

# NEWSLETTER

## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



Well what did those of you who attended last months meeting think about the bingo? I for one was somewhat sceptical about it beforehand as I suspect many of you were, but as I called out the numbers from my front row seat I could see the intense looks of concentration on many of the faces so at least a chord was struck with some of the Members . The relief from this was clear to see when in the second part of the evening the paper aeroplanes became the centre of attention. I am not certain who achieved the longest flight, it could have been Gina or Tony but in the chaos it was difficult to keep tabs on things.

Of course part of the chaos was due to the cramped conditions we found ourselves in due, in the main, to the ever increasing membership and the good attendance that particular evening. The Club has used The Bell for some considerable time now but if our numbers continue to increase we may have to consider larger premises. Before we take such a leap however it would be wise to reflect on the considerable benefits of this venue that we may not be able to secure elsewhere such as the use of the boules court, the barbecue in the garden, the Common alongside which we sometimes take advantage of, to say nothing of the free use of the function room. Let me know your views on

the matter so that at the next Committee meeting the subject can be aired.

Next Meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April is Prod and Poke which will start half an hour earlier than usual at 7.30 to take advantage of the light for as long as possible. This year you are invited to decorate your car in an Easter theme or as some of the ladies have suggested coming along in Easter bonnets. Why not do both. I will arrange an independent judgement of the best and award a small prize to the winner.

I would also like to know if there is any interest in the Abingdon Air and Country show listed in the Events Programme. This is held on 6 May but the cheaper advanced tickets need to be applied for no later than the 26 April. If there is sufficient interest we can travel in convoy and take a picnic lunch perhaps.

Finally I have received some very good news about Jeff and June. They are shortly to get married. On behalf of everyone in the Club can I offer our warmest congratulations and best wishes for the future. Was it the Racing Green MGB that attracted June or was it the wicked twinkle in Jeff's eye? We shall never know or should know, but we are all very happy for them and wish them all the best!

**Gordon.**

For your diary in the coming month

April

**21/22nd** - Bristol Classic Car Show.

**23rd - Club Night** 7:30  
"Decorated" Prod and Poke.

**27/28/29** - Club Weekend Away.

May

**6th** - Abingdon Air & Country Show.

**27th** - Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle Show.

**28th - Club Night.**  
Mystery Run.

**For details see page 8.**



**SKITTLES EVENING**

The annual Skittles Evening is usually a rowdy affair that is played with high spirits with much barracking. The gathering on Saturday evening the 31<sup>st</sup> March at The Cross Keys was no exception to this rule when

twenty or so Members arrived promptly (early in most cases) for an 8 o'clock kick off. Professionals i.e.

regular players or anyone who has played more than once in the last twelve months, and amateurs alike were pitched together in battle based loosely on the rules announced by Vic. Five legs to be played and the leading aggregate score for ladies and the men would be declared the winners and, at the end of the evening all other players would pay homage to the winners and lift them high in the community.

First to crack off was Vic who made a very respectable score though I can't tell what it was because I had more important business to attend to at the bar. One by one the players stepped forward to demonstrate their skill in a variety of styles depend-

ing on the ability of the payers to bend down low to pick up the balls, to those who had some difficulty in actually seeing the skittles standing at the far end of the alley. We saw balls played from the hip, we saw the Barnes Wal-



lace approach, and we saw those who thought the game had similarities with billiards and played the balls off the side cushions. I am pleased to say that as far as I am aware no one tried

any googlies off the ceiling. We welcomed along new Members Jane and Graham Bennett and Malcolm Taylor. Graham claimed to have never played the game before only to return a spare 14 on the first leg. We've seen this sort of gamesmanship before so he should fit in very well! Priscilla on the other hand played the ultimate gamesmanship card by turning up on crutches and with one leg in plaster.



Half way through the evening the food was brought out consisting of delicious beef curry, chicken curry as well as sweet and sour pork all served with boiled rice, potato chips popadoms and replicas of Ghandi's slippers. Every

one helped themselves and a deadly hush fell upon the proceedings whilst the plates were eaten clean.

