

AUSTIN CENTENARY 2005

Longbridge - July 2005

The club were delighted to be invited to be part of the Austin Centenary Celebration at Crofton Park, opposite the Longbridge site in July 2005.



Ian Nelson did a great job of organising our participation in the event especially as he was organising the Austin 7 rally (which was slightly more demanding) at the same time. We did wonder if we would be able to attend as the regulations specified that marquees had to be made of a fireproof material and exhibitors also needed to supply a fire extinguisher. The extinguisher was no problem but our diminutive Gazebo was hardly fireproof. Luckily the organisers agreed that in our case the regulations could be relaxed.

Ian collected our J40 early on the Thursday morning and delivered it to Tony Key. It was to ride on the back of his stunning Austin A40 pickup in the cavalcade from the centre of Birmingham to the park. Tony has a J40 but it hasn't been restored yet. If the pickup is anything to go by the J40 will be a sight to behold when it is finished.

The day of the event started early with the Smith family, Jan, Stuart, James and Ben leaving home before 8am in a convoy of two cars. Anyone who has two children under 4 will know this was quite a feat! The Pathfinder had been loaded into the back of the car the night before together with the Gazebo. We met Ian at the Gaydon museum to collect JOY 1 which had already been delivered to the front door by the time we arrived there at 9am. This was loaded into the back of Ian's car and we then retired for coffee in the museum cafeteria. Well, we knew it was going to be a long day so we needed to pace ourselves!

Having arrived at the entrance of Crofton Park we had a little trouble persuading the guy on the gate to let us in. Ian with JOY 1 had little trouble but then came Jan with no pedal car on board (she was taking the J40 home that was already on the back of the pickup) and she had a little more explaining to do. I hope the guys toes (and ears) are better now! A tired mother-of-two in a large 4x4 should not be meddled with! I then had no problem getting in just by pointing to Jan in the car in front and then to the Pathfinder in the back of my car and not stopping. I think the fight had been taken out of him by then anyway!

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The stand was set up on the edge of the Austin Counties car area so that people could view the real A40 and then see the J40. Once the stand was set up we were then able to relax a little.

We had many visitors during the day and we often heard "I used to have one of those". Even the guy running the fairground rides came over and said that his father used to have a J40 ride but they eventually took the J40's off and replaced them with more modern cars. James, aged 3, was a very enthusiastic demonstrator of the Pathfinder, and more than willing to let passing children sit in his car! Ben, his younger brother, was also willing to sit in the car but unfortunately his feet couldn't reach the pedals. Still it kept Jan entertained pushing him around the field! We also had a display of J40 magazines, and club information available on the stand.

We were delighted to see Alf, Mary and Roy at the event. They spent a long time with us on the stand with Alf holding court with many of the visitors despite the hot weather. Ian then took Alf on a motor tour of the event.

Thanks to Ian for organising our attendance and Roger Payne for making an excellent job of the platform to support the J40 in the back of the pickup. Also thanks to Tony Key for carrying the J40 on the back of his pickup. It made a splendid sight and must have been the most photographed car at the event. A photo even made it into Classic Car magazine.