

# Austin Times

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A NEWSLETTER FOR ENTHUSIASTS OF AUSTIN PRE-1955

## IN THIS ISSUE

Thought the BS1 Sixteen was a post-war model? Well it was and it wasn't. Surprising revelations that are not quite what you're thinking!

Abbey Road in the London suburb of Park Royal is best known as the scene of many *Beatles* recording sessions, but there is an Austin link as BENT explains.

Austin publicity shots of the 40s and 50s were, perhaps, uniquely evocative of the motoring of the age. AIDA MAURICE discovers where you can view them.

## AND COMING SOON

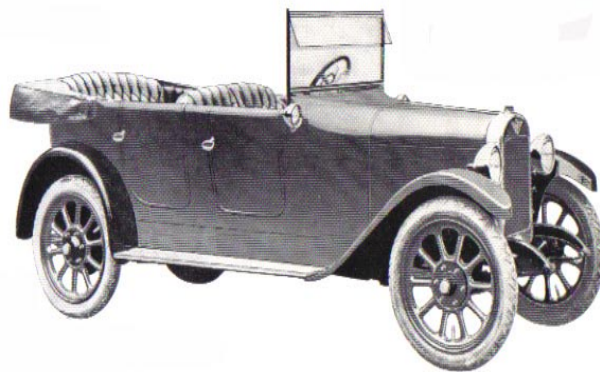
Peer's Poughman - the story of the farm tractors Austin built in France and elsewhere.

Plus the saddest Austin story of them all.

DON'T MISS IT, IT'S ALL IN YOUR FAVOURITE AUSTIN NEWSLETTER.

## How 'bizarre', the Sizaire affair

by  
BENT  
HORINGTON



*Austin staple was the much loved Twelve Four.*

he subsequently claimed.

Georges became an apprentice harness maker, probably on the strength of the contacts of his late papa, who sold the horses he had schooled to the cab and delivery trades.

Neither craft seems to have been the boys' *métier* and

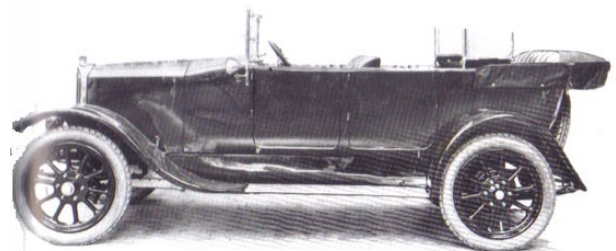
Maurice began dabbling in furniture design while Georges changed horses mid stream and trained as a turner in a bicycle factory.

By the turn of the century they had joined forces at a workshop on rue Godefroy in the suburb of Puteaux, to the west of the capital, and were

Whether there was much more to Austin's involvement with Sizaire-Berwick than meets the eye is hard to see from this distance. That it was complex is crystal clear.

'Sizaire' in its various incarnations was essentially a French company. Maurice Hippolyte Sizaire was born in Paris a few days after Christmas 1877 and his brother Georges in the summer of 1880.

Their father died when they were still children and Maurice entered the building trade, although not to train as an architect, as



*The 'Sizaire' was a Twelve Four in disguise. But why...? Read on.*



attempting to build cars. In the midst of this automotive activity Georges had to depart for National Service and friend Louis Naudin moved in from the neighbouring De Dion Bouton works where he had been a machinist. A brother of Naudin's may also have joined, but in any event, by mid 1903 the first *niveau* of the subsequent organization had been reached with the formation of Sizarre & Naudin.

As befits someone who liked to describe himself as a *petit bricoleur* (little tinkerer), Maurice Sizaire's first designs were not great.

### Most Audacious

But by 1905 the car the entrepreneurs displayed at Paris's exhibition for small inventors (sic) was being fêted by the prestigious magazine, *La Vie Automobile*, as: 'the most audacious ever to have been conceived and executed; one is tempted to believe on considering its details, that the builders had but one concern – that of doing nothing as others do.'

It had sliding pillar/transverse leaf spring front suspension and Sizaire & Naudin are often credited with having invented ifs – unlikely. There was also self-adjusting worm and peg steering and a quite remarkable transaxle. The latter was based on what is probably best described as a 'circular rack'. The transmission shaft itself could be moved fore and aft and sideways to bring three spur gears attached to its end into individual engagement.

It was simple. But apparently Georges Sizaire was the only person ever to execute a gear change without it sounding like a coal scuttle being emptied.

Single pedal control was provided by having the clutch shaft apply the brakes beyond a certain depression and the steering wheel could be set to five driving positions.

### Bicycle makers

The engine was almost certainly an off-the-shelf single cylinder de Dion-Bouton converted for a pushrod operated, as opposed to automatic, inlet valve.

It is this car which is pivotal to our story in as much as it was wildly successful; both commercially and in races. So much so in the first instance that bicycle makers Société Hammond et Mouter bought in, formed *Société*

*Anonyme des Automobiles Sizaire et Naudin*, moved operations to the lengthy rue de Lourmel, circuited the founders out of the spoils and promptly sold on to motor magnate Louis de Crussol, Duke d'Uzès.

With a wife who claimed to be the world's first lady driver to support, the duke upped the price by a quarter but still managed to sell Sizaire & Naudins like hot *croissants*.

