



Norfolk Austin Seven Club,

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NORFOLK NA7TER

JANUARY-2006

Well I will start by wishing you all a **Happy New Year** and hope that you all get a great deal of enjoyment out of driving or tinkering with your Austin Sevens and other cherished cars in 2006.

The Aimee Agenda

My old year and new year ended and started well as far as I am concerned because I have been getting stuck in to getting to know my "new" Austin Seven Arrow Sports Foursome, whom I have christened "Aimee".

Why Aimee? Well her registration letters are "AMM" and what you do with an Arrow is to aim it!!!! Quite logical from my Goonish point of view. During the first snow flurries at the end of November, I took the car over to David's "Toad Hall" so that I could have a good look underneath and get some photos with the digital camera. David was impressed with just how good the bodywork is, considering that the car is 73 years old, apart from a bit of corrosion of the aluminium at the rear.



So far I have removed the engine and gearbox in one lump, stripped out all the electric wiring and interior fittings, including the wooden floor boards, which have revealed great access to the chassis. This is the first coach-built Austin 7 I have worked on and I am intrigued by the little oddities that I have come across, such as the front spring having eleven spring leaves, instead of the more normal eight, and the rear axle has two "Helper" coil springs on top of the rear half-shaft casings, plus a third coil spring on top of the rear portion of the prop shaft. Also, the whole of the chassis and running gear were painted grey to match the car's body colour. Because the grey paint is on the bolts fixing the coil springs in place, I believe these extra springs were fitted at the time the car body was built. Why it was thought necessary to beef up the suspension of this car I have not yet worked out, but I have heard that a later model Austin 7 Arrow Competition 65, belonging to Martin Humphries had been also fitted with the extra rear coil springs before he restored the car. One hunch that I have is that as the car was found done in Gosport, Hampshire by Simon when he bought it, and the car had spent its life from the early fifties in the Southampton area, and because it is painted Battleship Grey, that it might have originally been ordered for the Royal Navy as some sort of staff car. Pretty fanciful you may think, but it does no harm to have these ideas.

On the last Wednesday of 2005, in the snow and ice I took the engine and gearbox, along with a load of other engine related bits, over to Keith Rawson of Rawson & Rawson Motorsport, near Oswestry. Keith is going to build a new engine from all the bits, using a pressure fed Phoenix crank, Renault 5 conrods and pistons, four branch exhaust manifold, SU carb, trials/touring camshaft, competition clutch, and overhaul and convert the gearbox to close ratio. I will sort out the chassis and axles, then it is over to David to sort the bodywork and repaint the body.

As a new owner of an Arrow, I have researched about the company that built them, and it comes as a bit of a surprise that the Austin Seven Surviving Chassis Register only lists 40 Austin 7 Arrows, of which only ten are Arrow Sport Foursomes, so quite a rare little car. I also found out that that one of our members, Bryan Norfolk, has been really interested in Austin Seven Arrows since he owned the rusting remains of one back in the fifties. Unfortunately there was not much left to viably rescue then, so the remains were dispersed. Since then, Bryan has been amassing a file of information on Arrows, which he kindly loaned to me, for which I am most grateful.

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That's my recent Austin Seven action, so lets look back on what happened with the club in the closing stages of 2005.

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East Anglia Inter-Club Motoring Quiz

This was held at the George Hotel, Swaffham, on Thursday 1st December. The NA7C was represented by Tony Rose, Rick and Cherry Fryer and yours truly (not "Truely of the Yard"!! for those Summer Wine aficionados!). We arrived to find that we were up against thirteen other teams, from eight other car clubs. However we had something that I don't think that any of the other clubs had - a supporters group!!! Thank you Anne Rose and Henry Thorne for coming along and whispering one or two of the answers!!! Before anybody accuses us of cheating, at least one other team consisted of six people instead of the stipulated four!!! Whilst we were getting ourselves sorted out, snatches of tunes for the Music Round were played

over the loud speakers, which we found to be a bit louder than we needed as we were sitting right next to one of them!! There were eleven rounds of questions, mainly based on motoring, but also including a General Knowledge round and another for Local Heroes. A couple of questions at least were Austin based – “Which motoring magnate had a daughter named Zeta?” answer – “Lord Austin” (which we got), and “Which manufacturer had a car named the “Se7en””, answer “Austin” (as in Mini) (which we did not get I am sorry to say!! – we {or was it “I”} thought that it was Caterham!). Anyway, it was a jolly good evening, well organised by Peter Riddle (a most appropriate name for a quiz master I thought!!) and his team from The Sporting Car Club of Norfolk. The quiz was won by the Cambridge Car Club, who will run the quiz next year. We, as representatives of the Norfolk Austin Seven Club, came, appropriately enough, seventh!

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The NA7C Christmas Dinner.

The evening of the Tuesday 13th December arrived, and Sue and I got to the Parson Woodforde Pub early to make sure that things were properly arranged for the evening of the club’s first Christmas Dinner. Dean, the manager, and his staff had arranged the seating into two long tables of twenty places each in one half of the dining room, and we also had use of the other half of the room for our coats and the raffle prizes table. They had also done us proud with the Christmas tree and decorations, which made the whole room look very jolly. First to arrive were Ron and Barbara, closely followed by John and Diane and Brian and Joan. Then everybody else arrived pretty closely, so that we were all assembled, seated and having a good chat by about 7:40, which was really great.

The evening allowed me to meet recent new members Roy and Carol Clarke, for the first time. They had recently bought the Big Austin Seven that I mentioned was for sale in the Wells area in the October Natter. Fortunately they live in Lowestoft, near Roger, our Big 7 specialist, and he has been a great help in sorting the car, so they naturally arrived together.

