

Practical Classics Restoration Show

NEC, Birmingham, 23rd-25th March 2018

Dale Bishop, Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Well, it's hard to believe it's been around 18 weeks since the November Classic Car Show and here we are again exhibiting again at the NEC! Where does the time go?

As usual, set-up day was Thursday and by 1 p.m. Richard [Sozanski] and I, with the help of Richard's son Antoni, had prepared the stand ready for the arrival of the four cars we were expecting and then finely tuning the stand in readiness for the public to descend on us the following day.

Friday got off to a slow start but it wasn't long before the stand was full of people telling us of their fond – and not sometimes not so fond – memories of their first Imp! If we had a pound for every time someone mentioned the head gasket or the bag of sand in the front we would be

paying a company to build the stand rather than doing it ourselves.

Saturday and Sunday, being the weekend, the footfall improved and it was nice to meet show regulars and members alike. There was plenty of compliments over the weekend on the variety and condition of the cars on display; as someone said, there was “something for everyone to look at” on the stand.

All the way from Bordeaux with a staggering ten-hour drive we had



Wayne Fisher's French barn find
Sunbeam Chamois and Andy Smith's AA Imp Van
Top: John Hallam's rally Imp
Photo: Richard Sozanski



French Imp arrives!
Photo: Richard Sozanski

'Scary' Wayne's genuine left-hand-drive Sunbeam Chamois which was probably the best *genuine* barn find classic in the whole show! In fact not only did Wayne [Fisher] bring the car but he built and erected the 'barn' display as well!

Young Dom Smith's BMW-powered air-

ride Chamois proved very popular with the youngsters. I was amazed at the crowds it pulled when he was demonstrating the air-ride.

Andy Smith's recently restored AA Patrol van also proved popular, especially with AA memorabilia collectors – one such person had a genuine AA phone box which he has for sale at a staggering £6,000. I can't understand why Andy wasn't keen to snap up that bargain!

To finish off the stand we had John Hallam's immaculately prepared Sunbeam rally Imp which was still dirty from the AGBO Rally stage from the previous weekend.

Saturday evening's entertainment was an invite to the awards hosted by Tourism Ireland in which Gemma Weeks was shortlisted and had made it to the final top three for the Contribution



John Hallam's rally Imp
and Dom Smith's Chamois
Photo: Richard Sozanski



Fuzz Townshend from *Car S.O.S.*
with Gemma and Richard
Photo: Richard Sozanski



by a Youngster award. Although we were only given two invites the other three of us paid to attend the Dinner & Awards Ceremony out of our own pockets: £210. Sadly, however, Gemma was not voted the winner.

At the close of show on Sunday, as has become customary, all the exhibits blared their horns and despite all this noise the paying public still didn't want to leave the halls which is fine for them but it does delay our stand breakdown as we have to conform to H&S.

Overall it was a great weekend. Planning is now well underway for November's show with the organisers already exchanging e-mails between us and, yes, we already have an idea for our next display.



Gorgeous
Chamois Coupé
on the Radtec Cooling stand –
owner joined the Imp Club at the show!
Photo: Richard Sozanski