

Imp Ecosse – A Scottish

Mortonhall Caravan & Camping Park, Edinburgh, 20th-23rd April 2012
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“How do you fancy going to Imp Ecosse?” came the question. I was talking to my long time friend, David Robson. We met in Ealing through both owning Imps nearly 30 years ago. Although now living back in his native Northumbria, now with family and despite a spell for myself and Karen in Australia, we have regularly kept in touch and have seen each other whenever the possibility has arisen. While I have always had an Imp on the go, Dave has tended towards more exotic Italian cars new and old for a while now.

However, around two years ago he eluded to the thought of owning an Imp again. After a few months, a likely candidate came up on eBay, an Oxford Blue Singer Chamois. After it was listed twice and didn't sell, Dave asked if I



could look the car over for him as it was located in Berkshire, a little too far for him to come and view it. It was a very nice example and Dave duly purchased the car in September 2010. *(See cover for photo. GP)* He flew down to Heathrow and I took him over to collect the car. After a short test drive, I think he was pleased with his new purchase and set off on the 300-mile journey home. Around the Northampton area he stopped to re-fuel and set off again but soon encountered problems as the car would cut out and then eventually restart before cutting out again a few miles up the road. Nothing else for it but to call the breakdown recovery agent who relayed the car the substantial distance home.

The car was garaged around eight miles from his home and occasionally Dave would go up and start it up and move it around a little before returning it to its resting place. Meanwhile I would enquire after the car hoping he would dust it off and get it back on the road. We surmised that the

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prognosis. After a call to Bob Allan, a new tank was purchased and collected by a fellow Nothumbrian Imp owner and left with Dave to fit. More months passed and the car's MoT had now lapsed so every time I spoke to Dave I enquired how repairs were progressing.

Nearly 18 months had gone by when I received the call enquiring about attending Imp Ecosse. What better incentive for Dave to dust off the Chamois and return it to the road, I thought? So I think he was a little surprised when I said, "OK". So, with six weeks to go the planning began. I booked my plane tickets to Newcastle – the plan was that after a day's stopover for 'tinkering time' on the Chamois, we would head north. Meanwhile, a few more weeks ticked by and with just over a week to go, Dave at last fitted the new fuel tank. The signs were promising, the car misfired occasionally but was running a lot better. With just three days to spare Dave took the car for its MoT and to his amazement it passed. So we were now set for the journey. However, now the ignition warning light was showing a

fuel tank had muck and/or rust floating around in it and this was causing the running problem. Dave checked the fuel pump and a large quantity of sediment was evident so this confirmed our



problem so Dave fitted another dynamo and control box which temporarily cured the issue only for it to return the following day. On the Thursday morning I arrived at Newcastle and we fitted the new alloy wheels and tyres Dave had purchased and the shortened front springs he had acquired with the car. The running kept improving but we could not cure the charge light glowing brightly on the dash. Still, we decided to charge a spare battery for the journey thinking we would make the distance.

On the Friday morning, Dave had agreed to meet up with Nothumbrian ACO Dave Lonsdale in his Imp Sport and Charlotte from the Midlands area who had driven up in *Sammy the Chamois* (it rhymes if you pronounce Chamois as shammy!). We packed the car and headed off the ten or so miles to the rendezvous point. Just as we arrived, the indicators packed up. Things were not looking good. Our suspicions were confirmed – the battery was as flat as a pancake. We pushed

started the car and headed for home while Dave Lonsdale and Charlotte headed for Scotland. After a brief attempt to fix the Chamois, we conceded defeat, swapped our bedding, etc over to Dave's 'modern' and headed for Scotland.

Not far from Edinburgh we caught up with Dave L and Charlotte and as we had the advantage of sat-nav they followed us to the campsite. What a lovely place, basically a country estate with camping facilities. Fortunately Dave had booked us a wigwam which turned out to be a very warm log cabin which was just as well as it was none to warm. We headed off to the 'stables bar' on site and enjoyed a few beers and a very welcome pub meal. At around 7 p.m. everyone congregated



Weather was somewhat damp
Right: Jim Fraser's Chamois Coupé
Far right: Nice Husky at Myreton
Motor Museum
Photos: Chris Clark



at 'booking in' for a coach trip around the sights of Edinburgh which, having never visited the area before, was of interest to me in particular. I was surprised to see how many of the southern Impers had made the long trek north. Back from our tour of Edinburgh to the camp site around 10 p.m. for another drink and then away for the night. I didn't have the stamina for the bonfire that was hosted by the mobile homes that most of the Imp clan had opted for.



Saturday morning arrived, just as much of a mixed bag weatherwise as Friday had been, four seasons in one day. All the Imps (I counted 28 over the weekend) gathered in the stables courtyard for a photoshoot before heading off on a scenic run to Myreton Motor Museum with several 'moderns' following. A nice informal museum that even had a low-mileage (but far from concours) example of a husky. A quick look round the exhibits before re-grouping and heading off to the Scottish National Museum of Flight. All the Imps were parked together and both the public and anyone attending Imp Ecosse were invited to vote for their three favourite cars. With plenty to see and do at the flight museum it was several hours before he headed to home. However, having just seen a few of our party try to land a light aircraft on a flight simulator, I was glad that they only held driving licences!

A few hours' rest before we met in the dining room of the stables bar for a meal and drinks, the draw of the raffle, best car votes and some live entertainment. A late night ensued before we called it a day around midnight.

Sunday morning and it was 'groundhog day' again on the weather front. Dave and I had decided we would head for home around midday. All the Imps gathered around the campsite entrance road for about an hour before heading off on a run to Edinburgh. As they set off, our Scottish adventure drew to a close and we headed back to Newcastle.

The following day (Monday) we cleaned out Dave's garage and the Chamois is now close at hand for him to complete the required repairs to enable him to use and show the car and also to attend this year's National.

This was our first experience of Imp Ecosse and I hope its not the last. It was a superbly organised event, the campsite and accommodation were the best I have ever experienced and the resolve of some impers and the distance they travelled was admirable.

Well done to all concerned and it was great to catch up with some familiar (and meet some not familiar) faces.



**Dave Robson's Chamois
attended in spirit!**
Photo: Chris Clark