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# Austin Times

A NEWSLETTER FOR ENTHUSIASTS OF AUSTIN PRE-1955

## IN THIS ISSUE

We conclude our coverage of Austin anniversaries with a visit to the Austin Village, starting this page.

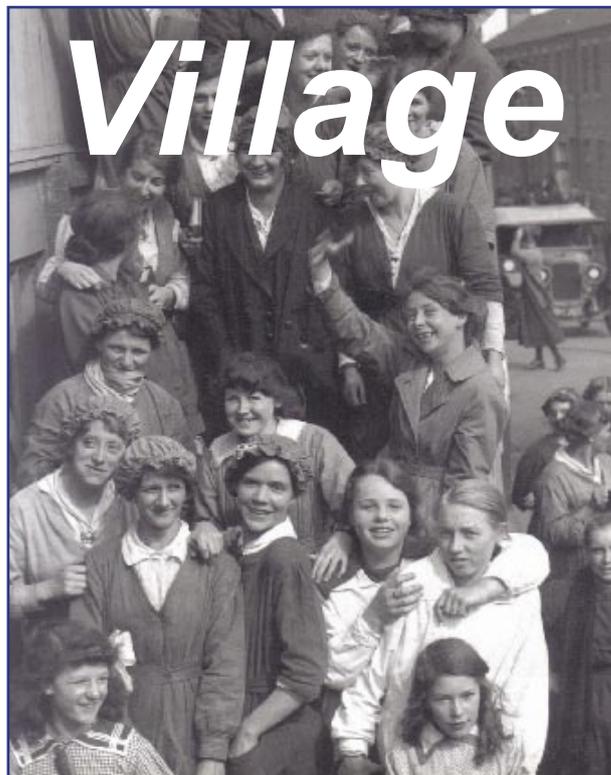
No. We didn't forget the Sheerline's 60th. We covered this model in depth not that long ago.

BENT reveals the Austin story behind the JEEP

There's news about a vintage Twenty from a loyal reader in Australia. It might prompt us to take a closer look at this great car in the future.

And hot of the wires, the exciting news that Austin will be the featured marque at the 2008 British Car Meet in Switzerland in honour of the epic 1947 'Seven Capitals' run.

**PLUS MUCH MORE  
ON YOUR  
FAVOURITE  
MARQUE  
PRE-1955**



## Village life

*From this strikingly evocative Imperial War Museum image from 1918, it would seem there were lighter moments even during WW1. It is not confirmed whether this was 'the Austin'. It only purports to be at an 'aeroplane factory in Birmingham'. We can assume, though, it is Longbridge. Women workers would have been housed in a former convent, some of their male counterparts in the village described here.*

**T**here is no question that conditions for the working classes in Europe's major conurbations during the mid 19th century were grim. Hundreds of thousands died of cholera between 1830 and 1855 in England alone, the result of appalling sanitation, fetid drinking water and every other unhygienic practice you can think of.

That said, there were men and women of enormous vision and simple goodness who sought to address the issues.

Edward Arkroyd, Titus Salt and the proprietors of Price's candle company confronted the problem head-on and by the middle of the century were providing modern, well designed housing and a raft of other benefits for their workers.

Somewhat later, Ebenezer Howard, the leading light in the garden city movement, had a broader concept. He wished to stem the emaciation of rural Britain caused by wholesale migration from the

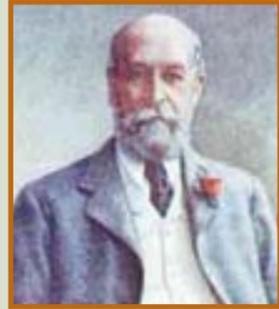
***The editor  
joins in 90th anniversary  
celebrations for  
the AUSTIN VILLAGE***

countryside into the burgeoning industrial towns and cities.

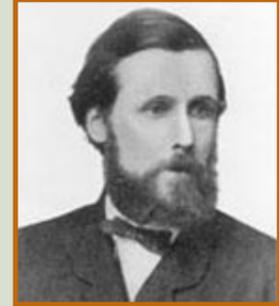
Names more familiar to our ears, though, might be Cadbury, Lever, and Rowntree, perceived to be the fathers of the workers' village.