On the track the cars were usually in the hands of Naudin or Georges Sizaire and honour came first with victory for the latter in the 1906 Coup de l'Auto six-day endurance trial. Victories were to follow in most of the major French

events as well as in Italy, Sicily, Spain and as far afield as Mexico.

Writing in the American magazine *Automobile Quarterly* in 1980 (Volume XVIII Number Two) Achille Devereux describes Maurice as ranking among the 'real prophetic and innovative designers of automotive history'. And goes on to say:

'He foresaw by decades what the modern motor car would be and he introduced and applied principles which were not even suspected by others at the time.'

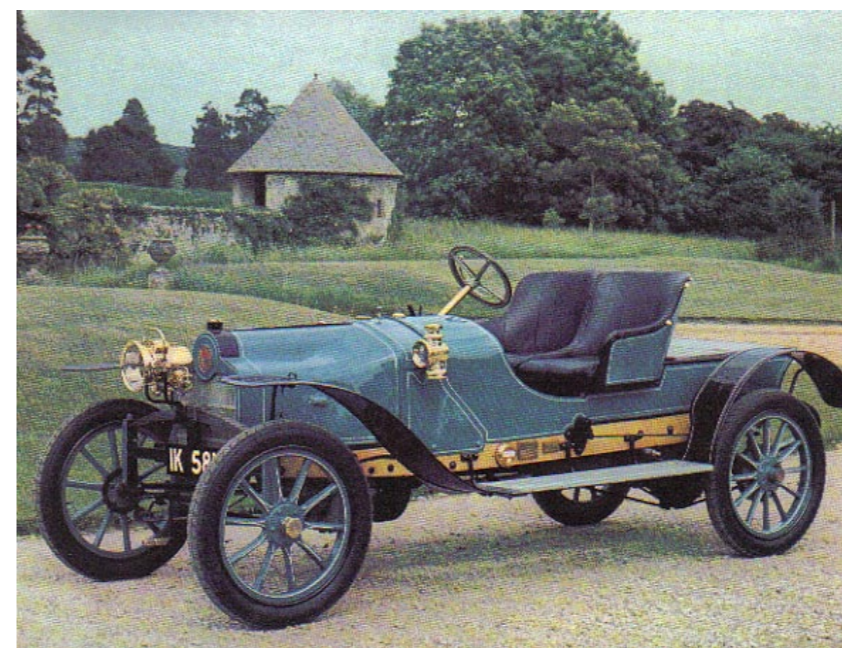
Not least does this manifest itself in his company's move to four cylinders in 1911 although mystery surrounds who actually designed this engine. In any case it was not a success and by 1912 the relationship with d'Uzès was frayed.

Maurice Sizaire himself wrote in *The Bulb Horn* in 1964: 'Our relation with our patron began little by little to degrade. In 1912 he dismissed us in spite of the contract that bound us together.'

Clearly this left the brothers at a loose end.

Now the scene changes, at least in part, to England. W F Bradley was a Paris-based

**It was simple. But apparently Georges Sizaire was the only person ever to execute a gear change without it sounding like a coal scuttle being emptied.**



*Genesis - the Sizaire Naudin. This is a 1909 example with the innovative sliding pillar ifs suspension visible.*

for there to be *entente cordiale*.

Sizaire-Berwick (France) Limited was registered on June 20, 1913 and had its offices at 18 Berkeley Street, London (source of the confusion over the whereabouts of Berwick's showrooms, one suspects).

The plan was that 80 per cent of production from a new plant on rue Louis Blanc in Courbevoie at the heart of Paris's own 'motown' would be sent across the Channel, the remainder floating onto the domestic market.

Sizaire Berwick chassis were taken in threes to a works in the Highgate area of London to recover from the rigours of their journey, having been tested on the way with the fitter responsible swapping from car to car.

They were usually released to the customers without a body but sometimes with coachwork by the company itself or H J Mulliner and others.

They were to an extremely simple design with a proprietary four cylinder, four litre side valve engine from Decolange on a chassis suspended by semi-elliptic springs all round. There was a four speed gearbox, multi-plate clutch and

motoring journalist and was to the Sizaire & Naudin story what Claude Johnson was to that of Rolls and Royce.

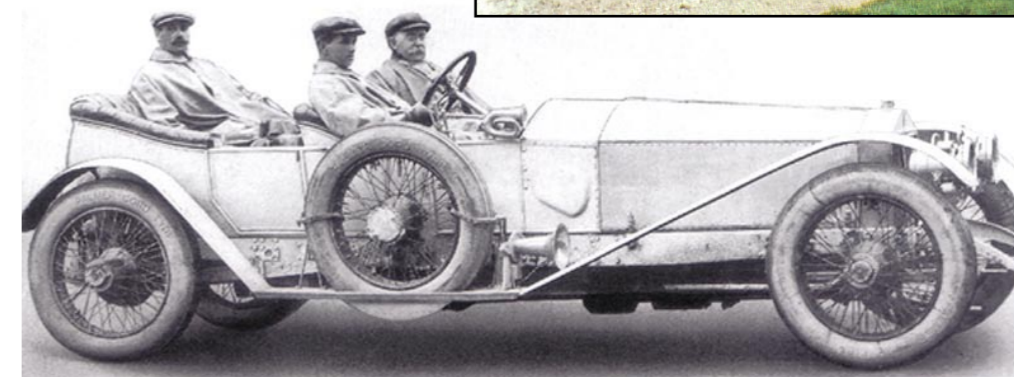
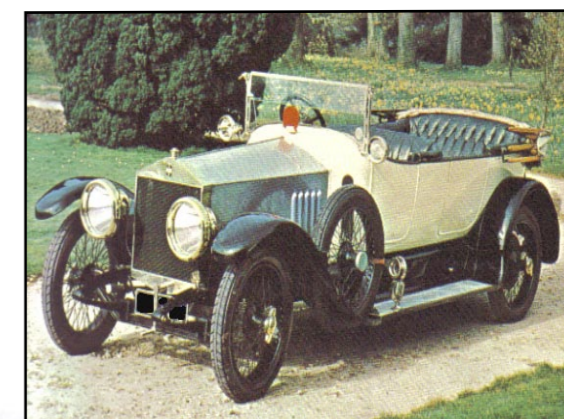
Bradley had a contact in London named Frederick William Berwick who, in 1911, had set up a used car business with showrooms, some say in Berkeley Street, others, the more likely Long Acre, as it was then the hub of the city's motor trade. There were also repair shops, south of the Thames, in Balham.

