



WESSEX MG CAR CLUB THE TOLLGATE INN-HOLT

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

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**CLUB NIGHTS
SUSPENDED FOR THE
FORESEEABLE FUTURE**

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

As the clocks are about to change and the evenings start to get lighter, we would normally be starting the events season, but this year it appears that the season will start a while later than usual. I am certain that the wait will be worthwhile as there are lots of things planned for later in the year.

It was good to see the response for passes for both the Chippenham Lions and Westbury Lions Cherished Vehicle Shows which hopefully will go ahead as scheduled and your club will have a strong presence at both events.

We have booked the Tollgate for a Club Barbecue on Monday July 26th and also for our Club Christmas Party on Saturday December 11th. Dependent on Coronavirus levels, these dates are provisional and further details will be available in the coming weeks.

It is hoped that we can begin to resume normal club nights in the coming months but in the meantime I am planning to organise a couple of evening or Sunday drives finishing at a scenic venue, and we also have the regular virtual quiz nights to keep us entertained.

Something to put in the diary for September 2022 is the MGB 60th anniversary day being held at the British Motor Museum at Gaydon. Doesn't time fly it seems like only yesterday that I went to the 50th at Blenheim Palace.

There is a lot to look forward to in the brighter days to come and I am looking forward to getting out and about in the car but although I have had the first Covid jab I still believe it is important to be cautious and keep safe and well.

Martyn



Club Member Car of the Month



Polished ready for the off but to where and when - unless of course it's to the inoculation centre when I get my second jab?

Is ' Just giving her a well needed run out officer ' a valid excuse for being 120 miles from home?



Rick Meopham



One More for the Road

Clive Stephens

Mum and Dad never had a car. So my love for MGs, eventually resulting in 5 MGAs and 3 MGBs, took a while to evolve. The interest in cars began at school when a "cool" lad in the sixth form turned up one day in his Mum's A35 van. We became great mates (and still are). Further fuel was added by older sister's boyfriends, first with a canary yellow 1934 Austin 10 which had a dicky seat and later an oil-incontinent Triumph Renown. But the real passion began when one older brother (there were three of those) turned up one weekend with a 1948 Jaguar Mk V, 3.5 litre drop-head in BRG. Wow, what a beast!

My opportunity to get in on the motoring ladder came sooner than I expected. Having stayed on in the third year sixth to take the Cambridge entrance exam in Modern Languages, I distinguished myself by making a total pig's ear of the German paper and retreated in shame to take a "gap year". A quick letter to Bowyers and I was immediately taken on in Despatch to work 3pm until midnight or finish from Sunday to Thursday. The wage packet was just outrageous, my previous earnings having been 10 shillings a quarter for singing in Trinity Church choir (Gordon - have I got that right?) extra for weddings,

and then ten shillings a week delivering papers for Roses of Newtown. This increased after six years to 12 shillings and sixpence per week. Suddenly, thanks to Bowyers with bundles of "folding stuff" I was obscenely rich and a driving licence followed in short order.



Library Photo - Jaguar Mk V
Drop-Head

A work colleague told me of pre-war Sunbeam Talbot Limousine at Steeple Ashton. Being convinced that no such model existed I was on the bus next morning and was shown into a tumbledown shed where the flat-tired, birds' nest encrusted, moth and spider-infested beast lurked. Negotiations with the owner were brief. He was intending to smash out the wind-up partition between the chauffeur's seat and the once luxurious passenger quarters with their walnut picnic tables, and to use the glass for his greenhouse. This gratuitous vandalism seemed avoidable and I offered to buy some glass for his greenhouse and the car was mine, the logbook showing that it was first registered in 1948. The odometer read just over 40,000.

As I knew the square root of zilch about cars I was on a steep learning curve but soon got it cleaned up and coaxed into life the massive 4 litre side-valve engine and drove it, hotly pursued by a huge cloud of blue smoke, to my parents' terraced house in Trowbridge. The helpful next-door neighbour, who had an immaculate Humber Hawk, the only car in the street, suggested that I might need to look at the pistons and that they could possibly be accessed from below. So lying in the road I drained and removed the sump, undid the bearings and sure enough six saucepan-sized pistons emerged. The piston rings were so corroded that they might as well have been welded into their grooves. So with the help of mum's gas stove, cycle oil and a tiny screwdriver and hammer two days were spent chipping them out in tiny pieces. Then armed with a sample piston, a trip to Ray's Motor Accessories at the top of Islington resulted two days later in two sets of four Standard Vanguard rings. Reassembled, the engine sounded like a watch and the exhaust was mercifully clean.