William Hesketh Lever established Port Sunlight, on Merseyside, in 1888 to accommodate employees at his soap factory.

Thirty architects worked on the design and it would have a church,



Joseph Rowntree, bottom left, then clockwise, George Cadbury and William Lever, the fathers of the workers' village. But was Herbert Austin, bottom right, one of them?



technical institute and, by 1907, a cottage hospital, as well as supporting social organizations like a branch of the Boys' Brigade and an amateur dramatic society.

George Cadbury drew on the ideas of Howard when he built his 'factory in a garden' at Bournville, on the outskirts of Birmingham, in 1895.

Cadbury's wife, Elizabeth, helped with the planning and workers who had barely seen a garden in their lives, had an individual plot complete with a row of apple trees. There were also almshouses, mainly for the company's pensioners, but also for a small number of people from elsewhere.

By 1900, when the development became a charitable trust, the Cadbury estate included 330 acres of land with 313 cottages.

The Rowntree set-up at New Earswick, near York, was much the same. Started in 1904 there would be 229 houses by 1919 and although the site was continuously developed down the decades, a folk hall and primary school were early features.

How the Austin Village at Turves Green, north of the Longbridge factory site and Sir Herbert's level of philanthropy, equate with all of this is an interesting point.

At first glance, not at all. As a consequence of WW1 the Austin company's workforce grew from around 2500 in 1914, to 22000 in 1918. About 5000 were women, known as 'munitionettes' throughout the industry and attracted from far and wide by relatively high piece work rates. The entire workforce, however, were

engaged on the production of a variety of war materials ranging from horse drawn limbers for the field guns of the day, through shells, to a selection of aeroplanes.

Herbert Austin's idea of establishing his factory well away from the centre of Birmingham had been fine in 1905. Now, getting an army of toilers to and from the green pastures of Longbridge was a problem.

A former convent, Nazareth House on the Bristol Road, was found for many of the women. It later became the apprentices school with accommodation for 75 young

men. But at the time there was no suitable housing for males unless a dormitory village could be created.

One hundred and twenty acres of agricultural land in Hawkesley Mill Lane was bought from the owner of Hawkesley Farm, Thomas Middlemore in 1916, and, £7750 the poorer, Austin cast his mind to the buildings themselves.

Quite why he looked to America for the timber for what would be 200 pre-fabricated bungalows is not clear but we can assume home grown stocks were fully accounted for fuelling the war.

What he lighted upon was the Aladdin Company of Michigan who specialized in log cabins to withstand the rigours of the North American winter. They used Canadian cedar, popular to this day for constructing such buildings, and boasted that for every knot a purchaser could find in the timbers they would get a dollar refund.

The structures were shipped from the local port of Bay City.

The British authorities were concerned about the fire hazard on an all-wood development but it was agreed that 25 brick houses (i.e. two semi-detached) would be built at six-bungalow intervals to act as fire breaks. It only partially re-assured the local council but they issued

**At the time there was no suitable housing for males unless a dormitory village could be created.**

temporary planning consent on April 26, 1917.

Eleven months later the structures were up, laid out by architect J W Wilson in the form of a horseshoe around a central avenue, dubbed as such. It was a 'dual carriageway' of sorts and, it has been suggested, was the first section of road of this type in the Birmingham area!

Whilst it is clear, and unlike Arkroyd, Salt, William Lever or all the rest, Austin had little philanthropic intent with his village, it has to be said, he did not stint on the accommodation and Wilson schemed in trees and shrubs. Thus Austin, could, indeed, have been following the example of men like Cadbury and Lever.

In the Austin village residents who paid 14s 6d a week rent entered their bungalows through a neat porch and were greeted by a 20 x 10 ft living room. Then along the same side of the bungalow was a 10 x 10 kitchen/diner that boasted a gas cooker, sink, ample storage space and even a separate pantry. At the back of the house there was a little wash house equipped with a boiler, also gas fired.

