

NEWSLETTER

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



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

The next meeting will mark the end of the Wessex Club year with the Annual General Meeting but hopefully it will also seamlessly see in the start of the new year. I say hopefully because at the time of writing I have had no one express an overwhelming or indeed even a reluctant desire to take over as Chairman. Its not too late right up to the AGM to come forward to take over our very lively Club and you will be ably assisted by some very well established and experienced committee Members. Remember in last months Newsletter Lord Kitchener pointed out that "Your Club Needs You", so please give the matter serious thought.

An Agenda for the meeting has already been published but to lighten the proceedings there will be the usual photograph competition. Simply bring along a photo of an MG and /or Club orientated picture and pin it on the wall and the winner of the best picture (taking all aspects into consideration) will be decided by a ballot of all at the meeting.

Subs for next year need to be paid to the Treasurer prior to the formalities of the meeting and

can I remind you that Christmas Dinner monies also must be paid.

Following last months meeting when Richard Edmonds gave us a fascinating talk about the business of classic car auctioneering, Sandra and I were motivated to attend the auction at the Castle Combe Race Track the following weekend. We were not the only members from the Wessex Club to go along on both days that we attended. When it came to the bidding I managed to keep my hands firmly in my pocket and out of harms way, whereas others from the Club bought some of the automobilia that was auctioned on the Friday and on the Saturday when the cars went under the hammer, one of our members bought a splendid old car and drove off in it at the end of the days business. I will leave him to tell you about it in due course, (if he has the nerve because it did not come out of Abingdon but it was magnificent nonetheless).

It was a joy to see the cars which were an eclectic mix in various conditions from an MG made up of different MG marques with a Ford side valve engine to an immaculate 1933 Riley Monaco.

For your diary in the coming month

November

26th - Annual General Meeting - **7:30pm**

December

8th - Club Christmas Party.

For details see page 9.

Please note that unless otherwise stated club nights start at 8:00pm

Contrary to popular belief that classic cars are currently spiralling in value, car sales at this auction amounted to only 36% of the stock of some sixty odd lots which came under the hammer, and of those that sold many failed to reach the upper guide estimate. Of course no doubt some deals were struck after the auction on those that failed to reach the reserve, but it occurred to me that auctioneering in this field is a tough business. I shall retain a blissful remoteness!

That's all for now folks, so see you at the AGM.

Gordon

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

As many of you already know, June and I are long-standing (literally) members of a local choir (The Pound Sound) and as such we have the opportunity every 2 years to join other singers on a week-long workshop abroad. Four years ago we enjoyed staying in a monastery (with a trattoria close by!) at the southern end of Lake Garda and learning new songs together with about 50 others under a choir title of “Sing Your Socks Off”. At the end of the week we put on a small free concert for local people so we could show off what we’d learnt during our stay.

Earlier this year we went to Litomyšl in Bohemia which is the western half of the Czech Republic, about a 2 hour drive east of Prague. Litomyšl is the birthplace of composer, Bedrich Smetana, perhaps best known for Vltava (Die Moldeau) and The Bartered Bride. In fact the week before we went, the



UNESCO heritage-listed renaissance castle hosted the annual opera festival in his honour. This castle has one of only 5 baroque theatres in the world within its walls and it was in the castle’s former brewery that Smetana was born in 1824. This former brewery is now the European Training Centre of the YMCA Europe and it is where some of our fellow singers stayed and where we practised our new songs every morning surrounded by some very unusual and attractive architecture. In fact the whole town with a population of 10,000 is rich in restored and renaissance buildings. On the walls of one building off the main Smetana Square, there are etched sgraffitto (a particular technique of ceramic decoration – presumably the origin of graffiti) which are quite striking and gruesome to say the least. The outside walls of the castle are unusually decorated with sgraffitoed



facades, each one of which is individual, although you need to look quite closely to appreciate this.

The town also boasts a 1950’s style outdoor lido with lots of grassy areas, ice creams stalls, no screaming kids



or rowdy teenagers and old wooden changing cubicles in which the door is locked by dropping down a hinged bench to put you clothes on – great!

Every morning we practised our new songs, about 9 in all – English, Moravian, South African etc and in the afternoons (make that after beers – very good and cheap) we were free to pursue other interests. On one day we all went on a coach trip to see something of the local area. Our first stopping point was Svitavy, the birth place in 1908 of Oskar Schindler who apparently had an early passion for alcohol, hot wheels and women. In 1939 he seized an opportunity to acquire a factory in Krakow for making enamelled dishes and his Jewish employees felt safe there from Nazi aggression and called themselves “Schindlerjuden”. As is probably known he became rich and in 1944 managed to transport many hundreds to Brnenec near Svitavy (to avoid the gas chambers) and there is a museum in the town to commemorate his achievements.