Play resumed shortly after for the last two legs and it was not long before the jeering and heckling



reached a thunderous crescendo as the final scores were added up. For the men equal top scores were declared and so Vic and Graham had a sudden death play off which though close was taken by Graham. So much for "never played before." As for the ladies, the intrepid Priscilla who by this time commenced on her weary way home, was confirmed winner despite her temporary disability. Congratulations to her and the speedy removal of that plaster cast!

At the other end of the scale the wooden spoon was awarded to Jane who saved by just one point, yours truly from gathering this honour.

A good all round evening for which many thanks goes to Vic for setting it all up.

**Chairman Gordy**

## NOT SUCH A GIANT SPRING FORWARD



Do you remember those optimistic pics last month, of Priscilla cleaning their MG in readiness for a toot, toot in the countryside?

Well a note from John Bishop records that Priscilla had fractured a bone in her foot. As a result, the Victoria Road MG ambulance service swung into action on Sunday afternoon (March 26) for a convalescent trip out to Avebury for tea and cake, but without the walk.



You can't keep a game gal down. Here is Priscilla giving those skittles a good fright at the club's Skittles evening. So much so that Priscilla won the ladies prize.

## Bletchley Park Visit 9th September

Following on from last months newsletter, many thanks to those that have confirmed attendance. The majority have chosen the 'fully catered / dedicated guide' option (see last months newsletter for details). However, as of today I have not had sufficient confirmations in order to be able to book this option with Bletchley Park.

If you would like to go (and please remember if the fully catered / dedicated guide options is booked, I'll be collecting the full cost at the May club meeting which is non-refundable), then please let me know by the end of April.

If I don't get the numbers required for the 'catered / dedicated guide option', the trip will still go ahead - we will still be able to park in front of the house but it will just be self catered, we will pay individually on the day, and we will have to join the public tours.

Thanks

**Peter Hine**

**THE HISTORIC RACING DRIVERS CLUB (HRDC) MGB50 SERIES**

You may remember in last month's edition, I included a short dit on the MGB50 series of races to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the MGB. The first of which was to take place on Easter Monday at Castle Combe.

Well dear reader, despite the weather, yours truly and normally level headed wife set off for Castle Combe relatively early on Easter Monday.....I'm pleased to report that we were not the only ones to brave the weather.

As well as the MGB50 series there were other HRDC organised races:

Pre '63 Group 2 touring Cars.

Pre '66 Grand Touring Cars - separate races for under 1500cc and over 1500cc cars.

Pre '60 Touring Cars.

As I mentioned last month, Barry Sidery-Smith who started racing MGB's at international level way back in 1965 was entered in his famous ex-Works Le Mans MGB 'DRX 255C. Top right. His car was supported by other ex-Works and Works-associated MGB racers. There were 20 FIA Appendix "K" or historically interesting MGBs entered.

We arrived in time to watch some of the cars going through scrutineering and qualifying for the first of the historic races. It had rained sufficiently to make the circuit quite slippery, particularly where oil had been dropped by some of the cars. It is these conditions that sort those drivers

with good car control, particularly around Camp Corner the last corner before the start/finish line. For MG50 qualifying, the historically important cars were kept well within their margins of safety. It would make for an interesting debate as to whether historically important race cars should be raced.

So with plentiful supplies of hot chocolate, we watched until qualifying finished. We then set off around the paddock to track down some of the MGB50 cars and drivers.

I won't bore you too much. For example, we found David and Matt Green and car No. 46. Second from top. This car which is a '63 Le Mans car has been restored by them - absolutely immaculate. They successfully entered the car in the 2010 Classic Le Mans weekend - the same event that a number of us attended using Roger and Lynn's house in France as a base. The car has been accepted for this year's Le Mans Classic, the team invited us down to see the car race.

