



The Crankhandle

NEWSLETTER OF THE HEREFORD AUSTIN SEVEN CLUB

May 2025 Issue 92



Our esteemed Technical Advisor's computer

The photo on the front page was sent in by Eddie Loader.

He claims to have bought this laptop in PC world, and wants someone to help him set it up.

In truth, it is Steve Wozniak's Apple 1 (1976).

Chairman's View

As I write this, we are experiencing some wonderful Austin Seven 'open top' weather. The Buggy is clocking up the miles as we do not know how long this will last.

Our contribution to the FBHVC 'Drive it Day' on Sunday 27th April was something that you, the members, should be proud of, as we made very good use of the lovely weather which was an endorsement to Carmen and Kip Waistell's planning for the event. The drive for everyone from their home, to Vowchurch, must have been an absolute delight, as the views across to the Welsh mountains were spectacular. Carmen and Kip were very generous in inviting us all for refreshments at the 'Old House'.

The Committee will be meeting on the 1st May and it will be decided what amount of donation will be sent to Child Line and the Midlands Air Ambulance for the Drive-it-Day event. Above all, our sincere thanks to Carmen and Kip Waistell for their efforts to enable the event to happen.

The activity in the Motor House has continued since the last edition, and the emphasis has swung towards the A10 Cambridge. What I thought was most likely a problem with the petrol tank sender, is in fact a problem with the gauge itself. If anyone has knowledge of availability of a 1937 gauge, I would be very grateful to hear of it. Meanwhile, both Austins are eager to take to the road, and I occasionally have to arbitrate to stop any arguments!

After the very unfortunate incident of a 'modern' pulling out a side road in front of Roland Alcock, resulting in a complete right off of his RN, and very nearly a right-off of Roland, I purchased a dash-cam. *[Ed, I think we should drive with our headlights on all the time, as all recent cars have daytime running lights, and drivers look for lights, rather than the car]*. It prompted me to think of the risks that other drivers take when they see an 'old car'. It is a like putting on a red L plate. They drive within a fag paper of your rear numberplate, overtake at the most incongruous place, and expect you to be able to stop without hitting their vehicle. Can somebody tell me what they do with the extra 20 seconds of the time saved, when they get home?

I am so pleased that Roland has made a full recovery.

Enjoy your Sevenning,

Michael

RH insurance, Emma Airey

Emma kindly came to talk to us at our April monthly meeting. She is a classic car enthusiast herself, enjoying ownership of a few TVRs, and also enjoys navigating on pre-war rallies. Emma considers RH has some important advantages:



i) home start is included, and also transport from your home, at a time to suit, and to your preferred repairer. [Ed *This would be very useful for the Citroen, because once the hydraulics have a leak, everything stops*

working.]

- ii) loss of spares up to the value of the car, is included.
- iii) RH is one of the few insurers to pay out the agreed value, and allow you to keep the wreck, if the car is a write off.
- iv) Emma herself is available by phone most of the time, if others in the company cannot assist.
- v) Multi vehicle insurance can bring about a 25% discount.

The premium is kept down by the team knowing how to find the lower risk drivers. There are about 30-50 consultants answering the phones. However, the owner has to follow the rules: if you say it is garaged when at home, then it must be in that garage between 10pm and 6am.

The RH Road Rescue is subcontracted to Call Assist Ltd, who work with a network of recovery operators in the UK and Europe. Emma encouraged us to submit a complaint if we have difficulties with this service.

You must notify RH in advance of taking a car abroad.

Roly was charged £15 administration fee for an **agreed value**, (subsequently refunded) where he had to fill in their form giving details, and send in photos. The alternative is to have a **market value** (e.g. what you bought it for), with no additional cost.

