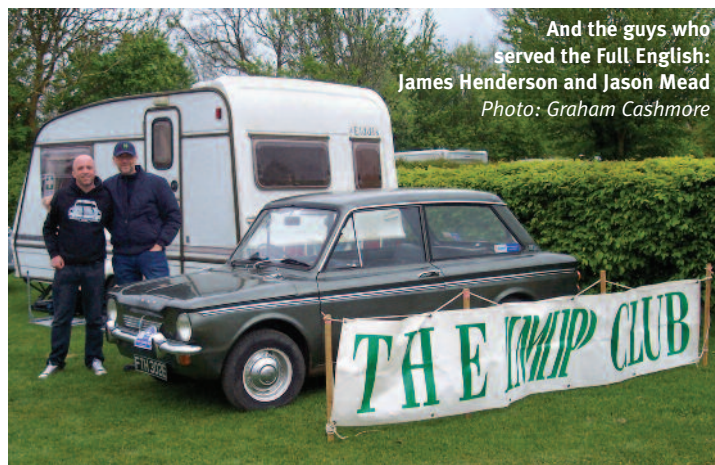


The First Full English Weekend

Anita's Caravan Park, Mollington, Oxfordshire, 5th-8th May 2017

Jason Mead, Daventry, Northamptonshire



And the guys who served the Full English: James Henderson and Jason Mead
Photo: Graham Cashmore

There has been talk about a possible 'Full English' weekend in the Mead-Henderson household for a couple of years now – admittedly more from James than from me, but we have been mulling it over for a while. What with Imp Ecosse being early and no Going Dutch this year, we thought it would be

the perfect opportunity to stop talking about it and actually put something together. The whole idea behind The Full English was to have an event which was very laid back and only loosely organised. We would provide the campsite, scenic runs ending somewhere people would hopefully find interesting, evening venues where people could gather together, eat and chat... and cake! It would then be up to those attending to do the rest and make the event a success.

And so it was that the first Full English weekend took place at Anita's Caravan park, Mollington, just outside Banbury – handy for us, living only ten minutes away. The caravan park has a couple of cottages, camping pods (which proved very popular), glamping yurts, electric hook-up pitches, caravan and camping pitches – all levels of camping were catered for. They even had covered seating pods where people gathered to drink and chat after returning for the evening.

We thought that the first weekend would be quite a small affair with possibly 15 to 20 people and hopefully ten Imps attending. As it was rather difficult to get booking details from the campsite we were rather overwhelmed when it was finally revealed how many people were actually attending. All our food venues had been prepared for our initial expectations and so we were very nervous about having to tell them at the last minute that our numbers had more than doubled. However, they really did us proud and were able to cope without any issues.

People started arriving around lunchtime on Friday and it soon became apparent that we would have to call the pub where we would be meeting for the evening to let them know that numbers were more than anticipated – it was a good job that we did as they were totally unaware we were turning up (it hadn't been put in the book!), thankfully they coped well.

Before we ended up at the pub for food and chat those that were interested ventured in to Banbury to visit the Rootes Archive Centre (that's the current one, not the still-under-construction new one) where they could view drawings and plans for various Rootes vehicles; they could sit on chairs and at the boardroom table where Imp designs and details were discussed back in the day

and James Spencer and Matthew Ollman were there to tell them about their plans for the new Archive Centre and what it offered. I think everyone enjoyed looking around at the various pieces of history associated with their beloved cars – this included a drawing of an Imp engine angled for an Imp, but with an interesting air box addition dated 1979. Intriguing!

Saturday saw us taking in the Cotswold scenery on an 82-mile run, stopping first at Bourton-on-the-Water, location of the Cotswold Motor Museum, passing the site of the new Rootes Archive Centre on the way.

In Bourton-on-the-Water, we managed to squeeze eleven Imps



Chamois of Peter Hurst, Chris Clark, the Dickinsons with lesser siblings at the current Archive Centre ignore the No Parking signs for a photoshoot – no such restrictions at the new Archive Centre!
Photo: Jason Mead

Jaap and Annette ten Hoeve came over from the Netherlands to sample The Full English!

