

Chairman's Chat

Sorry to have missed the last Club Night when the spring weekend on the IoW was reviewed and ideas for next years' trip were discussed. More of that in the future. Sandra and I were holidaying in Cornwall and enjoying the superb autumn sunshine which hopefully will continue for some time yet.

Before leaving for Cornwall we joined a group of seven or eight cars and took a trip to Shalbourne, just south of Hungerford, to attend a classic car and motor cycle show held in the grounds of the Manor House. Despite being a cold and overcast day it was a super day out because there was so much more than the large and varied collection of cars. It was more of an up-market village fete with craft stalls, jazz band, hog roast and for some in our party Pimms. It was all nicely rounded off with cream teas on the lawn. Definitely worth another visit next year. The day was made all the better for me because I feel that following all the work to my MGA at last it is running well with no overheating problems that had dogged me over the summer months.

The joy of driving it continued today when we attended the Club's Driving

Test held in Devizes. The sun shone brightly after a frosty start and twelve drivers exercised their skill and judgement to negotiate the course



consisting of reversing into a garage, the limbo, judging your cars width and finally reverse parallel parking. The results were kept under wraps until after we had enjoyed a first class lunch held in the nearby Hourglass PH alongside the canal, when Vic somewhat sheepishly declared himself as the winner. After shouts of protestation and an independent re-count it was confirmed that he was the genuine winner by a long chalk. Congratulations Vic and many thanks for organising this event.

Remember that the AGM is held in November and new Committee Members are in need. Why not put your name forward and bring



For your diary in the coming month

October

25th – Club Night 8:00pm.

November

22nd – AGM 7:30pm for 8:00pm.

For details see page 10

fresh ideas to the Club?

On Monday we are having a talk from representatives of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, so I look forward to seeing you there.

Gordon

Flight to the War Movies – or *Time to Spare go by Air*

You may have seen actor Martin Shaw take to the skies last Sunday in 'Dambusters Declassified'. In the programme, he retraces the route of the 1943 raid by 617 Squadron to destroy German dams, using the 'Dam Busters' film to compare and contrast fact and fiction.

Well read on, as Paul Wheal also takes to the skies visiting those German dams – and more....

The adventure began like any good adventure with a plan, but as Baldrick might have said, 'no cunning plan survives first contact with the enemy'

Kevin Turner (a Ground Engineer Crew Chief on Hercules Aircraft at RAF Lyneham) had formulated the idea previously, to visit the sites of RAF engagements during WW2 that were subsequently made into 4 epic films:

- The Dams Raids in the German Ruhr - "The Dambusters "
- Colditz Castle - "The Colditz Story"
- Zagen Stalag Luft III - "The Wooden Horse" and "The Great Escape"

The original plan was to take three Piper Warrior aircraft from RAF Lyneham Flying Club with three pilots in each, taking turns to fly navigate and rest. Each pilot would fly a leg of 2 hours in duration then land for fuel and a change of crew positions.

Unfortunately many of the original crews were unable to make the planned date in June due to Service commitments. This meant re scheduling and the only available date for departure was in August. Although we could only raise a crew for one aircraft it was decided to go ahead as it was to be used as a route proving trip for much larger outing from all of the RAF flying clubs next year and be classified as a Staff Ride.

The crew was Kevin, Ray a Lyneham flying club instructor and myself. Kevin was heading up the trip, but being an RAF crew chief, he was out of the country in a Hercules until 2 days before our planned departure date of Wednesday the 11th of August. On the evening of the 10th we met at Kevin's house to draw lines on maps and assign responsibilities for the various legs of the trip which entailed:

- The Pilot for each leg to compile a navigation log, listing magnetic headings way points and en route air traffic radio frequencies and navigation beacon frequencies for his navigator.
- Filing flight plans to National air traffic controls services of countries on route.
- Customs declarations to be filed 24 hours before crossing national borders (because quite rightly Great Britain did not sign the Shengen agreement)

This being my first overseas flight I went home with my head spinning with the amount of work needed to plan my leg from Calais to Arnsberg Minden in Germany. After several hours of calculations and frantic web browsing to find airfield radio frequencies safe flying altitudes etc I managed to produce a navigation log. However, I had no need to worry. The next morning we three intrepid aviators met at Lyneham ready to fly over enemy territory but the weather was against us with low cloud and heavy rain it was decided to delay for 24 hours.



