

Imp 2012 – Report

Matlock Rugby Club, Cromford Meadows, nr Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3RQ, 2nd-6th Aug 2012
John Hall (Lead Organiser), Worksop, Nottinghamshire



The National Weekend spectre had been with our area centre for many years, and we'd been tentatively looking at sites for a long time, mainly in the north Nottinghamshire area. However, things finally came to a head two years ago when Kath Stringer (Nigel's wife) suggested Matlock Rugby Club at Cromford Meadows. We visited the site on a Sunday afternoon and came across a little scooter rally at the rugby club. Straight away, the hairs on the back of the neck went up! The venue looked good, the location was ideal, and we already had a capable team. The final catalyst was Colin Valentine who had been visiting various area centres, trying to twist a few arms on behalf of the Imp Club committee. That was it, the ball was rolling!

The next hurdle was the rugby club itself. They were used to hosting occasional weddings, small bike meetings and an annual music festival, but these were only one-day events and the rugby club didn't allow camping on the site. Initially our proposal was turned down, but Mark Packard, the Facilities Manager (who'd learnt to drive in an Imp) helped win them over and they were eventually persuaded to go along with our plan. The scene

"Now, where did I put the kitchen sink?"

Photo: Graham Anderson



was set, and after the final nod from the Imp Club committee, there was no going back!

We tried to get the main facilities arranged as early as possible, so marquees, toilets, showers and catering were all booked well in advance. This would give us time to concentrate on the smaller details, such as preparing the runs and evening entertainment. Despite starting the planning so early, it is quite shocking how quickly the time comes around. Before long, we were all on site setting up and the event was under way...

Thursday was a bit frantic for Rally Control. Most of the people who had pre-booked arrived on the Thursday and at times we did have some small queues. The bicycle marshals did a great job directing people to the camping areas and this helped keep the queues to a minimum, but they were all rather saddle sore at the end of it!

In recent times, a Thursday evening motorsport event has become popular at the National, but our potential options for a 'track day' were either too far away or too expensive. Besides, we all liked the idea of go-karting, since this would appeal to drivers of all ages and would allow people to 'have a go' without risking their Imp on a race track. The Swain's Centre circuit at Harpur Hill seemed ideal for us, being in a great location and the outdoor track could cope with plenty of spectators. The circuit was booked at a bargain price and we are very grateful to Colin Valentine for organising the racing, ably assisted by the ever-efficient Kimberley Benoy. We almost got away with the weather, which was superb at first, but a thunder storm delivered some wet racing, especially for the A final. Despite the rain, the karting seemed to go down really well, so much so that one or two people went back the following day to have another go!

With so much to see in the local area, the choice of scenic runs left



Those mat black engine lids are catching on...
Photo: Graham Anderson



Dan Chadaton's somewhat distinctive
Bond 875
Photo: Les Human



Panoramic view of the campsite
Photo: Graham Cashmore

Coventry Area Centre mascot

Photo: Graham Anderson



good challenge for any Imp! The route through Chatsworth Park would also allow people to visit the famous house, should they wish to.

On Friday evening we were honoured to

Moody panoramic shot of Sunday's show 'n' shine line-up.

Long exposure has removed all people bar the seated and given a blurry ethereal look to the sky

Photo: Angie Gill



us with a dilemma – what do we leave out? We eventually settled on four varied runs, each heading in a different direction, to try and give a flavour of the area. We didn't want anyone to miss out on any particular run, so we decided to stick with two main runs for the Friday and Saturday, but keep the other two runs informal, so that people could do them whenever they liked.

The main Friday run was through 50 miles of typical Derbyshire lanes and villages to Castleton, a thriving tourist centre famous for its caverns: the Blue John mine, Peveril Castle and the 'shivering mountain' Mam Tor. The route took in some beautiful scenery such as Miller's Dale and superb views from the top of Hucklow. The run back to Cromford was via the steep and spectacular Winnats Pass – a



Andy Greenshields' lovely Commer Camper
Photo: Grahame Pearson

...“Keep ahe
Imp Club br
Photo: Grah



warmly welcome Bill McGovern as our guest in the main marquee to hear stories about his motor racing experiences, and in particular how he took the Bevan Imp to three outright wins in the British Saloon Car Championship in 1970, 1971 and 1972.

Well, it wouldn't be an Imp Club National without a little rain...

Photo: Graham Anderson



Head of the weather, get your
ollies here!"
am Anderson



The on-stage display showed many photos of Bill's racing history, and we were delighted to have the fantastic Bevan Imp replica next to the stage, for which we are very grateful to Tom Blackwood. Unfortunately an electrical gremlin in the marquee resulted in a couple of rather dark intermissions during the interview, but hopefully people found their way to the bar while we fumbled with fuses and circuit breakers!

