

# Suzy – movie star for a day!

**Roy Blunt, Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran, Gwent**

Dawn and I had planned to go up to last year's Preston National a day early to help with setting the site up when, a couple of weeks before the event, Richard Sozanski phoned us to ask if our Imp (*Suzy*) would be available for a TV photoshoot in the Brecon Beacons. We said yes – provided the dates were OK (original dates clashed with the National). Later we had a call from Stuart Redfearn of the TV production company 'Renegade' giving more details. It was for a show called *Car SOS* and the photoshoot would take place near Llandovery. Neither Dawn nor I had ever seen *Car SOS* so before we agreed I streamed an episode to see what it was all about. For those of you who don't know the show the format is as follows: *'Take one cherished car that has seen better days, add an owner in need of a helping hand. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw secretly whisk the wheels away to a well-equipped workshop before surprising the unsuspecting owner with their newly restored classic. In each episode the presenters drive an example of the car that was being restored to give viewers an insight into the experience'.*

All seemed OK so, on the appointed day, we headed off in a carefully washed and generally spruced-up *Suzy* to the Mountain Road Viewpoint car park off the A4069 (the so-called 'Top Gear Road' across the Black Mountains). It was an early start for us as we needed to be there for 8.15 a.m. As we climbed the last few miles towards the car park the visibility grew progressively worse due to low cloud. When we arrived at the car park we were the first car there and the visibility was now very poor – didn't look ideal for filming. Fortunately the visibility improved, the second example car (a left-hand-drive Lancia Fulvia – they do two cars in a single day of filming) arrived, and by the time the film crew started to arrive it was thankfully developing into a reasonable day.

The first job was to make sure the cars were clean and sparkling – there was a member of the crew tasked with doing just that throughout the day. Then Go-Pro cameras were attached to

various parts of *Suzy* and I drove her up and down the road to get the 'from the car' footage. Next was the 'from the camera van' footage – to do this I was given a radio so that they could give me instructions while I was driving behind the camera van – the cameraman himself was in the open back of the van. Presenters Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw were now on-site and getting details of the cars. Fuzz was very knowledgeable on Imps and had owned one until quite recently, in fact he was regretting selling it.

While we got to know Tim and Fuzz the camera crews were getting interior, exterior, engine and boot photos using some amazing and enviable bits of camera gear (the show is filmed in High Definition format). *Suzy* was then fitted with internal cameras and it was time for Fuzz to drive her. She had previously started perfectly all day but resolutely wouldn't start for him. Clearly 'stage fright'!



**Fuzz reminisces to Roy of his Imping experiences while pictures are taken of *Suzy***  
Photo: Dawn Blunt



**Making sure *Suzy* looked her best throughout the day**  
Photo: Roy Blunt



**"Lights, camera, action!"**  
Fuzz and Tim in *Suzy*  
Photo: Roy Blunt



**Right:** Fuzz and Tim photographed in *Suzy* from moving camera van. Beautiful Brecon Beacons provided a spectacular backdrop. Speed was low but keeping a consistent distance from the van was paramount.

**Below:** Gorgeous Lancia Fulvia was filmed on the same day for another episode of *Car SOS*  
Photos: Roy Blunt



I went up to her and whispered, "It's OK *Suzy*, I said that Fuzz could drive you." Fuzz turned the key again, and she started perfectly (and did so for the rest of the day). This behaviour has happened several times before when anyone other than me (or Ron Aspinwall of Impspeed who restored *Suzy*) have tried to start *Suzy* – perhaps it's the perfect immobiliser!

Fuzz drove her up and down the road several times followed by the camera van. When he and Tim came back they both seemed delighted.

After lunch (the camera crew had bought a good selection of sandwiches and drinks with them for everybody) it was case of accumulating more – much more – on the road footage of both *Suzy* and the Fulvia, with me and the Fulvia's owner doing the driving. Besides the roadside cameras they also used a drone to get aerial footage.

It was a very interesting day; I was surprised just how many people were involved in the photoshoot (at least ten plus a Brecon Beacons Warden to keep an eye on things) for what will probably only be a few minutes of broadcast footage.

We finally got back home at about 7 p.m. in time to pack *Suzy* up with all the camping gear ready for the drive to the Preston National the next day.

The programme is episode 3 in series 8 and is currently scheduled to go out on the National Geographic channel on 7th April but bear in mind the scheduling may change. The programme will also appear in time on Freeview channels such as More 4 and will also be available to stream on



Margaret (70) who has owned and loved Imps since she first started to drive. Her beloved car nicknamed *Tin Lizzie* was her pride and joy until it started to need a lot of work to keep it on the road. Aided by her husband, Margaret started work on the car but mid-restoration her husband passed away with COPD. Her father took on the job but he also died shortly after, leaving mother of two Margaret without the time or knowhow to complete the job."

We look forward to seeing the show!

