

West Country Singer

Tim Sears, Bordon, Hampshire

After the 'rescue' of *Gracie* the Imp Super – now owned by Tim Morgan – our latest mission to the West Country was to return an early Singer Chamois with 69,000 miles on the clock to the road, after nine years of resting. We also planned to collect a Sunbeam Stiletto rolling shell, which is going to be restored by Chris Clark who, as *Impressions* readers will know, has 'emigrated' to the Isle of Wight. It was hoped to get the Chamois running so as to be able to drive it home whereas the Stiletto was very much a restoration project.

We travelled down from Hampshire on Saturday 19th June, with Demelza driving her Imp and myself and fellow Imp-owning neighbour Bryan, following on with the van and trailer, stopping half way to pick up Demelza's boyfriend James.

We spent Saturday afternoon preparing and loading the Stiletto onto the trailer and maneuvering the Chamois into a position where she could be worked on. Bryan was returning home the next day with the Stiletto; Demelza and James were staying ten miles away. This left me with no transport until I could make the Chamois road legal. I had gone prepared with everything I could think I might need: wheels fitted with new tyres, water pump, brake parts, alternator, carburettor, petrol pump, battery, hoses and pipes. As I started work, I realised that the Chamois wasn't going to be as much of a challenge as I thought. The Chamois' clutch hydraulics were fine and after a few minutes spent cleaning the points, checking the carburettor and petrol supply, the engine was running. The

brakes were more of a problem. With no fluid in the reservoir, on investigation this appeared to have leaked from both rear cylinders making a mess of the drums. Replacement drums were found and new rear cylinders, hoses and pipes fitted, as well as a reconditioned Girling master cylinder. Without Demelza to assist with the brake bleeding, an Eezi-bleed was used and was successful. Surprisingly, the charging circuit worked and, perhaps even more surprisingly, was still running a positive earth and dynamo. The water pump was quiet and had no leaks. One Rotoflex coupling was fine; the other showed ageing and was replaced.

Road tax was arranged and on Tuesday she was ready for a test drive. For the first few miles, all went fine but on our was back an occasional misfire appeared. 30-plus years of Imp experience led me to believe that this was a spark plug issue. Sure enough, after a new set of plugs was fitted all was fine. The idea of returning the Chamois to



The old girl scrubbed up well!



Better Stiletto than this have been scrapped. Times change and now any Stiletto is well worth saving



Chamois revealed after nine years of hibernation
All photos: Tim Sears

Absolutely stunning.
The car's not bad too!





Vintage BBC Radio Cornwall sticker adorns the windscreen

the road was to find a new owner. Graham Anderson, knowing of my plans, had seen a post on Facebook from a young Hampshire couple – Chloe and James – keen to buy an Imp. After contacting them with a couple of pictures and an offer to view the Chamois (and the rest of my collection), to everyone's surprise we found that we lived within a mile of each other!

Back in the West Country, a few more miles were put on the Chamois in preparation for the 200-mile trip home, the highlight being an *impromptu* fish and chip run with Cornwall Area Centre Organiser Bob Blackman in his 'Kernow-fornian', Sarah D and Sarah B in Sarah D's very smart 237,000-mile Super Imp, Demelza and

James in the 1970 Deluxe and of course the Chamois. The afternoon had been spent playing with Imps, and James and Sarah B had their first go behind the wheel. Demelza had already driven well over 100 miles during the day and had picked me up a belated Father's Day present: a chocolate spanner from St Ives!

Saturday 26th June saw us return home, with Demelza's Imp having travelled over 700 miles by the time we got home. On Monday the 28th, Chloe and her fiancé James came to view the Chamois and Chloe instantly

fell in love with her. I have had many strange coincidences in my Imp-life, but this was one of the best... it turned out that not only did Chloe go to the same primary school as my daughters but for a brief time – at the age of two – she lived next door to us in our previous house! I would like to think that Chloe had seen the Imps in our driveway back then, and the memories were there in the back of her mind.

Chloe and James collected the Chamois on the Wednesday evening and they are set to use her as their wedding car and travel to Scotland for their honeymoon, completing some or all of the North-Coast 500 road trip this summer. They have of course joined our wonderful club and with Bryan joining a few months ago, we could soon have a new Whitehill Area Centre.



Fish and Chip run: Chamois behaved *impeccably*!



Cornwall Area Centre Fish and Chip run.
Left to right: Demelza Sears' Deluxe, Chloe & James' Chamois, Bob Blackman's 'Kernow-fornian' and Sarah D's Super



James and Chloe with their Chamois – the smiles say it all