But of particular interest, as we shall see later, Berwick had also been involved, in 1912, with an obscure car called the GN. Nothing to do with the cyclecar we know and love, this was a big engined machine (3.3 litres) with a four speed gearbox and shaft drive which Georgano tells us in *The Complete Encyclopedia of Motorcars* 'may well have been an imported car'.

Nothing came of the GN but sales of more mainstream marques boomed as Berwick still hankered to move into manufacturing. What's more, he had a backer in the Scot, Alexander Keiller of marmalade fame.

Thus Bradley had only to introduce Berwick to the Sizaire brothers

*We suspect Berwick was inspired by the endeavors of the London-Edinburgh Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost (right). By the time Austin was on the scene the look-a-like radiator (top) had been replaced by something much less elegant.*





braking on the rear wheels and transmission.

The power unit, however, was found to be noisy and Maurice Sizaire reworked it, although Decolange may have continued with the actual building.

Pluses seem to have been the widespread use of ball bearings and now, quiet running, although the home-grown, four-jet carburetter, on the same lines as the Smiths, later found so unsatisfactory by W O Bentley, was perhaps less of a boon.

*La Vie Automobile* described the model, designated Type Y, as a true luxury car, but that was predictable.

More objectively perhaps, the British magazine, *The Field*, said: 'The most fastidious could not desire a better or more luxurious car for its power', and *The Autocar* thought, 'if this was not the best car of its calibre we had ever driven, then it was hard to find a better.'

Perhaps interestingly, from our point of view,

Apart from its very similar radiator – which was to get Sizaire Berwick into hot water – it is questionable whether Rolls-Royce had anything to fear.

these pre-war cars were defined by place names. The Chiltern and Malvern were open versions, the Chelsea a landaulette and there was an Eton limousine and Chelmsford cabriolet.

In his article for *Automobile Quarterly* Mr Devereux goes to considerable lengths to establish that the 'Sizaire' was a

challenge to the Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost.

'Far better performance, much lower taxation, much better fuel economy, much longer tyre wear,' and 'for the owner driver a lighter, easier, more pleasant machine to handle'.

Apart from its very similar radiator – which was to get Sizaire Berwick into hot water – it is questionable whether Rolls-Royce had anything to fear.

However, we suspect Berwick would have been particularly impressed by the London-Edinburgh Silver Ghost, which had made its

capital-to-capital top gear run in 1911 and also the success in the Austrian Alpine Trial which actually occurred in 1913. These were large, rakish, high performance, luxury cars.

And in his erudite writings on the Sizaire-Berwick in 1995 and 96 issues of *The Automobile* Richard Mawer says: 'In practical terms the Sizaire-Berwick could do all the Rolls could, and in some respects, such as fuel economy and performance, was superior.'

### Minor significance

John Fasal, unparalleled expert on the Manchester and earlier Derby 'Royces' acknowledges in *The Rolls-Royce Twenty* (privately published in 1979) the 25/50 'Sizaire' rivalled 'both Rolls-Royce and Daimler' (25/85). Although the output to put the validity of its claim to the test was never achieved'.

And none other than Jack Warner, whose appearance on this particular stage is itself quirky, raised a similar point some years earlier.

Warner is loved by the British nation as the actor who portrayed genial, home-spun London-bobby, George Dixon, in the long running television series *Dixon of Dock Green*. He was also a character of minor significance in motoring history.

He served an apprenticeship as a mechanic and went to work for Berwick in August 1913. He was then dispatched to rue Louis Blanc to familiarize himself with the Y Type. When war was declared just over a year later, and the factory taken over for military purposes, he had the adventurous task of helping rush the last chassis to the docks and was in fact the person who had been responsible for those 'musical chairs' road tests.

### Remunerative contracts

In the 1960s he wrote that the Sizaire Berwick was meant to be a miniature Rolls-Royce.

As in other fields the War changed many things. Those last chassis were turned into armoured cars for the Royal Naval Air Service; there was a new works in Abbey Road, Park Royal acquired to fulfil remunerative contracts making lorry bodies, de Havilland aircraft and Le Rhône aero engines; French president Raymond Poincaré took to riding around in a 'Sizaire' driven by Georges, and Berwick



Jack Warner - quirky role.

amassed sufficient fortune to look forward to a peacetime expansion in his automotive activities.

