

NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

WESSEX
MG CLUB
AT THE BELL INN SEEND



I can't remember the last time I was able to sit in the late afternoon sunshine, in shirt sleeves, watching motor racing. Well that's what Anne and I were doing at Castle Combe for the Monday Bank Holiday meeting.

Gordon introduced his February 2012 chairman's chat thus: "Spring has sprung, the grass has riz. We have crocus and snowdrops in the garden and the birds are full of song." Well it has taken until this May Bank Holiday to be able to repeat those words!

The programme for Castle Combe included two rounds of the MGOC series and two rounds of the Morgan Challenge.

You may remember, in a previous edition of the newsletter, I included a piece about my godson travelling the world in a TutTut to promote education in Africa, India and South America. Well his friend Henry Williams - who is the proprietor of Williams Automobiles Ltd- was racing a Morgan in the challenge event and won his class. Two friends, Nick somewhere in India in a TutTut and Henry racing a Morgan simultaneously - what a contrast. I've included a couple of

links at the end of this piece, of their exploits. Well worth a watch.

Thanks to you all for making the 'Prod & Poke' evening such a great success. It has always been well attended, probably because it is the first opportunity, after the clocks have changed, to dust off your pride and joy and give it a run in the light of the early evening. Having said that, I don't think I've seen so many cars at a 'Prod & Poke' - or again it may have been the temptation of chips!

David Whitely has a cautionary tale to tell about taking his MGA out for the first time this year - see page 8.

Talking about successes, how about our Spring Weekend away in Llangollen? The weather was kind to us, so much so that Millie went topless most of the time....I've written an account of the weekend for posterity. Very many thanks to Lynne and Roger for organising the event.

Ron reminded me whilst we were away, of the dates for a MGC gathering. It didn't register that it was over the May holiday weekend. I am kicking myself for missing it, particu-

For your diary in the coming month

May

20th - Club Night - Mystery Run

June

2nd - Chippenham Lions - Cherished Vehicle Show.

24th - Club Night - BBQ - 7:30 Start.

For details see page 9.

larly as it was so close to home and the weather was so good.

Don't forget the mystery run on our next club night. David Whiteley has sent an e-mail to you all giving details of the event. I've included the content on page 11. If you are not going, don't go to the Bell Inn, as the Club Night is the Mystery Run.

Paul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCkzGosr7qM>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBwUuEL4jy0&feature=youtu.be>

Llangollen yma rydym yn dod!

It must have been September last year that Roger provided a sampler of a potential destination for our 2013 Wessex Spring Weekend. We were all still reeling from a disastrous summer, and Wales isn't noted for its fine weather. But for whatever reason, a healthy number of us put our names down and in the event Llangollen turned out to be an inspired choice. Famous for its annual International Musical Eisteddfod. Some had "visited" before. In the early seventies we used to visit Anne's aunt (her uncle owned an MG dealership) who lived in a small village called Dwygylfchi - about 8 miles west of Conway. In those days the A5 was a nightmare, so we used to travel at night from Plymouth to avoid the serious delays enroute. Llangollen was just a bleary-eyed small town at around 6:00am in the morning with another couple of hours before our destination. Anyway, back to the plot. With so many cars travelling, Roger issued sensible instructions not to travel in convoy. However there were planned optional stops along the way to catch up with each other.

So we set off in "Milly" on a sunny Friday morning heading for Tintern Abbey - the first of those optional stops. Given the time of morning the jour-



ney was uneventful - no hold-ups - highwayman or otherwise. Until we reached the severn crossing of course, the modern day highway robbery. Tintern is a regular destination for us, a beautiful ruin we always enjoy to visit and contemporary with Valle Crusis



which we were looking forward to visiting during our stay in Llangollen. Following clear instructions provided by Roger, onward we continued up through the Wye valley with Millie topless. The fast moving river Wye close by and the sight of spring

lamps in the sunny Welsh countryside - beautiful. We left the river Wye behind, continuing north on the A466 but caught a glimpse of the river again as we headed for our lunch stop in Knighton (Tref-y-Clawdd) via Hereford.

A few miles south of Knighton we noticed signs for Croft Castle and mentally noted it as a potential stop for lunch on the return journey.

The Horse and Jockey was our lunch stop in Knighton. We were the first to arrive. Picture the scene if you will. The regular old sage is sat quietly contemplating, as he does regularly every lunch time. Until today when gradually the space is filled with excited travellers with "Llangollen here come" tied to their cars. "Bugger oddi"! I hear him sigh under his breath. Jane and Graham will translate! I jest of course. Everyone made us very welcome but wary that we had ordered dinner that evening we had

to choose our lunch carefully. Ever onward, we set off for Llyncllys, the final stop before our destination. As it was not too far from the hotel and not long after lunch we pulled in to reset the STATNAV and continued on.