The Saturday run went the 'long way' to the nearby Crich Tramway Museum, taking in some steep and challenging hairpin

bends on the way past Riber Castle. The Tramway Museum is an excellent and very popular local attraction and normally very accommodating for classic car clubs. Unfortunately, there was a breakdown of communication in the museum's office, which meant that, on the day, they didn't provide the expected marshals to guide everyone in and the special



rate we had negotiated was not available for all those who parked in the main car-park. The museum has since admitted full responsibility for these problems, and has apologised to the Imp Club, but hopefully this little snag did not detract from

anyone's enjoyment of the visit. We are very grateful to Dale Bishop, Chris Depledge and Dave Dickinson for their impromptu marshalling in the heat of the moment. Despite this minor hiccup, a number of visitors took advantage of free admission (for the driver at least!) by taking their car down the main street, making for some great photo opportunities among the trams.

Saturday night saw the customary fancy dress in the main marquee, albeit with rather limited entries this year. Maybe the Harry Potter theme was a bit too narrow? Nevertheless, the children put on a good parade and the prizes were well deserved.

The fancy dress was followed by 'The Tetleys' live on stage, and our thanks go to Imp Club member Gerry Richards and his band for an excellent performance, their first gig at an Imp Club National. The electrics held out this time and everyone appeared to be enjoying themselves.

Sunday morning started with the traditional 'show and shine' line up on the main rally field. An unexpected number of cars arrived late on Saturday with even more on Sunday morning and this did catch us on the hop; we came very close to running out of space! I never had chance to count all the cars on the field, but the rally entries indicate that we had 187 Imps, 18 Clans, 14 other Imp-based cars, 26 visitors' cars, plus a large number of 'moderns'. Nearly 400 rally plaques were given out in total during the event and, with over 800 people, this must place Imp 2012 among the highest attended Nationals. Congratulations to all the award winners, the fantastic standard of

cars on display keeps getting better each year. Well done!

Sunday evening was an opportunity for us all to wind down a little, with a light-hearted quiz in the marquee courtesy of Tim Morgan. It was good to see so many people stopping over until the Monday and I believe this was the



Voted Best Visitor's Car was D
Hans Slenders gorgeous
Minx Co
Photo: Le



Pausing for a cone – or three – at the Crich
Tramway Museum, Roger Swift and Chris Benoy
Photo: Graham Anderson

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Excellent shot taken from atop the
Bowes-Lyon Bridge as all the Imps
were leaving Crich Tramway Museum
Photo: Mark Sistem



The convoy sets off for the
Crich Tramway Museum
Photo: Graham Anderson



Brian and Gwen Sparks'
Imp Super
Photo: Les Human



Alex Trueman's lovely
Glenalmond Green Mk 1
Photo: Les Human



first time that a National has completely filled the marquee on a Sunday evening.

I must thank Jackie Boon and her helpers for the 'Little Imps' area in the smaller marquee. Throughout the weekend, this was a hive of activity, full of happy faces. The results of the children's colouring competition follow this report, well done to all those who took part.

After all the atrocious weather leading up to Imp 2012 and the concerns this raised about the ground conditions, the site stood up well and the sun shone in a few key places, so we are all thankful for that; it could have been worse! The nearby Cromford Steam Rally was due to take place on the same weekend, but sadly this had to be cancelled due to the fields being too soft.

I'd like to finish with a heartfelt thank-you to all those who helped us with Imp 2012, including Colin Valentine for advance bookings and the go-karting, Dave Cull for the stage lighting and PA system, Graham Anderson for sorting out the programme, advertising and traders, Graham Traxon, Dale Bishop and Bob Allan for all sorts of help during the event. I must give special thanks to Paul Harrod, for his help with the marshalling. Although he isn't an Imp Club member, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the event and was invaluable. Also, I must not forget the wives and families of the Imp 2012 Organising Team, who have been an enormous help throughout. Finally, a massive thank you to Natalie and her team at Brook Bottom Catering who did such a fantastic job of keeping us all fed, and Mark Packard and his team at Matlock Rugby Club for all their help and support throughout.

We are grateful to everyone who has supported Imp 2012, including all the traders and sponsors, and thank everyone for all the kind words we have since received about the event. I also want to personally thank all of you for looking after the site and leaving it in a tidy condition; this made our job of clearing up so much easier. All the members of the Imp 2012 team are now off duty and looking forward to IMP50 next year, where we can hopefully relax and enjoy the event from the other side of the fence once again!

Goodbye from the Imp 2012 Organising Team! (John Hall, Nigel Stringer, Keith Robbins, Darren Boden and Mark Williamson.)

Turn the page for more photos...

