

Austin Seven Box saloons, Rubys and a special line roads of the Liechtenstein Principality

Seven stars

Austin Seven fans are hardy folk. Recently, the 750 Motor Club Brooklands Centre organised a run to Liechtenstein for these doughty little cars, and 42 of them made the trek across the Channel in May. According to Marian Hart, the event was not meant as a holiday, and all the Seven owners realised that as they drove across France in torrential rain.

Once into France, the intrepid men and machines rattled and banged their way along the bumpy roads with water dripping onto their knees and the cars frequently being drawn into blinding whirlpools of spray as what seemed like 40-wheeled camions swept by. The Sevens' poor vacuum operated wipers were totally unable to cope with the deluge. Nevertheless, after a two night stop at Evian to dry out and explore the town, they were ready to tackle the Swiss mountains.

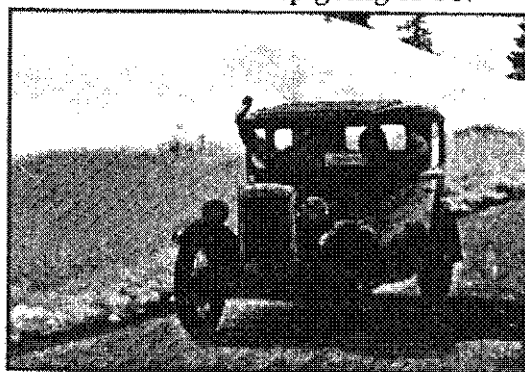
The group consisted of several Chummies, of which the earliest was a 1925 model, two and four seater tourers, sports specials, an Ulster, RN saloons, Rubies and Pearls up to 1938. The group was backed up by a course/spares car and three tender vehicles with trailers. One of these tender cars was the oldest vehicle on the rally, a 1921 Austin 20 which went up mountains in a most reassuring way.

Here it was a case of climbing up snow bound roads, and the only route open to the Sevens on their way into the tiny Principality was via the Klausen pass, which was also blocked at its very top. On the way up the pass, the Sevens climbed with bonnets propped open to

give additional cooling . . . Eventually a snow blower unblocked the road and the cars could continue on their way.

The three days in Liechtenstein passed far too quickly, with plenty to do and see, including a street reception. The more northerly route which they took back included many hairpin bends, which saw the Sevens struggling to the extent that some negotiated them in reverse, others had to shed their crews. The journey was broken at Mulhouse to look at the Musée Nationale de l'automobile (alias the Schlumpf museum).

At Ardres, the crews stopped for a farewell meal in France, and reminisced about the wonderful receptions held out to them at Montdidier, Autun, Neufchateau and Vaduz and of the friendship extended them by the car clubs of Salieu and Switzerland. They talked of the misfortunes which befell the two Austins that had broken their crankshafts and of the car that lost its white metal from the big-ends. Then there were the roadside and campside repair operations, the goodwill from the motorists abroad and the disbelief that the cars had been driven across from England. What is their next trip going to be?



Part of the run took in the French Alps