The Chainbridge Hotel - our hotel for the next 3 nights - was situated literally on the River Dee a couple of miles by road from Llangollen but only a 45minute-ish flat walk from the hotel along the river.

Eventually our party of 16 cars and 31 people arrived at the hotel.

The stay was a nice balance of being able to seek out those places that individually we found interesting and getting together as a

group, on Saturday afternoon for a trip on the Llangollen Steam Heritage Railway. Most places of interest were within easy reach of the hotel. Saturday morning was sunny if a little chilly.

With Millie topless again.....we led her onto the famous, or should I say infamous Horseshoe Pass. We caught it at a fairly quite time and let Millie stretch her legs up the pass - a nice blend of fast and tight bends with good stretches of straight bits, climbing to the top at ??? feet.

There were police patrolling the climb, keeping a "Welsh Eye" on all things fast....there were a few bikers at the top parked in the visitors centre, along with a number of Porches.

Next stop was the Cistercian Valle Crucis Abbey taking its latin name from the 'vale of the cross'. The abbey stands in a lovely valley at the foot of the Horse Shoe Pass. As I said earlier it was built



around the same time as Tintern Abbey, in fact it became the second most prosperous abbey after Tintern in all Wales. It was one of the first to be closed by Henry's



henchman Cromwell. You would think being that far off the beaten track you would be relatively safe....

The early afternoon plan, was to gather together at the hotel and walk along the river to Llangollen. Have lunch and be at Llangollen station in time for the steam train to take us along the Dee valley for the

7miles journey to Carrog and back.

Well, Roger had arranged an open plan carriage for our group, with the name of our group on every table, in full view of the folk on the platform. Excitement mounted as the steam engine clattered into the buffers of the first carriage and we all lurch forward. Then as the train pulled out of the station, the Wessex MG choir begin to imitate the train - "chuff, chuff, chuff, chuff, chuff, chuff,

chuff simulating the wheels slipping on the rails - lots of chuff chuffs in quick succession. Some ad-libbed with puffs and choo choos thrown in! So there we all were in full voice in a public place imitating trains! our first priceless moment. What fun.

On Sunday, for those of us spending the day east of Llangollen the weather was once again fine and sunny. A small group travelled west toward the coast, where rain was forecast to close in and continue west during the day.

We made our way to the famous world heritage site - the magnificent Pontcysyllte Canal Aqueduct. 1037 feet long and 127 feet high, a master stroke of engineering by Thomas Telford & William Jessop, too high for me to

walk across. But we walked down to the base of the aqueduct and strained to look up. Having climbed back again, we sat awhile in the sunshine, people watching. Enjoying the varying abilities of the narrow boat pilots avoiding each other in the congested area of the canal where the boats converge before crossing the aqueduct.

Next stop was Eriddig House the "jewel in the crown of Welsh country houses". Built in the early 18th century it reflected the upstairs - downstairs life style of the time. An idyllic setting. The approach roads to most national trust properties are the bane of owners of low slung sports cars with their traffic calming humps. Time was moving on. We had lunch and decided to travel back via Chirk Castle.

The complete opposite to Eriddig. An imposing 14th century castle from the reign of Edward 1st - parts of which are still occupied today by the family who gave it to the national trust. Whilst touring the 14th century dungeons I had a medieval moment when I was invited to try on a knight's helmet - quite claustrophobic. By this time the mists started to roll in from the west, so leaving Millie fully dressed this time, we headed back to the hotel.

Too much to see in so little time.

The group had dinner each



night at the hotel with entertainment - our own entertainment - afterwards.

The first night we were too tired to do anything. The second night we played 'call my bluff' - Known in Denmark as



Fup eller Fakta or was that one of the bluffs - what do think?

On our last night we played charades. Both nights were pretty chaotic but this particular occasion took some beating.

My abiding memory is of Andrea trying to mime "Gone with the Wind". Now Andrea had exhausted all the syllables and decided on the 'sounds like' for the last word. With her knees bent in the crouched position, she was trying to imitate 'wind'. Enter Tony with his iPad. It seems that he had an app installed that generated sounds and was following Andrea's every move with the sound of a fart on full volume!! - another priceless moment on the trip.

Having thought a while about staying on, we decided to make for home on the Monday morning with everyone else.

The sun was shining and with Millie topless once more we headed south. We decided to stop at Croft Castle for lunch on the way back. As we arrived in the car park Vic, Gordon and Kevin's cars were already parked. We met up for a tour around the castle and said our good-byes. We stopped once more at Tintern. Tony, Andy and Jeff's cars were in this car park. After catching up with them we made tracks for home.