The Herefordshire hill trial is possibly the most oversubscribed trial of them all. The weekend of 15/16th March 2025 was perfect driving conditions – no rain for weeks. The organiser's main concern over the year had been to find enough hills, with at least one in the wings should it be needed. It took 7 days to set up all the markers on the course. If the going is wet, a lot of cars will struggle, but if it's dry, most will clear the hill and find it a bit too easy. One of the new hills was very muddy, and was the most difficult to set out, and drive. The organisers thought no one would manage it, but by the end of the day, it was drier and do-able. It was the fruitiest of them all in my opinion.

Vintage car driving is seen as an elitist sport but it's a great leveller, and also very



unpredictable. The person who changes his tyres every month isn't necessarily going to win, nor is the person with the most money.

Amongst the competitors was Richard Hammond in a supercharged Ulster owned by Patrick. On the drive between hills it broke down. Patrick says that he carries a full working box of spares with him. Richard's account was that Patrick had nothing but a condenser on board, so whatever the problem, a new condenser had to fix it. Somehow it did.

Another competitor took along his 12-year-old daughter Esme in an Austin Ulster. Esme marked up the maps, and map-read as navigators should, but don't always. She got her driver up difficult Lindor, pointing out that under no circumstances was he to take his foot off the accelerator before Marker 25. She walked each hill, and other competitors remarkably didn't hop in front of them because they could see Esme couldn't move the car. "When's

lunch Gareth? I'm tired. And hungry" They settled at the bottom of Lindor next to the river in the sunshine on the road for a picnic.

Gareth usually trials large cars, but being lent the Austin was perfect for his little passenger, who not only took to waving at photographers, but could make some difference when she bounced. In a big car she would have been holding on for dear life.

I'm not surprised Esme steered him to a First-class award. VSCC, look out for Esme in the future!



Our reporter at the wheel on a 45° incline

A spectator, Vincent, walked an hour and a half from Ledbury, then home again, to see what Penelope Pitstop and Co. were up to at Chandos on Saturday. His interest might have had something to do with his father taking part in the TT races in the Isle of Man, or because his father also designed bulletproof windows for Mrs Thatcher's official cars.

Vincent pointed out, reasonably, that Chandos was difficult to find - no signage and he didn't have a map, - but he found it nevertheless because of the smell of car oil. He stayed all day, loved it, and watched each contestant keenly, from opening to

close of play. "Why not inform the Tourist Office in Ledbury? It's such a good day out, and it's for free!" "Loved the cakes, loved the cars!" "You are all mad!"

Webmaster Report Roly Alcock

Since the last newsletter, the Austin has been used far more frequently, maybe four times a



week due to the weather becoming pleasant. This may be the kiss of death, but it has been driving reliably and starting on the button (well pull knob). The engine or something, rattles somewhat. Investigation with the sump removed (when the engine was taken out to correct a loose flywheel), failed to find anything amiss, apart from the bottom end looking as though it had been rebuilt not

long ago. I drive it with the engine at its quietest sweet spot, and await any developments. It remains Freya's favourite transport. All unwanted noises usually emanate from the back axle and pretend to be a loose radiator.... We shall see.

Feeling the need for something a little more comfortable for a distance further than 10 miles, I had a look at Brightwells Auction. There was a Morris 1000 Traveller which caught my eye, but as the timed auction progressed the bidding rose above my comfort level. So being in a mental car buying mode..... I looked to see what else was there. I spotted a clean



looking MGB GT, late model, rubber bumper. It was mine for not a lot of dosh and I happily drove it home the 30 miles from Leominster. Due to the low price I felt comfortable with any additional expenditure to

recommission it. En route I felt the wheels were out of balance, and back home took a look to find all tyres were 25 to 30 years old and beginning to delaminate. So I had five new tyres fitted at home by a mobile tyre fitter. I had my suspicions about the starter motor and when that failed to function at all, I fitted a high torque one. Job done one would think. Indeed, the engine started instantly, but unfortunately would only run while the engine was being cranked. To cut a rather long story short, in the process of changing the starter motor the distributor was removed to

enable access. That action led to a couple of wires breaking off from the spade connectors (under the insulators) to the coil. This was not evident until they were cautiously tugged and came away. This in turn had upset the electronic distributor, which would only perform for 30 seconds and then cut out. This was somewhat alarming when driving. It would then restart 30 seconds later, only to fail in another 30 seconds...