Thank you to all those of you who generously brought along gifts for the Raffle; I remembered afterwards that I had forgotten to thank you for them at the end of the evening, for which please accept my belated apologies – I was just so happy and excited by the atmosphere of the evening!!

For those of you who were unable to join us, the carvery consisted of roast turkey breast, two joints of beef (one rare, one medium), plus a range of vegetables. After we had been round for our first helping, those who had room, were quite welcome to help themselves to more. Martin elected to go for the vegetarian option and was really delighted with his samosas. The sweet was a choice of apple crumble, berry cheesecake or fruit salad, which was followed by coffee and chocs.

The raffle produced very good entertainment, with Charles selecting a bejewelled candle snuffer (which caused some debate as to whether it will clash with his spangled jock strap!), and Julian ended up with the trouser press (look out for that item next year!). The Raffle produced £68.00, which will go to help the club’s funds in this our first year.

There was a really great and convivial atmosphere during the whole of the evening, and I think that everybody enjoyed the meal and the evening.

————— \NA7C/ —————

Matt’s MOT experience

Back in November I got an e-mail from Matt Dingle, about his recent experience with getting his cars MOT’d. Here is an edited version of his message, with editor’s additional explanations in bracketed italics.:

Hi Jim.

Albert (*the Austin 7 Box*) is still off the road having a chassis rail changed. (not that I want to run him around in the winter anyway - too much salt is bad for your health.). I would like to see yours, but i haven't found the time yet. (*I don't get many comments like that these days! Ed.*) Carla, Kiera & me will not be able to attend the Christmas meal - DOH.

MOTs - At the end of September I put Albert & Wally Westfield through the trauma of a new MOT test. DVLA's details don't seem too accurate - Albert was listed as being first registered as 1971 (A little late for a RN box saloon?) and the Westfield had no listed manufacturer or model, just a chassis no. & registration date. Both these errors were rectified & DVLA records were updated by the garage mechanic. There were no other problems. Albert’s brakes were more than efficient for the deceleration test, so my tinkering must have worked. (I think the brakes are now just a little poor rather than downright dangerous as they were when we first drove him). In my experience I don't think the new MOT tests are anything to worry about.

See you soon M,C+K.

ps If you want to e-mail future Norfolk Natters to us, that would be fine.

If any others of you have had odd experiences with the new MOT system please let me know and I will include it in the next Norfolk Natter.

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So what is going to be happening this year for the Norfolk Austin Seven Club?

In May:

To start with we have been invited to take our cars along Mulberry Tree House, Harris Green, near Hardwick, by **Barbara and Ron Houghton** to join in with their "Oily Rag Run". This is an annual gathering of machines that hold an interest for Ron and Barbara, which are mainly Austin 7s and stationary engines, and this year may include octagon MGs. If you are interested in joining in a feasting on Barbara wonderful feast at the end of the day, please let me know as they need to know how many people to cater for.

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**On Sunday 21st May 2006, we will be holding the
Inaugural Norfolk Austin Seven Club Rally
as part of the Norfolk Rally
which this year will be at the
North Walsham Rugby Club, at Scottow.**

I have roped in David Charles to help me with organising the event and we will let you know more as and when we have got things sorted. If any of you have any ideas as to what you would like to see at our rally please let me know.

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In June:

The wandering Essex Man, Graham Baldock has issued the following challenge:

The East Anglia Trophy

A hugely IMPORTANT date for your 2006 diary...

Date: SUNDAY

JUNE 25th 2006

**Where? Rougham Airfield,
Suffolk nr Bury St Edmunds**

**This is an open invitation to all members in the Norfolk Austin Seven Club
to come along and help contest for the East Anglia Trophy for the NA7C
which we in Essex won last year!!**

**In competition will be the Norfolk A7C, the Essex A7C, the Suffolk Centre of the EA7C
friends, and the Cambridge A7C.**

**We in Essex are determined to have a really good shot at winning the trophy again so be
warned! The more cars you have there the better your chances!!!**

**This year the competition is once again being held at the Wheels, Wings and Steam Show at
Rougham Airfield just east of Bury St Edmunds.**

**We won't know until the day what the actual competition will entail - it's a mystery - literally
anyone can win, but again the more cars are there the better your chances!**

**WW&S Show Entry fee last year was £5 a car to cover the insurance and last year some of us
paid on the day at the entrance, but it's always better to pre-book as some could be turned
away as has happened before.**

Cars ideally should be in position for 10.00am.

Entry forms will be available at the end of January

**Please don't book a holiday away or have something else booked that weekend,
clear the decks and show 'em what your Club is made of!**

**We look forward to seeing the NA7C in force at Rougham
on Sunday June 25th**

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**Right, so Graham has laid down the gauntlet so please let me know that you are going
to help me pick it up and bring the East Anglia Trophy back up to Norfolk.**

In July:

The

Cambridge Austin Seven & Vintage Car Club
announce that their

5  **th**

Anniversary Rally

*for all Austin Sevens
and pre-1956 Cars and Motorcycles
will be held on*

7th, 8th & 9th, July, 2006
at

Lordsbridge Arena, Barton

near the

Historic City of Cambridge



*Camping / Barbeque / Displays / Concours & Prizes /
Trade Stands & Autojumble / Charabanc rides into
Cambridge / Punting on the River Cam / Mapped local
drives / Saturday Night Entertainment (live Music &
Quality Food)*

Entry Forms are available from:

The Rally Secretary: e-mail hugh.50p@ntlworld.com

or

Paul Lawrence, 3 Housman Avenue, Royston, Herts. SG8 5DN

Tel: 01763 249210

or

Download from our website at: www.ca7vcc.co.uk

NA7C/

Charles Levien has expressed an interest in driving down to the rally on the Saturday and would welcome any other NA7C members to join him to make a club group entrance. Please have a chat with him and me if you are planning to partake in the fun at Cambridge on this weekend.