Along the other side of the building were three bedrooms, each the size of the kitchen and with the bathroom between the second and rear-most. This had a full size enamel bath, proper toilet and there was a form of central heating for the whole house.

Most of the early tenants were Belgian refugees of whom the company had 3000 on the books. It later helped Sir Herbert, knighted by Britain for his war efforts, on the way to a further accolade as Commander of the Belgian Order of Leopold II.

It's said that each home housed seven but the logic for the increased intimacy in one of those equi-dimensioned bedrooms is not explained.

Up to 12 men lived in each of the brick-built semis.

Everybody got a small vegetable garden, as on the Cadbury estate, but Austin's was complete with washing line.

As soon as the war was over, of course, the workforce declined dramatically and the company was in dire straits with little or no need for its 250 'des res'. And it could be argued that it was this situation that led Austin to end up with a genuine workers' village.

Although, to be fair, there is some evidence that he was so committed to housing workers on site that he had ordered 250 more cabins from Aladdin but the ship bringing them

was sunk by a German U-boat in 1918. This is entirely possible. Because although enemy submarine activity had diminished by then the fleet was still a considerable menace.

During the 20s the buildings were sold to employees for £250 leasehold or £300 free. The deeds that went with the transaction were somewhat bizarre to say the least.

They allowed the purchaser to immediately knock down his acquisition and replace it with a similar one in stone. Fortunately for those interested in Austin heritage none of those proud new home owners went for the option.

There was also a dictate that the properties had to be refurbished with good quality paint every four years and some people now argue that that is why they have lasted so long.

The kit to do this work – blow lamps, brushes, ladders etcetera – was available on the estate for 2s (10p) an item.

During this era the estate developed very closely along the lines of Port Sunlight, Bournville or New Earswick. There was a village hall where a wide variety of activities could be pursued from billiards to the staging of horticultural shows. There were tennis courts and football and cricket teams and a children's playground plus access to a doctor, nurse, mid-wife and

**There were tennis courts and football and cricket teams and a children's playground plus access to a doctor.**



The classic concept of the workers' village was probably that of Lever. His development at Port Sunlight blended the work of 30 architects. The drawing above depicts five workers' cottages by Maurice Adams. Herbert Austin's ideas were much more prosaic.

# Is ageing fatal?

RECENTLY, AN APPRECIABLE number of words have been published on the relationship between a tyre's age and its safety.

This was prompted by very tragic circumstances in which the driver of an MGB was killed when the car overturned following the failure of a tyre.

The victim was taking his MG to a car show and was running on a 25-year-old, but 'as new' set of covers, bought at autojumble to fit to the car when on display. One failed and the rest is very sad history.

Some of the relevant information was passed by the coroner to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs who asked member clubs to warn about the use of old tyres and proffer the advice that casings, even after correct storage, should be discarded once they had passed their sixth birthday, and those properly maintained and on a vehicle have a life of 10 years, irrespective of wear.

Not surprisingly, some enthusiasts regarded this guidance with scepticism and rather too much the answer to a tyre manufacturer's prayer.

Indeed, it was subsequently revealed by the FBHVC that the MGB's surviving tyres were inflated above the maker's recommended pressure. Presumably so was the one that failed. Also that the wheel in question had a loose 'spinner'.

Those who remember the tragic demise of pop-star, Marc Bolan, thirty years ago, will appreciate



*This period photo is from the Austin Ten Drivers' Club who speculate as to whether tyre condition had anything to do with the accident. If anyone other than the ATDC should be credited please let the editor know.*



*From day one the bungalows on the Austin estate instilled enormous pride in the occupants. It remains to this day, as evidenced by this delightfully presented property. Photo Local Heritage initiative.*

the Works laundry. It would take in your linen on a Monday and return it on a Friday.

Whether Sir Herbert Austin was as passionately interested in all this as say, George Cadbury, is not really clear. But he certainly turned out, in 1921, for the opening of the Baptist church in Hawkesley Crescent. (There was another of the Epiphany persuasion on Oak Walk).