Belt and braces, I changed out the distributor for a mechanical one and installed a standard 12v coil instead of the ballast resistor coil and wired it all up accordingly. This combination would be far easier to fault-find. The car now runs perfectly and very enjoyably.

Freya cautiously approves of the new transport. Especially now that I have stopped the rear bench seat unexpectedly sliding forward!

May Pub Meet



Eleven members turned out.

Five Austin Sevens, Fiat 500 Estate, MGB GT

Next pub meet:

Thursday June 12th at

The Roast Ox 01497 851 398

Or meet 10.30am at The Old House Vowchurch for coffee and biscuits.

Clodock Mill, on the River Monnow

Sixteen A7s (inc 1 Swallow), 4 other classics, and 33 people attended Drive It Day 2025.



New members Edward and Lee's 1933 Austin 10, recently purchased in Edinburgh



Caroline and Jonathan Bromley's Opal 1936

There has been a mill on the Clodock site from Domesday times, although it does not feature therein, because Clodock was in Wales at that time. It was opened especially for us by owners Martin and Gill, kindly arranged by Kip and Carmen Waistell.

There used to be a mill every 1½ miles on the Monnow river. The mills would mostly produce animal feed, so they were quiet in the summer months while the stock grazed, prior to the next harvest.



The animal-feed wheels are coarse Wye Valley stone, like a Millstone Grit (a sandstone from Derbyshire). This does not provide a good flour for humans, as it grinds up the bran. The human grain is produced by a second set of stones, made from French Burstone. These have a very smooth finish, like glass.

This shows the casing over the 2 pairs of stones, (blue arrows) the nearest one has a feeding hopper (green arrow) above it. The stones are on the first floor, above the ground floor driving mechanism



The drive to the 2 sets of stones: orange arrow is main axle from waterwheel. Blue arrow is drive to nearest set of stones, on the floor above. The gears are metal, as there is little risk of the mill catching fire, even if metal on metal caused a spark

Clodock mill fell into disuse for a couple of hundred years, re-opening in 1630, and there is a complete list of owners from then, until it closed commercially in 1954.

The water wheel comprises two thin cast iron discs, 6m in diameter, which are linked together by the water buckets. The wheels are made in arc-sections, bolted together, embossed with "Leominster Foundry 1856". The buckets that link the two discs are modern, and

made from Corten, which rusts, but does not flake off like mild steel, and the rust is then protective. The original wheel was probably undershot with the speed of the water turning the fins on the bottom of the wheel. Another variant is an overshot wheel, with the water falling onto the top of the wheel.

The current arrangement at Clodock is breast-shot, with water entering the buckets at the midpoint of the height of the wheel, and the weight of the 10 buckets (i.e. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total) full of water is about 1 tonne. The radius of the wheel is 3m, so the torque is very approximately 5-10,000Nm.



The main bearing. The bearing insert, or bushing, is brass, running on cast iron shaft. If it were to be a steel shaft, then it would run better against a bronze insert.

The axle of the wheel was Elm, but had to be replaced last year. Like all of the maintenance and construction of the mill, it can be done just with 2 men, without using lifting gear.