A great weekend, with a great bunch of people.

Diolch i chi am benwythnos gwyach Lynne and Roger.

Ed/Chairman

POST SCRIP TO THE LLANGOLLEN TRIP

A VERY FISHY TALE

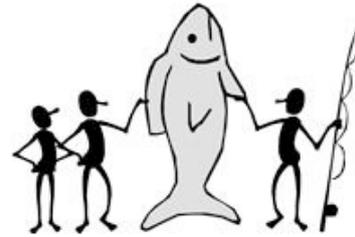
I listened to Ged's tale with considerable suspicion, as he naturally has that shifty look about him doesn't he, but when confirmed by that innocent looking Shirley then I had to take the story seriously.

I had taken the trouble to get clearance for Ged to fish for trout off the river banks close to the Chainbridge Hotel, where we stayed in Llangollen, and so naturally kept asking for a progress report. First day too tired, second day too cold, but the third day!!!

Apparently having seen a fisherman on the river whilst

we were on our steam train journey Ged and Shirley returned there the next day and asked about fishing. £20 for the afternoon Ged said, but the tackle he had, apparently was not so suitable, so the gillie gave him a new leader and lure more appropriate for salmon, not trout. And lo and behold Ged claims he caught a 34 pounder which the gillie had to gaff to land it. Cleaned and boxed for despatch to his home Ged could not bring the fish for us to see at the hotel.

He produced a photo, which to me looked suspiciously like



the stuffed fish hung on the wall at Chirk Castle! But Honest Shirley surely could not have gone along with such a big fib?

Fishy or what????

Roger

THANK YOU

Many many thanks from Lynne and Roger for the totally unnecessary but very much appreciated gift of a bouquet of flowers for Lynne and tickets to The Theater Royal Bath. Already booked in and we will be watching Birdsong on Friday 24th May. And Lynne has even promised me dinner beforehand. Wonderful.

We very much enjoyed the Llangollen trip and even all the cars seem to have behaved themselves. Very nice too to have so many new people along. Hope everyone enjoyed the trip also.

Thank you

Roger & Lynne

Thank you so much for the card and your good wishes on my birthday during our trip to Llangollen.

Ged



MYSTERY CAR

Well done Ron Alderson for correctly identifying the Voisin. Not sure what Ken has been up to this month, as I didn't get a response - most unusual...

David Whiteley sent this story behind the car.

"Produced by Gabriel Voisin, a talented designer, engineer and a French aviation pioneer whose company was at the forefront of the aeronautics movement in 20th century Europe, prior to turning his hand to the automotive industry. This particular car was originally commissioned by a Parisian Madam, to travel between her string of Bordellos scattered throughout France. It carries extra large fuel

tanks and an extra spare wheel to ensure the journey was undertaken with minimal disruption.

It found its way to the UK in 1933 and then eventually to the Channel Islands in the



early 1980's after languishing in a barn in Essex for many years. It lay unrestored in the local collection for many years until the current owner, an engineer, acquired the car and set about its careful and sympathetic restoration. It

has now covered some 2000 miles since completion, still apparently on its original exhaust. It is a large and imposing car on the road, 18 feet long and some 6ft high with the hood up. A sleeve valve 6 cylinder 4.5 litre engine is fitted and when running it is apparently very hard to hear. It has coachwork by R.Duvivier of France in open tourer style. The hood and side windows pack away neatly, and the coachwork is wonderfully engineered. It's interesting to note that there is the lack of a back window to the hood, for those private liaisons with clients no doubt!"

David

Hi All,

Marlborough College have confirmed it's OK for a visit on the evening of Monday 19th August. Rough details are:

Meet at Marlborough College at 7pm to be met by the college archivist

7pm~8pm Talk & tour of the college and its history
Depart for drinks & chat at a local pub (Pub TBA but probably about 10~15 minutes drive)

There is a £5 per person charge to cover the college archivist's time.

Those confirmed so far are:

David & Carrie, Gordon & Sandra, Graham & Jane, Jeff & June, Malcolm & Pat, Paul & Anne, Paul & Andrea, Tom, Tony & Jenny, Roger & Lynne (tentative), Ron & Anne

Can you please let me know (by email preferably) if you want to go so that I can confirm numbers.

