



# WESSEX MG CAR CLUB THE TOLLGATE INN-HOLT

## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

### CONTENTS

#### PAGE 2

**CLASSIC IN THE SNOW**  
Seve Todd

#### PAGE 3

**A FORK IN THE ROAD**  
Malcolm Taylor

#### PAGE 5

**NOSTALGIA**  
Roger Binney

#### PAGE 6

**BRITAIN'S FIRST SELF  
SERVICE PETROL  
STATION**  
Paul Warn

#### PAGE 8

**THE BIRTH OF DPL  
132B - IT HAD TO BE  
TARTAN RED**  
John Bishop

#### PAGE 12

**UP DATE ON CLUB  
EVENTS**  
Martyn Lucas

#### PAGE 13

**SECRETARY'S  
SCRIBBLES**  
Tom Strickland

#### PAGE 14

**THE CLUB'S DIARY**

#### PAGE 15

**CLUB ASSETS**

**CLUB NIGHTS  
SUSPENDED FOR THE  
FORESEEABLE FUTURE**

[http://  
www.wessexmgclub.org](http://www.wessexmgclub.org)

It is good to hear from some of our members that they have had their first Covid jab, and hopefully others will also soon get the vaccine.

Although the vaccine roll out seems at present to be going to plan, the pandemic does not seem to be easing rapidly and unfortunately I feel that with the various new strains emerging we are going to have restrictions and be cautious for quite a while in the future, but hopefully when Summer arrives we may start to experience a new normality.

The positive news is that I have booked a club stand at the Castle Combe Classic Race Day in October, as this is quite time in the future it should hopefully go ahead as planned. Now to some

slightly negative news the Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle Day in June has now been postponed to August 22<sup>nd</sup>, lets hope that they are able to go ahead in August, unfortunately the Gloucester Steam Extravaganza in August has been postponed to August 2022.

As we cannot at present hold our normal events programme why not give the regular virtual fun quiz nights a try, this is a great opportunity to socialise and catch up with your fellow members, if you need the log in details just let me know.

Until next month be cautious keep safe and well and look forward to brighter days which will arrive at some time in the future.

**Martyn**



## Classic in the Snow



We didn't get any action photographs, but we did find a new game to play in the snow - inspired possibly by some of Top Gear's challenges.

My wife and daughters took turns to throw snowballs at me driving up and down the road. I had to try and dodge them with a little dab of brakes or accelerator, or a majestic flick of the steering wheel. The eagle eyed amongst you will observe that the snow ball on the driver side window was a good shot. It found the tiny gap between the roof and the top of the glass.

Hope you are well and that this doesn't go on much longer. I can't continue to earn nothing and keep the MG so let's try and get these shops open!



**STEVE TODD**



## A Fork in the Road

Malcolm Taylor

What a surreal year it has been. A bit like my dreams. I am known for my crazy mixed up dreams. I can remember years ago confiding in a work colleague about a dream I had about the boss. He decided I needed certifying.

Those that have been doing Roger's Dingbats will get the fork in the road connection. The following dream was provoked by them and a programme Pat and I watched about a scenic rail journey in Bavaria. Also probably by a desire to get out as a group in our cars again.

As well as the present day, the programme featured Bavaria's past, such as the 1936 winter Olympics and some dark wartime events.

The dream started with Wessex MG out on a mass run. We were also hosting a visit by some German dignitaries. I didn't actually see them as they were up with the leaders of the run. There was a dark foreboding presence in the air though. Could have been Hitler.

Pat and I were immediately behind Paul and Sara. As we came to a fork in the road, Paul turned round and signalled me to take the junction. I signalled to those behind us to follow me. I knew there was a road further up that cut between the two forked roads. However when we got there it turned out to be one way, going against us.

But right on the junction, there was a sort of visitor centre with lots of gift shops. We all pulled in and took our more minor visitors to look in the gift shops. These were full of lots of kitschy cuckoo clocks and wooden ornaments. There you are we



said, you Germans are not the only ones who can make cuckoo clocks. (Mind you, ours were probably made in China!)

At the time of writing this, I am still struggling to come up with an answer to the first picture of Rogers second set of Dingbats, which features a cute baby on a box.