But matters had indeed changed. Rolls-Royce, who had registered their radiator design in the UK but not France, had nonetheless, 'strong-armed' an alteration to the 'Sizaire' shape. Much more momentous, Keiller put his uncle, called Greig, a steam roller engineer, in charge of operations.

Yet optimism reigned for a time.

The works now covered 16 acres, employed 5,800 and could have built up to 1,250 cars a year. There were orders for 1.5 million pounds-worth of these in the bag and contracts signed to market them in France and Italy. In October 1919 the company went public with £600,000 capital, Sir David Dalziel, who, incidentally was a great exponent of a Channel tunnel, agreed to become chairman and C J Ford, chairman of the Edison Swan Electric Company Limited joined him on the board.

Maurice and Georges Sizaire came over from France and brought with them two draughtsmen. But quite why this should be seems at first to be something of a contradiction. Matters now start to become very confused.

Maurice is reported as being committed to building virtually the same car as pre-war and this appears to be what was happening at Courbevoie with the bulk of the output now staying in France.

But someone in England, most probably, Berwick clearly wanted new models which is confirmed by the presence of the trusted draughtsmen whose names were Voignier and Lapeyre. It's further born out in a discussion

later in Maurice Sizaire's life when he tells marque historian Paul Badré: 'If we had contented ourselves with making the same chassis as the one we had made at Courbevoie we certainly would have been very successful'; adds, 'on his (Greig's) orders every piece I designed was reinforced, thickened and made heavier'; then concludes colourfully, 'the finished car couldn't get out of its own way. It was a disaster and it was rendered even more so by the fact that Greig, very sure of himself, had ordered the materials for a thousand cars without having built the most rudimentary prototype.'

Further insight comes from Jack Warner who returned from the Royal Flying Corps to become experimental engineer with responsibility for chassis testing and the repair shop. In his 1960s revelations published in *Old Motor* and later *Veteran & Vintage* he says: 'The one I felt sorry for was Maurice Sizaire. He never quite got over the fact that had he been allowed to do in London what he had done in his own factory in Paris, the Sizaire-Berwick car would still be alive today.'

But there were no new models. All that happened seems to be the Y Type got a hike in capacity of 500 cc in a bid to move it out of its own way, a revised crankshaft and beefier frame, and became known as the 25/50.

Just a year after the flotation the Receiver was in.

So why on earth did Austin get involved. For the most authoritative explanation we should, as in many other cases, turn to R J Wyatt in



Sir Herbert Austin - why was he there, at Sizaire?





*This French example of a Sizaire Berwick is what the British would have known as a 25/50. It was on the books when the 'Austins' arrived and remained after them in production in France. The radiator, 'V' in plan in deference to Rolls-Royce is visible.*

bubble burst and Hooley was bankrupt by 1898.

Du Cros was also involved around the same time in the stampede to acquire French automobile agencies. Pounding the Champs Elysées alongside him were such luminaries as Charles Rolls, Selwyn (not Stanley) Edge and Charles Jarrott.

Those who couldn't sign one often bought into French companies, acquired licences or simply started importing parts of a French car to sell under an English name. The Hurtu became a Marshall and the Vinot et Deguingand the ambivalent Vinot. Darracq, Rochet-Schneider and Delahaye were just some of the manufacturers which became British limited companies in the first years of the 20th century!

Quite apart from the French of the day being the most experienced and best builders of automobiles, thus presenting the safest opportunity for high profit from investment in a new industry, there were sometimes more nefarious thoughts. Slacker British company law enabled shares to be sold for quick profit. Conversely, unscrupulous French businessmen could dump a dud concern on funny foreigners.

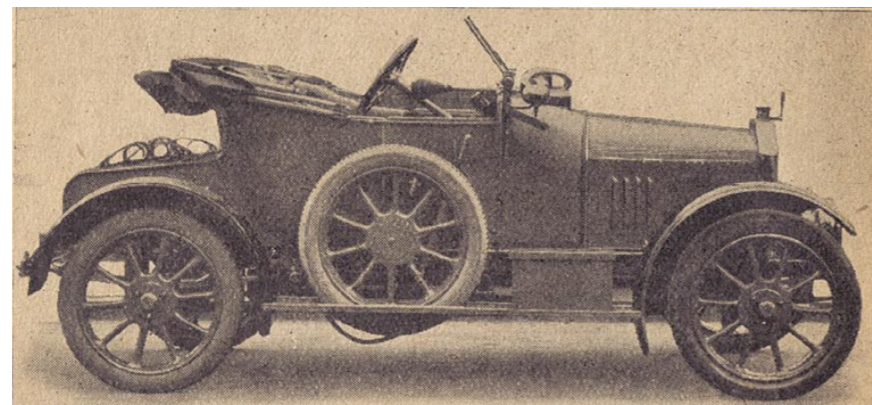
One further enterprise of Du Cros was to move the manufacture of Clément cars to his Swift works and to get no less than Austin to make Gladiators, another French make he owned. Around 1910 Gladiator production moved back

*The Austin 1905-1952* (David and Charles 1981). We learn here that Sir Herbert and one Harvey Du Cros arrived on the scene in September 1922 by which time Sizaire-Berwick would have built no more than about 250 post-war cars.

