
News

Editorial.

Another year has come and gone. Best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2015 and “Happy Austineering” to all our members.



2015 is our tenth anniversary year. Following an inaugural meeting in November 2004 to gauge the level of interest, the Norfolk Austin Seven Club was set up in January 2005. We are pleased to say that the club has gone from strength to strength, first under the auspices of its founder, Jim Blacklock, and subsequently with the present committee, headed by Chairman John Groom. We continue to attract new members (see page 3) and there are now 85 joint memberships, giving a total of 157 members.



To celebrate ten years of the club, your committee is considering several possibilities, such as an anniversary momento, a social evening, a barbecue and, of course, our main rally at the Royal Norfolk Showground in August.

Details will be announced at the earliest opportunity.

Dave Rix, our Events Co-ordinator, is working on the 2015 programme and the “first draft” is on page 23. More details soon, but don’t forget that the latest programme can be found on the club’s web site at www.na7c.co.uk



Our AGM will be held at the Jubilee Hall on Tuesday 17 March. This is your chance to influence how the club is run, so please try to attend. Finally, club membership expires on 31 March and renewal forms will be sent out towards the end of February. Prompt renewal will be appreciated by the Membership Secretary.



The user name and password to access the on-line version of the latest *Norfolk NA7ter* are in the printed copy sent to members.

Rick

**The next edition of the *NA7ter* will be published in April 2015
Please let me have any contributions before 31 March
Contact details are on the inside front cover**

News

Christmas Dinner

Another enjoyable evening

Fifty-eight members and guests enjoyed a convivial evening at our annual Christmas Dinner, held once again at the Wensum Valley Hotel, Taverham. As usual, the meal was excellent and efficiently served by the attentive staff.

The raffle, particularly well stocked with prizes, was drawn after the meal. Many thanks to those who donated so generously. Thanks also to the mem-

bers present who unstintingly bought tickets and raised the record total of £177, which will go towards club funds.

Our Chairman, John Groom, closed the evening by thanking both the membership and the committee for their support during 2014, which had resulted in another successful year for the club.

Members and guests enjoyed a convivial evening



The raffle was particularly well stocked

New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new members to the club:

Janet Wheeler and her son, Roderick, live in Hoxne, near Eye, and own a 1935 Ruby Cabriolet.

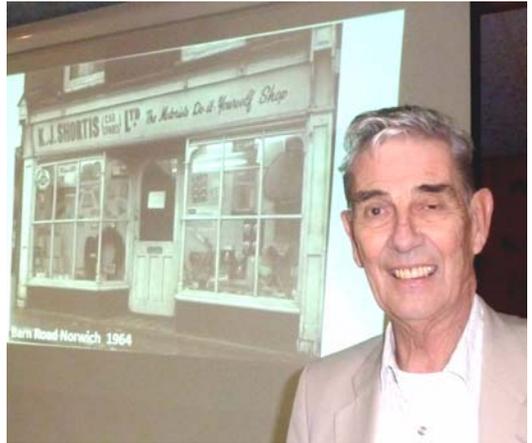
Gary and Lynne Weidner, who have a 1938 Big Seven, come from Rendlesham, near Woodbridge.

Marion and Keith Barmby, brother and sister-in-law of long-time members Roy and Sonia, live in Kirstead, near Norwich and do not yet have a "Seven".

Speakers' Corner

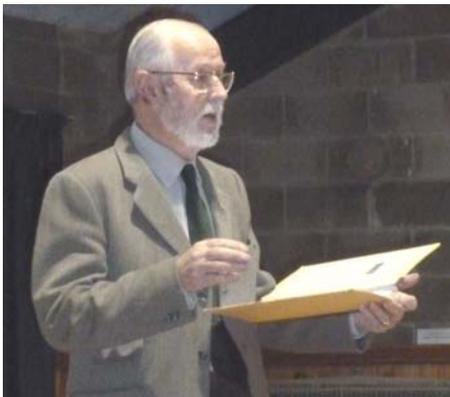
Two contrasting talks

At our October meeting, **Kevin Shortis** (right), ably supported by son Richard, gave us an interesting and humorous account of his personal and business history in the motor trade.