The weight of the wheel is held on two horizontal

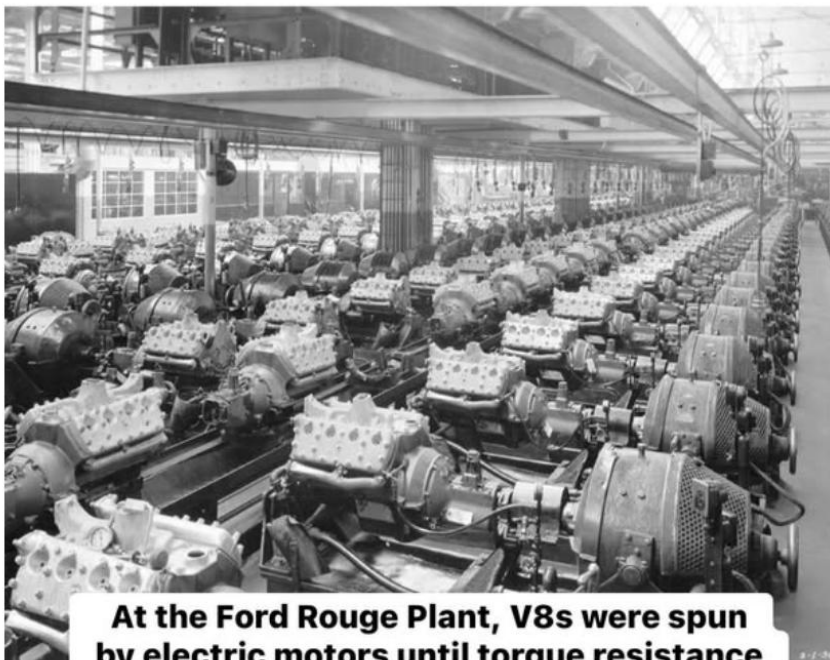
beams placed into **sockets** (blue arrow) of the millrace walls. The wheel was wedged up fractionally, to permit the withdrawal of the axle.



The grain is not ground, rather it is sliced open. The stones have to be perfectly flat, and high points shaved down. The wheels run on gimbals, and must not touch each other, being set apart by about the width of one grain. This is achieved by placing some grains between the wheels and then shining a light through, and if the wheel is not horizontal, a small weight of molten lead is added to the high side, similar to balancing a car wheel. Each stone has 30 furrows, so each revolution causes 30^2 slices, i.e. 900. The wheel turns at 100rpm, so achieves 90,000 slices per minute. The slicing cuts off the bran, and the bran and denuded grain fall along the furrow, to the centre where they fall into the collecting area. The bran is then sieved off from the grain. The furrows have to be re-cut every 6 months with a bill.

The teeth of the wooden gears were made from Yew, and it is thought that Ewyas, as in Ewyas Harold means the place of many yew trees. Each stone weighs 2 tonnes, and would have been manoeuvred into position by levering up a small amount, and then placing supports under it, and then repeating the process multiple times. The miller must have made reasonable money, because he was the first person in the area, after the GP, to be able to buy a car.

Technical Advisor notes Eddie Loader



At the Ford Rouge Plant, V8s were spun by electric motors until torque resistance dropped—an old-school break-in method before precision machining.

Eddie remembers being told by the late Don Lode (an Austin Apprentice):

When the Austin "A" series engines were manufactured and assembled, the cylinder head valves were not ground in. Instead the tappets were adjusted to a slight extra clearance to allow the new valves to 'bed themselves in', and the tappets were then adjusted to the correct clearance at the first 500 mile service.

The only engines that were subjected to valve grinding were the 998cc ones used in the Mini Cooper 'S' of the mid 1960s. This

was because this model was advertised as capable of reaching 100 mph.

The testing of the completed BMC Mini engines was done in a designated area where they were temporarily connected to exhaust, electrics and cooling water supplies, and run for a specified period of time. The engine oil was then changed, and the oil used in the testing was sold off cheaply to the employees.



Annie Peake

The Chummy Ladies went to Stratford!





They went to a Renault garage, to try and exchange their Austins for a superior make of

car.



They had lunch in a café



*20 Chummy Ladies,
making a fuss, ie
Much Ado About
Nothing (at the*

Royal Shakespeare Theatre)

One sad note, was that whilst on the tour, a driver was hit on the head by a football and her passenger was hit on the head by a large stone, causing bruising and bleeding, needing to go to the ED for 7 stitches. Despite this assault, they managed to return for the celebratory dinner that evening. Pretty stalwart aren't they!