On a lighter note: there was a beer and music festival in progress that day and in one corner of the square there was a cherry picker with a dangling rope harness, the purpose of which was soon to become clear. Plucky individuals were encouraged to don said harness and climb on to a beer crate and then whilst there place another one on top of it and then climb on to that one and so on. The maximum number we saw climbed before the inevitable topple, was 11 by our young soprano teacher who was clearly used to reaching the high notes.



At the end of our week's stay in this fascinating town we put on an outdoor concert in the monastery gardens for the local people and tourists and our songs were enthusiastically applauded and the whole event was recorded for posterity on 2 iPads – the wonders of modern technology! All in all a great place, fantastic surroundings and good cheap beer and food.

Jeff Rattle

A WEEKEND'S HIGH SPEED MOTORING

Recently I had reason to look back over some of my old magazines (their hidden away from Anne!) and came across the following in the November 4 1955 edition of Autosport.

It relates to BMC's record-breaking achievement in covering over 100 miles in the hour in each of five production cars. Specifically an Austin-Healy 100, a Riley Pathfinder, a 6/90 Wolseley, an Austin Westminster and **MGA** the latter being the reason why you may be interested in this short dit.

The piece records that at the time the magazine was published there were 30 odd cars at the Motor Show capable of the magic 100mph. One hundred miles *in* the hour however is rather a different matter.

So in the week leading up to the attempt, over the weekend of 21st/23rd October the cars were driven down to the Montlhéry race circuit some 20 odd kilometers south of Paris. The MGA (along with the other cars) was in standard showroom condition with all standard extras fitted and would run on BP Super taken from a forecourt in England under RAC supervision, for placing in the cars' tanks under ACF supervision in France. For an attempt of this nature sunny and dry conditions would have been nice particularly travelling at a sustained 100mph on a bank oval like Montlhéry, but for the first day it was wet, cold and very, very windy. Quoting from the article:



“ The minimum target lap was 57sec, exactly 100mph and the target lap quota 64laps. These however were the slowest permissible figures allowing for absolutely no error to achieve the target of 100 miles in the hour. Ken Wharton led off in the MGA running with its hood and side curtains erected. Despite frightful conditions with rain squalls and winds gusting up to 30kph the car was beautifully steady, but the lap time was too close to the target for comfort. As it was running on the standard axle of 4.3/1 the larger tyres had been fitted to try to spare the gallant little engine; these came off and were replaced by the smaller ones. Up went the revs to around a steady 6,000 and down went the lap times.....the MGA was credited with 102.54 miles in the hour - a most promising beginning to the sortie. One of the French officials who had seen the MGs at Le Mans was insistent that it had the special “Le Mans engine” and was astounded when the bonnet was lifted to see for himself that it didn't. **Continued on page 11.**

VERSE TWO OF GOING FOR A SONG

We were pleased that so many MG-ites were able to join us at our annual party and and sorry for those unable to join us. Excellent time was had by all, great grub (thank you everyone) and a sufficiency of wine! Jeni of course won the top prize with her portrayal of "Waterloo" by carrying a bottle of dodgy coloured water and wearing a toilet seat around her neck , taken as a souvenir on their recent house departure to their new home.

June and Jeff gave us an excellent lesson in jive dancing and from that point the party took off, culminating perhaps in the men's dance rendition of "Tiger Feet" by Mud. So the challenge now is "What next year"

Lynne and Roger

On behalf of those of us who went to Lynne and Roger's party, we'd like to thank them for a wonderful party on Saturday Nov 3rd. Everyone had a great time and there were some very innovative "Tunes". It was decided by a show of hands that Jeni's interpretation of "Waterloo" was the best of the evening. Those members not attending missed a great time. **Ged.**

SCENES FROM THE PARTY - WHAT WERE THEY ON!!!!



Would you trust this man with club funds ????

CLASSIC VEHICLE RESTORATION SHOW - SAT & SUN NOV 3RD & 4TH

Wessex MG Club had representation at this show as I was invited to display my B on the J.U.L.E Club Stand, this club is for owners of Jubilee and LE MGB and specially factory commissioned MGB cars. The theme of the stand was MGB 50 Jubilee, the Royal Jubilee and 2012 Olympics.

My car was first owned by John Butler, who with his MG TF was winner of the Abingdon Jubilee Concours, which in 1979 was held during a week of events to celebrate 50 years of MG production in Abingdon.



To celebrate his win he asked the factory to produce a replica of the North American LE for him, but in RHD, and the factory arranged for the Boot Rack to be shipped over from the states and added the special wheels, front spoiler



and LE stripes, plus the Abingdon Jubilee Logo.