Opening his first shop in Barn Road, Norwich, with a loan of £5000, he described how his group progressed in 50 years to owning 43 shops, 38 fitting bays and 23 motor factors, with an annual turnover of £40,000,000.

In November we were entertained by **John Read** (left). John spent his working life involved with the Norwich gas works and recounted many tales about the goings-on there.

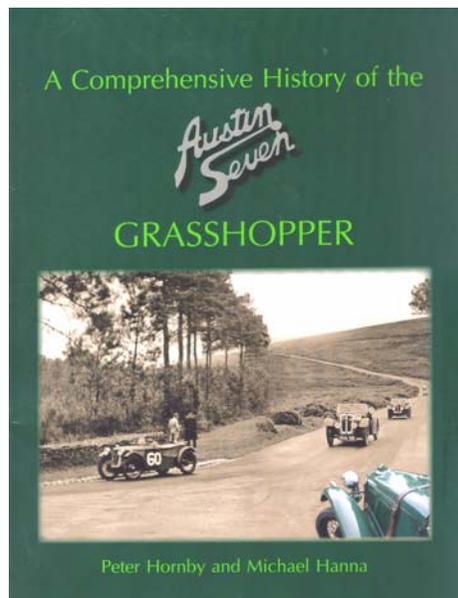


His talk centred around his own career and the history of gas and concluded with an interesting and informative slideshow based around the Gas Museum at Fakenham.

Calling All Bookworms

The Editor's attention has been drawn to the following books

A Comprehensive History of the Austin Seven Grasshopper – a new book by Peter Hornby and Michael Hanna, reviewed by Chris Garner



Of all the Austin Seven models produced over the years perhaps the Grasshopper model is the one least known. The Grasshopper had a brief life as a Works' car of only around three years from 1935 before being gradually sold off to privateers.

Of a total of twelve cars built a surprising seven still remain. Despite the low production numbers the model has played an illustrious part in 750 motor racing and its history has now been very ably described in Peter & Michael's book, one which has taken

several years of research and compilation

Comprising around 150 pages with well over 300 photographs, some in colour, the book comprehensively describes the cars, beginning with the technical aspects and then going on to detail the surviving cars. The chapter on living with a Grasshopper is interesting as Peter Hornby is the proud owner of two survivors – a situation to be envied.

The remainder of the book sets out the complete competition history of all the cars and is most detailed with numerous photographs. The book ends with short profiles of the drivers over the years.

The authors compliment each other, with Peter as an owner and Michael as a wordsmith and so achieving a very readable and well-thought-out layout. They are to be congratulated.

The book is published by The Pre War Austin Seven Club Limited, price: £ 16.00 post paid from Graham Beckett, 7 All Saints Lane, Nettleham, Lincoln. LN2 2NJ. Tel: 01522 750870. ISBN: 978-0-9572426-3-0

Alexa – The Life and Death of an Austin 7 Ruby, a book by Brian Milton

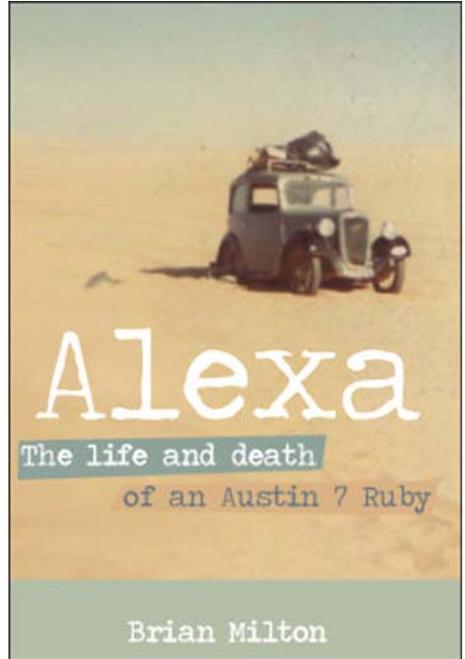
In 1968 Brian Milton – TV presenter, financial journalist and adventurer – fell in love with a girl called Fiona Campbell, who lived in South Africa. She agreed to marry him and he resolved to drive a 1937 Austin 7 Ruby called Alexa across Europe, the Sahara Desert and the tropical Congo to claim his bride.

