

Retro Rides Weekender 2021

Goodwood Circuit, West Sussex, 28th-30th May 2021

Dom Smith (Young Members Registrar), Stonehouse, Gloucestershire

The last year has been filled with disappointment, lots of hopeful car enthusiasts monitoring their e-mails for cancellations or postponing of events. I vividly remember receiving a message from a friend in the young members group chat saying, "I hope this coronavirus thing doesn't effect the Going Dutch trip." Back in early 2020, I remember reassuring the other young members that everything would be fine. How wrong I was!

So, leading up to Retro Rides Weekender 2021 we were all full of hope and optimism. Things



Achie Walmsley's
Imp Deluxe Mk2
Photo: VAMP Photography



Andy Waghorn's
Hillman Imp Californian
Photo: Cameron Palmer

were looking positive and with restrictions starting to lift it seemed like it was 'Go'. For many of us this would be the first car event in well over a year, and the first time we had seen our fellow young members in even longer. The date: Friday 28th May through to Sunday the 30th. The location: Goodwood Motor Circuit. Days booked off work and tickets purchased.

Leading up to the event weeks before, the excitement could be felt. We all started sharing photos, videos and memories from previous years on our social media in anticipation. James and Emma (Ibbotson),



Dom Smith's
BMW motorbike-engined
Clan Crusader
Photo: Cameron Palmer



Jordan Nicholls' Imp
Photo: Cameron Palmer



Charles McMahon's late registered Imp
Photo: Dom Smith



James Ibbotson sprinting
Photo: Cameron Palmer

Jordan (Nicholls) and I were all lucky enough to be accepted for the Sprint session, this involved laps around the famous Goodwood circuit, five cars at a time let out at 20-second intervals, strictly no overtaking. Similar to a track day but with a few hundred people watching!

Typically, days before the event my Clan was in bits but many long nights putting it back together were all worthwhile in the end, not to mention the car being better than ever before.

The Thursday evening before the event I loaded the Clan on the trailer and my girlfriend Steph (her first car event!) and I set off early Friday on the three-hour journey.

Jordan arrived first with me close behind, followed by the rest. The weather was amazing! We

quickly set up our tents and cracked open a drink ready for the weekend ahead. For young members Archie (Walmsley) and Zak (Turner), this would be their first weekend away with the rest of the long-standing young members. At 18 years old they made this young member feel very old at the grand old age of 25!

We woke early on Saturday and made our way over to the circuit for sign on and drivers' briefing. Tyre pressures checked, and suspension clicks adjusted, we were ready to line up for the Sprint session. To our surprise, there was another Imp in the line-up, a silver '64 belonging to Chris John, who was also in the morning session with us. Due to the no overtaking restriction, cars were

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Left to right:
Dom Smith's Clan Crusader,
Zak Turner's Singer Chamois,
Achie Walmsley's Imp Super, Jordan
Nicholls's Imp, non-member Harry Edmonds' Spring
Special and Emma Ibbotson's Imp in Hartwell colours
Photo: Dom Smith



Foreground:
Andy Waghorn's
Californian. Jordan Nicholls
chats with non-member Jakob Knappitt
Photo: Cameron Palmer

arranged in groups so that slower cars behind didn't catch up the cars in front. I was placed behind a Mini and the driver of this who was also a young lad politely asked If I wanted to go in front of him as it was his first time on track, I thanked him and we swapped places. From the back of our group

came a chap who claimed to have a 300 bhp BMW and wanted to be at the front. I said, "Please go ahead." At this point the organiser jumped in and recommended he stay where he was behind my Clan as apparently, "It's a quick car and I knew what I was doing." All I can say is he must



Living dangerously:
Jordan Nicholls
Photo: Dom Smith



Cars of Nick Smith, Jordan Nicholls, non-member Harry Edmonds, Emma Ibbotson, Andy Waghorn and Dom Smith

Photo: Emma Ibbotson



Rear view of same group with addition of Zak Turner's Chamois nearest to camera

Photo: Dom Smith

have got me confused with someone else!

All the Imps out on track performed brilliantly. Back in 2019 when I took the Clan round Goodwood at Retro Rides it was only my second time out on track. Since then both the Clan and I have come on so far, not without the help of Mike Dent from Competition Imp Parts. Mike has been helping me develop the car over the past few years and the transformation has been phenomenal. Most recently I fitted one of Mikes gear selector UJs; this has made for a much smoother and faster gearchange and works well in partnership with his polybush gearbox mounts.

With the morning Sprint session over, we parked our cars and went to the chicane to watch British Classic Touring Car driver James Ibbotson during the afternoon session. James has been saving wear and tear on his tyres recently so he decided to exit the chicane on three wheels!

We then had a wander round the cars on display. I bumped into Steve Gray and Andy Gill of the

Sussex Area Centre who came along in their Clan and Imp respectively. It was lovely catching up with them after so long.

With the day drawing to a close we made our way back to the campsite, and immediately ordered Dominos pizzas followed by more beers and finally bed.

We woke up the next morning and despite the sunburn we had breakfast and made our way back over to the circuit for day two! Most of the track was closed for the auto solo which both Zak and Archie took part in while the rest of us made our way over to the Imp Club stand where, to our amazement, there was another Imp that had arrived on the stand next to us bringing the total number of Imps and Imp-based cars across the weekend to 13.

We then had a walk round the other cars on display and watched the boys doing the auto solo. Before long it was time to make our way back to the campsite to pack up before saying our goodbyes and making our way back home, hoping this time it may be only a few weeks till we next see each other again, instead of a whole year.



James Ibbotson awaits his turn on the track
Photo: Cameron Palmer



Non-member Jakob Knappitt (left) and Nick Smith
Photo: Dom Smith