In August:

Under the “umbrella” of the NA7C **Anne and Hamish** are going to be organising their first

Waveney Wander

Which will be a road run from Norwich to Lowestoft.

Details are yet to be finalised but any of you who are interested in a drive through the pretty countryside of the River Waveney valley please have a chat with Anne or Hamish or contact me.

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So you can see there are already more Austin Seven things for you to do this year. If you want to do any other runs or events please let me know and I will do everything that I can to help you enjoy your Herbert's Special!

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So now for some **Items from the FBHVC NEWSLETTER No 6 2005**

UK LEGISLATION

David Hurley

Good news from the House of Lords

On 26 October, the House of Lords (in committee) considered the Road Safety Bill. Earl Attlee tabled an amendment to require the Secretary of State to have ‘regard to the need to avoid retrospective legislation concerning the construction and use of historic vehicles ...’ when negotiating with the European Union. The amendment was supported by FBHVC president, Lord Montagu, by Lord Berkeley (who told the House he owned a 1931 Lagonda) and by Viscount Simon. The official reply from Baroness Crawley makes it clear that government does not see historic vehicles as a problem, and the amendment was withdrawn. We quote in full:

I thank noble Lords for their contributions. While I am on my feet, I want to thank the noble Lord, Lord Montagu, for all his work over many years in this area. All sides of the House are proud of the work that he has done.

I hope to reassure noble Lords that there is nothing to worry about. We know of no European legislation or proposals that adversely affect the private use of historic vehicles. As the noble Earl said, virtually all proposals concerning the technical standards required of vehicles applied to new vehicles entering service after a specific date. We would not expect any suggestion for retrospective application of technical standards to vehicles unless there were unusual and robust safety or environmental considerations. It is particularly difficult to envisage any such circumstances that would be considered proportionate for the relatively small number of historic vehicles that are used privately.

Section 43(3) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 already requires the Secretary of State to be satisfied that no undue hardship or inconvenience will be caused by the application of new construction and use regulations if they are applied to vehicles registered earlier than a year after the new regulations were made.

Both the European Commission and the Government would have to justify any provision in a regulatory impact assessment. The Government already undertake such assessments whenever new vehicle standards are proposed, including anything that might affect historic vehicles. We would not support any proposal that could not be justified on the grounds of proportionality or cost-effectiveness. I hope that the noble Earl will feel reassured and withdraw his amendment.

MoT – new re-test fee structure announced

VOSA chose the FBHVC conference on 15 October to announce that a new fee structure would be introduced from August 2006 allowing half-price retests following MoT failure providing the vehicle concerned was repaired and returned to the testing station by the end of the tenth working day after failure.

Consultation on possible extension of the Kent Act

The consultation on the possible extension of the Kent Act that was expected during October had not materialised by the time of writing (mid November). This may well be because the Home Office has been watching the progress through Parliament of the Occasional Sales Bill, a Private Members’ Bill tabled by John Whittingdale. This Bill, if enacted, would have the effect of introducing many elements of the Kent Act on a nationwide basis, thus making the proposed Home Office consultation at least partially redundant.

Before the second reading of the Occasional Sales Bill on 14 October Greg Knight MP, chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicles Group, had persuaded Mr Whittingdale to accept an amendment that would take autojumble activity out of the scope of his Bill. Lack of parliamentary time on 14 October meant that the second reading was postponed until next March, and it is likely that the Bill will be lost.

Violent Crime Prevention Bill

FBHVC is making representations to the Home Office to urge that de-activated or replica weapons that are permanently mounted so as to become part of a larger structure should be taken out of the scope of the meas-

ures contained within the Violent Crime Prevention Bill. This would allow military vehicle enthusiasts to continue to display complete tanks, museums to continue to show machine guns mounted in World War II bombers and preserved naval vessels to retain ancient cannons, etc.

Threat to vehicular use of unsurfaced roads looms

Despite the great efforts of bodies such as the Land Access and Recreation Association and the Trial Riders Fellowship, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill which is wending its way through parliament, still contains clauses that would close many unsurfaced roads to motor vehicles. FBHVC opposed such moves at consultation two years ago, and is taking the matter up again through the All Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicle Group.

EU LEGISLATION

(Extracted from FIVA's regular update provided by its lobbying service, EPPA)

Road safety – FIVA amendment adopted by European Parliament

We are pleased to report that the Transport Committee's amendment to the European Commission's Road Safety programme (proposed by Ari Vatanen) was adopted by the whole European Parliament on 29 September. The amendment reads:

[The European Parliament] is keen to preserve the cultural heritage represented by historic vehicles; therefore urges that planned legislation should take into consideration any unintentional but potentially negative effects on the use – and thus also the preservation – of historic vehicles.

This was a proactive FIVA initiative, originally proposed by FBHVC chairman Andrew Burt in a meeting in Brussels with Ari Vatanen (the Transport Committee rapporteur for the issue) in late 2003. FIVA now knows that it has great support within the European Parliament and can use the paragraph to support any case in any future lobbying – specifically if either the Commission or Council try (for whatever reason) to ignore FIVA representations.

