Post-War ‘Baby’ Austin A30/A35s galore to visit Dorset…

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The 'Jurassic Rally' in Wareham is the destination for A30/A35 enthusiasts from around Britain and Europe (and beyond) to get together in May...

Kim Henson reports

Each year the Austin A30/A35 Owners' Club holds its annual International Rally in a different part of the UK. This coming May, over the late Bank Holiday weekend (Friday 24th to Sunday 26th, *with the main rally day being the Sunday*), this year's event – named the Jurassic Rally due to the proximity of the Jurassic coast – will take place at the Wareham and Swanage Rugby Club, Bestwall Road, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 4HY.

This will be only the second time that the Rally has been held in Dorset, the last occasion being in May 1999, when the event was staged near Weymouth.

The Dorset Group of the Owners' Club is hosting the 2019 Rally, and the Rally Committee members are hoping/expecting that around 200 diminutive Austins plus other classics, plus their respective owners and families, will be taking part. Some of the small Austins expected are much-loved 'everyday use' examples, others are in concours condition, and some are heavily modified; all are welcome, as are their owners.

Plenty has been laid on over the weekend for rally participants who have booked to attend, including discounted travel on the wonderful Swanage Railway, outings (on the Saturday only) on a classic Bournemouth Corporation bus, scenic motoring tours of the local countryside, plenty of activities for all the family, music on each of the three evenings of the event, spares available from specialist suppliers and club members, and much more. There's pre-booked on-site camping, and there are also club house facilities for rally-goers to enjoy the evening entertainment.

The old town of Wareham, which sits close by the River Frome, stands at the gateway to the magnificent Purbeck Hills, with rolling countryside, beautiful coastal views and sandy beaches all nearby. The fascinating village of Corfe Castle (with the remains of its castle, severely damaged in the Civil War) is only a few minutes away, and the traditional seaside town of Swanage, also Dorset's County Town of Dorchester are respectively about half an hour's drive, and with coastal delights such as Kimmeridge and Durdle Door also not far away.

THE CLUB AND THE CARS

The A30/A35 Owners' Club is open to all enthusiasts of these small, but big-hearted, Austins. It is known as a friendly organisation, and has members around the world. High quality magazines are produced four times a year for members, and a comprehensive spares service is also provided for its members. Information and encouragement is freely available for owners and would-be owners.

The Austin A30 was introduced in October 1951 as the 'A30 Seven' (with deliberate connections to the pre-War Austin Sevens that had done so well for the Austin Motor

Company), and was the first Austin to feature chassis-less unitary construction. The new ‘baby’ in the range was powered by an 803cc overhead valve engine, providing lively performance for the time, and also featured a four speed gearbox and independent, coil spring and wishbone front suspension.

Initially available in four door saloon form only, the A30 was produced until 1956, and buyers could choose between two and four door saloons, or could opt for a 5 cwt van or a fully trimmed ‘Countryman’ estate.

In the summer of 1956, the A35 arrived. Based on the A30, but with a more powerful, larger and stronger, 948cc BMC ‘A’ Series engine, a slick-changing remote control gearbox and a higher ratio final drive, the new car proved to be very popular. By contrast with the A30, the A35 was externally identifiable by its painted grille (chromed on the A30) and larger, wrap-around rear window.

Again the A35 was offered in two and four door saloon form, as a 5 cwt van or ‘Countryman’ estate. A short-lived and now much-in demand A35 Pick-up was also produced.

The A35 saloons were discontinued in 1959, making way for the Farina-styled Austin A40 (mechanically based on the A35) and of course the ubiquitous front-wheel-drive BMC Minis.

However the A35 vans continued in production until 1968, with later 6 cwt versions (from 1962) featuring the 1098cc version of the ‘A’ Series engine; some late vans were fitted with the Mini’s 848cc engine, mounted longitudinally and driving the rear wheels.

MORE INFORMATION:

Austin A30/A35 Owners’ Club: www.austina30a35ownersclub.co.uk

For membership of the Owners’ Club, please contact Sam Stothard, 20, Nookings Drive, Hibaldstow, Brigg, North Lincolnshire, DN20 9PS. Tel. (01652) 654366.

E-mail: membership@austina30a35ownersclub.co.uk

For more information about the Jurassic Rally at Wareham in May, and/or to book a place, please contact Jeff Carter, 26, Flaxfield Road, Beaminster, Dorset, DT8 3EY. E-mail: rallybookings@austina30a35ownersclub.co.uk



A line-up of A35 Pick-ups seen at the Club's International Rally in Yorkshire, in 2015.