Although my chums and I had some enjoyable trips in the monster (which drank like a fish at about 12-16 mpg) it seemed hopeless to think of taking it to University and so it was left at a friend's house and was sold through good old "Exchange and Mart" to a guest house keeper from Devon. I never saw it or heard of it again.

Notes on the 4 Litre Rootes Sunbeam Talbot

Rootes made a total of 229, 4 litre cars made up of 121 Saloons, 44 Sports Saloons, 7 Drop-Head Coupes, 28 Touring Limousines, 22 Touring Saloons, 2 Tourers, 5 Chassis for bespoke designs. The bodywork of the Touring Limo and Touring Saloon was by Thrupp and Maberley. The ST Register has one Touring Saloon in club membership



FBHVC clarifies the introduction of E10 petrol for historic vehicle owners

After an extensive consultation process, the Department for Transport has announced that they will legislate to introduce E10 petrol as the standard 95-octane petrol grade by 1 September 2021. They will also require the higher-octane 97+ 'Super' grades to remain E5 to provide protection for owners of older vehicles. This product will be designated as the 'Protection' grade.

The introduction of the 95-octane E10 grade and the maintenance of the Super E5 protection grade will be reviewed by the Government after 5 years to ensure they remain appropriate to the needs of the market. In relation to the E5 protection grade, such a review will examine market developments over the period. HM Government have sought to reassure FBHVC members and historic vehicle owners that, without a suitable alternative becoming available, it is highly likely the Super E5 protection grade would continue to be available.

Filling stations that stock 2 grades of petrol and supply at least one million litres of fuel in total each year, will need to ensure one product is the Super E5 protection grade. While not all filling stations meet these criteria, almost all towns across the UK will have a filling station that supplies the 'Super' grade and currently one major retailer, a national supermarket group, has committed to offer the product. The main exception to this is in certain parts of the Highlands, north and west coast of Scotland, which will be covered by an exemption process and allowed to continue to market the 95-octane E5 grade.

The Federation therefore recommends that all vehicles produced before 2000 and some vehicles from the early 2000s that are considered non-compatible with E10 - should use the Super E5 Protection grade where the Ethanol content is limited to a maximum of 5%. To check compatibility of vehicles produced since 2000, we recommend using the new online E10 compatibility checker: <https://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-e10-petrol>

It should be noted that some Super E5 Protection grade products do not contain Ethanol as the E5 designation is for fuels containing up to 5% Ethanol. Product availability varies by manufacturer and geographical location and enthusiasts should check the situation in their location.

Martyn

Swynnerton, The Post Office c.1955
Look at the fuel pump.
Post a letter and fill up at the same time.



Petrol Filling Stations - a Troubled journey

Paul Warn

Roger Binney's series of nostalgic pictures of petrol pumps and petrol stations got me thinking, particularly as the age of the petrol and diesel fuelled vehicle is coming to an end. Generally we are averse to change. One hundred and thirty years ago the age of the horse as the primary means of transport was coming to an end amid much controversy, particularly amongst the horsey well-heeled landed gentry. Today it's the well-heeled who are the collectors of the most expensive cars ever produced and to mark one's arrival in the upper echelons of society what better way of demonstrating

the fact than to buy expensive gas-guzzling SUVs. Today we think nothing of a new petrol station cropping up in our towns and countryside, in fact they are a common feature of roadside architecture. However behind the tranquil scene of the title picture with its petrol pump integrated into the design of the house/postoffice lies a troubled journey...



By the late 1860s oil was being imported into Britain where the leading distiller was the east London firm of Carless, Capel & Co. The company successfully produced oil-based products to add to their range of chemicals for industrial and domestic uses. The lighter liquids produced from the crude - later to be known as petrol - were initially a waste product. By 1890 one Fredrick Simms was importing engines from Daimler in Germany for use in motor

launches. The fuel for his launches was supplied by Carless and co - the waste product mentioned earlier - who called it "Launch Spirit". The story goes that Simms suggested the fuel be called 'Petrol'. The name was adopted and petrol was sold for 2 years before the first car arrived in Britain.

