

NEWSLETTER

**WESSEX
MG CLUB**
AT THE BELL INN SEEND



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Well, the weather has changed and the roof has at last been folded back on the MG. Although Jane and I have not been able to get too involved this year we managed the Gloucester Motor Show over the weekend. We met Vic, Jenny and Kevin near Tilbury Hill and made our way. A couple of minor panics as the dark clouds came over and light rain started to fall. We reached our destination safely and dry. But very cold. Ken and Sarah arrived as we got there and later on Nigel and Sue arrived in their Lea Francis and we all had a good day.

Jane and I have been down to The Fox and Hounds to confirm that our prod and poke and BBQ is on course for the 22nd. If you have not given me your name and wish to attend please let me know as Justin, (The Proprietor), needs to know to get the food in. Jane and I are both looking forward to getting more involved again and the picnic which Paul has potentially organised for Berkley Castle. Hopefully we`ll get a good turn out.

Graham

For your diary in the coming month:

June

22nd - Club Night - Prod & Poke
(Fox & Hounds Devizes 7:30 start)

July

12th - Summer Picnic
27th - Club Night - Games Evening David's House

See page 12 in this edition for more events and details.

Club Night start time 8:00pm unless otherwise stated



The Unsolved Mystery

The Toddster, or Poppy, depending on which family member you ask, had been in a temperamental mood over the Spring. Not keen to get started without jump leads. So imagine my delight when Vic kindly helped me get her going again, and just a few days before his Mystery Run.

So, full of the joys of Spring, I set off to meet everyone in Melksham, roof down, for the run. The signs were there after just ten minutes when my roof down enthusiasm in the sweltering heat of the sun (must have been at least 12 degrees) was thwarted by the rain. Being typically British, I tried to drive quickly enough for the rain to whistle over me. A combination of roundabouts and the onset of hypothermia encouraged me to break the habit of a lifetime and put the roof up. But only for ten minutes!



Having been second past the post in my first ever mystery run a few years ago, I thought to myself, this should be simple. Not having a co-pilot to read the instructions, I had set myself a failsafe plan. By nestling halfway through the convoy I couldn't go wrong...

The first ten miles or so went beautifully. I had been systematically checking the directions whilst following the convoy. Happy that all was going to plan I relaxed and followed the others. And here's a nice quiet left turn... ah wait... the convoy is just down to two... And number 1 is performing a 3 point turn. B**ger...

Back on track and passing Vic checking us all off I thought, "perhaps I need to read these directions myself now". Confidently I left my one sole glimmer of hope and sensibility and took off in a different direction. Beautiful road, sheep and thatched rooves galore. Seemed a shame to turn off of it.

I didn't see another MG that evening. Box looked very pleasant, and I had a lovely sunset tour around Lacock - all very picturesque. A quick call to Vic confirmed that I was much nearer to my own house than to the finishing point.

Attached is a picture of where I finished my run, much to the surprise of Mrs T who had anticipated a quiet night of whatever ladies watch on TV. And then it occurred to me; what a lovely evening I had enjoyed. Driving totally aimlessly in a car that is largely useless for my day to day life. What's not to like!?

The mystery run remains as intended - a mystery. I hate to spoil a good surprise!"

Steve Todd

Recommendation - Secure Car and Caravan Storage

Storing vehicles that we don't use all the time can be a problem. I can recommend a new storage facility that has recently opened in Bulkington.

Phil Coles at Lease Farm now has secure undercover storage facilities for 250 cars, caravans and motorhomes. Current prices are £10 a week for cars and motorhomes and £12 a week for caravans. All vehicles are parked on hard-standing and Phil plans to install multiple power points for trickle charging.



Security is well served and vehicles up to 12' high can be accommodated.

Contact: Phil Coles, Lease Farm, Mill Lane, Bulkington, SN10 1SR, tel:01380 828145.

David

BBQ at Orchardleigh Golf Club

It's always good to have an excuse to head out top down on a summer's evening, so a select few of us headed out to the Orchardleigh Golf Club at Buckland Dinham where, along with members from the Norton Radstock Classic Vehicle Club, we were invited to a barbeque hosted by the Bath Motor Club. The golf club is set in a very beautiful location on the Orchardleigh estate and it was enjoyable to pootle up the mile long driveway between the bunkers and fairways to the clubhouse.

Attendance exceeded all expectation as a succession of Minis, large Austin Healeys, Rovers, the occasional Jaguar, Escort Mexico and others too varied to mention lined up alongside our posse of MGs. The Bath Chronicle and Frome Standard were in attendance and we were soon corralled into the centre to pose for the official photographer whose shot, incidentally, I managed to "steal" - but you might like to check the papers later this week for the more professional version.

It was good to have a chance to admire a most interesting range of local classics and to mingle with their owners. Once assembled in the clubhouse we were addressed by a representative from the Great Western Air Ambulance - the chosen charity of the Bath Motor Club - before tucking into the pre-prepared barbeque. Breeze and Radio Bristol were also represented, so by now you may have heard their reports if you listen to these stations.