European Commission proposes a new clean air strategy

On 21 September, the European Commission proposed a comprehensive 15-year programme to improve EU air quality. The central aim of the Clean Air for Europe's (Cafe) programme is to set a series of targets for reducing key pollutant emissions between 2000 and 2020. The proposal is for sulphur dioxide to be cut by 82%, nitrogen oxides by 60%, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by 51%, ammonia by 27% and ultra-fine particulates (PM2.5) by 59%. To do so, the Commission has issued a first piece of draft legislation, consolidating existing EU laws on air quality standards and introducing the first limits on PM2.5. It also discusses future measures for political debate.

It is the existing air quality/emission regulations, dating from 1999, which have caused problems for FIVA members in some member states, specifically Italy, where local authorities have banned the use of vehicles without catalytic converters from towns and regions on specific days in order to ensure that the air quality levels set by the regulations are met.

FIVA met officials of European Commission's DG Environment last year to ascertain whether there was any action the Commission could take to ensure that the use of historic vehicles is not impacted by national implementation of the Regulations. They answered that there was little they could do and that certainly there was no action that could be taken if FIVA could not provide facts and figures on the numbers of historic vehicles in Europe, miles driven by them, emissions produced by them etc. Since then FIVA has commissioned a study to provide these facts and figures which is expected to be ready by July 2006.

FIVA's most recent dialogue with the European Commission on this matter – in anticipation of these new proposals – was somewhat more positive. One of the Commission officials responsible for the proposals made clear again that the Commission will never be able to include in one of these Directives a provision stating that Member States should not impact on the use of historic vehicles when implementing the Directives. However, he did say that during the regular workshops which the Commission holds with Member States to discuss the implementation of the Directives, it does give the Member States guidance as to which actions are likely to have the greatest impact in improving air quality. Conversely, the Commission can advise Member States to avoid certain measures if evidence has shown that such action does little to improve air quality. It is hoped the FIVA research will show that the historic vehicle movement's contribution to pollution is minimal. When the research is complete, we will share the information with the European Commission with the objective that they may then tell Member States to avoid impacting historic vehicles when implementing the EU air quality Directives as doing so will have little overall benefit.

This issue is important as vehicle bans are increasingly seen to be an easy way to ensure that the Directives' air quality targets are met. It will become more important still as one of the new proposals is calling for the first

ever EU-level limits on ambient concentrations of ultra-fine particles under 2.5 microns wide (PM2.5). The proposal states that by 2010 all member states will have to comply with a “concentration cap” of 25 micrograms per cubic metre. Five years after the directive’s adoption the Commission will propose further targets differentiated by member state. Environment groups have criticised the proposal on the grounds that the proposed target PM 2.5 target will not be fully legally binding as the Commission has confirmed that the target will have to be met “where possible”, but governments will still have to show they have taken all reasonable measures to reduce pollution if they want to avoid legal action.

DVLA

Sandy Hamilton

The backlog of V765s that built up due to unfounded scares and V5C documents has now been eliminated and response times are back to customary levels. I have been asked to investigate some refusals where applicants were concerned that criteria may have changed although submissions appeared to be following established procedures. On checking, the principal reason for the refusal - or more properly ‘deferral’ since DVLA explained a willingness to reconsider with more information - was a lack of clarity in explaining non-official reference material. As enthusiasts we are sometimes inclined to forget that not all recipients of our research are as knowledgeable (or even as interested) as we are about old vehicles. We therefore need to present this material in as simple a format as possible, highlighting the relevant information when it is hiding inside a blizzard of similar statistics. Help the officials to help us and we will usually have the result we want.

Over 98% of registered vehicles now have a V5C. DVLA will be monitoring take up of those that fall/fell outside the automatic scheme. Unless there is a very slow conversion rate for the remainder they have no plans to repeat the advertisements that caused the recent confusion.

No fresh consultations have been seen although we await the Minister’s reaction to possible revisions to DVLA fee proposals. We need to be prepared to ‘warm up’ our objections if the views expressed by the 50,000-plus signatories to last year’s petition have been ignored; we know that our trenchant response was noted.

MoTs were thoroughly covered at the conference but one aspect mentioned during the excellent presentation by VOSA was that production of a V5C is not required to conduct a computerised MoT. For an obscure make, or a particularly old vehicle, it may nonetheless be helpful to have the V5C to hand since the DVLA/VOSA database is not very strong on pre-1980 models. Local experience confirms that VOSA training in recent months has been more effective than at the beginning of the changeover: over 50% of stations are now using the new system. One benefit is that a replacement certificate can be obtained from any station and that DVLA offices can provide a certificate with a new registration number when a cherished transfer is submitted.

There is still a substantial number of errors uncovered on vehicle data so continue to check that your vehicle ID exactly matches the documentation, or vice versa to be more precise, so that any correction can be made before a test.

AGM and CONFERENCE

Minutes, including the complete chairman’s report, have been circulated to club main contacts. These include a detailed report of the conference presentation and the question and answer session. Copies are also available by email from admin@fbhvc.co.uk, or by post from the secretary on receipt of a C5 stamped addressed envelope.

A brief question and answer session followed which concentrated on the continuing problems with availability and cost of insurance – Arnold Davey of the Lagonda Club cited the difficulty of extending cover for older vehicles for named drivers under 25; Howard Annett (Austin Seven Owners Club of London) was concerned at the continuing difficulty faced by smaller organisations seeking satisfactory public liability insurance and David Holland (Brooklands Society) was worried about obtaining the level of insurance required by law for the use of non-road going vehicles in paddocks at events or when taking part in display runs.