Photo: Jason Mead

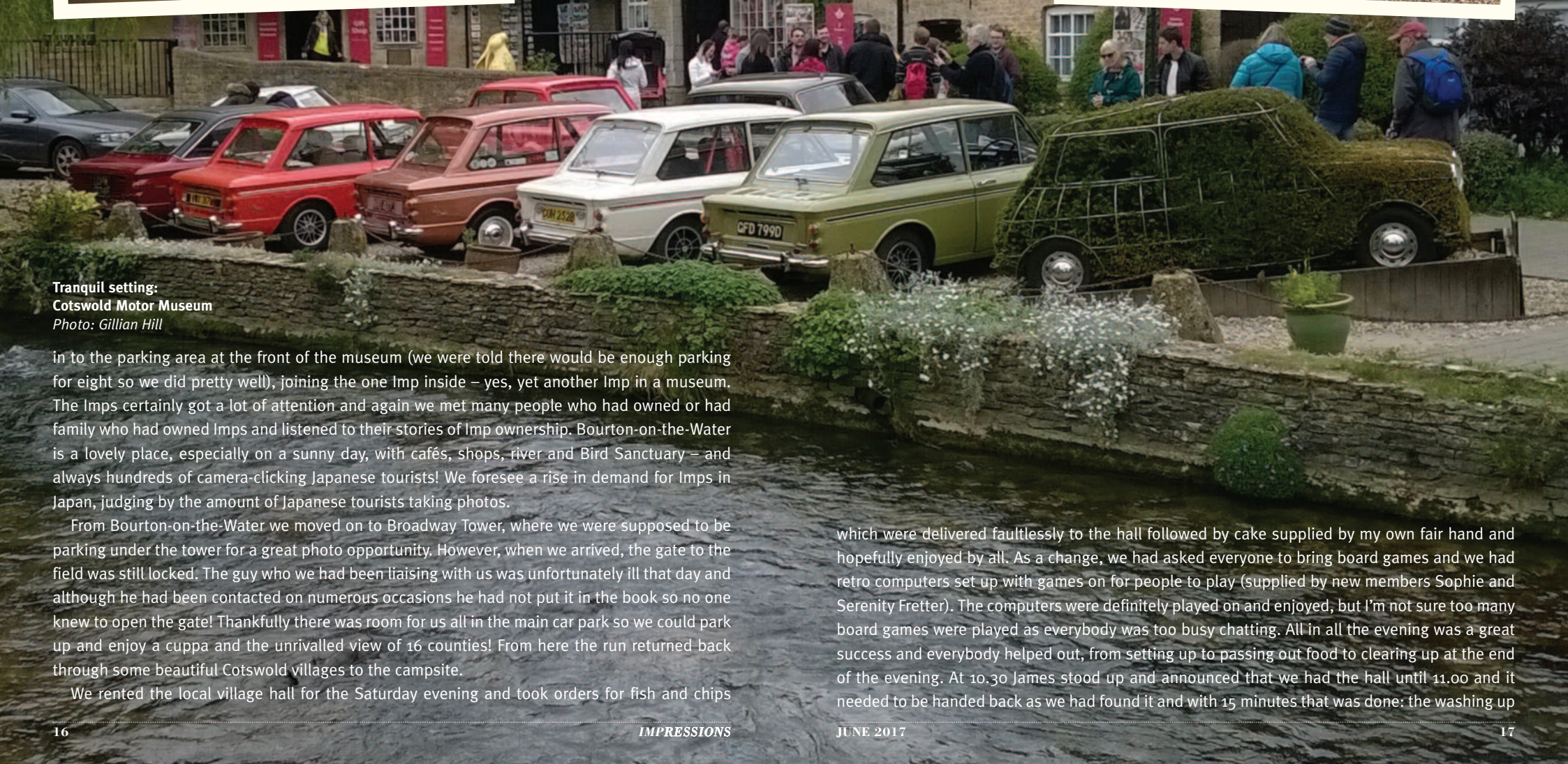




Imp on display at
Cotswold Motor Museum
Photo: Gillian Hill



Mark Ibbotson's all-white Stiletto,
Cotswold Motor Museum
Photo: Jason Mead



Tranquil setting:
Cotswold Motor Museum
Photo: Gillian Hill

into the parking area at the front of the museum (we were told there would be enough parking for eight so we did pretty well), joining the one Imp inside – yes, yet another Imp in a museum. The Imps certainly got a lot of attention and again we met many people who had owned or had family who had owned Imps and listened to their stories of Imp ownership. Bourton-on-the-Water is a lovely place, especially on a sunny day, with cafés, shops, river and Bird Sanctuary – and always hundreds of camera-clicking Japanese tourists! We foresee a rise in demand for Imps in Japan, judging by the amount of Japanese tourists taking photos.

From Bourton-on-the-Water we moved on to Broadway Tower, where we were supposed to be parking under the tower for a great photo opportunity. However, when we arrived, the gate to the field was still locked. The guy who we had been liaising with us was unfortunately ill that day and although he had been contacted on numerous occasions he had not put it in the book so no one knew to open the gate! Thankfully there was room for us all in the main car park so we could park up and enjoy a cuppa and the unrivalled view of 16 counties! From here the run returned back through some beautiful Cotswold villages to the campsite.