Du Cros is an interesting player. He is best known to British observers as the shrewd Dubliner who early on got control of John Boyd Dunlop's company. But he had many and varied business interests. He was one of the first share holders in the Austin Motor Company and was a director when the fledgling was barely a year old. He was later to become deputy chairman. In addition, he had a Mercédès agency operating, maybe significantly, from London's Long Acre, and ran the Swift company in Coventry.

To French students of early motoring history Du Cros is more familiar as a financial operator whose ventures were imaginative to say the least. In 1896 he had been part of a syndicate which bought out the Clément bicycle firm along with several others including the French branch of Humber. The consortium were engaged in a spree of investment and over-capitalization run by money-manipulator Ernest T Hooley which resulted in £24 million pounds worth of new shares appearing on the market between 1896 and 97. But the

*Swifts weren't very but they were one of Harvey Du Cros's motor interests.*



to France and the Vinot et Deguingand works in Puteaux - yet another Du Cros brand.

And was it he who suggested to his neighbour in Long Acre, at about this time, that bringing in GN, if, as Georgano, suggests it was a foreign label, might be a good idea?

When Austin and the Dubliner sat down at the Sizaire & Berwick board table there can be little doubt the latter had some firm views on involvement with French car makers.

### Trifle harsh

What Sir Herbert and Harvey Du Cros brought to the party was the Austin 12 and 20. Although again, we must ask why.

Wyatt gives us Austin's own not very convincing explanation: 'The company has agreed to supply Sizaire-Berwick Limited with certain parts of Austin chassis, to be completed with a greater variety of coachwork than is covered in the Austin models.'

In reality the cars were to be sent from Longbridge as completed chassis and fitted with, it appears, the radiator of the Courbevoie model and the British body. However, if this is the case the reason for the complication over radiators is unclear although it appears there was now an additional, very small works in rue d'Alsace and maybe this was a radiator specialist.

Jack Warner said of the exercise: 'To me this was the final blow, as the wonderful well-bred car that started life with me in those far-off Paris days finally turned out to be a bastard'. Even if read literally, and it is obviously intended to be, this sounds a trifle harsh.

### Withdrew gracefully

Both the Austin 12 and 20 were first class cars and one really does have to question whether the Sizaire-Berwicks, designated 13/26 and 23/46 respectively, would ever have sold in preference to them. Particularly as a 13/26 cost £590 and a 12 in the region of 450.

In any event, it was all over by February 1924 when Sizaire-Berwick (France) Limited ceased trading and Austin and Du Cros withdrew gracefully.

What had it all been about?

Wyatt suggests the two businessmen may have been hedging their bets and, given

Longbridge's finances had been fairly precarious immediately after the war, preparing an outlet for two sound products. That makes sense, particularly as Du Cros was extremely *au fait* with the French scene and may have felt he could have returned and exploited it.

But by 1922 Austin fortunes were improving and the Baby Austin would soon find its feet rendering such contingencies unnecessary.

Maybe they were looking for a manufacturing foothold in France. Remember it would not be that long before the search for licensees to build the Seven in Germany and France.

Or perhaps it was simply that Austin, who always liked to

have his fingers in a French tartiflet, was keeping his hand in. His very first car had been modeled on Amédée

Bollée senior's confection, he had his tractor factory at Liancourt, Lucien Rosengart would soon be on board and in the not too distant 30s certain models would be heavily promoted to French society.

Or was it the Sizaire/Rolls-Royce analogy had captured his imagination and he saw a way back into the upper class market that was now less his domain than pre-war.

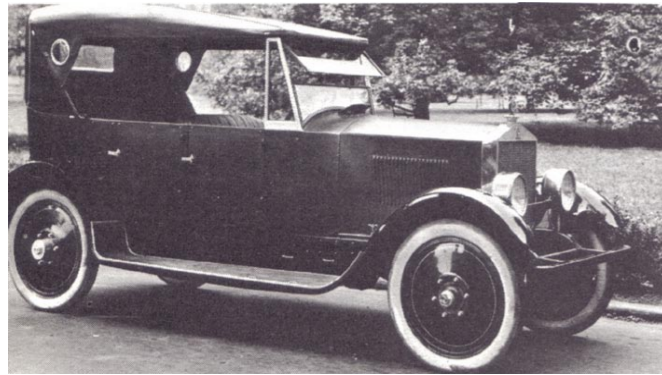
Perhaps he wanted to distance himself from the boardroom pressures at Longbridge to work on some radical ideas. Remember he had had to escape to Lickey Grange with Stanley (not Selwyn) Edge to create the Seven.

We know there was a 26/52 model in the 1922 Sizaire-Berwick catalogue which was said to have a six cylinder engine designed by Herbert Austin, coupled to a three speed gearbox.

Wyatt suggests the design may have been on American lines, harking back to Austin's much-admired Hudson. As it never went into production little more is known of this whimsy but Mawer suggests it was the forerunner of both the six cylinder Austin 20 of 1926 and the

**Was it the Sizaire/Rolls-Royce analogy had captured his imagination and he saw a way back into the upper class market?**





The Birmingham car from Detroit...poses questions?

16 of a year later.

This is based on the cylinder dimensions of 81.5 mm bore x 102 mm stroke.