However, this has obviously provoked another dream. It is set on an estate in Reading, where a good mate of mine lives.

A young girl on the estate has a baby and the authorities are doing tests to find out who the father is (wonder where that twist comes from??). Anyway, it transpires my mate has drawn the short straw and is summoned to take the baby.

The girl is very artistic and the floor boards are sanded smooth and clear varnished. She has painted all sorts of things on the floor to entertain the baby, such as sheep and clouds and other fluffy things. She says to my mate, 'do you want to take the floor as well so that the baby won't feel so homesick?'

I can imagine his wife's response when he turns up back at home with his child under one arm and a bundle of floorboards under the other. Well I suppose it would give her something to hit him over the head with?

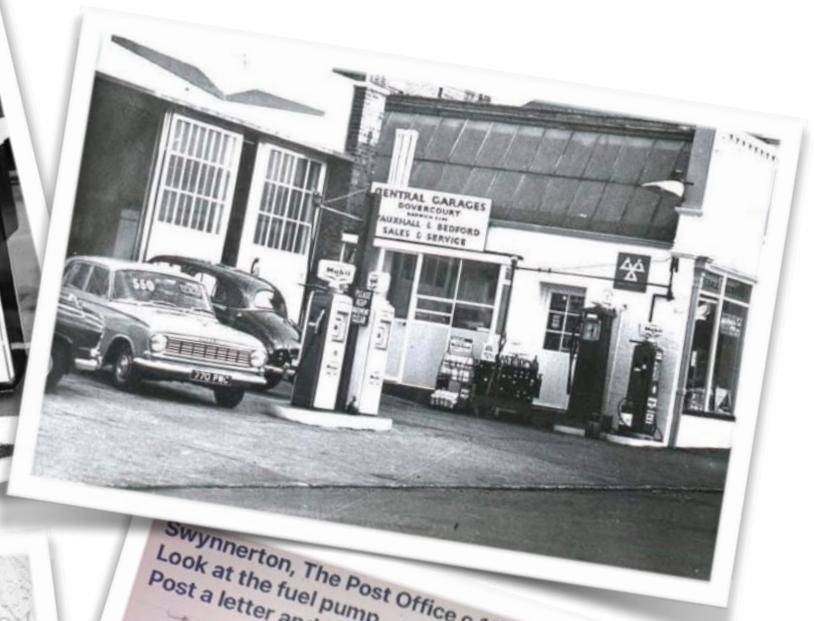
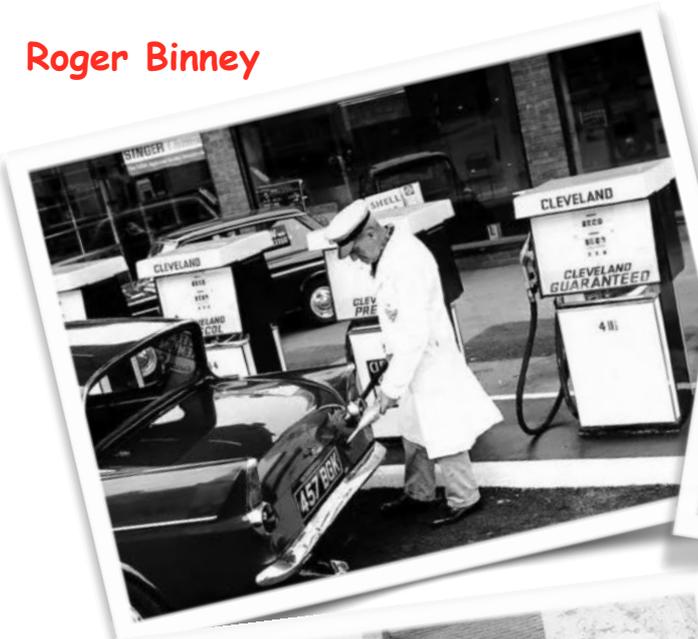


"Millie in the snow"



**Nostalgia....** "those were the days" and actually not so long ago. I remember buying petrol for my first bike at 5/~ a gallon from Total, the cheapest in those days. Just love the greenshield stamps, the uniform and the post office. And that's a very shiny Ford Anglia.