Several present mentioned that Willis provided comprehensive cover for named under 25 drivers of older vehicles provided they were accompanied by the policy holder; the secretary reported some (slow) progress in efforts to make PL insurance more readily affordable for small clubs and David Hurley agreed that the legislation committee would again consider the implications of motor insurance for organisers of events where vehicles that were not suitable for road use might be used.

The afternoon conference opened with a presentation by a team from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (outlined below) followed by a question and answer session – a full report is available on request from the secretary.

MoT Testing of Historic Vehicles in the Electronic Age

The team from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) comprised Alan Wilson (Head of Testing Standards Policy and Strategy), Simon Duffin (Communications Manager for MoT Computerisation), John

Stephenson (Senior Policy Development Engineer) and Melanie Yelland (Stakeholder Manager)

The computerisation programme was the biggest change to the MoT scheme since compulsory testing started in 1960, but the changes were all in the administration – the test itself and the standards required were unchanged. The MoT testing system has over 18,500 testing stations employing 77,000 workers of whom 55,000 are registered testers carrying out some 30 million tests annually. VOSA has 330 enforcement staff operating from 23 area offices. Test results are entered into the computer and re-test procedures are unchanged, but the system enforces the rules that many testing stations might previously have ignored. The four main benefits to computerisation are improved uniformity of testing standards; reduction in certificate theft and forgery; improved efficiency in administration and better customer protection, this latter including a facility that prevents a tester failing a vehicle incorrectly. The system also opened the way to being able to re-licence a vehicle on line.

Another benefit of computerisation was the ability to obtain generalised statistics: although it was probably too early, and the sample too small, to read anything of major significance into these details, other than the common sense need to check the obvious – lights, wipers, tyre tread etc. – before presenting a vehicle for test. Interestingly a list of ten items that had commonly been given as reasons for failure, but which should not have been were: rotten jacking points; bad engine oil leak; loose battery; prop shaft loose; prop shaft bearing failure; speedo not working; bald spare tyre; loose wiring; indicators not self cancelling; main beam warning light not working. In future the computerised system would not allow these failures.

Moving on to cost, Alan explained that the maximum fee is set by government each year. Testers may, if they wish, reduce this fee, but they may not exceed it. The current regulations governing test and re-test fees stipulate that if a vehicle is left at the MoT testing station for repair to the cause of failure, no re-test fee is payable. If, however, the vehicle is removed, the tester is meant to carry out a full re-test when the vehicle is returned for which he may charge a full test fee. The only exception is if the failure is one of a specific list of relatively trivial items and the vehicle is returned for a partial re-test before the end of the next working day, in which case no fee is payable. After consultation, VOSA had decided to seek a change to this rule to a system that would be fairer both to motorists and testers. The free next-day retest of trivial items would continue (although the list of items qualifying would change slightly) but, following a more significant failure, a partial re-test at a price not exceeding half the maximum fee would be permitted provided the vehicle was returned to the same testing station before the end of the tenth working day after the original test.

SURVEY OF THE HISTORIC VEHICLE MOVEMENT IN EUROPE

The gathering of information for this most important project is now well underway in 11 EU countries.

Distribution of the club members' form in UK has inevitably triggered questions about why we are asking for certain information, why we didn't ask about other items, why we have chosen a particular cut off date, why the value steps between boxes are rather strange, etc. The answer to all these queries is that the survey form is a compromise between many different pressures – size was dictated by the requirement that it should be capable of insertion with all club publications, and yet it had to be as light as possible to minimise the postal costs of distribution.

The next imperative was that a cross in a particular box on one form should mean the same thing on any other form whichever country it related to, so within the constraint of a single sheet of A4, folded to A5, the team running the project under FBHVC vice president, Geoff Smith, has had to create a form with a common layout in eight different languages using five different currencies and two measurement systems: it is remarkable that they have succeeded without losing any essential questions. And it all had to be done twice because in parallel with the survey of club members, another survey of traders providing services to the historic vehicle movement is also taking place.

There will be a third survey in each country – that of activity within clubs themselves. We expect to be distributing questionnaires for this club survey to subscriber main contacts before the end of the year.

UK response to both surveys has been excellent – if it continues as it has started, the high level of return will provide analysts with a very high level of confidence.

The volume of extra mail generated by the survey means that it has been impossible for the secretary to reply to all queries and comments on an individual basis, while notes handwritten on the survey forms themselves may not be seen for several months.

The Federation would like to thank all the clubs that have helped by sending out copies of the survey form to their members with their newsletters and magazines. One club went to the trouble of providing its members with return envelopes – something FBHVC would like to have done for everyone in an ideal world where money is no object.

CLUB NEWS

David Davies

The Journal of the **Morris Register** tells us about early applications of public address and mobile radio re-

ceivers and transmitters. By 1924 it would seem, the Metropolitan Police possessed a travelling wireless station (based on a Morris, of course) with a range of 50 miles for transmission and 105 miles for reception. Judging by the preliminary reports into the July bombings in London, the Met. have not progressed very far in the last 80 years.

We are reminded that 2006 will be the 70th year of the four-wheel **Morgans**. Appropriate festivities are planned for the end of July at the Mallory Park Circuit.

The **Austin Ten Drivers Club** contains a nice little story about an Austin Ten which was exported to South Africa in 1974 and repatriated in 2004. An unusual train of circumstances led to success in recovering its original registration mark. So, the DVLA does receive some accolades.

\NA7C/

I had always thought that the story of putting an Austin 7 on the town hall roof was one of those apocryphal stories with little substance until I came across this story on the internet and thought you might be amused by it. Now I really hope that it does not put any ideas in any heads in this 50th anniversary year of the Cambridge Austin Seven & Vintage Car Club!!

A van that went up in the world.