Admittedly the latter is the same as an early Austin 12/4 but the contention 'the production 20/6 used the same bore, (presumably as the 26/52 Sizaire Berwick – this writer's insert) allied with the 111mm stroke common to the new 16', is incorrect.

The six cylinder Austin 20's cylinder dimensions were 74.5 x 114.5 and those of the new 16 65.5 x 111. It also seems unlikely that Austin would have waited until 1926 to launch something which existed as a prototype in 1921/2.

### Transverse springs

However, maybe there is a grain of truth – a three speed gearbox was certainly developed by Austin after the Sizaire-Berwick experience and perhaps it had its inspiration in that for the 26/52 'Sizaire'. Also there seems to have been a plan to build a '15' at Abbey Road, the horse-power rating for this would have been 13.9 the same as Austin's Light 12/6 Six Harley of 1931, the car which used the three speed 'box and, ironically, was the only real 'turkey' the company ever built!

Finally, in Detroit between 1921 and 22 about 20 examples of a big, six cylinder car were built. It had an independent suspension system similar to Maurice Sizaire's designs after he returned to France and used semi-elliptic transverse springs as incorporated in the Austin Seven's beam axle layout. It also featured a radiator very similar to that of a Rolls-Royce.

For no immediately apparent reason it was called, the Birmingham!



IT'S TOO LATE now to enter for the super events that take place each year round the small French town of Chanteloup-les-Vignes, but if your anywhere near Paris and the Ile de France on Sunday June 11 the hillclimb is always worth a visit.

The organizers habitually extend a warm welcome to British attendees and there is usually an Austin presence.

If you want to experience the relaxed atmosphere of a French motoring event and celebrate the first automobile hillclimb in the world on June 1, 1898, this is the place to be..

Of particular interest for participants this time is that the Saturday evening dinner is being staged at the *l'Esturgeon* restaurant at Poissy which was the 'watering hole' for competitors in that very first competition.

If you need more information speak to Alain Radigue. He's on [alain-radigue@wanadoo.fr](mailto:alain-radigue@wanadoo.fr) Tel 00 33 (0)1 39 70 55 41

## A treat for autumn

**NOW IN ITS 15th year the Swiss Classic British Car Meeting takes place on Saturday, October 7.**

**This is not an exclusively Austin event, of course, but welcomes all makes (preferably British) of cars and bikes.**

**It usually attracts well over 1000 machines and can draw 20000 visitors to the shores of Lake Geneva.**

**There's free entry for participants and public and special offers on hotels and other support facilities.**

**You can get more information from the website [www.british-cars.ch](http://www.british-cars.ch)**

# Did FOG clear that early?

by the editor



**M**otoring historians and tyre kickers like, are well advised to keep their counsel when discussing the originality and authenticity of the vehicles we all love so much.

Whether or not that handle or this first appeared in June or July or whether the exhaust flange was altered in October or November is dangerous ground! Not least with the Austin.

The editor always considered himself to be fairly familiar with the BS1 Sixteen having grown up with one and cut his mechanical teeth on the model. 'Introduced in August 1945, discontinued in '49, slight hike in power in 1947, change in the configuration of the rear lamps about the same time;' that sort of thing.

However, a few months ago he was shown an *Autocar* road test dated September 29, 1944 that opened a new chapter on the Sixteen.

First discovery is that at least one, possibly more 'Sixteens' were running during the War.

That in itself is not so surprising as the four cylinder overhead valve engine, Austin's first for a production car, was derived from the six cylinder lorry engine being developed in 1938/9 for a new commercial vehicle range. Also the truncated form remained in the spotlight during the hostilities as it was being considered as the power unit for a British manufactured version of the Jeep.

Furthermore, the side valve HR1 Twelve was launched just days before War was declared and the body and chassis of that car were adopted, post-War, for the new Sixteen announced in 1945.

But that's where it gets interesting. The post-War Twelve, coded HS1, was virtually the same as its 1939 sister – but not quite. The most noticeable difference to the casual observer would be the dashboard and instrument panel. The

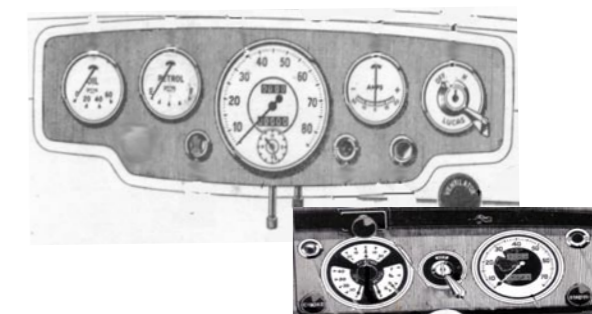
pre-War car uses a design that is to all intents and purposes pure New Ascot. A pressed steel affair with mock wood grain and an instrument board in front of the driver with two large dials – one the speedometer, the other containing a cluster of three gauges.

The post-War car, of course, has a Bakelite version of the Sixteen's instrument board and fascia, but the heater control is absent as the Twelve did not enjoy this luxury.

It would appear that as early as 1943 an HR1 (the 1939 code) Twelve registered FOG 717 was re-engined with the overhead valve unit Longbridge had on the stocks.

It has been suggested that it became Leonard Lord's personal transport (what happened to the Bentley?) but positive proof of its existence is found in that *Autocar* road test of September 29 1944 – almost a year before what is generally assumed to be the BS1 Sixteen's unveiling.