Speedex 750 Progress David Edwards



The Speedex 750 is now authenticated, insured, and registered with its original 1933 name and number TL 2903 and once again thank you: Gerwyn Lloyd, Peter Rowlands and Nick Lettingdon for handling the paperwork.

Before I departed for my winter sojourn in France in mid December of last year, I managed to begin the restoration process by stripping down the engine and consigning the rubble to Gerwyn Lloyd in Hereford. Meanwhile I parted the body frame from the chassis, wrapped it all up and left knowing that any input on my part was going to be negligible till I returned to the UK at the end of the ski season in mid April. In my absence Gerwyn had rebuilt the engine using the original crankcase, had discarded the block, substituted another crank, but retained the Cambridge alloy head. A single 1¼" SU carb and obviously a lot of new nuts and bolts had been added. At this point we could describe the full



shopping list, but I think of greater interest might be to **discuss what I am actually going to do with the car when it's running**, and how much will that influence the extent of its development. How much can I justify spending on the project?

The Speedex was created by Jem Marsh around 1954 as a kit to turn an Austin 7 Ruby into a basic 2-seater sports car. It was acquired by me in 1968 to go back and forth to college in a degree of impecunious topless style. A parental embargo denied me a motorbike, but it was OK to have a home built special that possessed an infinite capacity to kill you but at least on four wheels!! It was my first car so it has sentimental value, it is a 90 year old vehicle **with provenance** that will not look out of



place at Prescott or Shelsley or any number of desirable pre-war venues, and just getting it there will be enough of a challenge. **It will never be a long distance tourer, and it is not a suitable trials machine. Is it just a cute mechanical exercise?** Added to the task of keeping my T Type

MG and TR 3 on the road? Look at the photographs of progress so far. All of us can guess how much is still to be completed. Desire always comes pricey, a four-speed synchro box, hydraulic brakes, 12 volt conversion (it will need an electric water pump) and enough power to ascend a hill climb at least. It will all have to be approached in stages of course but planned with the end result in mind. Would you buy a part finished special to cannibalise as a cost-effective strategy? There is much to talk of.

I really would like this dilemma to be discussed by the Club, applying optimism and reality in equal measure.

Shropshire A7 Meetings by Graham Baldock

As you may know, I pretty much went into exile from the HA7C when my wife and I moved to sunny Shropshire, 40 miles away from Hereford, but do-able. Then three years ago we moved into Shrewsbury, so now we are 50 miles away! To go on a run, we needed to do a 100-mile round trip before we even started on the run itself.

So, for the past three years I've slowly been getting A7 withdrawal symptoms, no one to go out with, no one to even chat with me about Sevens (sob).

My next nearest club was/is the PWA7C up in Staffordshire, again an almighty round trip.

That leads me to let you know about a new venture I've instigated in Shropshire. I put out an appeal on Facebook to see if other interested parties would like to start a small local A7 group. I am delighted to say that we did it! Under the watchful eye of the PWA7C I would like to pass on a personal invitation to all HA7C members to make the long journey "oop north" to Shrewsbury where a warm welcome awaits.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 21st May from 6pm in the evening at the Nags Head PH in Pontesbury, just a few miles south west of Shrewsbury. Nick Turley, the chairman of the PWA7C will join us, as will Emma Airey, head honcho of Richardson Hosken (RH insurance). Best wishes to all my fellow HA7C members

Graham Baldock, Phil Roberts, Geraint Rees, Robin Oldfield



PS if you think it's too far to come in your Seven please feel free to join us in your modern.

Just so I know numbers please email me on gbaldock120@gmail.com

Looking forward to seeing you!

Our first get together was held at the Riverside pub in Cound

The last issue described the control of the pressure of petrol into the jets by the float chamber. From the float chamber, the petrol is fed by internal channels to the two jets: the main jet, and the “compensating” jet (see below).