The car didn't make it, but a great many adventures occurred.

Brian crashed Alexa in the Sahara after suffering ptomaine poisoning from a tin of sardines. He was robbed of various pieces of equipment by desert Arabs, and ran out of water twice en route.

Driving into Chad in central Africa, a piston ring broke and Brian was forced to continue for the next 2,000 miles with just 3 working pistons, no plug at all in the 4th piston.

Alexa lost her brakes and was without lights, shock absorbers, starter-motor or handle, and gradually falling to pieces. In this state, Brian drove her another 900 miles down to the Congo River itself, then east. With 300 miles to complete to get to Uganda where everything, pre Idi Amin, could be repaired, Alexa was down to two pistons and a failing big end, and finally gave up the ghost in a town called Mungbere. However much he raged, Brian



could not get permission to give Alexa a Viking funeral in flames.

Alexa's terrific struggle and eventual demise is told through diaries written at the time, on a 1948 Olympia typewriter called Brunehilde perched on one petrol can, the author on another, lighting provided from a hurricane lamp hanging off an umbrella stuck into the car roof-rack.

The book is available only on-line, price £10.00 plus £3.00 P&P, at

www.brian-milton.com/books

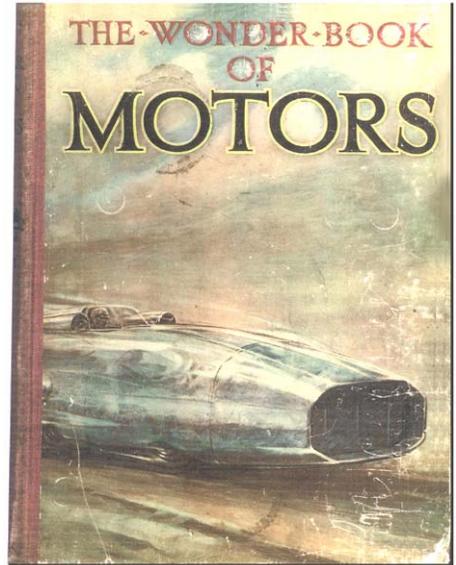
While we're on the subject of books....

Here is a snippet from Martin Jones

The October issue of the Automobile Magazine refers to a picture of an early Daimler, that was still going well in the late thirties, that appeared in a book entitled *Motors, Ships & Engines*.

Being a collector of motoring books (Thelma calls it "hording") I looked up my own copy of the book in question, which I have had from the early fifties, and found the picture. This in turn got me looking through other similar aged books and I found the same picture in *The Wonder-Book of Motors*, *The Romance of the Road*, published by Ward, Lock & Co in the late forties.

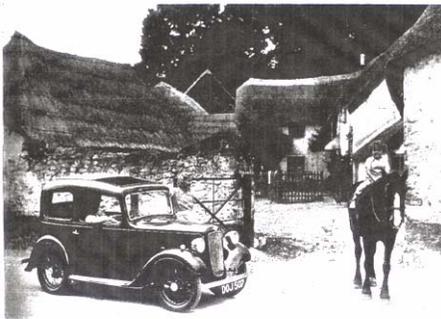
Whilst leafing through it I came across a picture of an Austin 7 Ruby, with the registration number clearly visible. DOJ 507 appears on page 137, in the chapter headed *Light Cars and "Babies"*. Unfortunately there are no details of when or where taken, but it is clearly an early farm setting. The Ruby



appears pristine, so it could have been taken pre war.

This prompted a look on the surviving chassis register, which lists DOJ 507 as being a model ARR Ruby Mk2, in green and owned by someone in the Bristol Austin 7 Club who is also a member of the Austin 7 Owners Club (London).

I e-mailed the secretary of the said club, suggesting the owner might like a copy of the photo and details of where it appeared, but as yet have not had a response.



AN AUSTIN 'SEVEN' SALOON