Day 1: Enemy Coast Ahead

The weather early on Thursday morning was much better. We fuelled and packed our aircraft and were ready for departure in no time at all. Ray flew this first leg, Kevin navigated and I was passenger. We routed overhead Calne, Popham, Goodwood airfield and Hythe to Calais airport in time for lunch. We all wore Mae West's (life jackets) and carried personal locator beacons, but we did not have a life raft for the cross channel flight.

Ray lines up G-VICC for departure.
Runway 24 RAF Lyneham

We decided to wear immersion suites instead. Kevin said that it would be possible to don the rubberised overalls in flight before we reached the coast. In the 1970's MG advert it said 'You can in a Midget', well it is probably more difficult to don the immersion suit in a Piper Warrior. This resulted in fits of hysterical laughter and a few pints of sweat as Kevin and I put ours on, Ray who was flying decided that it would be safer for us if he did not don his.

After refueling both VICC and the left hand seat and fly to few puffy white clouds to chase along the Belgian coast into Hol-our overnight stopover at small local authority airfield for very reasonably priced restaur-local tax payers no doubt.



Kevin & Ray Looking forward to a cold beer at
Arnsberg after my dodgy landing.

ourselves at Calais it was my turn to take Germany, in a gin clear sky with just a and shoot down. Our route took us north land then eastwards in to Germany and Arnsberg Minden airfield. Arnsberg is a General Aviation (light aircraft). It has a rant and a small hotel. Subsidised by the

Day 2: The Dambusters & Colditz

The next morning was Friday the 13th, not being superstitious Kevin planned to fly the first leg of the day. He decided his leg was going to be strictly stopwatch and compass, low level without using navigation aids. Just like the guys from 617 Squadron 'Dam Busters' Operation Chastise. Except it would be daylight and hopefully no one would be shooting at us and both Ray and myself in the back would be keeping an eye on our 'sat navs'.

The Dam Busters film



The Dam Busters film was made in 1955 starring Richard Tod as Guy Gibson, Michael Redgrave as Barnes Wallis and a black Labrador with a name not used much these days.

We departed Arnsberg in fine weather. Kevin was skipper, Ray the navigator and me as the tail gunner (rear seat passenger). Kevin flew down the valleys of the Rhur towards our first dam the Möhne.



As can be seen from the pictures we made several passes but slightly higher than

the Dam Busters 60 feet at night. The towers in the centre of the dam that no longer contain anti aircraft artillery were used in conjunction with a simple sight to ensure that the Lancasters dropped their bouncing bombs exactly 500 yards from the target. The repaired section can clearly be seen in the photo left.



Next was the Sorpe, this dam was not breeched by the bouncing bomb as it is not a concrete walled dam but of



banked construction. From the legally low level flight down the the Eider Dam. This dam was the Germans to be so inaccessi-



Sorpe Kevin flew a very sporting but valleys to thought by ble to enemy

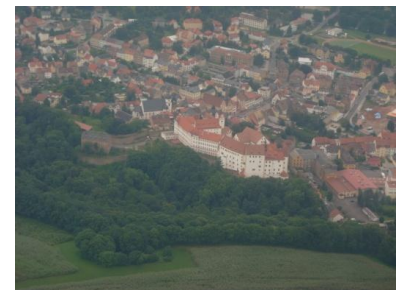


attack that it was very lightly defended. They were wrong and the Eider dam was also successfully busted. The

Radio call sign for success of the mission was the name Gibson's black Labrador. Having flown the route in peacetime I have nothing but admiration for the bomber crews that did it for real; not just on this occasion but regularly over enemy territory with the chance of surviving your tour of missions less than 30%!