Yet we must not be too inclined to scepticism. True, Austin's was not an original idea. There were blueprints for excellent workers' villages and the ideas of Ebenezer Howard were increasingly in vogue.

However, Herbert Austin has an excellent track record for his commitment to high quality, accessible training for the labour force. It led to an apprentice scheme the envy of the industry.

And there is no doubt the accommodation in his village was of an extremely generous standard and one that compared favourably with what was available in working class Britain as late as the 1950s.

The bungalows passed to second and even third generation Austin workers and even now the development, quite apart from being an important part of social history, is cherished by the residents.

In 1990 the Austin Village Preservation Society was formed and in 1997 the site declared a conservation area. The temporary planning permission was revoked in the 60s and the development allowed permanent status!

that quite apart from anything we may have to say about tyres, a loose wheel is not a good idea.

So what is a realistic and responsible position to take for the users of veteran, vintage and classic Austins, and of course all historic vehicles.

The Pre-War Austin Seven Club magazine will soon publish a letter from club member, Rex Grogan, who has no fewer than 60 years experience of examining tyres that have been in accidents.

## IMPOSSIBLY HARSH

After an interesting and informed discourse on the history of the tyre, Mr Grogan says: 'In the late 1940s, Michelin made the radial tyre which separated the functions of a tread and casing from each other so that they could each do their respective jobs properly.

'They made the tread flat and kept it flat by stiffening the rubber with steel cords bonded into the structure. This would have made an impossibly harsh tyre if they hadn't married their rigid tread to a super flexible casing by using radial cords, that is running the cords straight across the tyre from one bead to the other. They also found that only a single layer of material was necessary which also made the casing really flexible.

'So far, so brilliant. The steel braced tread could be made flat(ish) and so it didn't squirm against the road and so it didn't wear out, well not much anyway, so tyres lasted much longer; twice, three times, even more, than the old cross ply tyres.

## TYRES BURSTING

'Wonderful. Or so we thought.

'Rubber does not readily stick to steel cords and all sorts of cunning chemicals had to be used to coax the two materials to bond together. But around the late 1970s or early 1980s we began to notice something sinister.

'Under certain conditions the steel cords separated again from the rubber so that the tyre either shed its tread or it flapped itself to pieces. No one really understood what was happening, in fact, they (we) still don't.

'The most perplexing factor was that tyres which were little used, like caravan tyres, or those on cars in museums, almost fell apart.

'I first aired this phenomenon on the *Top Gear* tv programme when they were investigating a spate of tyres bursting on caravans.

By then I was confident enough to say, out loud, 'old radial tyres come unglued'. The Caravan Club, to their great credit, told their members not to use old tyres and they even told them how to determine the date of manufacture.

'It did not matter how little use (wear) the tyre had sustained, "if it was old throw it away", they said. The tyre industry just shuffled their collective feet and looked at the ceiling. In fact it is only in the last couple of years or so that they have come clean and said: "yes there is a problem with old tyres".

'But there still remained a small fly in the ointment. The tyre industry warning talked about "tyres". They should really have said, "steel braced radial tyres", 'cos the cross ply tyres, like we lucky pre-War Austineers use, don't come unglued.



*Cross ply have no steel cords.*

There are no steel cords in them!

'Don't get too complacent by this because old cross ply tyres also have their problems. Nothing in life is ever perfect.

'Rubber is a bio-degradable product which still grows on trees in many places and it, and its synthetic counterparts, do succumb to oxygen attack and there is a good scientific reason why this has to be so. Readers will be glad to know that I shall not boggle their minds with the chemistry of that one. Just accept it, rubber decomposes.

'Happily for us and our old cars any degradation in cross ply tyres is there to see.

'Unlike the radial tyre, which sneakily decomposes internally where you can't see it, cross ply tyres crack and split and go brittle. They also develop flat areas where they stand on the road but these features are always on the outside. In fact, cross ply tyres do everything they possibly can to tell you when they are not well. Just look at them!