Petrol and air are sucked into the jets by the vacuum created in the inlet manifold by the piston moving down in the cylinder on the induction stroke.

The main jet: air in the main chamber is accelerated by the narrowing in the “choke tube” component. The main jet sits in this narrowing, and the air rushing past it sucks the petrol out of the jet and atomises it. Zenith supplied different size choke tubes to suit different designs of engine. *The everyday word choke does not apply to the choke tube, but refers to what is properly called the air strangler.*

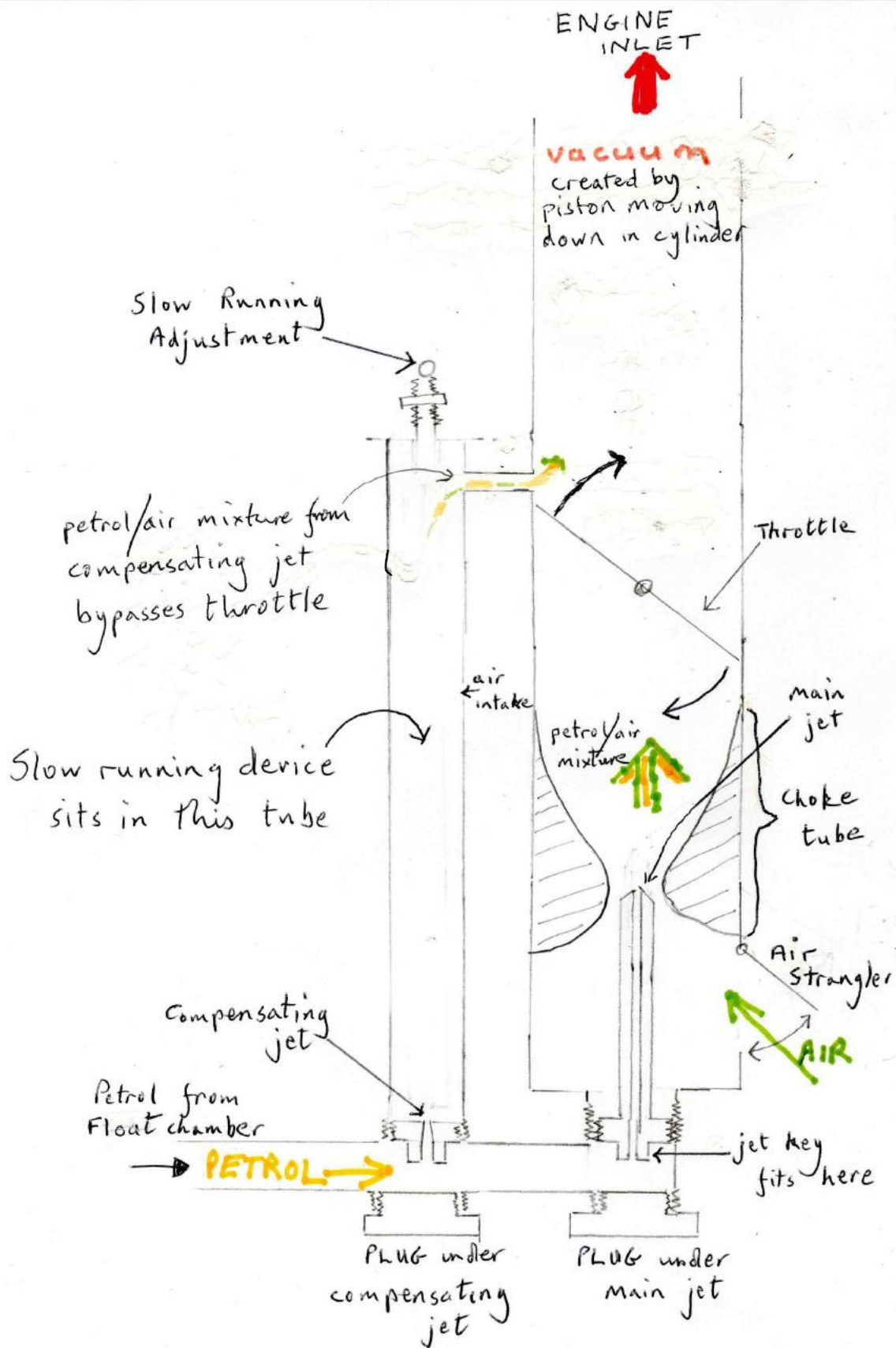
The slow running, or compensating, jet bypasses the throttle, and is the main feed when starting the engine, or when the engine is at low revs, and hence suction is low in the main chamber. This jet is in a separate chamber, and has a conical jet, which is inside a female cone, and separated from it by a small gap. At low engine revs, this mechanism has a higher suction than the main chamber. There is a side channel that links it to the inlet manifold. At higher engine revs it still supplies the engine, but the amount quickly reaches a plateau.