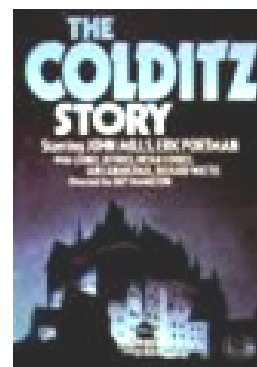


Having completed our dams raid we set an easterly course for Colditz Castle. The former Prisoner of War castle from the air looked quite picturesque belying its infamous past. It has recently been re- furbished and is now open to the public as an hotel.



The Colditz Story film

The Colditz Story film was made in 1955 from the novel by former inmate and escapee Captain Patrick Reid. Starring John Mills as Pat Reid and Lionel Jeffries as Harry Tyler.



From Colditz we flew to our lunch and fuel stop and crew change at the "Flying Ranch" in Soemmerda-

Dermsdorf. I'm not sure where this old East German Mig airfield got its American sobriquet from, but it had a brand new club house with cheap food and very friendly service.



Roy was flying the next leg with me as navigator, but the weather was a bit claggy so it was decided that Kevin navigated and I was rear gunner again.



Shortly after departing the Flying Ranch the sky cleared for the short flight to Zielona Góra airfield in Poland. The airfield had quite substantial facilities for what was just a grass strip; the red biplane in the picture is used as water bomber to fight forest fires.

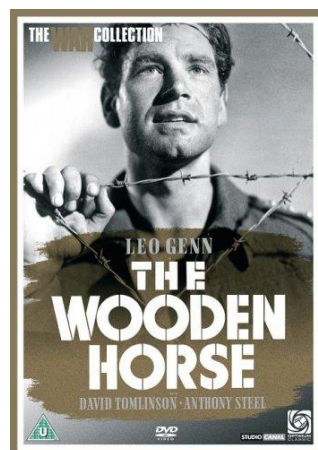
Day 3: The Wooden Horse & The Great Escape

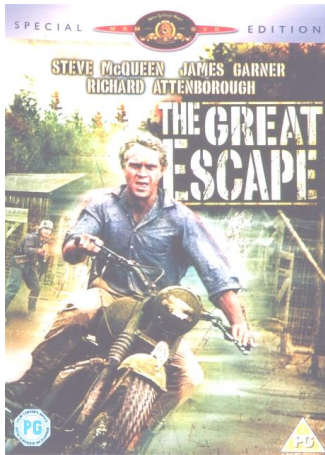
Due our delayed departure from England we were only going to stay one night in Poland and return via the Mosel in Germany the next day. This would mean that we did not have time to visit our last site Stallag Luft III. We spent the night in Zielona Góra had an excellent meal and a couple of local beers. When we returned to our hotel the weather was fine, however, the next morning the heavens opened and a look at the weather report put paid to any flying that day. The hotel receptionist put us in contact with a local car hire firm and off we went to Stallag Luft III in a rather tired Audi A3. There is a modern museum at the site with a replica hut built by the RAF and the Royal Engineers in 2008. The huts that were the scene of the great the escape are about 2 miles away in a forest, only the bases remaining. The routes of the tunnels have been paved over and the names of the 76 men crawled through the tunnel to initial freedom including 50 of whom were murdered by the Gestapo at Hitler's orders are engraved on the stones. Stallag Luft 3 was the inspiration for 2 classic war films:

The Wooden Horse film

The Wooden Horse is a Second World War film based on true events in the German POW camp Stalag Luft III, which were also described in the book of the same name by Eric Williams, who also wrote the screenplay. Actors starring include Leo Genn, Anthony Steel and David Tomlinson. The 'Wooden Horse' plan itself was actually conceived and entirely thought through by Williams and Michael Codner in equal measures. In Oliver Philpot's later book The Stolen Journey the author made it clear that he initially thought the plan was "crackers", telling its inventors "I give it a couple of days!". Nevertheless, Philpot helped with the sand dispersal, and later with the actual digging - at which point he was invited to take part in the escape.