'So there you are, there is a problem and a very sinister or dangerous one at that. But it shouldn't bother your old Austin unless you trailer your beloved to an event on an old radial-shod trailer.



Result of over-inflation of a coach tyre.

if the tyres can continue in service. This includes the spare tyre as well. Typical tyre ageing symptoms are crazing/cracking of the tyre's sidewalls and/or tread, distortion of the tyre and bulges.

Regular tyre pressure checking and maintenance is an important routine that all tyre users are strongly advised to conduct. Tyres that are infrequently used tend to age at a faster rate than those in regular service as a result of the anti-ageing chemicals contained in tyre rubber components being most active when the tyre is in use. This is the prime reason why leisure vehicle organisations, such as The Caravan Club, tend to recommend removing tyres when they reach an age of between five and seven years.

The advice given above applies to all tyres be they cross ply, bias belted or radial ply tyres.

The chronological age of any tyre can be found on the tyre sidewall by examining the characters following the symbol DOT.

For tyres manufactured after the year 1999, the last four numbers identify the date of manufacture of the tyre to the nearest week. The first two of these four numbers identify the week of manufacture (which range from 01 to 52). The last two numbers identify the year of manufacture. For example a tyre with the information DOT XXXXXX2703 was manufactured in the 27th week of 2003.

For tyres manufactured prior to the year 2000, three numbers instead of four indicate the date of manufacture. Also, during the early 1990s, many manufacturers added a triangle (◄) to the end of the character string to distinguish a tyre built in the 1990s from previous decades (e.g., a tyre with the information DOT XXXXXX274◄ was manufactured in the 27th week of 1994).

'In just the same way, watch out for the age of the tyres on your "modern". Above all though, remember that because a radial tyre has a good deep tread it doesn't mean it's safe to use. If it's more than six years old, be brave and throw it away'.

Useful information from the British Tyre Manufacturers Association, penned by their chief executive, John Dorken, will also appear in the same issue of the Austin Seven magazine. Mr Dorken wrote: The subject of tyre ageing is a complex one as there are many variable factors. In simple terms, ageing of a tyre is the gradual drying out and hardening of the principally rubber components. Some of the factors involved are the conditions of storage before the tyre is put into service, the nature of use, the level of maintenance and the climate in which it is used. Hence two initially identical tyres may age at very different rates. Since storage and service conditions vary widely, accurately predicting the service life of any specific tyre in chronological time is not possible.

Consumers are strongly encouraged to be aware of their tyres' visual condition. Also they should be alert to any change in dynamic performance such as increased air loss, noise or vibration. Such changes could be an indicator that the tyre(s) should be immediately removed from service to prevent a tyre disablement.

Tyres should be removed from service for numerous reasons, including tread worn down to minimum depth, damage or abuse (punctures, cuts, impacts, cracks, bulges, under-inflation, overloading, etc). For these reasons tyres, including spares, must be inspected routinely, i.e. at least once a month. Regular inspection becomes particularly important the longer a tyre is kept in service. BTMA recommends that, if tyre damage is suspected or found, the consumer has the tyre inspected by a tyre service professional. Consumers should use this consultation to determine



Delamination after driving at 70 mph for fifty miles on a hot road in an ambient temperature of 30°C. The tyre itself was two or three years old with minimal wear, but, it had been used as a spare, riding in strong sunlight on the bonnet of the Land Rover it subsequently caused to be written-off. Please take heed of the advice provided in the article above.

## I 'ad that Rottweiler in the back of the cab once



A bit sad all round really, but this picture of a fairly early FX4 cab and its guardian comes from motoring writer, Miguel Martin, and was taken in central Portugal, the country of Miguel's origin. Austin did a good trade in Portugal where, even in pre-War days, models like the Ten were used as taxis.

## Classic car meet will honour 'seven capitals' run

by AIDA MAURICE

As AustinTimes went to press we received confirmation from Keith Wynn, who organizes the annual Classic British Car Meeting at Morges in Switzerland, that the featured marque in 2008 will be Austin.