Thanks to Vic for organising this!

John Bishop

MGF - A VERY CONSIDERATE CAR

I have previously written about my MGF (Mata Hari) being considerate by self healing herself for the duration of an MOT test. Well she has ridden to the rescue again, I think.

We have just been for a jaunt to Holland in the other car (Vauxhall Zafira) to meet up with a Dutch chum from New Zealand. I needed to give the Vauxhall a real going over to make sure it would stand up to the trip. So I jack it up, take all 4 wheels off and remove the front pads and discs. Whilst it is in this state I will need to rely on Mata Hari for transport and to fetch bits for the Vauxhall.

During this process we go to see my grand-daughter in Southampton and Mata Hari performs by ceasing to charge the battery. I had to buy a battery charger to top up the battery whilst playing with grand-daughter. We managed to get home on one battery charge. The next day I book the MG into my local garage to sort the problem.



Returning to the Vauxhall, I discover that the exhaust is shot and the engine is making worrying noises and it's getting close to commencement of the trip. Once the brakes are sorted and it's back on it's wheels, I take it to the garage for an opinion. Water pump bearing! He advises not moving it as I could lose the timing belt and be looking at big bucks.

However, he is busy and can't look at it in time for the trip. But of course I have Mata Hari booked in. So I swap the Vauxhall for Mata Hari's slot and bingo, we are in business. Thanks Mata Hari.

The trip to Holland went without a hitch except losing a wheel-trim on a Dutch motorway somewhere. 4 countries and a cruise each way as we took the shortest channel crossing, Dover to Calais. I still have to fix the charging problem on the MG.

Malcolm Taylor

Summer Picnic

Our destination for this year's summer picnic is Berkeley Castle.

I have had an enthusiastic response to my e-mail with 25 confirmations - excellent! which is at the moment 13 cars.

Anne and I made a trip to the castle to make arrangements for the day and also plot a route for an early morning jaunt. The castle staff are looking forward to receiving us. We will have dedicated parking along the length of the picnic area and I have arranged a club tour of the castle for 11:15am.



We will depart from Morrison's Super store - **SN14 6UZ** - which is at the end of the Chippenham by-pass travelling north on the A350, opposite The Premier Inn/ Brewer's Fayre - at 9:00am. I have prepared a simple cross country route of 28 miles which should take about an hour, arriving at the castle around 10:00am.

I will need to collect your entrance fee on arrival as I am required to pay for the group as a one-off payment.

ED

Track Day Campaign

Track Days offer an opportunity to drive a car free of oncoming traffic and speed limits and in a generally safe environment. In other words, they offer a chance for a driver to test his skills and limits.

Nowadays, I am not really a track day type but I recognise their value for gaining experience and letting off steam. Until early 2014, monthly track days were held at Keevil airfield but plans by the MoD to build a cinder runway brought this to an end.

This MoD plan has now been dropped and gliding and hunting are returning to the airfield. Unsurprisingly, the track day enthusiasts are hoping that the RAF will agree to re-instate their facilities.

To this end, a campaign group met recently to plan their action.

Masterminded by Phil Coles (extreme left) a Lotus Elise owner, and supported by Jonathan Seed (extreme right), Wiltshire Councillor, the track days are organised by Natasha and Ed Moore of Trackdays and British Motor Sports Events (on my right). Ed himself is Formula Ford



champion and does (or did!) some of Clarkson's stunt drives on Top Gear. Additional support comes from David Smitherham who runs the Classic Car Club.

The group is to invite the RAF to our next Parish Council meeting on 15 July and it is hoped that like-minded people will attend to illustrate local interest. The objective will be to convince the RAF that the track days are run responsibly, that they represent a valuable amenity, an opportunity to gain driving experience and can facilitate charitable fundraising.

Wish us luck!

David

MGB ON THE TARGA - ROTORS, BUMPERS AND BROKEN BOTTLES

As you may know Timo Makinen was a BMC works racing/rally driver. He contested the Targa Florio - one of the most difficult road races in days of yore - on three occasions - 1965-67.

The first of these was in a rally-spec Healey 3000 co-driven by Australian Paul Hawkins. But for a broken rotor arm they might have finished in the top ten and beaten the Ferrari 250GTs to a class win.

They would have certainly done better than their eventual 21st place had they informed Hawkins of the spare rotor arm it had thoughtfully stored in the cockpit! "Hawkeye" as he was affectionately known, only discovered this having run two miles back to the pits from the stranded car. After a purple faced rant, he retraced his weary steps.

The following year provided Timo with a more straightforward race - once a pair of English spectators had been persuaded to part with the bumpers from their road-going MGB. The scrutineers insisted that Makinen's Group 3 machine be so equipped - see pic. Timo shared the car with John Rhodes and they finished 9th overall, first in class.