**Roger Binney**





## Britain's First Self Service Petrol Station - and more...

Paul Warn

Roger's nostalgic nod to the past, reminded me of an event that took place in my home town of Plymouth - when I was much younger than today.

In 1958 my boyhood hero Stirling Moss - in my view the greatest sportsman this country has ever produced - took time out from going toe to toe with Mike Hawthorn's works Ferrari in the 1958 F1 world championship, to open the first stage of an innovative new garage development to be built on two levels in the centre of the city. Did I bunk-off school to go and see him I hear you whisper?

It was built entirely of reinforced concrete in order to give unobstructed floor areas

and featured a cantilevered canopy. Now here's the thing.

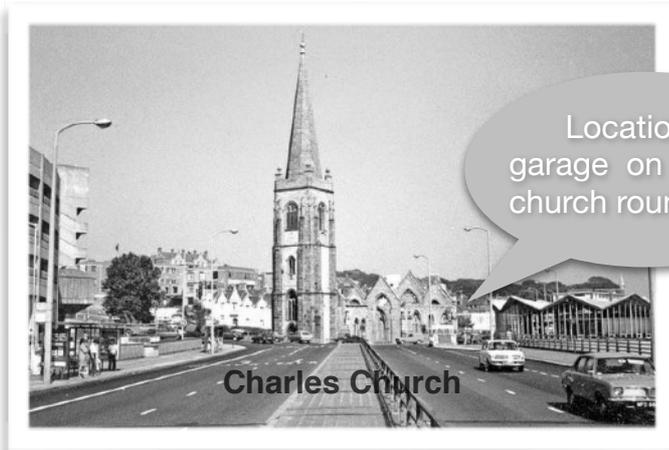
In 1963 the garage proprietor installed Britain's first self-service petrol pumps. Three of the pumps were designed to blend five intermediate grades of petrol, the remaining six delivered the two standard grades available at the time. With no pump

attendant required to fill tanks for customers, the garage was able to sell petrol at a discount - pleased by dad no end.

In September 1964, Stirling Moss made a return visit to the the city to open the upper portion of the development. Designed by Peter Roseveare, at the time it was Britain's most modern service station. It was also the first petrol station in the



country to be built on the outer edge of a roundabout. The roundabout itself was unique in that it was built to conserve a church - Charles Church - which had been bombed during WW2. As the petrol station was on a roundabout, the entrance and exit points required the pumps to be arranged around an inner island and an outer circle. A circular quick-service bay was also unique to Britain, cars drove onto a turntable, were then rotated to an available bay and worked on from a platform on the



floor below. Another rare element was the Crypton Heenan Rolling Road, which enabled testing and diagnostics at speeds up to 120 mph. A waiting room with a trendy coffee bar - my dad couldn't see the point - allowed customers to watch the work being carried out. A ramp to the workshop floor below gave access to a semi-automatic car wash. Alas the whole complex has long gone.

## PS

To add a local spin to this story. Mike Hawthorn beat Stirling Moss to the aforementioned world championship in 1958. As a result Enzo Ferrari agreed to Mike becoming a Ferrari concessionaire using his car dealership "The Tourist Trophy Garage" in Farnham.

The first two Ferraris he imported were 250GT coupes which he displayed on his own stand at the 1958 Earls Court Motor Show. To keep this brief, these were the first Ferrari road cars ever to be sold in the UK and as such are historically important. One no longer exists



in its original form, however the other "5 HPD" has been recently sold to Chris Haynes of the Haynes International Motor Museum. So next time you're down that way keep an eye.





The Birth of DPL  
132B....it had to be  
Tartan red!

John Bishop

If you're an MG purist you would be well advised not to read this article. What follows is an attempt to explain how my very non-standard, non-original red MGB was "born" and, in order to do this, a little bit of history is required...

You'll need to imagine me - an impoverished sixth former - riding a Lambretta LD shaft drive scooter - and yes, I did have a parka complete with a bit of "skunk" fur around the collar. But, to vary the famous quotation from Orwell's Animal Farm, some formative near-death experiences on this masterpiece of Italian engineering made me start to think: "four wheels good, two wheels bad". Friends at school had discovered the Berkeley three wheeler, largely I suspect because they could drive one at age 16 with a motorcycle licence.

