

Aston Martin-Riley

Another Aston Martin-based special is the Riley-engined machine used in Vintage Sports Car Club events for more than a decade by Captain C R Pack, RN. Basically a 1931 Aston Martin International, the car was owned in the 1950s by a Devon farmer who was probably responsible for it losing its proper engine (this is, incidentally, currently installed in a Frazer Nash). By the 1960s it was providing transport for several of the Navy's officers at RNEC Manaton, which is where Chris Pack bought the car back in 1966. The only departures from original AM specification at this stage were the SS Jaguar rear axle and a very non-period Triumph TR2 motor. Visually it looked quite original, but was "very, very tired". Chris used the car as everyday transport until 1970, when an extensive rebuild was called for.

The Triumph engine was removed and replaced by a Riley 2.5-litre "Big Four" motor, from a 1939 saloon abandoned at Manaton. A new, lighter and narrower pointed-tail body was fitted, the brakes were converted to hydraulic operation and 16 in wheels put on. Over the years, the Aston Martin-Riley has been progressively developed, ultimately giving a reliable 100+ bhp; it is capable of lapping Silverstone in 1 min 18 sec and ascending Prescott in 50.3 sec.

In order to concentrate on his other historic cars, which include an interesting Riley special with a 1929 Riley Nine chassis, a similar 2.5-litre Big Four engine with its three-speed plus overdrive gearbox,

and all clothed in a scaled-down VDP Bentley-style body, Chris sold the car in 1984 to Richard Black.

Richard Black accelerates the "Big Four"-powered AM away from the traffic lights at Prescott.



In addition to repainting the car an attractive maroon, Richard Black has continued to develop the special. To date his modifications include replacing the AM gearbox with one from a Riley, lightening the flywheel, and fitting larger SU carburettors with an improved exhaust manifold.

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Technical Specification Data

Date of origin: 1931-9

ENGINE

Type: Riley

Capacity: 2443 cc

No of cylinders: 4

Valve operation: ohv

Estimated power output: 120 bhp

Carburation: 2 x SU carburettors

GEARBOX

Type: Riley

No of ratios: 4

CHASSIS

Type: Aston Martin

FRONT AXLE

Type: Aston Martin

Suspension: 2 x Semi-elliptics

REAR AXLE

Type: SS Jaguar

Suspension: 2 x Semi-elliptics

BRAKES

Type: Drums all round

Actuation: Hydraulic

WHEELS

Size: 16 in

Tyre Size: 6.00 x 16

OVERALL DIMENSIONS

Length: 156 in

Wheelbase: 104 in

Track: 64 in (front)

66 in (rear)