At this show the J.U.L.E club also had one of the MGBs which appeared in the closing

ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics - covered in newspaper. This car is one of the O series engine development cars. Also on the stand was a 1975 BGT Jubilee.



The show had various other clubs there with some stands actually demonstrating restoration techniques. In addition there were trade stands and autojumble. The show was busy on both Saturday and surprisingly after the unexpected snowfall on Sunday.

Martyn Lucas



IS IT A GOLDWING - OR MG?

I came across this MG? at the Nosh and Natter at Longbridge Deverel. Below is the content of the display board:

HONDA GOLDWING GL 1500cc 6 cylinder. Purchased new in March 1988 from Harry Ward - late President and founder of G.W.O.C.G.B. for £8,800. The first 1500 to come into the country. I was very proud as it was a real eye catcher. 40,000 happy miles later and now aged 70 I started to lose the confidence to hold the bike up, so rather than sell my beloved Goldwing - with much thought and a lot of scribbles - I decided to "trike" the front of the Goldwing. An exercise not for the faint hearted.



Having just completed a restoration on my wife's MGB GT, I found that an MGB front axle would be what I required to fit so I tried one in, with much measuring I made a 60mm box section sub chassis, a cross member and an adjustable King Post was made to support the Goldwing's weight under the headstock of the wing. To make the MG wheels turn from lock to lock I had to make a steering box up which is driven by 4 cogs and 2 industrial chains complete with chain adjusters to take care of the slack, a real brain teaser that was.

With 2 universal joints I got it to work and it turned the MG rack and pinion lock to lock whilst the wing was on axle supports. When I lowered it onto the ground the friction of the tyres made it heavy to turn. I decided to go for electro hydraulic power steering - now that's made a dream come true - turns lovely! Mudguards and light pods all turn with the wheels just like the "Morgan". 25mm box section to take the new head lamps to required width.



I then covered in the steering box with a "Mini" bonnet which I cut and welded to suit the necessary size. I hinged it at the front - pull a bonnet catch and a "V.W. Golf" gas strut opens the bonnet. Brakes are all linked to my foot pedal. As it is triked the law requires a parking brake, this was made from a 70's "Honda CB100"

front brake caliper which is cable operated and an MG hand brake handle with a little alteration to size. It works well. Having done away with my front motorcycle wheel I've lost my speedo drive so I've installed an electronic speedo which is linked to the left front wheel. The speedo is a type used on trials bikes which you set for the size of wheel you use. Very high tech - made in USA - called Tail Tech.

Having ridden the trike around my garden it seems very maneuverable in forward and reverse all without any worries of it going over. Next thing is to take it to Bristol to get it tested at the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency as it's changed from a bike to a TRIKE. Hope it passes the test as I have spent well over 1000 hours "in the shed" following the V.O.S.A. guidelines.

DON CUTLER

Anyone know this nutter (sorry 'eccentric English gentleman')?

Malcolm T

THE GOODWOOD REVIVAL PART ONE - BRITISH SPORTS CARS



The Goodwood Revival, along with The Silverstone Classic and perhaps four other historic race car events are always penciled in the diary at the beginning of every year.

There seemed to be more people than ever attending the Revival this year, even on the Friday. Most of whom seemed not to be interested in the racing but content to strut their stuff, dressed in period clothes looking for retail opportunities - hey ho.

But the cars are the stars. As I said in an earlier newsletter, this year celebrates a number of 50th anniversaries - the MGB of course, the Ferrari GTO, the AC Cobra were all celebrated and for those of you interested in the history of racing, the 50th anniversary of Dan Gurney's first Grand Prix victory at Rouen. However if this wasn't enough, the main attraction for me this year was the presence of the largest collection ever assembled of the pre-war German Mercedes Benz and Auto Union factory Grand Prix cars. They were the subject of the first talk I gave to the club on the history of Grand Prix racing a few years ago.

The mystique of these iconic cars, seems to grow the further we move away from those times. A purpose built pit was assembled based on the garages from the 1937 Swiss Grand Prix at Bern. They were constructed exactly the way they would have been built in period, with sawn boards, nails and bolts - fabulous! The spectacle, noise and exhaust fumes of those who witnessed this great collection will I'm sure remain with them.

The recreation Earl's Court Motor Show is always a favorite with us, and after breakfast on our first day, is the first thing we aim for. This year included a number of great British sports cars - see above.



As usual I wanted to record the MG presence at the event - and now of course Morgan. But lets keep to MGs for this piece.

I could see in the distance a familiar flag proclaiming the MG logo *Safety Fast*. When we found it, it was flying above one of the BMC competition department's transporters. Designed by Pinin Farina and built by Marshall's of Cambridge with all-aluminium coachwork, they were equipped to a very high specification.