The Locomotives on the Highways Act 1896 included legislation relating to the storage of motor-spirit. It allowed motorists to store 40 gallons of fuel, as long as it was kept in tanks built to a prescribed standard containing no more than 20 gallons. As cars became more reliable and motorists more adventurous, a need arose for fuel supplies 'on the road'. Cycle shops were the first to respond to the demand. As the retail network grew bicycle shops were joined by chemists and ironmongers and later hotels. This suited Carless' company who already had a network of retail outlets for their other products and used these outlets to distribute petrol.

In the years between 1904 and 1914 the number of cars in Britain grew at an average rate of almost 50% per annum, with a proportionate growth in the demand for fuel. An amendment to the Locomotives Act required all containers for 'conveying or keeping' petrol not to exceed 2 gallons capacity. Overnight the 20



gallon storage tank became obsolete. The appearance of cars changed instantly as motorists took advantage of the convenience offered by purchasing 2 gallon cans of fuel and securing them to the running board of their cars. By this time the business of supplying petrol was very competitive. The fuel companies immediately used the cans to provide a product identity and as an advertising medium, as carrier bags are today. By 1913 the popular press was predicting the adoption of bulk storage of petrol by the fuel companies to offer greater convenience, safety and economy. The fuel companies were against this idea preferring to supply via cans. However the First World War changed everything including the supply of domestic fuel. The army cornered the market for cans to transport fuel to the front line. And so with the shortage of cans, progress toward fuel sold from bulk storage facilities or filling stations evolved. The issue of the quality and quantity of fuel supplied via pumps would become a concern however.

The first roadside pump to appear in Great Britain was in Shrewsbury in 1914. The first filling station was opened in this country in 1920. This initiative belonged to the AA who had witnessed the growth of petrol filling stations in the USA. This first station was at Aldermaston, seven others followed, the fuel was sold for the use of members only at zero profit.

The motor car had been seen by many to offer motorists the opportunity to experience Britain's countryside, but those every day country folk weren't so keen and effectively told them to "bugger off", particularly because filling stations were needed to service the unwanted visitors' cars. To make matters worse, the new fangled filling stations were constructed cheaply of unsightly corrugated iron and painted in bright colours to attract the attention of passing motorists. Enamelled signs - which of course have become collectors items today - advertising products for sale were then attached to the buildings and surrounding trees. The opposition to the



Barton's Garage Mutley Plain



Old Egham Motor

filling stations was not only extensive but well organised with the Council for the Protection of Rural England which included in its membership the RAC if you ever, taking the lead. Government legislation was put in place in 1928, giving local authorities the facility to impose by-laws to control the appearance of fuel stations. As a result architects elected to minimise the impact of their buildings by disguising them.

Which brings me onto the title photo. Competitions to design filling stations brought entries resembling amongst others a Tudor public house, a windmill and a railway

station. By far the most common form of disguise however was that of a house which could easily blend into a village setting.

The emergence in the early 1930s of businesses combining car and petrol sales gave rise to many new buildings particularly in urban areas. A number were built in the Art Deco style providing form as well as function to the filling station. There are a number of survivors from the period which have been readapted. One such is the old Egham Motor Company which is now the home of a Ferrari importer. Another stunning piece of period architecture is again from my old town of Plymouth - Barton's Garage, opened by Lord Nuffield before WW2 and unlike Charles Church, survived the bombing. An attempt was made to get the building listed through English Heritage but failed. Various retail outlets have occupied the building and gradually the art deco styled internal features have been destroyed. For example the staircase in the centre of the building and a spiral ramp for cars to access the upper showrooms...

Sadly now of course supermarket filling stations dominate our lives.

Apologies for banging on a bit - funny what a bunch of old petrol filling station photos conjures up.



Photo courtesy of Roger Binney.

Anyone care to carry out a little detective work and guess the year?

We are not sure other than the price of the red DB2 is £850.



Beetling Around
or
Herbie Goes on
Holiday

Malcolm Taylor

Something was mentioned in the family the other day that reminded me of the saga of a VW Beetle I owned.

It had been extremely cheap for various reasons (other than the fact that I am a cheapskate). It was left hand drive, the front suspension was knackered and it wasn't registered in this country. It was registered in Spain, but had been brought here by a young chap from Gibraltar, who had come to live with his brother. This was in 1972 and the car dated from 1960. Before buying it I did a bit of research and thought it would be easy to swap the whole front axle assembly for a right hand drive one from a breakers. Everything, including suspension, dampers, steering is all on one assembly that bolts to the front of the floorpan. So I knocked him down from his very cheap price! Well, I've already admitted I'm a Cheapskate.

