

HRCR Open Day – the Imp 50 anniversary gatherings begin

Gaydon, Warwickshire, 12th January 2013

Nigel Webster, Witney, Oxfordshire



A cold Saturday 12th January marked the start of the Imp 50th celebrations with an impressive gathering of cars at the Historic Rally Car Register's Open Day at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon.

The HRCR theme this year is the Imp's anniversary and they really got behind the concept once I managed to persuade them to talk to the Imp Club. The Heritage Motor Centre also endorsed the idea with positive encouragement for Imp owners from all over the country (and beyond) to bring their cars. It was estimated that there were 40 Imps in the car-park, three in the outside rally car display and four inside in the event venue. All forms of the marque were in attendance including cars of great historical interest.

A Regalia Shop was permitted in the Heritage main museum (to which Imp owners and HRCR visitors were given a 50% entry fee reduction). Richard and Karen Claydon did brisk business, estimating that over 100 members attended the event.



Richard models the Imp 50 T-shirt at their launch. Looks happy, doesn't he?

Photo: Graham Anderson



Dick Tompkins' rally-prepared Imp

Photo: Graham Anderson

Significant was the interest by non-members – one joined on the spot and many membership forms were distributed. (See Karen's report on page 34. GP)

In the main event Chairman Graham Anderson was escorting the HRCR guest of honour, Rosemary Smith, whom he had persuaded to make a special flying visit to Gaydon to open the event and to launch the HRCR 2013 rally year. After walking round the outside display Rosemary was met in the foyer by the magnificent FRW 306C owned

and restored by Rob Dixon of which she has fond memories. Such is the quality of this car that it arrived and returned to Dumfriesshire on a trailer wrapped in cling film to keep the winter salt off it! Unfortunately its sister car (308) owned and restored by Clark Dawson couldn't fit on the trailer as well! In the main event hall Rosemary was reunited with JDU 46E, a car that was prepared for her to drive on the 1967 RAC Rally but never used as the foot and mouth disease that year forced the cancellation of the event. At the other end of the Imp display was the very successful road rally car of the Vokes family which is a great example of a car out many weekends each year being enjoyed and regularly winning in competition. In the centre, right in front of the stage where Rosemary made a very entertaining speech, sat my own rally car which competes in the British Historic Rally Championship. Although this car has been built specifically for current

historic stage rallying it was very interesting to note the differences in the two cars present despite both being built 'in period'. I had little opportunity to see much of

Dave Walters' 1967 RAC Rally Imp – the event was cancelled due to the foot and mouth epidemic
Photo: Graham Anderson



Rosemary Smith reunited with works rally Imp FRW 306C, of which she has fond memories
Photo: Graham Anderson

the rest of the Imp display because I was literally pinned to my car dealing with a huge amount of interest. This interest was from people currently building rally Imps, club members and most notably from other BHRC competitors who on events take little notice of the Imp (unless we are holding up their £75,000 Escort!)



it is going to be a great year for the Imp. Well done Charlotte Tambling for organising the Imp Club side of the event.

End of the line(up) in the wintry car-park: Jeff Day's Imp Sport (ex-Peter Nunney) next to Dave Dickinson's recently restored Stiletto and Charlotte Tambling's *Sammy the Chammy*.

Above: Rosemary Smith and Paddy Hopkirk – Irish Rally Greats both.

Right: Nigel Webster's stage rally prepared Imp – The blue one behind is the Vokes family's road rally car

Photos: Graham Anderson

Several stage rally Imp drivers were at the event including Gary Edgington, Ian Fisher, Mike Barratt and Mike Hanna. I even had interest from two great 'Mini' faces: Alec Poole and Paddy Hopkirk.

If this is a taster for the club celebrations





Mind the paintwork, Rosemary!

Photo: Graham Anderson