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Sun-drenched Dorset Delight

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The magnificent, five day long Great Dorset Steam Fair is a huge annual event that takes place every August on a 600 acre site at Tarrant Hinton near Blandford Forum, and in the presence of approximately 200,000 people.

This year's event - the 49th - was held a few weeks ago and lived up to its deserved



reputation for providing 'something for everyone'. In fact it is one of the largest outdoor historic 'nostalgia' events in the world, showcasing Britain's heritage in terms of industry agriculture and vehicles, and with as many as possible of the machines actually working/operating during the Show.

While I cannot claim to have attended every one of these events, I have only missed one since 1971, and always enjoy the wide variety of historic exhibits and the unique atmosphere of this Show.

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This year, once again, the exhibits included one of the largest and most spectacular line-ups of steam-powered traction engines and road rollers seen anywhere on earth, several hundred historic commercial vehicles, and a fascinating selection of cars, dating from the earliest days of motoring to the early 1980s.

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Adding interest to the car section of the show were many classic caravans, dating from the 1920s to the 1970s; shown below is the brilliant '1967' themed display of car (MGB), caravan and music set up by John and Heather Knott.



In addition to the vehicles there were superbly turned out shire horses, a multitude of tractors and stationary engines, historic road building displays, 'dancing' sheep and also birds of prey, in addition to dog agility demonstrations, wood cutting displays, bicycles, an impressive model tent, and a fairground with many steam-driven rides.

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This year saw one of the last ever displays by the much-loved, Blandford-based Royal Signals 'White Helmets' motorcycle display team...



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Here are a few more of the wonderful classic commercials at this year's Show...







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On each evening, the wonderful and very long line-up of showman's engines was enjoyed by large crowds, and on the Saturday night especially this was truly magnificent, together with several 'old time music hall' type shows taking place in the open air.



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As in each of the last few years at the Great Dorset Steam Fair, a superb commemorative display depicting a typical World War I battlefield made many show-goers pause and think; very poignant...



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This WW1 Thornycroft 'J' Type No. 2282 was put back on the road after the owner discovered poppies growing in the rear axle casing...

VERDICT

A terrific show. This year it was blessed by hot, sunny weather over all five days, and everyone I spoke to enjoyed the event. Well worth considering a visit next year!



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Next year, in 2018, the Great Dorset Steam Fair will take place from Thursday, 23rd August to Monday 27th August inclusive, and will be a very special event as it will be the 50th Show.

For more information please call (01258) 860361 or go to:
<http://www.gdsf.co.uk/>