Aesthetics did not enter into this: the Berkeley looked like a bathtub with wheels and sounded like a lawn mower, but it had an undeniably sporty image and was far cooler than the angular Bond mini-cars or the globular Isettas of that era and it was open top. A neighbour was flashing around in a white Triumph Herald convertible which really looked the business: as ever, however, financial restraints kicked in and my available £70 overall budget meant that I eventually settled for a yellow and white Herald with a tin lid. Despite mildly impressing my girlfriend at the time, the Herald always underwhelmed me.

Admittedly it had the turning circle of a London taxi, but having fun by whirling round in ridiculously tight circles scrubbing out the front tyres in the process ultimately bored me, and the acceleration of 0 - 60 mph in about 2 minutes failed to send the adrenaline coursing through my veins. Then a friend acquired a tartan red MGB with wire wheels and I knew what car I really wanted...

In 1972 I went off to Leeds University and joined the University Air Squadron where all the lads seemed to have a sports car. I hankered after an MGB, but ultimately it was a blue 1098 Austin Healey Sprite that came up at the right price. A few years later another chance to buy an MG came along, but fate decreed that it should be another Sprite that presented itself at the right price but in the wrong colour: this time a 1275 in a rather grim orangey

hue that was euphemistically called "burned sand" as I recall (humble apologies if you actually like this colour). After 128,000 miles and a lot of fun, the second Sprite clapped out both bodily and mechanically and, as Priscilla my wife was pregnant with our son, we acquired a four-door Ford Escort Automatic (the most boring car I have ever owned - except that Priscilla managed to spin it one night on an icy road, making it momentarily quite exciting) and the Bishops lapsed predictably into ownership of a series of "sensible", tin-lidded family cars.

So there it is! The tale of the car I never owned. All I needed to do was wait the twenty or so years until the kids grew up and maybe I'd finally own that mythical red MGB. So that is what I did.

The hunt began in 2006, but I soon discovered the incompatibility between maintaining a busy job and hammering around the country looking at prospective MGs. Whilst visiting a friend in London I eventually found a handsome looking B - it was British racing green, but of course I am used to the fact that I can never find one the right colour! I invested in an RAC inspection, wisely as it turns out, to be informed that the "reputable" dealer who had this gleaming beast for sale was vastly more skilled in camouflaging faults than I was in detecting them. Hmmm.....

It was at this point, with my very indulgent wife's consent, that I decided to start from scratch. Being an aeromodeller I always like to have a building project on the go, so it seemed quite natural to undertake a car project - but to be brutally honest, I have become worryingly deskilled over the decades

when it comes to mechanics. I lost track a long time ago of what all those black boxes and tubes do under the bonnet. Whilst surfing the web I learned about Heritage shells, discovered that MGB parts are fairly cheap and readily available, and located a specialist garage in Bristol who were happy to supply a donor car and build me the car of my choice.

Authenticity, accurate restoration and fidelity to the original were not going to be issues that troubled me: I simply decided to choose all the MGB features that I liked best. Since this was the reincarnation of a boyhood dream, it also wasn't going to boil down to value for money. Apologies to any purists who may have got this far, but in fairness you were warned at the start!

It had to be tartan red, chrome bumper, pre-1972, have chrome wires, overdrive, a chrome radiator, a decent hood (I got fed up with replacing cheap hoods on the Sprites), a boot rack and a stainless steel exhaust system - both Sprites seemed to eat exhaust systems voraciously! Given that I don't plan to sell the car, I opted to have a reconditioned engine,



gearbox and rear axle along with a Koni conversion on the suspension and various other new bits with a view to creating a reliable classic rather than Frankenstein's monster.

A trip to the MG Owners Club Headquarters at Swavesey proved to be a massive help in selecting the various goodies that would be needed to deck out the cabin. I've always liked wooden dashboards and leather seats, so it was really only a matter of selecting the colour and design that I fancied most. It's rather odd being in a warehouse trying out lots of car seats that aren't actually bolted to a car: being prone to a touch of sciatica, I went for the most comfortable ones, the heated MG Club sports recliners. In all honesty the "heated" bit



didn't make them any more comfortable, but along with an uprated alternator and a beefier heater matrix, I hoped to stay warmer on those colder English days - that is most days, come to think of it! Having a Motolita steering wheel was irresistible, and it was fun selecting the wheel boss, gear lever knob and other bits of trim from the displays in the MG headquarters. Did I do any of the building myself? No, only in a chequebook sort of way.