As I said I won't bore you, but suffice to say that we tracked a number of other cars down and talked to their owners. I've included in this issue a short piece on Chris Lawrence's historic class win in a Morgan +4. Well there were two Morgans entered in the pre '66 Historic GT event - one an ex Chris Lawrence car. But it was now time for a pasty and chips and somewhere warm to enjoy them.



I won't say too much about the racing other than it was wet and in the main quite close. For the MGB50 race, understandably the historically important cars didn't feature in the results but it was good to see them on the track.

As a piece of personal nostalgia, I found an early split screen, headlamps in grill Morris Minor being raced. This was the first car my father owned in the fifties.

**Ed**

**MORGAN MATTERS**



You may recall that I wrote in the February edition of this illustrious publication, a short dit on the MG entry in the BTCC. I referred to how the car may look like the new model MG but has a kit of parts under the skin.

Well Morgan have gone one better than that. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of their class win in the 1962 Le Mans they have entered a car in this years FIA World Endurance Championship which includes Le Mans. And the the European Le Mans Series. The point is that apart from the name it is not a Morgan, it neither looks like a Morgan nor does it have any Morgan parts.

For 1962 the car was re-bodied as a “low-line” Super Sports, painted in British Racing Green and given a white hard top. As can be seen from the Le Mans ACO scrutineering logs and confirmation letter in the history file, chassis number 4840, carrying the number plate ‘TOK 258’ gave Morgan its 2-litre GT class victory, arguably Morgan’s finest hour on the track. It covered a total of 2261 miles at an average speed of 94mph. See top pic.

Chris’ cars went on to win other important class wins across europe including Spa and the Nurburgring. The car was eventually sold on and raced by the Stapleton Brothers who fielded a two car “Super Sports” team in the late sixties. Chassis 4840 carrying JHX 142B reg.

By the early 1970s historic racing cars had no particular value - if only we had known! The car pictured middle left, the Le Mans winning chassis 4840, was sold last year for £120,000.

Chris went on to work with Marcos Cars where he managed and engineered their 1995 Le Mans entry the LM600. He then joined Morgan and designed the Aero 8.

So, as I said for this year Morgan have a car in the FIA World Endurance Championship. The Oak-Pescarolo LMP2 car has morphed into a Morgan. Charles Morgan and Jacques Nicolet President of Oak Racing (which is based in Le Mans) sealed the deal - bottom left.

As you will see from the link, it couldn’t be further from the traditional Morgan. Make sure the sound is turned up! **Ed**



Let me tell you a story. The late Chris Lawrence wrote Morgan into racing history. He raced a succession of MG specials that he built himself during the early fifties. He then successfully raced his 1956 Morgan ‘TOK 258’ in national races. By 1961 he wanted to race in Europe. He ordered a new Morgan +4 and he took delivery of chassis No. 4840 in May 1961. The actual owner - the person paying all the bills and co driver was Richard Shepherd-Baron.

The car was taken to Le Mans in June where, at the last minute, it was refused entry. Apparently Standard Triumph put pressure on the organisers. Not enough space to say how. Having seen their TR3s trounced by the LawrenceTune team (who by the way ran TR engines in their Morgans) all over the tracks of Britain, they did not want to risk the same happening to their team of TRS cars at Le Mans.



[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mkV-1\\_E8x4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mkV-1_E8x4)

THE THERMIONIC VALVE



Are you sitting comfortably everyone? then I'll begin.

Revising the club's diary of events for this edition, I came across Peter Hine's Bletchley Park event and those fabulous valve driven computers. This put me in mind of my own career roots involved with valve driven missile control systems. And now 45 years later, they are still - just - being used.

A handful of specially crafted glass valves each measuring one metre high are all that is stopping BBC's long wave service, the historic home of Test Match Special, Yesterday in Parliament and the Daily Service going suddenly and permanently off air.

The valves, at Droitwich in Worcestershire, are so rare that engineers say there are fewer than 10 in the world, and the BBC has been forced to buy up the entire global supply. Each lasts anywhere between one and 10 years, and when one of the last two blows the service will go quiet.

