

Trip to the North East Land, Sea and Air Museums

Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, 11th June 2022

Geoff Atkinson, Edinburgh and Neil Jones, Wallasey, Merseyside

The North East Land, Sea and Air Museums (NELSAM), formerly the North East Aircraft Museum, is a volunteer-run aviation museum situated on the site of the former RAF Usworth/Sunderland Airport, between Washington and Sunderland, in Tyne and Wear, England. The museum has the largest aviation collection between Yorkshire and Scotland and houses over 30 aircraft and a wide collection of aero engines. The museum also has a small collection of other items such as weaponry, vehicles and other historical exhibits. www.nelsam.org.uk

Geoff Atkinson writes...

In June 2021 the museum purchased a very low mileage Clan Crusader (HEX 260N) from a car collector which they wanted to include in their museum as this represented the only true north-eastern car company in the last 52 years (unless you include the Nissan plant!).

David Charles, Director of the museum, asked if any other owners in the area wanted to view it, so myself and my friend Ron Kane from Morpeth took our Crusaders down. He asked if this could be escalated to an annual event so for 2022 I offered to try and contact as many Imp and derivative car owners: Clan Crusaders, Ginetta G15s and Davrians. This event was hosted by David Charles as a follow on to last year's event.

By chance I found out Neil Jones had a fantastic Davrian and his son lived across the road from my previous house in Whitley Bay. After chatting to Neil in my garage one night, sitting next to my Crusader and G15, I suggested he recommission his Davrian which had lain dormant for 30 odd years and drive it up for the 2022 NELSAM event.

Left to right: Neil Jones' Davrian, Dave's Crusader, Richard Wager's Crusader, Geoff Atkinson's Crusader, Ivan Johnson's 'Irish' Clan, Ron Kane's Crusader, Dave Lonsdale's Sunbeam Imp Sport and Simon Benoy's Sunbeam Stiletto

Photo: Neil Jones



The museum's very original low-mileage Clan

Photo: Geoff Atkinson



I think he took this as a bit of a challenge and really worked to get it on the road again and drive it up from the Wirral.

I also mentioned the event on social media to try and drum up interest. David Charles – an Imp fan – was hoping for a good turn out.

Ivan Johnston, who resides in Spain was really keen to drive his 'Irish' Clan up (well from Stanstead at least) while in the country so even though I had moved to Scotland, I couldn't not go!

I met my friend Ron in Morpeth and to my surprise saw his green Clan and brown Clan waiting. Actually, he'd sold the green one a week before to Dave, a local Imp enthusiast who was keen to come too.

We met Neil (with his

Right: Ivan Johnson's BMW motorbike-engined 'Irish' Clan

Photo: Geoff Atkinson



This photo was taken on the first run to the museum in 2021 by Ron Kane (green Clan) and Geoff Atkinson (yellow Clan). Since this photo was taken Ron has sold his Clan to Dave (surname unknown)
Photo: Geoff Atkinson



Davrian) *en route* and had a great drive down.

On reaching NELSAM there were a number of other Clans and Imps there already.

Ivan then turned up in his amazing Clan following a 280-mile drive from Stanstead! What a car! Worthy of an article in itself, it has one of Clark Dawson's excellent BMW conversions. It's also been converted to left-hand drive ready for Spain and has refinements including electric windows and concealed headlights. The list just went on!

A great day was had by all. Many other Imp and Clan owners turned up minus their vehicles which most were restoring. I think it proved a great incentive for the 2023 event – David wants to include as many owners and cars as possible.

After some photos with various cars under the wings of the resident Vulcan, some of us made the short trip to the site of the original Clan factory for a few photos. We were met by a number of employees of the current occupiers of the site and they were very enthusiastic about the Clans being there and returning next year.

After posting some photos on Facebook, I was contacted by a great number of Clan owners who all suggested a much larger gathering next year to commemorate 50-plus years of the car. David is keen to accompany us in convoy back to the factory again, provided the current owners are agreeable.

Neil Jones adds...

David Charles, the Director of NELSAM (North East Land Sea and Air Museums), liaised with Geoff Atkinson, who has a Clan Crusader, to hold a car show at the museum on Saturday 11th June.

As you will have read in his article, Geoff contacted as many Imp derivative owners as he could and I so it was that I travelled up from New Brighton in the Wirral to the Museum in my Davrian.

The journey was a bit of a heart in the mouth trial for me as I hadn't fully run the new engine in (built by Andy Jones) and tested the car over a long distance. I had been rebuilding the car over the last five years and had forgotten how much fun it was to drive. However, I was conscious that the last time it was on the road was 29 years ago when I overheated it driving to hospital to see my dad. My Davrian (BAJ 414L) is a Mk5 which I have owned since 1982. I am in touch with the original owner/builder, Graham Gore-Browne, who is living in Greece. It has been interesting to compare

notes over the refurbishment. The car now has a 998cc engine with R17 cam, twin Weber 40 DCOE carbs, Davies Craig water pump and Mocal inter-cooler for the oil. New petrol tanks from Tim Duffee have been fitted while suspension has been uprated with Protech dampers. I hope to attend the Davrian 55 event in the Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens, Burford on Sunday 14th August.

All the cars at the museum were Imp engine-powered with the exception of the brilliantly turned out blue 'Irish' Clan with its motorbike engine, power steering, electric windows, etc!

High point of the day was being invited to assemble for a group photograph under the Vulcan bomber.

Later we went in convoy to visit the site of the old Clan factory.

I look forward to this becoming an annual event which I gather David Charles and Geoff would like to see happen.



Neil Jones with his recently restored Davrian Mk5
Photo supplied by Neil Jones



Above: Neil's son as a nipper and last month!
Photos: Neil Jones



The old Clan Motor Company factory, now Smithers-Oasis UK Ltd

Photo: Neil Jones