Collecting the car was lots of fun, but you'll all be keen to know if my rebuilt MG was as good as one that had rolled off the

production line at Abingdon. The truth is that the car has proved to be like the proverbial curate's egg - it was good in parts. It was immediately apparent that something was wrong with the rear suspension given the spine-jarring nature of the ride. "Just stick a bag or two of cement in the boot and the springs will soon bed in" was the advice. To cut a long story short, the MGOC parabolic springs that I'd had fitted (and which were deemed to be the problem) were replaced with standard springs before somebody eventually noticed that various bits of the suspension had been wrongly attached to the Heritage shell.

Relief at last, but the DPL 132B was proving to be remarkably incontinent - that is the car, not its owner! Yet another trip back to Bristol revealed that the cylinder head was faulty and had to be replaced. The replacement head also proved to be faulty. Back to Bristol. Then the overdrive packed up. Back to Bristol - at this point you will have noticed the recurrent theme! All these items were replaced under guarantee, but the replacement overdrive unit left me with an incorrectly calibrated speedo and my MG driving seemed limited to a particular stretch of the M4 motorway. And then the breakdowns started: the first happened to Priscilla when she was trying to impress our daughter's new boyfriend. It just wouldn't start after a nice pub lunch somewhere in Somerset. The car was recovered to Bristol where the starter lead was found to be hanging on by a couple of strands - an ancient one must have come from the donor car. And there had always been a weird misfiring problem which twice resulted in it not firing at all - once in the rain coming back down the M5 from Birmingham, and then during a local test drive after it had been "fixed". Twice more the car disappeared in that embarrassing fashion on the back of a recovery truck, and I eventually discovered that a new fuel pump worked a whole lot better than the one that had come from the donor car. A very dodgy distributor had also been a chronic



source of problems so electronic ignition was fitted and, at last, I seem to have a reliable car!

At this point I should pay tribute to my daughter's advice, perhaps occasioned by me getting into yet another black apoplexy, which was the reminder that "Dad, it's not a new car, it's a project!" That's right. I'd forgotten. There was no time frame for getting things right and I only had myself to keep happy.

It's now 2021 and in the fourteen years I have owned the "Red Beast" there have been countless other small hiccups which I've been able to fix myself, such as a shard of metal getting stuck in a carburettor float chamber causing a petrol flood. The B is currently residing in a barn somewhere near Edington - this is because its garage has been knocked down as part of the process of adding an extension to the house. What else can you do during lockdown?



I must confess that for a long time the project seemed more trouble than it was worth, but Priscilla and I have really enjoyed making a whole new group of friends at the Wessex MG Club. The problems were largely down to two sources: faulty reconditioned parts and worn bits from the donor car. Quality control is hardly the same as in a modern automotive plant, so I'm inclined to put the problems down to bad luck rather than anyone's fault. Purists may disapprove, but this has at least been my project and yes, it has been fun starting from scratch and "giving birth" to a new car.

And this time it is tartan red, and it is an MG!



Lock-down game courtesy of John Bishop



## Update on Club Events

### Castle Combe Classic Race Meeting Saturday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021

I have booked a stand for our club at this meeting, which will hopefully go ahead and it will be a dry day!!

The booking code is **WESSEXMGCLASSIC**

To book the link is <https://castlecombecircuit.co.uk/shows/autumn-classic/02/10/2021/club-book> with the booking deadline of September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

### Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle Day -

This event which was due to be held on Sunday June 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 **has now been postponed to Sunday August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021** at Meadow Farm Nurseries, Langley Burrell, Chippenham SN15 4LW and I have booked a club stand, hopefully this will go ahead as planned more details in future newsletters.

