

## Flywheel Festival

Bicester Heritage, 20th/21st June 2015

James Spencer (Oxford Area Centre Organiser), Banbury, Oxfordshire

As this was the inaugural Flywheel Festival and sensing that it could be the start of something big I decided that the Imp Club should be involved! So, after negotiating with the organisers we were accepted as an Invited Club, qualifying because the Imp was launched prior to 1966. This meant a two-for-one ticket offer to any member attending and the opportunity to display cars in the pre-'66 display area on the showground, the Imp was even the first car mentioned in the Post-War section of the *Souvenir Programme*.

As it turned out only two Imps were on display each day. My Caledonian was joined on Saturday by the Super of Gemma Weeks and her father Nigel and on Sunday by the Sunbeam Imp Sport of Barry (Leicester ACO) and Glenda Cole. On both days the Imps created a lot of interest even though they were among the more exotic cars from Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Jaguar, MG, Triumph and Morgan. Everyone seemed to know someone who owned an Imp even if they hadn't had one themselves and many were able re-live their youth with a look into or even a sit in one of the cars and of course we had to put up with the stories of water pumps and head gaskets .

As Bicester Heritage is an ex-RAF airfield there were many aircraft on display and in the air, military vehicles including Grant and Sherman tanks and period RAF and Army re-enactors including a detachment of the Bicester Home Guard.

Music from the First and Second World War periods up to the 60's was provided in the Live music marquee together with vintage cinema in the cinema tent and on board the 22-seat 1967 mobile cinema. A vintage trade fair provided the opportunity for browsing, classic cars could be hired from U Drive Cars and oils and lubricants were available from Classic Oils, who will soon be opening up a branch in Bicester Heritage. Ample food and drink was available in the Food Court.

A Demonstration Circuit had been set up on the perimeter track for approximately 50 vintage and classic competition cars to race round. Visitors were encouraged to walk round the paddock where these cars were parked, talk to the drivers and watch the cars on the track, which included

a pre-First World War 16-litre Fiat, 4½-litre Bentleys, an Aston Martin DBIII, Napier Bentley, Allard, Napier Railton, Lister Jaguar 'Knobbly' and a fire-breathing 42-litre Packard-Bentley with a V12 engine from a WW2 US Navy motor

**Chris Williams' Packard-Bentley** – as seen on *Top Gear*  
Photo: James Spencer



Evocative setting ex-RAF airfield is home to the Bicester Heritage Flywheel event

**Right: Gemma Weeks' Super** was present on the Saturday  
**Below: Rare two-headlight Sunbeam Imp Sport of Barry Cole** came to the event on Sunday, seen here with James Spencer's Caledonian which was present on both days. Hopefully more Imps will come along next years to this superb event  
Photos: James Spencer



torpedo boat! More recent cars included a Volvo Amazon and Austin Healey Sebring Sprite from the 60's.

Not to be outdone by the cars a full programme in the air was also provided with a De Havilland Dragon Rapide on Saturday, the Great War Display Team giving fantastic performances on both days with their Sopwith and Fokker

triplanes, BE-2, Junkers CL-15 and SE5as. The Blenheim returned to Bicester after 70 years on Sunday together with two Spitfires. These aircraft had been weathered in at their home bases on Saturday. The nine-strong De Havilland Tiger Moth display team also flew on Sunday, as did the Yak-50. Unfortunately the promised visit of the Vulcan was cancelled due to technical problems.

In the static display was a 1942 Douglas C47 Skytrain – Dakota to the RAF – which saw service on D-Day and at Arnhem, the Royal Aircraft Factory BE-2e was also there. However the star of the static display was a recreation of a 1915 Bristol Scout, built to the original plans by a team which included the two grandsons of the pilot, Flt Sub Lt 'Bunnie' Bremner who flew the aircraft 100



**Beautiful Bristol Scout recreation uses some original parts**  
*Photo: James Spencer*



**Spitfire drew gasps from the crowd with low fly-bys. PRU (Photographic Reconnaissance Unit) scheme unusual**  
*Photo: James Spencer*

years ago. While clearing out their grandfather's workshop David and Rick Bremner found the control stick, rudder bar and magneto from the original Bristol Scout and in 2010, along with Theo Wilford, decided to build an aircraft around the surviving components. The results of their efforts was unveiled and dedicated, on Saturday, by the great grandson of the founder of the British Colonial Aeroplane Company – later Bristol – Sir George White. It is hoped that the Scout will be flying very soon.

This was a fantastic weekend and I hope that Flywheel will become an annual event to which the Imp Club is invited. Perhaps next year there will be a few more Imps in the display.

Make a note in your diaries that the 6th Sunday Brunch Scramble at Bicester Heritage is on 20th September 9am to 2pm. See [www.bicesterheritage.co.uk/events](http://www.bicesterheritage.co.uk/events) for more details.



**Blenheim: another Bristol rarity**  
*Photo: James Spencer*