminster, Daimler SP250 Dart, Alvis TA14 Woody Estate Hotels were booked and the stops had all been confirmed. Time to go for a quiet 1,000 mile run. With the route based on an average speed of only 40 mph and the vehicles all capable of 50 mph, we should have been set for an enjoyable run. Everyone arrived on time for the start at Brooklands Motor Museum. If we had but known it, this was the only occasion when all five vehicles would arrive at an appointed stop, together and on time! A number of enthusiast well -wishers arrived to wave us off and the first stop at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu was only 70 miles away. Only five cars, we would be fine.

We left Brooklands via the Campbell Gate and almost immediately lost the Alvis. Traffic was heavier than we had hoped but each vehicle had a satnav, a map and a mobile phone. At least we could talk to one another! Working our way towards Beaulieu the group of four vehicles became separated in the traffic. Not everyone followed the same route and as we made our way south one or two issues were identified in the Austin. This, it transpired, was just the tip of its iceberg. By the time all the vehicles had arrived at Beaulieu we were running over an hour late. Not a problem, in the next leg up to JLR Classic Works we just had to put our foot down a bit!

It was at this point that things became more testing. What with traffic, further issues with the Austin and an errant satnav in the Ford we arrived late at JLR Classic Works and with only three vehicles. The two estates had taken a different route north and the Austin was throwing tantrums on a regular basis. It was decided the estates should make directly for the hotel as their progress was running well behind schedule. The Daimler and MG enjoyed tea at JLR Classic Works but the Ford arrived only shortly before it was time to leave!

The first car arrived at the Wednesday night stop at the Plough and Harrow in Birmingham almost two hours later than expected and it was almost 9.00pm before the Austin, last of the five, arrived. No matter, we had all arrived safely and Thursday was another day. Little did we know that the proverbial wheels were about to come off! The original plan was for the Austin to leave early on Thursday, visit the CBR Motor Bodies workshop for some fettling and then for us to meet along the way to Bowcliffe Hall, a facility owned by motoring enthusiast Jonathan Turner and home to the Alvis Archive Trust. The Austin proved problematic to start and it was well after 9.00am by the time it left. The other cars set off up the A38. At last we were due to be out of the traffic and on to comfortable A roads for most of the day. The four vehicles became separated but that was fine we all knew where we were going.

The MG had arrived for lunch. Members of the Alvis Owner Club and Friends of the Archive Trust made the MG welcome while they awaited the others. Meanwhile back on the A38: While following the MG, the Daimler suffered its catastrophic failure. Minding its own business in moderate traffic, but cruising around 55 to 60 mph, there came a mighty crash bang wallop on leaving the northern Derby roundabout. The car slumped on its rear offside after a lurch as the wheel left the car. The steel grinding noise sounded as though the bottom was being dragged out of the car. Surprisingly the car slid, in a more or less controlled fashion, to a halt alongside the central barrier on the dual carriageway. The Daimler was going nowhere under its own steam however good our tool kit on loan from King Dick tools seemed to be! The wheel had sheared four bolts.

Fortunately the high-viz jacket had been stowed at the top of the boot so traffic direction was order of the day until Derbyshire's finest arrived and the cones captured the road. The Daimler seemed to enjoy its moment of fame as it appeared on the Derby traffic news. CBR Motor Bodies recovered the car. Despite rumours to the contrary, it is not true that the build sheet for the Daimler had the 'Del Boy' option ticked. (Running on three wheels as the Reliant in *Only Fools and Horses*.) It was an unkind suggestion!

The Alvis carried on to Yorkshire where a replacement for the Daimler was dragged from its garage. Another Alvis! The Ford arrived at Bowcliffe but the Austin was nowhere to be seen. Back at the CBR workshop, work on the Austin had taken a turn for the worse. It was established that the engine bearings were irretrievably damaged. Clearly one option was to have the Austin retire and continue with three vehicles plus the Alvis substitute, but the team were made of sterner stuff and it was critical that the Austin should cover the 1000 miles to arrive for its publicity photo-shoot at ACA on Monday 23 April. An ancient engine was pulled from the bushes behind the workshop. The bottom end appeared good despite its treatment, so a swap was made. The team, including our two apprentice volunteers, worked through Thursday into the late evening. The Austin was running. A little before midnight the intrepid crew set off for The North. They checked in at the Alnwick hotel at 5.20am on Friday morning!

Bright and early, well about 9.30am actually, the four cars were ready to go. Off they went, out of the hotel car park and turned left into a cul-de-sac. Easily corrected, but in the traffic leaving Alnwick the vehicles were again separated! Sporadic fettling of the Austin was required as the team sped North but she kept moving. It was now the Alvis woody's turn to throw a tantrum. Perhaps it was the run to Yorkshire the previous day, perhaps it was the thought of crossing the border into Scotland but the Alvis was feeling her age. Finally, around 50 miles south of Edinburgh and the Forth crossings, she spluttered to a halt with a blown head gasket. Recovery seemed the only way.

Meanwhile the MG and the Austin pressed on to the Forth River crossings and South Queensferry for the photo-shoot. In the way of those sad natural history programmes where one animal is loath to leave its dead or dying partner, the new Alvis (a TC21 drophead for the record) waited with the woody until it was clear spares could not be sourced in a reasonable time. The woody was indeed dead so the TC pressed on to catch up with the Austin and the MG.

The journey from South Queensferry to Preston was relatively uneventful. The Austin required intermittent fettling and the group became separated, but by this time everyone had grown used to the routine! It was something of a surprise to find that itinerant travellers had taken over part of the carpark at the Faringdon Lodge Hotel but after the excitement of the previous few days and with the promise of a good night's rest for the Austin crew, dealing with a few travellers was a minor problem!