In 1967, Makinen shared a bit of a bitsa car with fellow Monte Carlo Rally winner Paddy Hopkirk. The car featured the lightweight alloy GT shell that had been prepared for a racing version of the six-cylinder MGC engine. But that was still top secret - and so a stretched 2004cc B motor was fitted on this occasion. The car was also odd in that it was painted red on the inside, green on the outside - the result of a last-minute realization that cars in the prototype class had to run in national racing colours, not the usual red bodies-white roof of BMC.

There was another problem before the race. Timo and fellow Scandinavian teammate Rauno Aaltonen were placed into custody after a fracas at Naples airport. The cause of the dispute was some broken vodka bottles...

The MG GTs, as the team called it, finished 9th - unofficially. A complicated results system meant that it was unclassified overall because it failed to complete the race within 110% of the class winner's time. It was however awarded 3rd in class! Oh Hum...

ED

Photo Gallery -



The May Mystery Car

There have been no Mystery Car responses this month. Either Ken is away or we have an unresolved mystery.

So let me introduce Duncan Healey and his two babies, the Duncan Healey and the Duncan Dragonfly. Ian Duncan is the chap in the photograph. It was he that got side-tracked into designing cars when he was meant to be building food processing machinery in Norfolk for his brother Albert, just after the war.

Ian was a mechanical engineer and a of the aviation industry. He bought the chassis from Healey in Warwick, the Riley 2.4 litre engine from BMC and the aluminium body was



produced in Coventry around an ash frame fabricated by a local boat-builder.

With its big engine, wood-framed aluminium body, and good aerodynamics, apparently it would do 100mph. The trouble with such a speed was the steering. It is said that you needed a very wide road in the early hours of the morning, then try to pilot it down the middle of the road.

Allegedly, lots of these ended up in hedges.

Whilst building the Duncan Healey, work progressed in secret to produce their first mini car. The principal designers were Alan Lamburn, who had worked on the Barracuda aircraft, and Frank Hamble who had developed the heat exchangers for the Gloster Meteor, the first operational jet aircraft.

Both had extensive pre-war motor industry experience and the team's efforts resulted in the Duncan Dragonfly. This was a unitary bodied, transverse engine baby with a 500cc BSA engine and Moulton rubber suspension.

Sadly, the success was short lived. Development costs had drained the company's resources and the Duncan Engineering went into receivership in 1948. It appears that Duncan then sold his design to Leonord Lord, boss of Austin, because work continued on development in Longbridge.

Eventually the project was canned in the early 1950s but the design features pioneered by Duncan re-appeared of course in the Mini some 10 years later!

David

Club News

Secretary's Scribbles

I am writing this on Monday 8th June. I am a very excited MG owner as on Wednesday the ZB is off to start it's 5 speed gearbox conversion. It is funny how cars react to change isn't it....

This last weekend we drove up to Burford for the MGs in the Park event (fab for kids!) and the car drove beautifully, there was none of the normal grinding of gears, no jumping out of gear, no sign of worn synchromesh etc etc it ran 'spot on'. What is she up to? Is she showing me that she doesn't want an upgrade or that she is an elegant elderly lady that doesn't want poking about with? I am thinking positively and believe she was just showing me how good she was in her hey day - a last blast of 4 speed motion!

I am a bit nervous - I would be lying if I denied it but the good news is that Vic is leading the operation and I know that I can trust him.

Next time you see the car I should have the option of 5 forward gears and hopefully one reverse gear too (that Joke is for Ken!).

Tom

| 2015 EVENTS LIST | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date | Event | Club Event | Venue | Contact Details & Start Point/Time |
| 22 Jun | Club Night (Prod & Poke BBQ) | Yes | The Fox & Hounds Devizes | |
| 12-Jul | Summer Picnic | Yes | Berkeley Castle | <i>Paul Warn</i> |
| 27-Jul | Club Night (Games Evening) | Yes | David's House | <i>David Whiteley</i> |
| 19th Aug | Peter Browning Talk | No | Abingdon | <i>Martyn Lucas</i> |
| 24-Aug | Club Night (Talk) - TBC | Yes | TBA | TBA |
| 30-Aug | Action Day | Yes | Tom's Field | <i>Tom Strickland</i> |
| 20-Sep | Club-Run Basingstoke Milestones Museum | | | <i>Martyn Lucas</i> |
| 28-Sep | Club Night (Theme TBA) | Yes | TBA | TBA |
| 26-Oct | Club Night (Grand Prix talk - Duel of the Titans - Nazi sponsored GP racing 1930-1939) | Yes | TBA | <i>Paul Warn</i> |
| TBC | Committee Meeting | No | TBA | <i>Tom Strickland</i> |
| 23-Nov | Club AGM | Yes | TBA | Formal notification will be included in the Sept & Oct newsletter. |
| 13-Dec | Christmas Party | Yes | TBA | |
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NB The last column includes the committee member responsible for the event. If you need to contact them, you will find their details on page 7. Just click their email address or give them a call.

ED