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Standards Galore... at the Standard Motor Club's 2025 International Rally at Daventry

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‘Standard procedure’... The Standard Motor Club’s annual International Rally took place over the long weekend of 13th to 15th June, and was based at Daventry. Kim Henson was there and reports on a delightful and varied event, with warm sunny weather to make it even better...

(All words and photographs© Kim Henson and Wheels-Alive).

Standard Motor Company vehicles were built over six decades from 1903 (with the Triumph name applied to products after 1963), and enthusiasts of the marque are well-served by the



Standard Motor Club, which in the organisation's own words, is, "Dedicated to the preservation of all Standards and their derivatives".

The Club's annual International Rally brings together owners and those interested in Standards, providing an invaluable opportunity to meet fellow enthusiasts/friends, to show and use the surviving vehicles, to swap information, buy and sell spares and to have a good time on road runs and visits to a host of places of interest.

Just one of the great aspects of these Standard Motor Club rallies is the marvellous variety in terms of vehicle age and model, and owners of classics of other makes are also always welcome to participate.

This year's event was based at the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel, but the long weekend started with participants meeting on Friday 13th June at Foxton Locks, near Market Harborough in Leicestershire. The lock flight, a marvel of design and engineering was built in 1810 on the Leicester line of the Grand Union Canal, to serve canal boats carrying coal on their way southwards from the coalfields of the day. The 10 locks comprise two 'staircases' of five, enabling canal traffic to negotiate the steep hill.



At the start of the last century, a complex and very clever 'inclined plane' system was added, essentially a mechanical canal boat 'lift' to speed up the passage of canal traffic through the system. However, due to the decline in canal traffic due to the increased use of the railways and motor lorries, the system worked for just 10 years, being mothballed in 1911 (and eventually scrapped in the 1920s).

From Foxton Locks, a picturesque road run took rally-goers to the headquarters of the Triumph Sports Six Club (at Lubenham), with its fabulous collection of Triumphs, including unique Herald, Vitesse and Spitfire models, among many exhibits.



Participants then drove to the hotel at Daventry, where after a buffet dinner, member Paul Robins gave an illustrated talk about taking an RAF 12 cwt Standard (Vanguard) pick-up to the Normandy D-Day 80 year commemorations last year.

Saturday 14th June saw participants taking part in another road run through pretty Northamptonshire countryside and villages, stopping en route at the Sywell Aviation Museum. This fascinating place, on a World War II aerodrome, was of great interest for its displays of artefacts from that era, many of them deeply poignant and of course including aircraft-related items.



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The Pilots' Mess Cafe and the Aviator Hotel (with its art deco bar) were enjoyed for refreshments before the road run continued.

The next stop was at the interesting Holdenby House, where tours of the property were on offer, in addition to The Great British Food Festival taking place amidst its beautiful gardens.

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Rally-goers then drove back to the hotel at Daventry for the Gala Dinner (including a general knowledge quiz!), after which James Walshe, deputy editor of 'Practical Classics' magazine, captivated his audience with a talk. This included the importance of classic clubs and events such as this Standard Motor Club rally, as well as giving great insight into the rescuing, in 2017, from a 'scrappage' scheme, of a 1959 Standard Ten saloon, known as 'Bluebell' and now residing in a Scottish museum. James also related other true and amazing anecdotes, including one relating to John Lennon and an Austin Maxi... (and presented the Show awards on the next day).

Sunday 16th June saw the 'static' element of the Rally take place on the lawns of the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel.



Eights and Tens of the 1950s were major contenders in the market for small cars at that time.

The variety of cars on display was wonderful, with several examples having just completed long-term restorations and looking superb in the sunshine. Equally there were other Standards in 'original' unrestored condition (and great to see).

I greatly enjoyed seeing them all, but examples of particular favourites of mine (among many) of the vehicles on show included the oldest car in attendance, Phil Homer's 1919 Standard SLS, fresh from a beautifully detailed restoration, David Mileham's original condition 1934 Twelve, Graham Hart's 1937 Flying 20 V8 (an ultra-rare car and still with its lovely original paintwork) and Barrie Ackroyd's 1955 Ten Companion, a very early example

and that Barrie has just finished restoring after a 12-year long haul restoration. His efforts were justifiably rewarded with two prizes – the car looked wonderful!



Left, Len Barr's 1922 SLO model, with Phil Homer's newly-restored 1919 SLS on the right.

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Cars on display other than Standards were many; among them, two especially attracted my attention. These were the magnificent 1938 Ford Ten 7W owned by Susan Tinsley and a lovely two door Austin A30, original and with not much more than 20,000 miles on the clock.



This was brought to the rally from Lincolnshire by the family 'Team Evans'. The owners of both these cars also own Standards.



Fantastic 1938 Ford Ten 7W.



Beautiful low mileage two door A30.

Mention should also be made of long-distance travellers from the south of France, Frederic Landelle, with his 1951 Vanguard Phase I, and Michel Magnin, who brought his 1952 Vanguard Phase IA. Both had driven their cars all the way through France and then to Daventry.



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Michel Magnin's 1952 Vanguard Phase IA with Frederic Landelle's 1951 Phase I, voted 'Car of The Show'.



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Frederic Landelle won 'Car of The Show' for his Vanguard.



Michel Magnin's Phase IA pictured at the TSSC HQ at Lubenham.

Frederic told me that the car was a very good long-distance cruiser, and enjoyed the drive. Michel said that, following recent hospitalisation, it had been his goal to drive his Vanguard to the Rally, and he was delighted to be there with his Standard.

In terms of UK long distance, Bob Alexander (who had also been involved in the rescue of 'Bluebell' the Standard Ten), had driven his Triumph Stag the 510 miles from his home in the north of Scotland, to attend the Rally.



VERDICT

Just wonderful. I have attended many Standard Motor Club Rallies and personally I felt that this was one of the best. The hotel management and staff were friendly and helpful, the road runs and visits to places of interest were excellent, the camaraderie among rally-goers exemplary.

My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed taking part and meeting again with fellow Standard owners, and pay tribute to all the hard work put in by the organising team.

A few more photographs from the Rally...

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The Standard Motor Club

If you have a Standard, or are interested in the marque, it is worth joining the Club and, if possible, taking part in their events. The Club also provides a comprehensive spares service for its members, covering models from across the decades. Technical assistance is also available to help members.

For more information or to join, please e-mail: membership.standardmotorclub@gmail.com

The Club's wide-ranging website is at: <https://www.standardmotorclub.org.uk/>

Next year's International Rally will take place from 26th to 28th June, based at the Cheltenham Chase Hotel, near Gloucester.