Standard Motor Club International Rally – classic fun in the sun

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Left to right… 1959 Ten, 1934 10/12 Speed Saloon, 1960 7 cwt van.

Standards enjoyed in the sunshine…

From 26th to 28th June Standards and their owners met near Gloucester to enjoy the Club's International Rally. Kim Henson reports…

(All words and photographs © Kim Henson).

The Standard Motor Company produced well-respected vehicles during six decades from 1903, and the much-loved surviving examples are celebrated (and enthusiastically enjoyed) each year by their enthusiastic owners.

The Standard Motor Club's biggest annual event is the organisation's International Rally, based this year at the Cheltenham Chase Hotel near Gloucester, with visits to local places of interest on the Friday and Saturday of the long weekend's event, and culminating in a 'static' display of vehicles on the Sunday.

Owners and enthusiasts were welcome, whether in their Standards, other classic models or indeed modern cars (especially in situations where Standards were being worked on and/or not yet on the road), and in addition to the Standards, owners of other makes and models of classics, notably Triumphs, were also invited to join in the fun in the sun…

Sunshine certainly played its part, and with the Friday aspects of the event held in heatwave conditions, which did preclude the attendance of some of the older Standards in particular. However, those unable to bring their Standards were still able to wholeheartedly participate in the Rally.

Some of the Rally-goers arrived on the day before the event, with others travelling to Gloucestershire on the Friday, meeting at the fabulous Painswick Rococo Gardens, just a few miles from the Rally base at the Cheltenham Chase Hotel.



Painswick Rococo Gardens.

The evening saw participants gathering in the hotel for a buffet meal, where new friendships were made and existing ones happily rekindled amidst much talk of classic cars (Standards especially!).

As Saturday dawned the heat was a little less intense (this was welcome after tropical temperatures endured during the previous few days) and a picturesque road run led participants to the Forest of Dean. First stop, after about 28 miles, was the Hopewell Colliery Museum, with an optional underground tour of the old mine workings, where ‘free mining’ was undertaken for many years.



Two Drophead Coupés parked side by side at the Hopewell Colliery Museum. On the left is a 1937 Flying Twelve, next to a 1946 Fourteen.

The road run route continued for another 10 miles through lovely Gloucestershire countryside, to the Dean Forest Railway near Lydney.

The steam-hauled train ride took participants along the full length of the line, with some Rally-goers having pre-booked cream teas to enjoy during the journey. Many enjoyed watching from a footbridge above the train as the big-hearted 0-6-0 loco was replenished with water during a break in the journeying.



‘9681’ worked hard in the hot sunshine; seen here at Parkend.



0-6-0 motive power at the Dean Forest Railway.



Taking on more water…

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Above: Some of the Standards parked at the Dean Forest Railway.

The 26 mile return route to the hotel allowed plenty of time for a rest ahead of the evening's three course dinner. After the convivial meal (during which a challenging quiz was held!), guest speaker James Walshe, Deputy Editor of 'Practical Classics' magazine, gave an encouraging talk about the classic car scene and the importance of clubs such as the Standard Motor Club in keeping motoring heritage alive.
James, himself an avid enthusiast of old vehicles, also gave an update on the heartwarming

story of how ‘Bluebell’, a 1959 Standard Ten, was saved from a Ford scrappage scheme in 2017, due to efforts by the magazine, the Standard Motor Club and many individuals. The car was indeed saved (literally on the eve of it being destroyed) and has become famous worldwide as a symbol of the importance of saving old vehicles for posterity, for future generations to enjoy.
James also explained that the car has been undergoing bodywork renovation and funds are now being sought to give the Standard a high quality respray to keep it looking good for years to come.

The ‘static’ display on the Sunday in the grounds of the hotel gave further opportunities for attendees (and members of the public) to look around the cars, to chat and to learn more about the vehicles.
This aspect of the Rally is always good for owners to learn more about their vehicles by chatting with fellow owners. (On a personal note, I for one gained much technical information about my 1938 Flying Fourteen from other Standard owners more knowledgeable and experienced than I am).

Here are some of the cars that were on display…



1946 ‘military’ Twelve saloon.



Martin Holstead’s smart Vanguard.



A lovely line-up of 1950s Eights.



Two contrasting vans, with a 1957 6 cwt example in the foreground.



An early Phase III Vanguard, alongside a 1919 SLS.



In the Historic Open Class, a lovely Austin Healey Sprite Mark 4, next to an equally terrific 1937 Standard Flying Nine.



A wide variety of vehicles were in attendance in the ‘Open’ classes.



A wonderful survivor… an unrestored 1934 Ten Deluxe saloon, in the same family since new and so far having covered around 363,000 miles!

Spares, brought along by fellow members, were on sale during the day, which ended with raffle prizes being distributed, and the prizegiving for the various classes of vehicles in attendance. The prizes were awarded by James Walshe, who, in his closing address thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the Rally.

'Car of the Show' was deservedly judged to be the 1934 10/12 Speed Saloon owned by Tim Sprague (Tim and his rare Standard pictured below).


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As the rally ended, departing attendees wended their respective ways home, having enjoyed a terrific weekend and already looking forward to the 2027 event.

The Standard Motor Club...

... caters for all owners and enthusiasts of vehicles produced by the Standard Motor Company.

For more information, including how to join, please go to:
https://www.standardmotorclub.org.uk/



Climbing well on the road run!