



# VILLAGE NEWS

WEST END ESHER

WEST END MOTOR CLUB

Volume 19 Issue 3

AUTUMN 2022

The Village Show Edition

THE VILLAGE CLUB SPECIAL

CONTINUED

At relatively short notice, three intrepid members attended The Henley Traditional Boat Show over the weekend 16-17 July. The Fawley meadows, normally the site of corporate hospitality during the Henley Regatta, became much more interesting with display and mooring of everything that traditionally has floated on a river, from coracles and steam pinnaces through slipper craft to Dunkirk little ships, motor craft of every description to amphibious cars, Bluebird, canoes, rowing and sailing dinghies. Supplementing the boat builders' stalls, marine orientated sales pitches, there were food and drink outlets to suit all tastes and, wonder of wonders, an eclectic classic car display.



Steam Yacht

An immaculate 1950s Bentley Mark VI transported its keeper Ken, Suzie and David and was our base for the very hot, sunny day, alleviated by the river breeze. The ambulant toured the riverbank whilst the non-ambulant rested beneath a sun umbrella with ice cream and the odd pint. This bliss later amplified by the sound of four Merlin aero engines of the Battle of Britain Flight Lancaster performing three passes at about 200 feet so the rivets were visible. Oh! to be in England.....



Bluebird

The big event of the year for some Motor Club members was the Centenary Rally for Austin 7's at Moreton-in-Marsh in the Cotswolds, held over 19 to 24th July at the Fire Service College. One thousand, yes 1000! examples of these little cars gathered for the 100-year celebration of the launch of the baby Austin Seven at Claridges on July 21st 1922. And what a celebration it was! Production started in 1922 and finished in 1939 with the outbreak of war so all Austin 7's are at least 83 years old.

Cars came from all corners of the earth, many from Europe and further afield. West End was represented by Ken, Suzie and Roger with their three cars travelling over 200 miles to and from the event plus excursions.



Historic Racing Austin 7s

Some very historically important models were present at the rally including single seat racers that competed in their heyday at Brooklands and similar circuits. Rally field displays, an A7 Festival on July 20th at Prescott hill climb course, a mass picnic on the anniversary day, spare parts stalls, evening bands in the marquee with beer tent, gin bar and food court - what more could a car enthusiast want?



Mass picnic



Afterwards—empties



A7s sleeping it off

The West End cars proceeded to Moreton in stately convoy via Witney where Ken had previously garaged his Fabric Saloon. Roger leading in his Austin 7 Special, named 'Lockdown' after rebuilding the engine during the first covid lockdown, then Suzie in Ken's Nippy and Ken bringing up the rear in his Saloon. Cars' ages 86, 85 and 93 years – were we asking for trouble? Read on.

There were only two travel hiccups on our way to the event on the hottest day ever recorded in England. Ken's 1929 saloon conked out on a busy hill approaching Stow-on-the-Wold. Seeing Ken had stopped, Suzie stopped (convoy rules), and missing Suzie, Roger pulled over and also stopped. Whilst the road was busy it was wide, two lanes up and one lane down, so we weren't a total road block.

Rescue came courtesy of a Gloucestershire Constabulary traffic patrol, who after stopping all traffic, pushed the Fabric Saloon around in a u-turn for Ken to freewheel back to the bottom of the hill where a pub car park was very conveniently located. Then the Nippy's engine failed to restart so the Nippy was also pushed around for Suzie to freewheel back down. I daresay we made the officers' day.

The Fabric Saloon's ignition coil was replaced which seemed to fix the problem and the hill successfully climbed on the second attempt! After some TLC the Nippy agreed to restart and also successfully climbed the hill, it was not clear what its problem had been, but later it was realised that probably the fuel pump was failing because of ethanol in modern fuel.

### Prescott 20th July

As an event within an event, and partly because the main rally at Moreton in Marsh was not open to the general public, a public Austin 7 festival was organised at Prescott, about 20 miles away nearer Cheltenham. Prescott is a well known old establish hill climb course where cars compete one at a time against the clock up a short steep tarmac road with a sweeping bend and a steep hairpin. It is 1127 yards long, the best time 34.6 seconds (66.5 mph) set by modern racing car in 2021. The best Austin 7 time is 47.4 seconds (48.6 mph) set pre WW2, also a single seat racing car. Some of the historic racing Austin 7s did display ascents sounding very strong. Other historic Austin 7s also displayed, including 'Simplicity' a contemporary of Roger's Austin 7 Special 'Lockdown' which incorporates many details pioneered by Simplicity in early 1950s. Lockdown was very happy to take park in a sedate parade run.



Simplicity at Prescott



Lockdown with Suzie and Roger at Prescott

The Motor Club section continues to meet in the Social Club every Tuesday morning around 10am for coffee and bacon rolls and also each Thursday evening around 8pm for a pint.

*Text: David, Ken and Roger - Photos: Ken and Roger*