And the *Autocar* report is no pie in the sky glimpse of what might be available from Austin when peace returned but a comparison between the car ('FOG') and its HR1 stablemate. The article runs to six comprehensive pages, has photographs of 'FOG' wearing wartime



The pre- and post-War instrument boards were quite different. Top is the HS1 Twelve's, below a typical late 30s style.



headlamp masks in traditional Austin settings, plus artist's impressions of features of the car (boot and sparewheel compartment, for example) not to mention a detailed cutaway by the magazine's Max Millar.

This is not particularly well drawn and we need to be very careful about what is guesswork on Millar's part, what is inaccuracy and what is a tantalizing glimpse of an HR1/BS1 hybrid.

From the start it is obvious 'FOG's' body was that of an HR1. Millar's drawing of the passenger compartment clearly shows the 'New Ascot style' dashboard, but with a grille in the middle.

On his overall cutaway this is labelled as covering the space for air-conditioning (a total misnomer, of course) and radio equipment.

The steering column is shown as the adjustable type common to the Goodwood and Eighteens (though not fitted to the Twenty Eight Ranelagh) but presumably to the HR1. The steering wheel though is like no other.

This might be Millar's invention. It has a horn ring, deleted from big Austins by the late 30s, and the boss seems to have a central switch of a type

used on a number of cars, but not Austins, to control lights or indicators. The spokes though are sprung, which is accurate, and suggests the artist might have seen the real thing.

If we now consider his cutaway of the whole car, starting with the engine compartment, the radiator header tank is domed which accords with the Works publicity shots of an HR1 but not with what was subsequently fitted to the HS1/BS1.

The 'pressure oil cleaner' (filter to us) is mounted horizontally, immediately above the dynamo attached to the right, forward side of the block. Pre-War Austin lorries and some Twenty Eights (pre-production cars I suspect) used this arrangement but not position. And it

somewhat negates the claim in one of the *Autocar* photographs that the sparking plugs were 'very accessible'!

The production BS1 Sixteen, of course, had its full flow filter conventionally placed on the side of the crankcase while the HS1 had a stariner inside the 'pan' a *la* Austin side valve practice.

Still on the subject of oil; the sump itself is as no other this author has seen.

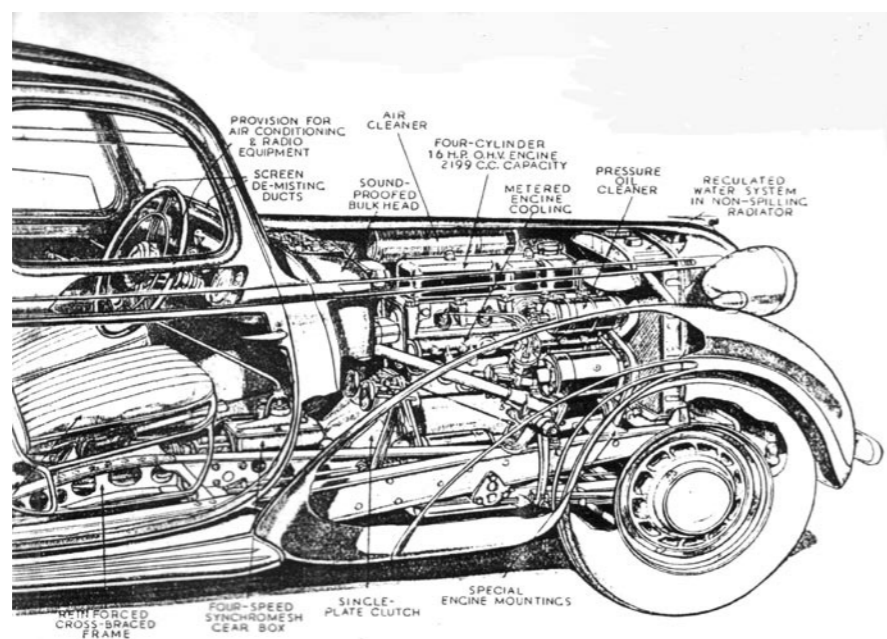
It is comprised of a tank, reminiscent of a foot warmer, extending forwards for about two thirds the length of the engine. The curvature between its top and what must have been a tray closing the base of the crankcase is clearly intended to channel air as a cooling medium and I just wonder if this was a military or stationary engine design.

The air cleaner is a cylindrical, oil-wetted type, parallel to the engine. Again, this is interesting. That Works publicity photo of an HR1 shows a drum type filter which was common on the side valve cars at the time. Post-War the HS1 favoured the cylindrical pattern, similar to that drawn by Max Millar

but set at an angle to the engine. The Sixteen, of course, ended up with a large cylindrical filter mounted at right angles to the rocker box, seated on it in a rubber lined cradle and secured with a rubber lined metal strap bearing a sexy, polishable patent plate.

Finally, while in the vicinity of the engine bay the chassis side rails are drawn either as I section or channel members with the open side facing outwards. One suspects this is invention as the drawing of the triangular mounting plate for the anchorage of the road spring is spot on and obviously could not have been fitted to I section!

We've already discussed the other points in these drawings but one might conclude by



One of the Max Millar artist's impressions that accompany the *Autocar* article.

mentioning references to the petrol tank. This is described as being of eight gallons capacity but does not correspond to the size fitted to HS1s (10) or BS1s (14). From a New Ascot perhaps.