When this particular unit's training function ended, Basil Wales transferred it within the company to the Competitions Department where he worked. In its new role the vehicle was used to store and transport display boards with Special Tuning parts mounted on them, while also serving as a mobile stores and workshop on UK rallies carrying spares, welding equipment and so on.



It would have been used to support cars like the MGB. Hardly noticed then or later, was the MGB's very successful role as a works competition car. However the MGB was over shadowed by the Big Healeys and totally eclipsed in the popular newspapers by the stunning successes of the works Minis.

As the MGB was proving so easy to sell it's competition successes were not needed to boost sales - the company had plenty of other great sales-boosting stories to tell about other models. Its only recently that the few remaining works competition MGBs - such as the the one opposite which finished 11th overall and second in class at the 1965 Le Mans - have at last been properly appreciated by collectors with a consequent dramatic rise in values.



The other car is one for Tom, although he doesn't deserve it after what he said last month..... See below for other MGs seen at the Revival.

ED

MYSTERY CAR - AND ENGINE



Last month's mystery car was hijacked by Ron's mystery engine! Part of the billing for this picture included as an incentive a bottle of the club's finest if someone gave the correct answer. Unsurprisingly there were no takers...but would have been worth a punt.

The engine was built by Cross Engineering in the late forties for the Gordano sports car company based in the Bristol area. The engine was a four cylinder 1500cc block fitted with 4 Rotary valves and 4 Amal carburetors with forced air induction. If anybody is interested I have acquired a test report on the engine when it was being developed.

Ron



As seen at the Castle Combe Autumn Classic. Ken has provided a good test which you will have a reasonable chance of identifying - if you try hard enough.....

ED

The WESSEX MG Club 2012 EVENTS LIST				
26 Nov	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
26 Nov	Club AGM	No	The Bell Inn at Seend	Formal notification was included in the September and October newsletters.
8 Dec 2012	Christmas Dinner	No	The Greyhound Bromham	Peter Hine

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On the Sunday the MGA was configured in “speed trim”. This consists of an under-tray, “wrap-around” wind-screen and cockpit cover, plus removal of the main screen, hood and bumpers, and addition of oil-cooler, all the additions being available to the enthusiast. The engine has not been checked since Ken’s run and indeed has been sealed by the the scrutineers. The Le Mans axle of 3.7/1 was also fitted.



John Gott, the author of the piece in the Autosport was invited to drive one of the cars to and from the UK and was invited to drive the final stint in the “modified “ MGA:

“Lap speeds fairly steady at 112mph then they drop to 110mph. Must be getting tired, and must do something about it. Next time around 114mph. Actually, I was told later that I would have been called in if it hadn’t been for that 114mph. And then the “Come In” sign goes out. The MGA has done 112.36 miles in the hour...The engine was steady at around 5,700rpm and by the rev counter we were getting just on 120mph on the straights.”

All five production cars achieved more than 100 miles in the hour!

ED

SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES

November cold has hit and my Magnette is tucked up in the garage. I will continue to look for dry road days – when you don't get that dirt film on your windscreen from the salt and damp to take her for a blast. I have tipped a bottle of Millers VSPe POWER PLUS(£8) in-

which in their own words is: An "ALL IN ONE" fuel treatment providing ethanol protection, lead replacement and an octane improver that adds up to two octane numbers to unleaded fuel. In the past I have used Castrol Valve Master Plus (£10) when refuelling but with all the gumming up of carburettors going on at the moment I decided to try the Millers stuff whilst the car is semi 'laid-up'. One of the things that really tells the additives apart from the start is the Castrol is longer lasting, in that you tip a measured amount per 'fill up' into your tank using the clever measuring system built into the top. The Millers though you chuck the whole lot in at once – one bottle to one fill! I wonder what the difference of sheer amount of additive makes?

Both offer octane boost etc etc. Despite concerns in my mind for the cars I have been a bit of a sceptic about the need for unleaded heads etc – indeed apart from my ZR I have never owned

an MG (out of 7) with a converted head. I have used additives less frequently as time has gone on – but I have always used one fairly regularly – remember several of my MGs have been daily drives too. I worry of course and have read Paul's articles on Ethanol as well as the various other classic motoring mags. Do I sceptically carry on... Will I need to start using something such as Frost's Ethomix(£12) – another measured shot type? Can I use the Valvemaster and the Ethomix at the same time? Is life too short and would my engine need a rebuild fairly soon anyway? Decisions, Decisions Decisions. I reckon certainly something to help against the gumming up over

the winter has to be good and generally you notice Octane boost so at least there is some actual feedback from the additives. I could go and ramble about putting Shell Optimax in rather than my current 'cheapest unleaded' that I can find locally. I shall stop now before I stress myself out and have nightmares.

Tom