Peter



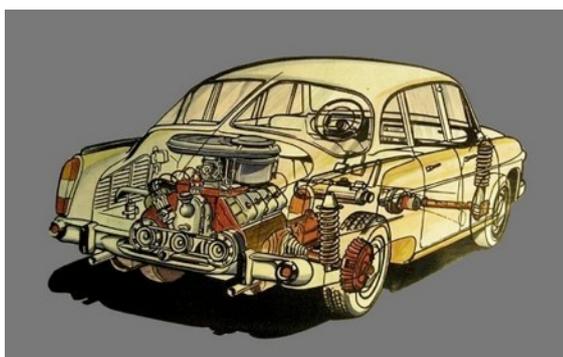
THE TERROR OF THE TAIL WAGGERS

I'm sure Ken only put that statement that the Imp was a better car than the Mini into his interesting article to provoke a response. So here's mine.

Fortunately Ken worked on the engine, which was the best thing about the Imp, so he may not be too insulted. Good job he didn't work in the styling department. What am I talking about? You don't need a whole department to draw round a house brick and scale it up. Of course the downside of the engine was its location, hanging out the back in a fore and aft orientation. This is not only the worst possible place to put it from a handling and weight transfer point of view but it means that the luggage carrying capacity is up the front. So if you overload the boot and can't shut the lid, you can't see where you are going. But it is a cheap mechanical arrangement, no prop-shaft, no constant velocity joints. Another cheap mechanical arrangement was the single swinging wishbone front suspension. This means that the wheels sit constantly with just the outside edge of the tread touching the road. This arrangement also means that under full throttle with maximum rearward weight transfer, the front end becomes even lighter and the wheels tuck in even more.



The bit about the 'Swallow' project was interesting. I didn't know anything about that. It looks like the 'styling' department had to upscale the house brick a bit more. In fact it looks very like the rear engine Skoda. Maybe another reason it didn't make it into production was the difficulty of selling it into a market sector overloaded with Skoda jokes? I see that Rootes were up with the rest of the British car industry in the up-scaling of small successful engines into potentially problematical larger capacity engines. Sounds like the 'K' series in my 'MGF'. The only car manufacturer who seems to have been able to control the tailwagger is Porsche. They are powerful, fast and successful. Although, I did see one not long ago, in North Bradley that had spun



and was hugging a telegraph pole. But even they had to relent and copy the MGF by putting the engine in front of the rear axle, with the Boxter.

A really hairy tailwagger from the past was the Czechoslovakian Tatra. This had a V8 air-cooled engine at the back. It was referred to in the Second World War as the 'Czech secret weapon' because so

many occupying German officers, who were totally unfamiliar with their handling characteristics, killed themselves driving them. The most diabolical tailwagger of all must have been the Bond 875. This was a lightweight fibreglass monocoque concoction, with a Hillman Imp engine in the back and only one wheel at the front. Can you imagine trying to get that to change direction when under full throttle with maximum weight transfer to the rear? I apologise for any chronological discrepancies or engineering faux pas, which are included for the sake of a good argument.

Malcolm Taylor

E5 BIO FUEL



I guess you are no different to me - I filled Marilyn with petrol sometime last autumn and, due to low winter use, she still had a couple of gallons left come April. We took her out on Easter Saturday and she was running rather rough - she was reluctant to start, had a slight misfire and pulled rather weakly.

Our fuel gauge is currently away being re-calibrated so I was unaware how much fuel we had left. Not much, as it turned-out! We ran-out about 2 miles from home. Fortunately, we had a fresh gallon - about two weeks old - in the boot, so re-fuelled, we headed home.

The fresh petrol was a revelation. It was like eating prime rump against chewing though gristle. She pulled well, ran evenly and sounded very cheerful.

We used to say that fuel deteriorated with age but I have never experience such a difference between "old" and fresh fuel. This is only anecdotal but the big difference is the advent of E5 petrol, i.e. petrol with 5% biofuel. This has a poor reputation for aging and our experience starkly endorses this view.

The problem is - what to do about this.

They say that we should keep the tank full to prevent condensation during the winter. But then I will have a whole tank of rubbish petrol as spring arrives. The alternative is to ignore the possibility of condensation in the tank and leave it (nearly) empty, and then empty a can of fresh fuel in come the spring.

I don't know which is better.....

P.S. Since writing this, I have learned that Nancy Pelosi, the new American Leader of the House of Representatives and Californian Senator, is advocating E15 (15% ethanol) in the States. This has resulted in consternation in the classic car world in the States because of the unknown effect of this on old cars.

I hope the ladies will excuse this 1955 photo of Miss Pelosi, then clearly not worried by the use of fossil fuels.....

It seems lunacy to me to turn vast tracts of farmland over to maize for biofuel whilst at the same time championing the sale of gas-guzzling SUVs and trucks.