We rented the local village hall for the Saturday evening and took orders for fish and chips

which were delivered faultlessly to the hall followed by cake supplied by my own fair hand and hopefully enjoyed by all. As a change, we had asked everyone to bring board games and we had retro computers set up with games on for people to play (supplied by new members Sophie and Serenity Fretter). The computers were definitely played on and enjoyed, but I'm not sure too many board games were played as everybody was too busy chatting. All in all the evening was a great success and everybody helped out, from setting up to passing out food to clearing up at the end of the evening. At 10.30 James stood up and announced that we had the hall until 11.00 and it needed to be handed back as we had found it and with 15 minutes that was done: the washing up



Games on Saturday evening
Photo: Jason Mead

heading out, so the run didn't leave until 11.00. We were joined on this run by a contingent from the Bath & Bristol Area Centre, which added to our numbers. My apologies to anyone who managed to bottom out on this run – I did all the planning for the runs in our Ford Kuga and didn't realise how bumpy the roads were until we were leading the run in *Theo*, our 1967 Imp Super – lesson learnt for next time! We spent several glorious hours in beautiful sunshine wandering along the canal, constantly stopping to chat with other Impers *en route*. We took a trip in a boat down to Blisworth tunnel, looked in the shop and museum and had the obligatory tea and cake in the waterside café before heading back to site. It has been pointed out that the route instructions for the return from Stoke Bruerne were incorrect – I mistook my left from my right at one point, which I apologise for.

Amazingly we had 32 people staying on the Sunday night and so we took over the whole restaurant at our chosen pub, The Brasenose Arms (the only pub with that name in the country and one of mine and James' favourite local pubs). Again our initial numbers for the Sunday night were approximately ten people and so we were very thankful that the chef was able to cater

was done, the tables and chairs stacked, the floor swept and the rubbish put out! What a great bunch of people!

Sunday saw the start of a glorious day and a scenic run out to the Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne. We allowed everybody a lie-in and a chance to chill and chat before

for over three times that many. This was helped greatly by Simon and Karen Benoy kindly deciding to chase up everybody left on site to take pre-orders for food and phone them through – James had understandably had enough of being organiser by then. I think everybody who

stayed Sunday night will agree it was a lovely evening with great food and drink.

The first Full English weekend has far exceeded our expectations. We are quite taken aback by the turnout and the reactions we have had to the event. People seem to have really enjoyed themselves

and that makes all the organising worthwhile. It was supposed to be a very laid back event without too much structure and I hope we managed to achieve that.

We probably had around 50-60 people in attendance all travelling from far and wide including Jaap and Annette ten Hoeve making the trip over from the Netherlands! We had 20 Imps, a Husky, a Ginetta G15, a Singer Vogue and a Fiat Cinquecento (owned by new members Sophie and Serenity Fretter) on site for the duration of the weekend, but with the Bath and Bristol contingent and Dick Tomkins' trials car – which joined us on a trailer on the Sunday – we probably had a total of 27 Imps and variants over the weekend, which for a first event I think is pretty impressive. What a great turnout!

Events are always made by the people who attend them and the people who attended the first Full English made the event very special for us. The Imp Club is made up of a great bunch of people and this event has reinforced that to us once again. Thank you one and all for your support, positive feedback and for being such great company.

Will there be another Full English? We were initially considering it as a 'filler' event for when there was no Going Dutch or Irish Experience, which meant it would only take place every four years, but after the success of the first event and everybody's requests for it to be repeated next year, we may have to re-think this. Watch this space!

More overleaf...



Line-up at Broadway Tower
Photo: Jason Mead



Convoy to Stoke Bruerne
Photo: Jason Mead



Canal Museum
at Stoke Bruerne
Photo: Jason Mead

Heathrow AC – never known to miss a good breakfast!

Graham Cashmore (Heathrow Area Centre Organiser), Ashford, Middlesex

Well, where do we start? What a great weekend. I think the novelty of booking a 'pod' just put a completely different twist on the event. Trouble is, I just want one now at every event! Unloading the car was so much easier without having to put a tent up first, and making tea was a joy with the added luxury of a plug and an electric kettle!



This was my first event of the year for the Stiletto, so it was nice to give it a good run out. Even I'd almost forgotten how surprisingly well an Imp can cope with motorways, they just seem to enjoy it more the faster you go, don't they.

I must admit my Stiletto did not partic-

ipate in the weekend's runs (Shame on me), as dad and I enjoyed the luxury of being chauffeured around in Paul Parson's modern, (Cheers, Paul). The visits out were great, and food selections were lovely, I'm sure the pubs and chip shop enjoyed the extra custom.

On behalf of the Heathrow Area Centre, our huge thanks to James and Jason for such a fantastic, laid back event.



All good things come to an end...
James wishes Lynda and
Dave Dickinson a safe trip home
Photo: Jason Mead