### MG Live= Silverstone June 2021

This event will not now be held in 2021 and has been rescheduled to Summer 2022

### Gloucester Steam and Vintage Extravaganza - August 2021

Sadly due to the uncertainty regarding restrictions the organisers of this large event have reluctantly decided to postpone this until August 2022

### Haynes Breakfast Club - Early Sunday Morning from April onwards

Haynes Museum have announced that they hope to resume the early morning breakfast meets from April, one week will be for pre 1980 cars and bikes and the next for Modern Classics from the 1990's onward, you now have to prebook and there is now a charge of £5 per vehicle, with extra cost for admission to the museum.

I am planning to go along to one of these at some stage, if anyone else would like to join me I will endeavour to arrange a club parking area, please let me know if you would like to join me.

**Martyn**



## Secretary's Scribbles

Thank you Paul for some inspiration about what to write this month.

I am reflecting on the day my Magnette won the Pride of Ownership award at the 2011 Stoneleigh Spares Day. This was quite a few years ago and I drove Vic and I think Paul Wheal up to the show and parked in the sheds alongside all the immaculate cars.

Two things stood out about my car, one was that it was a Magnette and there was only a couple at the event. The second was that there was a baby seat strapped in the back. These two things, I believe, meant the judges were moved to stick the note under my wiper blades ahead of all the near perfect MGA,Bs etc. I was awarded a glass trophy and a photoshoot in MG Enthusiast Magazine.

Simon Goldsworthy came down to Sunny Wiltshire and interviewed me about my interest in all things MG and we went off to

find a quiet lane to take the photos. My eldest daughter, Claire who was nearly two joined in for the photos to give it the family feel and indeed the article was titled 'Family Matters'. It was great fun, and I was certainly really proud to have the car featured in a magazine. I have attached some photos from the photo shoot - [see next page](#).

The various magazines are always after stories and it is quite easy to get published - the MGOC even used to send you a £5 cheque if you sent in an article. I know a few in the club have done so - why don't you have a go - it could be a holiday experience in your MG or some piece of modification that you have done perhaps.

Take care everyone...



**Tom**



Secretary's Scribbles Cont...



## Club Diary

2021 EVENTS DIARY				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/ Time
12/13th June	MG Live		Silverstone	<b>TBC</b>
19/20th June	Bath Festival of Motoring		Landsdowne	<b>TBC</b>
25th July	MGF25		Gaydon British Motor Museum	<b>Rescheduled for 2022</b>
26th July	Club Night Outside Event		Tollgate	<b>TBC</b>
31st July/ 1st Aug	Gloucester Steam Fayre		South Cerney	<b>Rescheduled for August 2022</b>
22nd Aug	Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle Show		Meadow Farm Nurseries Chippenham	<b>TBC</b>
5th Sept	White Horse Vehicle Show		Westbury	<b>TBC</b>
11th Dec	Christmas Party		Tollgate	<b>TBC</b>

It is the committee's intention to schedule an outside meet-up as soon as practicable. Our annual mystery run may be an opportunity to meet...



## Club Asset List

CLUB ASSET LIST			
ASSET	CURRENT HOLDER	CONTACT DETAILS	
Engine Hoist	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	<a href="mailto:stricklandto@hotmail.com">stricklandto@hotmail.com</a>
Club Sail Banner	Kevin Meakin	01380 727151	<a href="mailto:kevinmg1@live.com">kevinmg1@live.com</a>
Event Shelter + Sides	Kevin Meakin	01380 727151	<a href="mailto:kevinmg1@live.com">kevinmg1@live.com</a>
Projector	Paul Warn	01225 768676	<a href="mailto:paul.william.warn@gmail.com">paul.william.warn@gmail.com</a>
Speakers	Paul Warn	01225 768676	<a href="mailto:paul.william.warn@gmail.com">paul.william.warn@gmail.com</a>
Projector Stand	Paul Warn	01225 768676	<a href="mailto:paul.william.warn@gmail.com">paul.william.warn@gmail.com</a>
Projector Screen & Cover	Paul Warn	01225 768676	<a href="mailto:paul.william.warn@gmail.com">paul.william.warn@gmail.com</a>
New Set of Boules	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	<a href="mailto:stricklandto@hotmail.com">stricklandto@hotmail.com</a>

**NOTE:**

If you need to borrow or take custody of any of the club's assets, the current holder should be contacted directly to arrange transfer. The new 'holder' of the asset should notify Paul Warn by email to ensure the asset list is kept up-to-date.