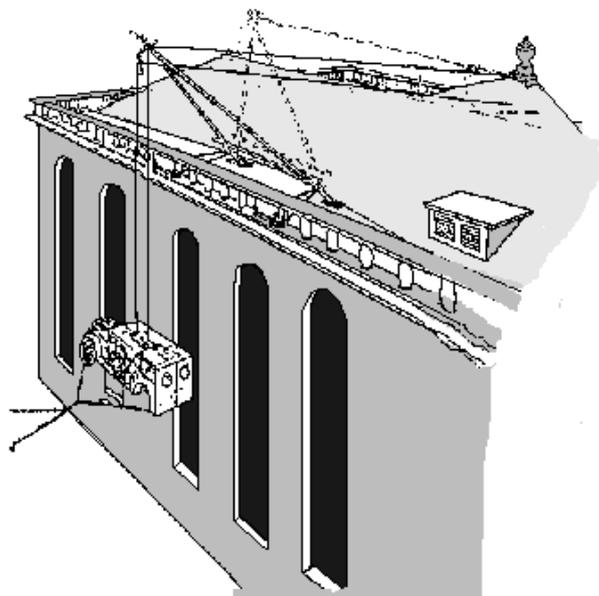
The germ of an idea.

It was while four of us were wondering how to beguile the last few nights of term a year previously, that it occurred to Davey how attractive a motor vehicle would look parked on one of the roofs around Kings Parade. However, wiser councils prevailed at the time, and we celebrated Gilbert Robert's departure in a more conventional manner by giving unusual prominence to a 6 by 4 ft traffic diversion sign. But the seed had been sown, and it germinated for months in the minds of Messrs Balchin, Jacobs and Davey - along with some other ideas more directly relevant to Part II Mechanical Sciences Tripos. This is how it finally blossomed.

There were three problems to be solved. First, the Senate House roof, though a perfect setting for our tableau, is normally accessible only by the notorious leap from Caius. Second, the 4 ft balustrade and projecting ledge beneath it that add grace to the building make it very difficult to get a heavy object on to the main roof even after the 70 foot hoist. Third, an Austin 7 had to be placed under the lifting point in Senate House Passage in the small hours after its engine and rear axle had been removed for lightness. Because of this it became clear that the vehicle would have to be specially bought and prepared somewhere in privacy: we were more than ever glad that it had not just been borrowed when the City authorities afterwards found themselves unable to reverse the hoisting operations, even in broad daylight, and were obliged to destroy the van completely with oxy-acetylene cutters.

It was decided to get a party of six men across a plank bridge over the Passage on to the roof, and that these should haul the vehicle up from the street. Much thought went into the design of suitable lifting apparatus. This had to be simple enough to be erected quickly and silently in darkness, yet substantial enough to stand forces of over a ton in parts. Obviously, a collapse while the 600 lb. weight was 50 odd feet above ground would be highly dangerous to the lives of all concerned. Also, we could not count our operation a success if the fabric of the building was in the least damaged.

We settled for a 24 ft high triangular derrick, made in situ out of 16 ft scaffold poles, to stand on the roof overhanging the Caius side. The feet were 12 ft apart to prevent sideways toppling and were held against slipping by wire straps around the balustrade. The apex was held up by a steel wire backstay 61 ft long whose holdfast was the massive base of an urn on the King's side. The vehicle was to be hoisted from street to derrick head with a double-reduction tackle; it could then be swung 'inboard' over the balustrade by shortening the backstay with a 5-part tackle. Then it could be lowered on to the flat part of the roof between the derrick feet and the balustrade. The diagram (see below) shows how we would have liked the whole apparatus to look, near the completion of the haul up. It also shows the planks and sacking used to protect the stonework wherever wire or poles touched it, and one of the steady lines manned in Tree Court which prevented the car swinging and breaking all the windows on its way up. The lifting tackle had a hook



which fitted through a hole cut in the roof of the vehicle and engaged with a lifting eye bolted to the chassis. A separate ground party was to manoeuvre the van from a parking place near Clare up the Passage, pull on a light line to draw down the hook and tackle from above, and hook it on. Two men would then take charge of the steady lines.

Preparations

Old Austin Sevens are so popular in Cambridge that even a wreck was unobtainable from the local scrap yards, but eventually we found an engineless black van, axle deep in a nettlebed at Harston. Although heavier than the car we had meant to hoist, we bought it for £4. 10s., on condition that the back axle, good tyres, and other vitals were returned. In early May the vendor steered the van, towed by Davey's own jalopy, into an overgrown farmyard at Coton. He managed quite well considering that the steering gear consisted mostly of bent fence wire.

Our purchase made, the four of us who had planned so much suddenly realised that the die was cast. Now we would really have to go ahead with this absurdly difficult clandestine project, and translate our improbable-looking sketches of derrick and rigging into masses of scaffolding and rope on top of the Senate House, by dint of many nights of difficult climbing and ferrying operations. The prospect was rather daunting.

On 28 May two of us crossed to the Senate House armed with a knotted cord and steel measuring tape. We made a complete survey of the roof in darkness, correct to a few inches, and the following day made an accurate scale drawing, from which the geometry of derrick and rigging could be finalised. Calculations indicated that scaffold poles, overlapping along the two long sides of the triangular frame, would be safe from buckling under the weight. On 31 May we noticed some suitable loose scaffolding and that very night five incredibly resonant 16 ft. scaffold poles and all necessary clamps were smuggled out of King's and into Caius by a standard route and concealed in Tree Court. On 2 June all the gear was raised to the Tree Court roof and swung across to the Senate House. It had taken so long to get mere poles on to the Senate House without detection that it seemed to us almost impossible that we could succeed in a weeks time with a van.