Once I had it back home and started working on it, I contacted the customs service to check what was needed to register it in this country. I started telling the guy the story and after a while he interrupted and said, 'I'm not listening, I haven't heard a word you have said, he is not allowed to sell it until he has legally imported it into the country.' I informed the seller of this information and left the problem with him. He discussed with customs, the possibility of importing it as scrap, for spares only, due to it's condition. This would attract a far lower import duty. Customs sent someone round and witnessed the car in bits and agreed to this arrangement. He was then issued an import certificate, which he forwarded to me.

I was right, unbolt the clamps on the old axle, remove it and bolt on the right hand drive one that I had purchased. Simple?

Then the problems started!

First I had to cut a new hole in the floorpan to get the steering column through. Those Beetles were made of very thick metal. It was a straight column, housed in a long tube. No knuckle joints or collapsing mechanisms. The top of the column was clamped to the underside of the dash panel. The dash panel was again very thick metal and part of the structure of the car. Also to locate the column there was a semicircular depression on the underside of the dash panel. But of course this was on the other side of the car. So I had to create a new one. Large hammer needed. Modern cars are designed so that they can be assembled as left or right hand drive. But not in those days. I had to make provision for everything that needed to be located on the right hand side of the vehicle. More about this later.

The floorpan was like a chassis with the body bolted on top. This is why they were so easily converted into things like beach buggies. The main strength was like a centre spine chassis, created by a tunnel running down the length of the car. But of course there was no transmission running down this tunnel as the engine is at the back. The floor pan then had smaller rails running around it's perimeter. The control pedals were on a shaft spanning between the central tunnel and the edge rail. But of course on the left hand side. I had purchased a right hand set from the breakers. I had to drill and cut the central tunnel and edge rail to accommodate this. The assembly extended into the central tunnel so that a hook operated by the clutch pedal could pull a cable passing back down the tunnel to the clutch operating arm on the engine/gearbox assembly.

The brake master cylinder was mounted forward of a very robust, double walled, cross member, operated by a rod passing through and connected to the brake pedal. Again more drilling, cutting and bolting. Followed by getting new brake pipes made up to connect to the relocated master cylinder. Now we were operational and mobile, thoughts turned to getting it MOT tested. It needed that to get it registered.

The only remaining problem that I could see was that the speedo was in Km/Hr and was in front of the passenger? This was mounted in a hole provided for it in the structural dash panel, whilst the glove box was now in front of the steering wheel? I had a word with the guy that was going to test it. He said it didn't matter, the regs didn't require that the speedo indicated in mph. And as long as I could see it from the driving seat, it was fine. So that's the way it stayed. From memory, I also had to get it inspected by the Customs Dept., for which they issued a clearance certificate.

Having insured it and got the testing out of the way, I turned up at the tax dept. just before the beginning of the month. Having queued and got a slot at a window, I informed the guy that I wanted to register and tax an imported vehicle. He held his head in his hands and wailed that they were very busy and I wouldn't have all the required documentation, couldn't I come back in a couple of weeks when the first of the month rush was over and they would gladly help me. I reeled off all the customs and testing documentation that I had and he looked surprised. Oh OK, that's everything. So he went through the procedure and issued a Reg. No. He said, we always give a low number for cases like this as it may be desirable and winked at me. I don't know whether he expected a tip (see previous comment about a cheapskate. He didn't get one.) I can still remember the reg. It was YRD4K. RD being the registration code for Reading, where I lived.

My girlfriend and I had a plan to go camping on the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia. First we had to get some miles, or in our case Kilometres, on the clock, to prove the car was reliable. The first problem was when the clutch pedal hit the floor because the cable had snapped. The cable that ran down the central tunnel was in a fixed steel tube welded into the structure of the car. The lateral position of the throat of this tube was different for left and right hand cars. So the hook of the right hand set of pedals didn't line up with the left hand cable tube? The cable was being worn away on the tube because it was out of line. The answer was a bit of demon welding by a friend to extend the hook to reach the tube.