The mixture can be enriched by screwing the female cone down closer to the male, and vice versa. Only 2 turns are needed between maximum and minimum.

The compensator jet also has great influence at low speed, such as when climbing hills

The throttle never fully closes, and when starting the engine, the air-strangler (colloquially know as the choke) is operated, so that very little air is sucked into the main chamber, thus giving an enriched mixture.

Next time: the jet design itself



Committee Meeting May 2025

Here is a summary of the minutes, the full version is available from the Secretary.

The Club will:

- i) obtain a second-hand laptop for use with the projector at presentations.
- ii) look into getting an amplifying system for speakers at the presentations.
- iii) donate the £200 given to it by RH Insurance to the Air Ambulance (Martin's chosen charity at Clodock Mill), and to Childline (the Drive-it-Day Charity)
- iv) ask members to consider paying their subs by standing order or direct debit.
- v) hold this year's Christmas Lunch at the Bunch of Carrots as already arranged. A member has requested a change of venue, and this will be raised at the AGM for next year's meal.
- vi) investigate (via Kip) an A7 run to a historic house near Kington, which is not normally open to the public, which was the setting for the Hound of the Baskervilles.
- vii) Split the Membership from the Treasurer. Julie James to be Membership Secretary, whilst Kip will be Treasurer.

The Club has 53 Primary members, with partners and others making a total of 93.

Please will a member volunteer to be Club Secretary, as Bob will be moving away. Contact the secretary if you might consider this role.

Deadline for next issue: 20th July

Please do send in contributions! editor@ha7c.co.uk

Ideal article length is up to 700 words, preferably with 2 photos.

Longer articles also very welcome, especially if they can be divided into parts for subsequent newsletters

Short notes, say 150 words, also popular. Please keep writing!



Tail lights

I didn't realize how bad of a driver I was until my sat nav said, "In 100 yards, pull-in to the left, stop, and let me out"

Club Regalia

Available at most monthly meetings from the Treasurer

Windscreen Stickers £ 2.00



**Sew-on Embroidered badge: no longer available,
But could be ordered if enough interest.**



Radiator Badge £20



Lapel Pin Badge £2



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HA7C website

<https://www.ha7c.co.uk>

Herefordshire Austin Sevens Forum

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/357904524672062>

Some other useful resources on the Internet

Austin Seven Friends	http://www.austinsevenfriends.co.uk/
Austin Seven Clubs Association	https://www.facebook.com/thea7ca/
The Federation of British Historical Vehicle Clubs	http://www.fbhvc.co.uk/
Austin Seven Group on FB	https://www.facebook.com/groups/8069487412
Cornwall Austin Seven Club	http://www.austin7.org/
Bristol Austin Seven Club	http://www.ba7c.org/
Dorset Austin Seven Club	http://www.da7c.co.uk/
South Wales Austin Seven Club	http://southwalesaustinsevenclub.com/
Red Cross Directory of Parts, Products and Services	http://oldcarservices.co.uk/

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