

Great Imp returns to Scotland

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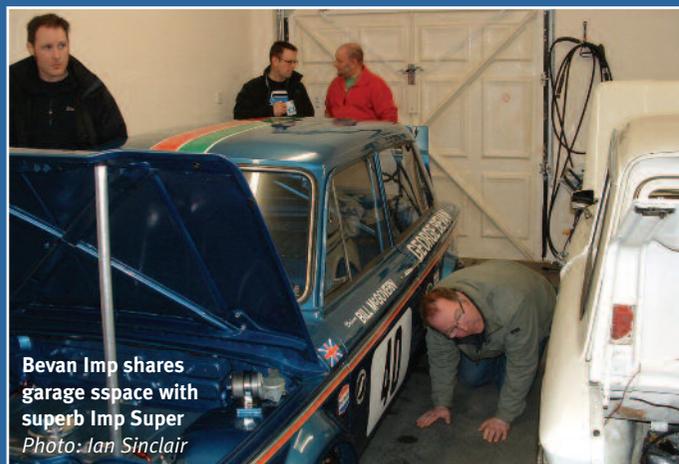
Something wonderful happened in 1970 – an Imp won the RAC British Saloon Car Championship. A 1,000 cc Imp took on the might of Ford, Jaguar and BMC and came out on top. The same wonderful thing happened again in 1971. And again in 1972. Wonderful, not because it was a Rootes works entry, but because the car had been conceived and prepared by a private organisation. The Bevan Imp was a family affair with the added skill of a great driver, Bill McGovern.

The car had been built by George Bevan and his son Peter to win the 1,000 cc class and preparation and meticulous detail was the key. When George died in 1998 a piece of history almost died with him but, because he left reams of records and settings about the build, an idea formed in the minds of his son Peter and grandson Jonathan – to build another Group 2 Imp to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Bevan Imp's last championship victory.

Soon the idea took shape in the form of a Sunbeam Imp shell stripped and prepared to the same exacting standard of the original Bevan Imps. No expense was spared to create the replica of the giant killing Imp of the 'seventies. The Imp Club Forum was filled with the details and the progress of the build with snippets of pictures appearing now and then to whet the appetite of the



Rod Birley driving some demonstration laps, Crystal Palace, 29th May 2011
Photo: Clive Berry



Bevan Imp shares garage space with superb Imp Super
Photo: Ian Sinclair



Odometer reads 1972 – homage to the original car's hat trick victory
Photo: Ian Sinclair

Imp faithful until eventually it was finished. It appeared at NEC Classic Car Show and was united with Bill McGovern for his fully endorsed approval as well as the lucky Imp followers at the show. It was also featured in *Impressions*, July 2011.

After the NEC show the car was taken back home to Kent and, after a few laps of Brands Hatch, was stored. The enthusiasm had finally run out for Peter and Jonathan after creating the nearest thing to perfection and although it was an exact replica of the winning car, it would never compete with the much lighter and more technically able cars that grace the current championship. Then along came Tom Blackwood ...

Tom is an Imp Club member from Scotland whose first car had been an Imp and his passion is Touring Cars. He had recently bought an original condition Imp Super and the bug was re-kindled to the extent that he had also bought a Singer Chamois Coupé with a 998 cc engine and a few bells and whistles but in need of a little TLC. After stripping the Singer down he found that his plant hire business was taking up too much of his time and he reluctantly sold the Singer on. It was around this time that the Bevan Imp was put up for sale and after a few months of offers and counter offers the deal was done and the Bevan Imp was on its way to Scotland.

Tom is a member of the Glasgow Area Centre but it was private jungle drums that found out about his purchase and a visit by other Glasgow AC members to view this famous Imp was hastily arranged. Seven members, including myself, turned up and were welcomed by Tom and his family to view the Imp. The more we looked at the car the more minute detail we saw; everything had been taken into account in its reconstruction. Look carefully at the picture of the dashboard and odometer in particular, and you will see that it was built with the 40th anniversary in mind!

Tom will not be driving the car on the road. The insurance of such a valuable vehicle, not to mention its state of tune, would make it impractical. Instead, Tom wants to show the car to as many people as possible and is intent on taking it to Imp Ecosse this year at Mortonhall, Edinburgh (20th-23rd April) and although he cannot make this year's National at Matlock he fully intends to take it to the 50th Anniversary National in Perth. So make sure you go to both these



Is that rust on the
brake disc?

Photo: Ian Sinclair

Apart from a handful of sensible modern fitments this is a faithful recreation of the original Bevan Imp
Photo: Ian Sinclair



events to see the car in the flesh. You will not be disappointed.

News of the visit had spread through the other Scottish area centres and the next Glasgow meeting was the liveliest one for many a month proving that a good Imp has a lot of pulling power.

Many thanks to Tom and his wife for putting up with a group of anoraks bustling round their garage and taking up over an hour of their time – it was a pleasure for us and I hope it was for them.

Left to right: Alan Ramsay, Derek & John Fraser, Scott Fanning, Hugh Liddle and Owen Sinclair
Photo: Ian Sinclair