The highest selling vehicle in the USA last year was..... The Ford F Series, 645, 316 sales!

David Whiteley

CLUB NEWS

2013 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
20-May	Club Night (Mystery Run)	Yes	It's a Mystery	David Whiteley 6:45pm for a 7:00pm start at Devizes Wharf - see below.
1-Jun	Vintage Nostalgia 2013 - Warminster	No	Stockton Park, Wilts	Details available at www.vintagenostalgia.co.uk
2-Jun	Lions Chippenham Cherished Vehicle Show	Yes	For details see January newsletter	Tom Strickland to get a pitch
8-9 June	Gloucestershire Motor Show	Yes	Highnam Court	CANCELLED
24-Jun	Club Night (BBQ)	Yes	The Bell	Paul Warn 7:30 start
21-Jul	Classics at the Castle		TBA	Tony Neale to check details
22-Jul	Club Night	Yes	TBC	Possibly Boules at Broughton Gifford "Bell on the Common". 7:30 Start
July ?	Summer Picnic	Yes	TBA	Paul Warn NT House visit
19-Aug	Club Night - Visit Marlborough College	Yes	TBC	Peter Hine
25-Aug	Action Day & BBQ	Yes	Tom's Field	11:00 am Tom Strickland's house
1-Sep	Bath Classic Car Show - Supports Help for Heroes	Yes	TBC	Peter Hine. Update at the May Club night
8-Sep	Walking Frome Treasure Hunt	Yes	Frome	Arrangement to be announced - Tony and Jenny Neale
Oct ??	Sunday Lunch at a Pub		TBA	
28-Oct	Club Night (Talk - 1970-79 GP Seasons - When Sex was Safe & Motor Racing was Dangerous)	Yes		Paul Warn
7-Nov	Committee Meeting	No	The Bell	Tom Strickland
25-Nov	Club AGM	Yes	The Bell	Formal notification will be included in the Sept & Oct newsletter.
7-Dec	Christmas Party	No	TBC	Peter Hine

SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES

My ZB developed a rattle and it was getting worse! It was coming from underneath my bum! I checked the main things like the springs and dampers but hadn't yet found the cause..... The break through came when Paul Warn jumped in for a diagnosis run at the Prod and Poke night. We (he) deduced it was coming from the exhaust banging against the underside. I took the car back to Bell's exhaust where they sorted it free of charge. They reshaped the actual front pipe for more clearance and found a broken rubber at the same time. The chap was on the phone as he told me this so I couldn't quite get to the bottom of which rubber it was and I half think it could have been a gear box rubber - could this be changed easily? I know, I need to get underneath and have a good look. I noticed this weekend that one front wheel was quite hot after a drive so I need to give the brakes a good going over NOW. I have drums at the front and rear so hopefully less to go wrong..... We shall see. See you all soon!

Tom

BBQ

Club night on the 24th of June is the club's annual BBQ. I have arranged with the the Bell Inn to provide the BBQ on our behalf.

The cost per/person £5 to include:

A 6oz beef burger and bun, a BBQ'd pork sausage and roll (hot dog), Fried onions for both, and then the salad will include homemade coleslaw and potato salad, and mixed salad leaves.



I will need to confirm numbers by the 10th June. Please let me know via e-mail.

ED

The WessexMG Mystery Run 2013.

Date: Monday 20 May 2013.

Time: 6.45pm for 7pm (please try not to be late - our destination stops serving grub at 9pm!) Last departure: 7.15pm.

Venue: the Wharf Car Park, Devizes.

Destination: that is the Mystery (but my mobile number is 07505 056 769 if you get lost!)

Distance: around 30 miles, aprox. 1.5 hours.

The Route: this will be designated by simple distance and turn instructions provided on the day.
Be aware that in places the roads are narrow and the bad weather over the winter has created some potholing.

Sustenance: bring your own for the journey;
orders taken (and money!) on departure for destination grub, if required:

menu:	Beef Lasagne, chips and salad	£10.50
	Wiltshire Ham, Egg & Chips:	£10.25
	Pie of the Day, new potatoes & veg.	£11.25
	Whole Tail Scampi and chips	£10.50
	Bucket of chips	£2.00

My mobile number in case of problems: 07505 056 769

We have a "Plan B" in case of really bad weather.

Please let me know (01380 828 806 or 'david@whiteley0.plus.com) by 6pm on Saturday 18 May if you are coming - departures will be checked-out by 7.15pm but I would hate to miss you if you are a few minutes late!

Have a good trip.

David Whiteley

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**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 – 10am-4pm –
ALICE PARK**

LIMITED PARKING, SO PLEASE WALK, CYCLE OR TAKE THE BUS!