When we decided the car was reliable we organised the holiday. Organisation meaning only that we booked two weeks holiday at the same time. No ferry was booked. No campsites were booked. We set off before the crack of dawn on the prescribed day and made it as far as Chiswick flyover! There was a load bang and instant loss of forward motion. I managed to push the clutch in and cruise to the side of the road. Due to this fact, I deduced that the engine was seized.

By some means, I assume we found a telephone box (remember them) and called and managed to rouse one of my brothers. He said he would get his mate to bring his van and tow us back to Reading.

Note: We were going to Yugoslavia with no breakdown insurance - 'Cheapskate' comes to mind again?

In surprisingly quick time my brother and mate arrived in his old Austin J4 van and commenced the tow back along the A4. Unfortunately, they took the wrong turning off the roundabout at Heathrow. We were towed through the tunnel, round the airport and back out again. Perhaps he was hinting we should have flown to Yugoslavia. We did get a holiday in Cornwall in my alternative prestige transport. A 3 gear, side valve, Ford 100E.

When the Beetle was stripped down, I found a valve impaled through the top of one of the pistons. I had intended to get this shot blasted and cast in a block of perspex, as a souvenir. But it is another thing that has been lost in the mists of time.

The Beetle was rebuilt with second hand bits and gave good service.



"Of course Sue Warder has one in her drawers"..... joke well understood by the Wessex Tuesday evening quizzers!

And of course its on the right kind of car. Now who didn't have one of these? Us thankfully no dice hanging from the rear view mirror or furry steering wheel cover. Stick on bullet holes? And sadly, yes, briefly a cb radio.. sorry.

Roger Binney

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Secretary's Scribbles

Firstly you will be glad to hear that I have been out in the Mulette at last. I now feel I may have been rather naughty - if you read Roche Bentley's story of the chap in his Land Rover in Enjoying MG this month. I had great fun zooming about in her last weekend in the sun!

This month I thought I might reflect on my Wedding day. Nancy and I had a very MG themed day! In the weeks leading up to the Wedding I had been rushing to get the White Midget ready (We were running a Blue 1500 Chrome converted Midget, a White 1275 Midget and a Blue MG ZR at the time). Vic and Paul Wheal had helped me to swap over the engine and gear box from a donor car and I was trying to retrim her and convert to wire wheels ready for the big day. Later I was to do a proper wire wheel conversion using an original shorter wire wheel axle, but here for cost reasons I was using bolt on conversion

hubs (Don't do it!). The time was ticking and the flower lady had been to plan how she would affix flowers to the front of the car and I was still trying to get the car ready. I finally got her all together to find that she rubbed terribly - tyre to wheel arch rims. I was now a day or so away from the big day so you can imagine I was slightly stressed out. I resorted to grinding away the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch lip that sticks into the wheel arch to try and create the space required - this didn't completely solve the problem but did do enough to make her drivable.

The Big day arrived and we were due to get married in the local church in Lyneham, where we lived at the time. I only just made it after a horrendous hangover nearly incapacitated me (Another story!) Nancy's father was given the Midget keys and all went ahead brilliantly. After the service we had a



Secretary's Scribbles Cont...

convoy of MGs parade from Lyneham to Lydiard Park, where the reception was held. We went down Wootton Bassett high street horns blazing and crowds waving bedecked in ribbons and flowers. It was fabulous. (Brides need copious hair spray for this type of drive) **Tom**



Club Diary

2021 EVENTS DIARY				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/ Time
12/13th June	MG Live		Silverstone	Moved to June 2022
19/20th June	Bath Festival of Motoring		Landsdowne	Moved to June 2022
25th July	MGF25		Gaydon British Motor Museum	Still going ahead at the moment as it is an outside event and the Museum has Covid-19 Secure Status!
26th July	Club BBQ		Tollgate	
31st July/ 1st Aug	Gloucester Steam Fayre		South Cerney	Moved to August 2022
22nd Aug	Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle Show		Meadow Farm Nurseries Chippenham	
5th Sept	White Horse Vehicle Show		Westbury	
2nd Oct	Castle Combe Autumn Classic		Castle Combe Race Circuit	
11th Dec	Christmas Party		Tollgate	



Club Asset List

CLUB ASSET LIST			
ASSET	CURRENT HOLDER	CONTACT DETAILS	
Engine Hoist	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com
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Projector Screen & Cover	Paul Warn	01225 768676	paul.william.warn@gmail.com
New Set of Boules	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com

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.