The valve evolved almost by chance and lurked for years as an electrical curiosity. In 1883 that chap Edison was attempting to make more efficient one of his latest creations - the light bulb. He got one of his troops to knock up a bulb with two filaments, the idea being to attract particles that would otherwise darken the inside of the bulb. He noticed that when the second filament was positively charged a current flowed in the circuit, but when reversed it didn't. But that's as far as it went. This became known as the Edison effect.

In 1889 Ambrose Fleming decided to conduct (sorry) further experiments. He noticed that if he applied an alternating current, only half the cycle was passed. The bulb was acting as a recti-

fier turning AC to DC. But still no one could figure out what to do with it.

In 1904 Fleming had his eureka moment when working as a consultant to Marconi, who was pioneering the use of radio waves as a way of 'wireless' transmission of telegraph signals. He realised that the bulb could be used for the one way flow of electrical current, just like a valve controls water and called the device a valve.

Another smarty pants came along - Lee De Forest who introduced a third element which became known as a grid. This enabled the control of electron flow and opened the way for the broadcasting of continuous sound rather than the dots and dashes of the telegraph. WW1 added to the urgency for developing a valve amplified wireless. And so the in the post WW1 years saw the development of the radio and a massive worldwide audience for radio as home entertainment.

The pinnacle of valve technology was arguable reached during WW2. with the construction of *Colossus*, the code-breaking computer at Bletchley Park which used 2,400 valves. Even that was dwarfed by ENIAC the so called 'giant brain' built in 1946 for the US Army which was 100ft long and consisted of 17,468 valves.

Ironically the cult among (rich) audio enthusiasts who relish the warmth of the sound reproduction is the use of valves. The most expensive hi-fi amplifiers proudly display an army of glowing valves. And in a clash of technologies you can by valve amplifiers in which to dock your MP3 player. **Ed**

AGAINST ALL THE ODDS



The MG in its blue war paint and at war



Back to that February edition again. I said I would keep you up to date with progress on the new MG works programme in the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC). The team is run by one of the most successful teams in the history of the BTCC - Triple Eight - and the car is driven by the most successful driver ever in the series - Jason Plato.

So there was little doubt that the team would become successful, but no one expected the car to perform as well as it did on April 1st - no this is not an April fool. The car didn't have a proper test until the week before Brands Hatch - the venue for the first round. There was barely time to get both team cars ready for the race. But against all the odds the car was improved incrementally over the 3 race programme. The MG scored a podium finish in the second race and a win in the third.

This puts MG and Jason Plato first in the championship ahead of Honda. The next round is Donington on the 15 April. Watch this space.

**Ed**

**CLUB NEWS**

## The WESSEX MG Club 2012 EVENTS LIST

Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
21/22 Apr	Bristol Classic Car Show	No	Shepton Mallet	For information.
<b>23 Apr</b>	<b>Club Night – ‘Decorated’ Prod &amp; Poke</b>	Yes	The Bell	<i>Gordon Newman. 01225 755645. Give your car an ‘Easter Bonnet’ Chips in the pub afterwards. More details to follow.</i>
27/28/29 Apr	Club weekend Away	No	Buxton Derbyshire	<i>Paul Wheal 01249814764</i>
6 May	Abingdon Air & Country Show	Yes	Abingdon	See <a href="http://www.abingdonfayre.com">www.abingdonfayre.com</a> Tickets £15 or £12 in advance OAP's £10 or £8 (by 26 April). Leave Wharf Devizes 9.15am
<b>7-May</b>	<b>May Bank Holiday</b>			
27 May	Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle Show	No	Nr Castle Combe Track	<i>Lions Contact: Bob 01793 852 497</i>
<b>28 May</b>	<b>Club Night – Mystery Run</b>	Yes	Its a Mystery!	<i>Tom Strickland. 01249 447125. Details to follow.</i>
<b>4/5 June</b>	<b>Queens Diamond Jubilee Bank Holiday</b>			
<b>25 Jun</b>	<b>Club Night - BBQ</b>	Yes	The Bell	<i>Gordon Newman.01225 755645. Details to follow.</i>
15 Jul	Sherborne Castle Classic Car Show	Yes	Sherborne	<i>Gordon Newman. 01225 755645. Details to follow.</i>
22 Jul	Club Summer Picnic	Yes	Studland	<i>Jeni Wright. 01380 859618. Beach games &amp; summer sun fun. Details to follow.</i>
<b>23 Jul</b>	<b>Club Night – Boules Evening</b>	Yes	The Bell	Details to follow.

