

# Armstrong Siddeleys visit Morrinsville

The New Zealand Armstrong Siddeley Car Club based themselves in Morrinsville over Labour weekend.

They had a series of events planned, and held their AGM at the Morrinsville Central Motel.

Their itinerary included a visit to a local tractor museum, and they held a mystery run for the cars on Sunday.

Armstrong Siddeley was a British engineering group, operating during the first half of the 20th century. They produced luxury vehicles from 1919 until 1960, and are also well known for manufacturing aircraft engines.

The cars were built to very high standards and priced accordingly. They were luxurious, while still offering exceptional performance.

The marque was considered to be amongst the leading manufacturers of quality British cars with products that were recognised around the globe as standing for the best of British manufacturing.

This was a car for the aristocracy and the upper echelons of the carriage trade. Having the Duke of York (later King George VI) as a customer was a sound endorsement of both the car and the marque.

Motoring legend says that if an owner inquired, on taking personal delivery of his new car, how long it would take to run-in the engine he would be told politely, "as far as the factory gate."

The design of the Armstrong Siddeley is architectural, reflecting the characteristic Art Deco style of the 1920s.

The cars had strong vertical and horizontal lines and an overall solidity.

All the designs avoid fussy detailing and this is carried throughout the design so the cars had disc wheels and solid body panels with no louvres cut into the side panels of the bonnet.

The bonnet emblem on the Armstrong Siddeleys has always been the Egyptian Sphinx, and some models sported a Sphinx head, with jet engines on the side as a reference to the company's manufacture of aircraft engines.

Advertising in the day used the slogan 'as silent as a Sphinx.'



ABOVE: Six of the eight Armstrong Siddeley cars which spent the weekend in Morrinsville. BELOW LEFT: Ian Patterson's car was the oldest in the group. BELOW RIGHT: Martin Purdy drove his 1958 Armstrong Siddeley from Upper Hutt to attend the weekend meeting.



Very early Armstrong Siddeley cars were not fitted with bumpers, even when these were commonplace on other makes.

Company owner Cyril Siddeley disliked these fittings, saying that if a man drove properly they shouldn't be

needed!

Ian Patterson's 1949 car has been in his family for 54 years. Originally owned by his brother, Ian restored the vehicle around 15 years ago.

"It was originally two different shades of brown, but I painted it British Racing Green," said Ian.

He has done quite long trips in the car, which has a six cylinder, 2.3 litre engine.

Rob and Helen Stening from New Plymouth own a 1957 Armstrong Siddeley.

"They only ever made 608 of this



model, and this one was mostly in pieces when we bought it," said Rob. They are active members of the car club and attend most events.

Martin Purdy has owned his 1958 Star Sapphire model for 22 years.

"This one was the twenty eighth of this model to be manufactured," he said.

He drove up from Upper Hutt to attend the Labour Weekend meeting.

"It's an automatic, it has power steering, and the seats are the most comfortable leather lounge suite I've ever owned," he added.



ABOVE LEFT: Helen and Rob Stening from New Plymouth, with their 1957 Armstrong Siddeley. ABOVE RIGHT: The Sphinx has been used as a bonnet emblem on all Armstrong Siddeleys.



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