October 1977

DORSET AUSTIN 7 CLUB

Secretarial It is now a year since we went official although, of course, the first meeting was in February 1976. It has been a year of gradual growth, with two road runs, various tie-ups with local rallies and runs and membership has grown to 36.

THIS MONTH’S MEETING is, of course, our Annual General Meeting so please try to come along to the Nags Head at 8.30 on the 20th October in the room to the left of the bar. There is to be an A7 Clubs Assoc. meeting on the 23rd October and it is hoped that the Dorset A7 Club will be voted into the Association. If so the Assoc. magazine will be available to our members. This is usually a quarterly magazine and unfortunately it will not be free - the charge will be 75p per year if you wish to have it.

It will be proposed that the subs. stay the same at £2 plus the 75P if you wish to have a magazine.

Last Month’s Meeting We had another quiz on A7's and it seems most of us are more knowledgeable than last year. It was a very close match between teams. I would like to thank everyone for being such good sports.

Phil Whitter would like to publish a list of members in alphabetical order together with details of the Austin Sevens they own, what they need for them and what they have to swap or sell. Please let him know your wants and swaps on Broadstone 694857.

Starting this month overleaf is an article by Charles Goodacre who was engineer, team manager and driver for Austins before the War. What follows is his account of the racing effort between the wars, starting with the events and cars that led up to the introduction of the first Austin 7.

BEAULIEU AUTOJUMBLE REPORT by Phil Whitter

After getting up at a ridiculous hour on Sunday Bernard and I set off with Pete in his Ruby and made good time to Beaulieu arriving in the queue at 8 am. Surely only the English would form a queue at that time in the morning! When we reached the entrance we were amazed at being asked £15 for entry but were a little happier when we learnt that we could get most of it back at 11 o'clock.

Having parked the Ruby, the main problem was how to get round 800 stalls

before the main rush at 10 o'clock. In a short time, Bernard had picked up a pair of new C.A.V. headlamp fronts, a nice vacuum wiper and best of all a pair of unused early Chummy side-screens, even with the XL part no. on the frames!! By 10 o'clock all I had crossed off my list was a pair of scuttle vents.

It is interesting to see the changes that have taken place at the Autojumble over the last six years or so. Firstly, it seems that a lot of useful stuff changes hands between stall holders on the Saturday when things are being set up. Secondly, the A7 spares available are mainly Ruby and it is difficult to find such parts as a gate box or C.A.V. dynamo as these type of spares are moved between club members, and never reach Beaulieu. The unfortunate result of this is that when the odd item does turn up on a stall it is deemed to be rare and valuable. I only managed to find one original Lucas headlamp out of 800 stalls.

As usual there were the stallholders who took back most of what they had brought. Who will pay £3 for four hose clips or even £12 for an early carb? Vintage enthusiasts remember vintage prices and it is difficult to get them to part with a lot of money.

We all enjoy a bargain at the end of the day and a front axle for £1 is better than taking it home and surely this is what Autojumble is all about.

THE RACING AUSTINS by Charles Goodacre

During the 1914-18 war, Herbert Austin had been driving himself about in a Hudson 16, and had been most impressed by this big car with its four cylinder engine. When peace returned, he therefore decided to try and produce a British equivalent - a big, four-cylinder car - and by concentrating all the production resources of Longridge on this single model to sell it for around £500. Thus the Austin 20 was born, with it 3610 cc four cylinder engine developing 45 bhp at 2000 rpm.

Unhappily, it came on the market in the middle of the 1921 depression, and it was just too big. People couldn’t afford it, nor petrol at 2s 6d a gallon. Moreover, the early production cars were fitted with wooden wheels which made it a hopeless proposition for the export market.

The failure of the 20 brought the Austin company to the verge of bankruptcy with an official receiver in the plant, urgent and drastic action was required. Sir Herbert therefore set to and designed a smaller car which in effect was a scaled down version of the 20. This was the famous Austin 12 with a side-valve four-cylinder engine of 1661 cc producing about 30 bhp at 2800 rpm with sufficient torque to accelerate away in top gear from around 800 rpm. From the 20 it inherited the separate cast iron block on an aluminium crankcase and the five bearing crankshaft. The 12 was a low

performance car, but it was completely reliable and it was an immediate .   
success.

With the future of his company now looking more secure, Sir Herbert Austin tackled the other project that he had had in mind for some time past, namely the building of a very small car.

On his own initiative, he set up a small drawing office in the billiard room of his house, Lickey Grange, and employed one or two draughtsmen, the leader being Jimmy Clark, an engine designer. The success of the Jowett with its

flat twin engine had first turned Sir Herbert's thoughts to a small car. Not surprisingly, therefore, Clark first designed a flat twin for the new small Austin, but when the engine was built and tested Sir Herbert did not like the rough running and uneven exhaust beat of the flat twin. He, therefore, took a snap decision to scrap it and have a small four instead.

I wish to renew my membership to the Dorset Austin Seven Club for one year

from 1st November 1977. Enclosed please find cheque/P.0. for £2 or £2.75 -   
if Association magazine is required, made payable to Dorset A7 Club.