It seems fair to regard 'FOG' as something of a 'bitsa' and certainly, and as you would expect, the layout was fine tuned to create the delightful BS1 Sixteen available to the public from August 1945.

Nonetheless this account does go to show the post-War Sixteen we know and love was extant quite a time before the war ended.



A lovely setting for 'FOG' in a wartime issue of *The Austin Magazine*. The setting is typically Longbridge as you will discover when you read **Aïda Maurice's** article alongside.

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# Picture an Austin

**A**ustins were quintessentially English cars. The majority of customers were the stereotypical English middle class, straight from the set of *Brief Encounter* and more than ready to be shocked by Madeleine Carroll's stocking top in *The Thirty Nine Steps*. The model names were, in the main, quintessentially English, Goodwood, Eton, Ascot, Ranelagh.

If you want to relive the ethos of that age and a class structure and social demography that lasted until the mid-1950s there can be no better Tardis than John Reed's brilliant soft back for The Austin Counties Car Club, *In England with Austin*.

Reed comes to a subject he handles superbly by a slightly circuitous route. David Whyley, who wrote that Austineer's staple, *Austin the Counties Years* with Stuart Brown, discovered that official Longbridge photographer, Ron Beach's archive still existed.

It had survived several of the archetypally insensitive clear outs at the plant and contains what Whyley says are generally accepted as 'some of the world's best motoring images'.

Uniquely, Reed has celebrated Beach's work by tracing the locations of the publicity shots, accurately mapping them for the benefit of would-be visitors and explaining the history that surrounds each shot. Even more fascinating is that he is able to identify a large number of the photographic models – Austin mainly used photogenic people from the Works rather than professionals. It is, though, a shame none of these men and women have been traced as there is a good chance most of the women, particularly, could still be alive and must have marvellous stories to tell.

Apart from the 'glamour' shots Ron Beach covered factory social events and even recorded technical processes. He used a plate camera on a tripod and worked with a team



of six from the basement of the administration block. The scenes were meticulously set up with particular attention devoted to the lighting. Reed reveals that Beach would wait all day for perfect light and also conceal lights inside the cars to

show off the interior to best effect.

***In England with Austin*** is thoroughly recommended, costs £9.95 plus £1.50 postage and packing and you obtain it from John Reed at The Old Barn, Perrystone Hill, near Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 87QX.

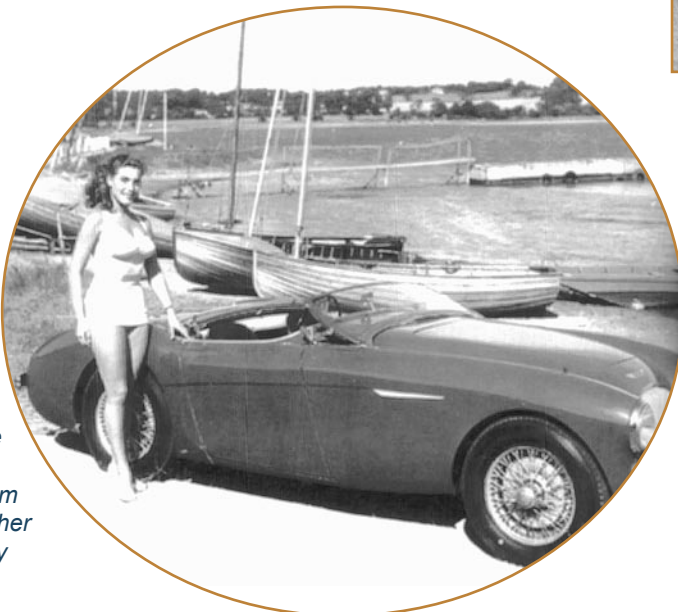
*Although the positioning of the young lady on the wing looks somewhat unnatural, not to say uncomfortable, this is a delightful picture of a very early Sixteen taken beside the thatched boathouse in the grounds of The Old Rose and Crown Hotel at Rednal on the outskirts of Birmingham. Later the car was taken down the road, the women changed places and photos were taken outside the gatehouse to Shepley Manor in Barnt Green.*



*This is a particularly interesting and evocative shot taken outside 'The Green' in Tredington and is one of author John Reed's own favourites. The couple with the Devon are professional models and their expressions and poise really do show, then as now, the advantage of using figures from an agency rather than photogenic individuals from the factory.*



*The gentleman at the wheel of the A40 coupé at Tamworth in Arden is George Sawdon from Account Sales, chosen for his distinguished looks. The younger man is Alan Jones, who was an apprentice serving a stint in advertising while the lady on the left of the car is Sheila Nash the, advertizing manager, Sam Haynes's secretary and her companion we know only as Audrey.*



*Understandably this is one of the shots that doesn't feature a member of staff. The lady is Hazel Cleaver who was the 1955 Miss Great Britain, the car is the Austin Healey press demonstrator and the location the Upper Bittel Reservoir on Barnt Green Water.*

*Ron Beach was a master of colour photography and below is a particularly delightful shot taken with a very early A30 in the 'chocolate box' village of Broadway. John Collins is the driver and Margaret Hewitt wears the red cardigan. The name of her friend is unknown but it's rather obvious why she was chosen!*