To be honest the drive on Saturday was uneventful to the point of being boring. We had after all been used to a regular flow of problems to solve. However, the upside was that the team arrived at both the British Motor Museum and the Rootes Archive Centre on time! Both were interesting visits and the cars were made to feel very welcome. Certainly great places to visit on a trip around the country.

It was on the way to Charringworth Manor near Chipping Campden on Saturday evening that we got back into the old routine! The Austin had been playing up but in a manageable way. The Ford on the other hand was looking for a moment of glory. As she arrived in the hotel carpark it was clear to all onlookers that her offside front wheel had 'an issue'. A quick examination revealed that the wheel bearing was certainly not 'within normal tolerance'. When the wheel was removed, it was discovered that most of the bearing had been reduced to iron filings. A new front wheel bearing was certainly not in the spares kit. Recovery was again the only way!

The Sunday morning run to Bicester Heritage for the Drive It Day celebration, was mostly uneventful. There were only three cars but in accordance with what had become normal practice, the group became split. Surprisingly, all three cars reunited a few miles before entering Bicester Heritage and so were able to enter the site in triumph (if an Austin, an Alvis and a MG can be said to do anything 'in Triumph'!). All three vehicles were displayed for the day outside the Heritage Skills Academy where our two apprentice volunteers are studying.

Drive It Day at Bicester Heritage was a great day out. We were all sad to leave but there was still a 65 mile drive to the Queen's Head Inn at Nassington for our overnight stop ahead of the major photoshoot. The Austin had been the centre of considerable attention at Bicester but this it seems was not enough. She was craving the undivided attention of an engineer. There were several stops. Points were checked, condensers changed and every electrical connection checked. Finally the core of the problem was identified as a defective fuel pump. It would 'click' a few times and stop. The only way to make it 'click' again was to break the circuit. A simple electrical feed was established and while the complete works of Shakespeare were tapped out in Morse Code, the Austin made its way to Nassington. It was 8pm. We arrived happy. The Austin's problem had been identified, the MG and the Alvis TC were fine but the hotel restaurant had closed at 7pm! No matter. We were on a roll. Driving to another village for dinner we could cope with easily.

Monday morning's trip to the Practical Classics workshop to fix the petrol pump was straightforward. Fixing the pump was less straightforward. We arrived late at Anglia Car Auctions for the photoshoot but at least we arrived and more importantly, the Austin had achieved its 1000 mile run. It was ready for the charity auction on 16 June at ACA (well almost!) The run was over. Only the MG had completed the run without incident. The MG had been prepared by apprentices at the Heritage Skills Academy at Bicester Heritage. Enough said! The Austin had had a heart transplant along the way and all praise must be paid to Matt Tomkins of Practical Classics, Andy Waters and his team at CBR Motor Bodies and our two apprentice volunteers for their work in swapping engines and getting the car to the finish line. Would we do it again? Of course we would. In fact in 2019 we are planning an Apprentice Challenge based on our experiences this year. We will be looking for teams of apprentices to take part. If you enjoy expecting the unexpected and would like to take part in, or help with, the Apprentice Challenge, get in touch.

WVPC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman – Vacant, club to be run on a 'Team Management' basis.

Secretary – Janet Palmer – familypalmer29@hotmail.com

Treasurer – Val Baker.

Website Co-ordinator - Dennis Stranack – wvpcweb@gmail.com and alpinecruising@gmail.com

Motorcycle Section – Colin Baker - bikes@wvpc.org.uk

Committee members - Christine Fletcher, Peter Fletcher.

PRELIMINARY CALENDER OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday October 9th - Baked Potato Night, a bit earlier this year as last year was too close to Christmas. See order form on next page.

Tuesday November 13th - The ever popular AGM.

Tuesday December 11th - To be decided.

URGENT REQUEST – RAFFLE ORGANISER NEEDED

After 7 years of organising the raffles, Mo has decided to retire, so we are in urgent need of someone to do this important task and ensure we continue to have our regular raffles – apply please to Mo or Doug.

BAKED POTATO NIGHT – October 9th – ORDER FORM

The choice will be as below; please indicate your choices and numbers, and let me have your orders and cash or cheque by no later than September 25th. The cost will be £4.00 per head. Cheques should be made out to WVPC Ltd and either handed to me or sent to 91 Pinehurst Park, West Moors, Dorset BH22 0BP. Thanks, Doug.

TUNA..... CHEESE..... CHEESE & BEANS.....

CHEESE & COLESLAW..... PRAWNS..... CURRY.....

NAME AND MEMBERSHIP NUMBER.....

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WESSEX VEHICLE PRESERVATION CLUB LTD

WVPC COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM 2018

THIS FORM IS FOR NOMINATIONS TO THE CLUB COMMITTEE FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 13th NOVEMBER 2018.

More than one form can be submitted proposing other candidates for committee posts, but **all forms have to be in the hands of the Secretary prior to 29th October 2018. Nominations received after such date will not be considered. No nominations will be considered at the annual general meeting. The form must be fully completed in order to be accepted.**

I (name)membership number.....

would like to nominate:-

.....

for a position on the committee and my seconder is (name):-

.....membership number.....

SIGNED:- PROPOSER

SECONDER

THIS FORM IS TO BE SENT TO:-

WVPC Ltd Secretary, 52 Anstey Rd, Bournemouth, Dorset BH11 9HG, or by e-mail to:- familypalmer29@hotmail.com

Please note that any nominations received after October 29th 2018, or any incomplete nominations, will be invalid.