## The WESSEX MG Club 2012 EVENTS LIST

Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Additional Information
28 Jul	Salisbury Race Meeting (Provisional, subject to support)	No	Salisbury	Evening meeting with Abba tribute band to follow.
<b>20 Aug</b>	<b>Club Night – Driving Test</b>	Yes	Tom's Field	<i>Tom Strickland. 01249 447125.</i> Details to follow.
<b>27 Aug</b>	<b>Bank Holiday</b>			
8 or 9 Sept	Club visit to Bletchley Park	Yes	Bletchley Nr. Milton Keynes	<i>Peter Hine. 01672 512847.</i> Details in March edition of newsletter
23 Sept	MGB 50 MGCC/MGOC Event	Yes	Blenheim Palace	Details to follow.
? Sept	Club Treasure Hunt	Yes	Frome	<i>Tony Neale. 01373 465044.</i> Walking Treasure Hunt. Details to follow.
<b>24 Sept</b>	<b>Club Night -</b>			Details to follow.
<b>22 Oct</b>	<b>Club Night – American Civil War</b>	Yes	The Bell	<i>Roger Binney. 01380 830524.</i>
3 Nov	Roger & Lynne's Party	No	Royal Edington Village Hall	<i>Roger &amp; Lynne. 01380 830524.</i> Details to follow.
<b>26 Nov</b>	<b>Club AGM</b>	No	The Bell	Formal notification will be posted nearer the time.
8 Dec (Prov)	Christmas Dinner	No	Bromham	The Greyhound

## SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES

This month I have surprising little to tell you about my MG exploits. The BGT seems to be largely healthy although she does have a cough some mornings going up Derry hill - she soon clears herself and all is well. Any ideas- should I be worried?

I did get some mercury ace wheel trims very cheap on eBay - but they didn't come with the rare attaching bits to fit them - oh well. These are quite cool and Magnettes and early midgits can be seen wearing them occasionally.

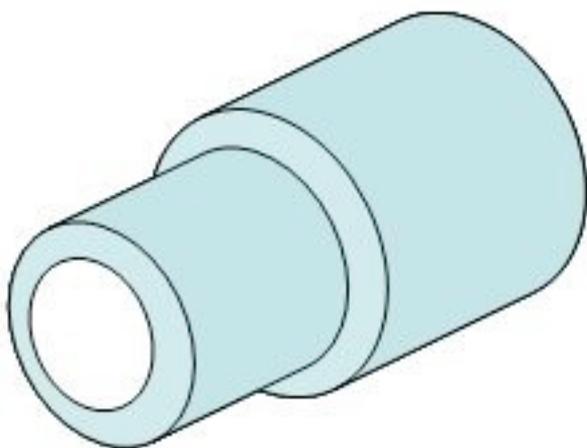
The family are doing well and by the time you read this we should at last have our new kitchen so things at Spires view are moving forward. We are still waiting for our big new driveway - we still have a gorge of rubble leading up to the house.

Cars themed as Easter Gordon - what have we let ourselves in for?

**Tom**

Hi all

Does anybody out there know a small machine shop / somebody with a decent lathe in the local area who could turn a bush re the pic below?



L = 45mm x Max D = 25mm with a stepped internal bore (I have a better drawing from which to make...)

Thanks

**Peter**