Meanwhile the van in Coton was being lightened. Every internal component was stripped out, consistent with it remaining steerable on a 4-wheel tow; a square hole was cut in the roof to pass the lifting tackle, and the lifting eye - a substantial pyramid of 3/8 in. steel rod - was firmly fixed to the chassis somewhere near the estimated centre of gravity. The back axle was loosened so that it could be dropped off on the road and returned to the owner as soon as the van had been towed into Cambridge. Special fittings for short scaffold poles were attached so it could be trundled on front wheels only, like a wheelbarrow, from its parking place by Clare to the launch point.

Careful recruiting had now complete the team. Messrs Balchin, Jacob, Brett and two ladies formed the ground party. The police beats were studied, and the plan broken down into discrete steps so that whenever an alarm was given - until the hoist actually started - each party could retire to a place of reasonable safety before proceeding. The alarm was to be given by our lookout starting a Vespa scooter by Great St. Mary's Church - the racket would be audible to everyone concerned. Messrs Pritchett and Fowler operated the drawbridge across Senate House Passage. The lifting party consisted of Messrs Davey, Usher, Fisher, Dimock, Kidd and Roberts - the latter having motored down from Scotland to assist.

Further apparatus for the hoist was collected, including over 250 ft of 1/2 in. scrapped steel wire rope (normally used for launching gliders), 200 ft of 1/2 in. hemp rope with two 10 in. pulley blocks and hooks, a 5-part tackle and a quantity of ancillary planks, sacks, and light rope. The steel rigging was cut to exactly the right lengths and knotted in a bowline at each end. Each piece was neatly coiled and fitted with a stiff cardboard label which would identify its correct position in the dark.

Action

On the night of 4 June a party of four crossed to the Senate House roof and built and erected the whole of the derrick and rigging. Observers from below agreed that the structure looked most convincing. It was then folded and stowed out of sight on the roof. Since the object of the exercise throughout was to put a van on the roof and not a corpse on the pavement, each member was roped for every crossing. By now, every member of the final lifting party had walked the plank at least once; this made for a really slick crossing procedure with no downward glances on the night. Most members of the team had already spent several nights without sleep and the intervening days satisfying Part II Tripos examiners; and we settled for 7 June to make the hoist, hoping that the noises of bump supper celebration would drown ours to some extent.

Even when the day arrived, many uncertainties still remained. Could the lightened van, whose axles were only held on with fence wire and finger-tight pins, and which now looked more like a stage prop than a road worthy vehicle, be towed in without attracting police attention or, worse, ending up in a ditch? Would the six on the roof be able to pull hard enough to lift it at all? Full scale tests were impracticable. Would the three men in the ground party be able to wheelbarrow it up the Passage. How to get the van from the flat part up to the apex was not even considered!

A brilliant idea due to Balchin was to disguise the tow-in as publicity for a May Ball. We chose St. Catharine's; enormous coloured posters were prepared and festooned around the skeleton van with slogans like 'We're going to get to Cats May Ball - ARE YOU?'. After lunch on Saturday the 7th the bizarre procession set off from Coton for the centre of Cambridge. It attracted much attention, but its innocence went unquestioned. As it drew up to the appointed parking place by Clare, Jacob's grey car drew away to make room at the kerbside. Immediately it was surrounded by mechanics who propped up the back end and removed the rear axle, driving seat and four good wheels for return to the owner. Two ancient and useless tyres were fitted in front, the doors and two rear wheels were removed and, wrapped in brown paper, were taken into College disguised as pictures and cushions respectively. Hastily the skeleton was covered with a billowing polythene cloak, equipped with the statutory parking light, and abandoned.

By midnight the tower in Tree Court looked like the base camp for a Himalayan expedition. a mountain of rope, planks, pulleys, blocks and hooks together with the doors and rear wheels of the van covered the floor. To begin with, all these stores, several hundred pounds in weight, were to be ferried across the bridge by Davey and Roberts; then the four other members of the hoisting party were to emerge from another staircase and cross over. As usual, the drawbridge was to be raised after the crossing by the two remaining men on the roof so that its silhouette would be visible as little as possible, although this would cut off the hoisting party in a difficult predicament if there was a major alarm. The operation started on schedule at 12.30 a.m. By great misfortune the clattering of the stores down the slates toward the crossing point excited police attention from King's Parade and the alarm was given almost at once. The ground party became accidentally involved with police investigating a large Bentley jammed by revellers on Garret Hostel Bridge; and the whole team rather shame-facedly gathered together to discuss this very inauspicious start. Those who had already encountered the police were ready to give up; but it was decided to wait an hour and start again. This time all was quiet but time very short, so an augmented party hurried down to the van, removed the cover, and wheelbarrowed it successfully to the shadow of the Senate House steps. The roof party went aloft, leaving three men and the look-outs below, to move the van the few yards to the launching point, and to lay out the steady lines. The stores and hoisting party were transferred over the bridge without incident, and forty minutes later the big derrick swung out over the Passage. Seeing it, the ground party climbed out, moved the van, drew down the heavy pulley and hook and hastily fixed it on. They trimmed the steady lines and gave the signal to haul. Whatever the alarm from now on, we had to follow the plan right through