As part of the celebration of the Longbridge car it is planned to stage a re-enactment of the run by three Austin Sixteens through seven European capitals in seven days to coincide with the launch of the Austin Sheerline at the 1947 Geneva Motor Show.

The Sixteen used for the re-run that 60 years ago began in Oslo and embraced Stockholm, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris will be the car that earlier this year successfully completed a re-enactment of the 1907 Peking-Paris race.

YSY 485 is a 1948 example and was driven on the Peking-Paris by John Vincent and his father-in-law, Edwin Hammond, who is a classic rallying enthusiast.

The adventure was fully reported in the June/July issue of *Austin Times*.

In 1947 the Austins were driven by Austin publicist Alan Hess, a friend, Dennis Buckley, journalist and racing driver Sammy Davis, and Stan Yeal from the Works. They were also accompanied by three representatives of the major film and photo agencies of the day.



Peking-Paris Sixteen.

# Bantam that needed more punch



Line ahead over ice and snow covered roads in Sweden, the Sixteens head for Geneva and the Motor Show during the worst winter to rage across Europe for 300 years. Photo Motor Racing Publications.

## Christmas looms...

THIS YEAR *Austin Times* brought you reviews of two fantastic books you might like to consider as Christmas presents.

The first was *Rust in Peace* by Tucker and Worthington-Williams, published by Dalton Watson Fine Books ([www.daltonwatson.com](http://www.daltonwatson.com)) at £27. It's about scrap-yard discoveries of historic 'motors' worldwide, with much to interest the Austin reader (see below). Relive your mispent youth or discover the way we were!

Then there was Canning Brown's *Austin Seven Competition History 1922-39* direct from Twincam Ltd [www.austintwincam.co.uk](http://www.austintwincam.co.uk) at £35. Collector's edition £75 plus p&p in both cases.

This book, sumptuously illustrated with pictures of cars and drivers, is the best ever written on this aspect of Seven history and one of the finest produced on Austin.

MN



Emerging from the chrysalis. Catch them in *Rust in Peace*.

**H**UMVEE HARDLY has the ring of Jeep. And WWII US Army Chief of Staff, General George C Marshall's description of the General Purpose 4 x 4 quarter tonner as 'America's greatest contribution to modern warfare' describes what is probably also still the world's best known vehicle.

Not so well known is that its origins are firmly rooted in the Austin Seven!

As early as 1937 an American soldier, Colonel Robert Howie, aided by Sergeant Helvin Wiley, came up with a curious little vehicle that soon became known as the 'Belly Flopper'.

In essence it was a platform with a wheel at each corner and a Bantam engine - which, as we know was pure Austin Seven - in its butt.

## Entrée to the military

Whereas the Belly Flopper had seemed a good idea at the time, its cross-country capability was limited and driving it while lying down, uncomfortable and fatiguing and, as another American soldier said: 'The only way to get it where it was needed was to put it on a truck!'

But with this entrée to the military, Bantam loaned three roadsters in 1938, hoping these might be adopted as a reconnaissance vehicle.

Meanwhile the Belly Flopper had not finally flopped and was demonstrated to Delmar Ross, chief engineer of the Willys motor company and his boss, Joseph Fraser, in 1940.

Ross saw the potential for development and a committee was set up to investigate. It consisted of Howie who had thought of the Belly Flopper in the first place, experts from transmission company Spicer and three army engineers named Brown, Burgan and Beasley. And as Uncle Sam was already looking at the Bantam for broadly the same purposes they met at that firm's works in Butler, Pennsylvania.

## BENT HORSINGTON reveals the true story behind the JEEP

An outline for a stark four wheel drive vehicle to carry a machine gun and three soldiers was drawn up in the spring of 1940 and in May and June merged with further specifications over which the US Army's Ordnance Technical Committee had been deliberating.

No fewer than 135 companies were invited to submit detailed drawings which could lead to a prototype being required for evaluation in seven weeks and the balance of an initial batch of 70 supplied within another four. Perhaps not surprisingly, only two firms, Bantam and Willys, took up the challenge.