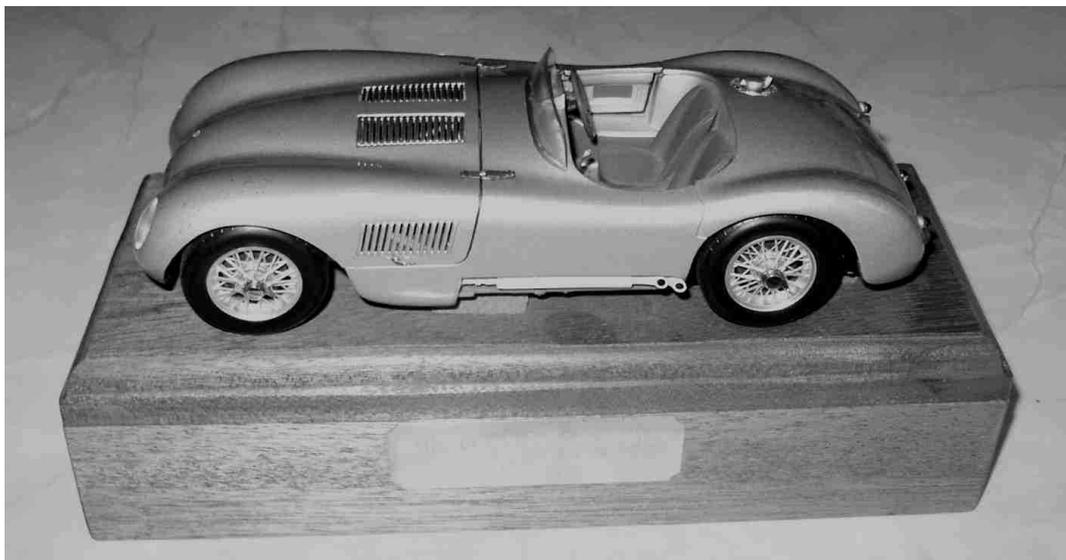
The lift

Anxiously, five on the roof took in the slack, while the sixth looked down into the darkness for signs of trouble. The more we pulled, the more alarming were the sounds of straining wire and creaking joints as the head of the derrick wilted visibly towards its load. At last the van swung gently down below - it was airborne! A foot or two was pulled in, and then with a ghastly shudder a joint on the scaffold slipped. The van was lowered precipitately, causing despondency on the ground. The joints were all tightened properly - one had been forgotten in the darkness - and the rope was moved so that the sixth man could take the strain on the rope between hauls by belaying it round a stone pedestal on the King's side of the roof. We started again, and those of us who had calculated the buckling of the scaffold poles wondered where the safety factor had gone to, as the frame bent like a longbow. This time hauling was successful and the van steadily rose on the willowy derrick till in a few minutes it was half way up. Exhausted, we belayed firmly and peered over the edge. The van slowly swung there, a strange and magnificent sight. One steady line went down into Senate House passage, the second vanished into the darkness of Tree Court. It was just after we recommenced hauling that three oarsmen, who had apparently been rowing in alcohol all that night, risked imminent pulverisation by stopping entranced beneath the weird shape. They asked what it was, clearly meaning to pull down on the steady line and find out! Balchin, tending the line, nimbly informed them that he was tethering a captive balloon, but that rides could not be given without Ministry approval. Satisfied, the drunks moved on, oblivious of their peril. At last the van rose for all to see, and was eased clear of the ledge and balustrade. The derrick head was hauled inboard, and the rope slackened cautiously. So awkwardly was the van hanging, however, that it would not fit as planned between the balustrade and derrick. Two men reached up and gingerly pushed it towards the gap. It was lowered a few feet and again pushed towards the frame, touching it. Under this accidental pressure the frame sickeningly hinged backwards. Quickly gathering speed the whole structure turned into a mechanism. There was a thunderous crash as the van fell the last five feet and the derrick toppled over backwards. And there we were; severely shaken, dawn nearly breaking, and a van almost hidden by a mountain of ropes, poles and wires at our feet. Very fortunately our own injuries were superficial and the roof itself was unscathed. All traces of planning and secrecy vanished. Working like madmen the party manhandled the van by brute force up the thirty-degree slope to the apex, refitted the doors and wheels, dismantled the derrick and threw the rigging down to the lawns below. Later we suffered our only casualty when the police caught one of the ground party preparing to gather it up. All ropes, planks, pulleys and blocks were collected and ferried back. They were returned to their owners next day, but it was reluctantly decided that time was too short to

finish the plan by lowering the scaffolding and clamps; instead these were stacked neatly and left near the van. The drawbridge was lowered; the job was done. No-one was in a mood to linger and admire his work. Light as it was, an early morning policeman on his beat past Bowes and Bowes did not notice six roped figures rapidly walking the plank back to Caius, nor did his gaze wander just then to 'a black tattered pre-war Austin Seven van placed neatly on the apex of the lead roof of the Senate House at Cambridge' (The Times, Monday, 9 June 1958).

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The return bout of the **Norfolk Jaguar Drivers Quiz**, which we won last year mainly due to the Fryer Factor will be taking place in March, hopefully on our club night. This time Rick and Cherry will be in the Question Master's and Checker's seats, so we will need two teams of four to compete against the Jag Drivers teams. Would all "volunteers" please let me know that they are willing to pit their knowledge on behalf of the Norfolk Austin Seven Club? Meanwhile, as a reminder here is a picture of the trophy that we won last year and want to hold onto.



The Norfolk Jaguar Drivers Club
Quiz Trophy.

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Well this is the end for the first NORFOLK NA7TER of 2006. I hope that you have found it of some interest. Those of you who want to participate in any of the events mentioned or who want to organise additional events for 2006 (a Sunday Pub Run or a Club Night Speaker) please let me know and I will give you what assistance that I can.

Best Wishes and Happy Motoring for 2006

Cheers

Jim