Bantam put an engineer called Karl Probst on the job who submitted his plans within five days and delivered the prototype equally promptly.



This is the Bantam prototype. It had a proprietary Continental engine that was no match for what Willys had on the stocks and the firm from Butler ultimately lost out. Photo Jim Dunn Collection/US Army.

**AUSTIN TIMES COVERED THE SEVEN CAPITALS IN SEVEN DAYS RUN OF THE AUSTIN SIXTEENS IN SOME DEPTH FOR THE FEBRUARY/MARCH ISSUE OF 2004.**

If you haven't seen a copy and would like one please let the editor know at 10 Av de la Porte de Ménilmontant, 75020 PARIS E-mail [martyn.nutland@gmail.com](mailto:martyn.nutland@gmail.com)



*The Jeep has played innumerable roles in war and peace. This one acts the slightly unusual part of a 'Follow Me' vehicle helping control ground movements at an airbase. At the battlefield they would have been painted normal drab but away from the lines were often yellow.  
Photo Brian French. www.Drive.to/WWII*

washed their hands of the American automotive industry.

On the other hand, Willys had the ideal motor, straight off the shelf, in a unit they had been using in their 'Americar' model since 1934 and called the 'Go Devil'.

The Jeep as it actually appeared immediately proved itself an indefatigable workhorse.

In fact variations on the theme were only limited by the imagination of the serviceman concerned.

There were Jeeps that served as mobile altars, as half tracks, as farm tractors and snowploughs and as tugs for aircraft. The Jeep was the first road vehicle to convert successfully to run on rails and an example of the amphibious version – the Seep – later sailed round the world, although it did take nine years!

There is even an apocryphal tale of a contingent of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' (REME) Jeeps being used in a competitive demonstration at military displays like



*Building the highly acclaimed 'Go Devil' engine at the Willys-Overland factory in Toledo, Ohio.*

The army tried out the Bantam at their Holabird Test Centre and for an entirely new, relatively complex design, could only list 20 'defects'.

But Bantam and Probst were to fall victim to their own success. The military slapped in a further order for 1500 and it was questioned in some quarters whether the company from Butler could deliver in this volume. As a result contracts were placed with Willys and Ford for the final version.

In the end the former produced more than 360,000, Ford nearly 280,000 and Bantam – just 2,675.

The Jeep was now intended as a powerful reconnaissance car that would replace the motor cycle. Thus we have to broach the issue that even if Bantam had not been hamstrung by production constraints any easily produced version of the Seven engine was not going to serve.

Sure, Rosengart knew how to 'up' the capacity and power with a six cylinder 'Seven', but that wasn't the layout the military were seeking, and it is doubtful Bantam would have had access to that information anyway. And yes, a word in the ear of Longbridge might have produced the clincher. Indeed, Austin later worked on a super engine intended for a Jeep replacement and subsequently used it extensively, including for the post-war Gipsy. But when Bantam were in the running for mega-bucks the British firm had

Britain's Royal Tournament.

A vehicle had to be assembled from its major components in three-and-a-half minutes and the long suffering Jeeps went together with only rear wheel brakes and their oil filter bowl acting as the fuel tank.

At the battlefield, Jeeps were converted to hardtops, sometimes with the roofs cut from enemy cars, and additional storage was fitted in every conceivable location including the wing tops and bulkhead.

All this in addition to carrying everyone from GIs to generals, the wounded, supplies of every description, towing trailers and mounting and hauling guns.

The Jeep fought in nearly every arena of WWII; from the sands of North Africa to the jungles of the South Pacific, taking in along the way the Italian campaign and the rest of Europe. This is one of the reasons why it became such a familiar phenomenon and has been replicated to such a considerable extent.

***Naturally it was in the US that the Jeep subsequently became most popular. Willys registered the name in America and 111 other countries.***

So if you want to stretch the point on Austin world dominance - the Land Rover was Jeep inspired, as was Japan's Nissan Patrol and Toyota's Land Cruiser. In Italy the Fiat Campagnola and Alfa Romeo Matta was a variation on the same theme as was the Auto Union Munga in Germany. And there are other examples.

The post-war Phillipinoes, though, took the standard Jeep to their hearts, called them Jeepneys and ran an estimated 80,000 often with the rear end extended so they could accommodate up to 10 people and serve as public service vehicles.

But naturally it was in the US that the Jeep subsequently became most popular. Willys registered the name in America and 111 other countries and were swift to capitalize on its war-time success.

Soon they had a virtually identical version on the market, but with column change and called the Universal (model CJ-2A) then followed up



*The Jeep still has an international following. This beautifully restored example is being enjoyed by a member of the Norwegian Historical Military Vehicles Association.*

with more pretentiously named offerings like Jeepster and the Station Sedan with imitation wicker exterior panels!

However, it has to be acknowledged the company survived on producing solely Jeep derivatives until 1952 when they re-entered the conventional car market as well, with the Aero.

By 1966 Willys had become the Kaiser Jeep Corporation and old favourites like the Jeepster and Universal were back in the catalogue. Machines which look vaguely like the WWII original linger even to this day. But that really is pushing the Austin link to the bounds of credibility!

## Sheering off the mark



*The Sheerline was launched 60 years ago this year. It had a great engine and chassis but was flawed visually and as a marketing concept. It has been assessed by Austin Times in a recent issue. Photo Austin Motor Co.*

**THIS YEAR HAS** seen a number of important Austin anniversaries. The Ten's launch was 75 years ago and the model received major

coverage in the August/September issue of *Austin Times*. Earlier in the year we paid tribute to the A40, 60 years down the road from its unveiling. In this edition we mark 90 years of the Austin Village. Yet, 2007 sees one other milestone - another 60th - this time for the Sheerline which went public at the Geneva Motor Show in 1947.

This big, Bentley-like car, had its points. A great engine and a good chassis, but styling

that was way adrift. If you like, every line on the Bentley it sought to emulate was correct; and almost every one on the Sheerline wasn't.

True to form, and a head of the game, *Austin Times* took an in depth look at this ill-starred model a little while ago in a major, two part, feature.

If you missed this important contribution to Sheerline history you can receive the back numbers by contacting the editor.



Twenty limousine (far left) is for sale in the UK. The highly regarded four cylinder engine is pictured alongside.

## One hundred-years-old

## Worldly Twenty

Good friend of this newsletter, Australian reader, PETER HOOPER, spotted the Twenty, pictured above, for sale in southern England.

This 1920 example is said to have spent most of its life, actually *in* Australia, then in a museum in Japan. Well, Austin did teach them to build cars!

The four cylinder Twenty was one of Austin's finest, said by many to be superior to the Rolls-Royce of equivalent horsepower and able to give a Three Litre Bentley a run for its money. Although not in this form, one would wager.

The vendors are Orchid Cars of Amesbury in Wiltshire, England.

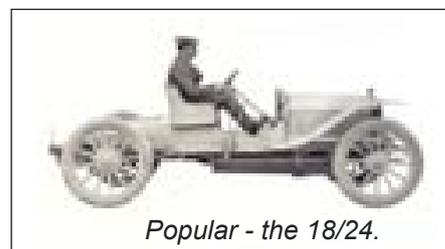
More on the vintage Twenty soon.

WE'RE SURE MANY of you found it hard to accept Austin was 100-years-old in 2005. It seems equally incredible the motor car itself is quite a bit older than that.

But another remarkable phenomenon is the oldest Austin car in the world, still being used on the road on a regular basis, has just celebrated *its* 100th birthday.

It's a 18/24 Hertford cabriolet:landaulet and belongs to George Fulton who lives in Ireland and restored it.

The 18/24 was one of the most popular Austins of the pre-WWI era and was produced from 1907-13. It was a four cylinder side valve and just one of the blocks was used as the base for a 'Seven' sold by both Austin and Swift.



Popular - the 18/24.

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