The actor Peter Butterworth, who appeared in many of the Carry On films, was one of the vaulters in the real-life 'Wooden Horse' escape. He applied for a role in the subsequent movie but didn't get a part as he 'didn't look convincingly heroic and athletic enough'.





The Great Escape film

The Great Escape is a 1963 American film about an escape by Allied prisoners of war from a German POW camp during World War II starring Steve McQueen, James Garner, and Richard Attenborough. The movie is based on the book of the same name by Paul Brickhill, a novel of the true story of a mass escape from Stalag Luft III in Sagan, which was then part of Germany. The characters in the film are composites of real men. The film was made by the Mirisch Company, released by United Artists, and produced and directed by John Sturges.

Day 4 My Diversion

We had one more night in Zielona Góra and the next morning in fine weather we planned our return route to Arnsberg Minden as the weather in the Mosel was 'DS' (an aviators term for not good). We paid our bill to the lady in the airfield reception with the help of Babel Fish translator on her computer as we did not speak Polish and she did not speak English or German. I had the captains seat for this leg with Ray as nav' and Kevin as rear gunner. On a bumpy grass strip we used all the available runway. As I lifted off Kevin remarked how unlike a homesick angle VICC was with three well fed airmen and their baggage on board.

On route the weather started to deteriorate with cloud building to our west. We knew we could not make our



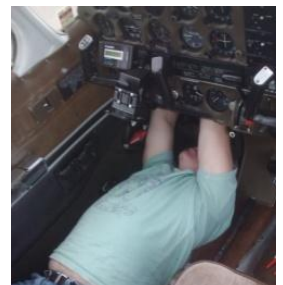
destination so we decided to divert to the nearest airfield with navigation aids and radar. This happened to be Hannover international airport, not bothering to think about landing fees we called them up and they vectored (guided) me on to their runway. After landing we were directed to the General Aviation Terminal GAT where we paid the princely sum of €25 for landing, handling and overnight parking. That would be over £50 at Bournemouth. The receptionist at the GAT booked us a hotel down town at crew rate so we had enough left

over for a couple of beers and a scale tipping German meal.

Day 5 Recovery

Next Morning we filed our flight plan to Calais and taxied out to the runway holding point to do our run up checks Kevin captain me nav' and Ray as talking ballast. At the hold the ammeter was reading over 60 amps (should be about 20) and one of the two radios went ping. Giving our apologies to air traffic control we taxied back to the GAT. I was wondering if my annual RAC recovery would get us and an aging Piper Warrior home.

We diagnosed what we thought to be the problem with the help of a local engineer who ordered a new voltage regulator for us. The spare would arrive the next morning (almost as good as the MGOC) so we had another night in Hannover. No Andrea we did not break it on purpose. The new regulator arrived next morning, but you've guessed it, that was not the problem. We then found there was a short circuit in the field wire to the alternator which we replaced (even more like an MG). By the time we were ready for departure there was only enough daylight left to get us to the Dutch boarder, so we flew to Niederrhein Airport previously RAF Laarbruch air base for another overnighter. Andrea and I spent 3 years at Laarbruch from 1974 to 1977 so I know the area well.



We spent what was thankfully to be the last night of our trip in a small nearby town Kevelar and we reminisced on our tales of daring do over a pizza and of course, a couple of beers.

Day 6 The Home Run

The next day was the reverse route of day one, Ray flew and I navigated to Calais. I flew and Ray navigated the Blighty leg coasting in at Seaford near Brighton. Kevin decided he would be passenger for both legs. This time we all donned our immersion suits before getting into VICC. I just wish we had a photo or video of the first attempt on day one. We arrived back at RAF Lyneham in time for tea and medals. We each flew for about seven hours during the trip and I personally learnt a great deal from it. Ray and Kevin had both done overseas flights before, but for me it was a first. I must thank Andrea who did not complain about me bogging off for a week again (after Classic Le Mans) or tell me how worried she was until I got back.

It was an expensive indulgence and one I will probably not do again, well not until Kevin has another cunning plan.

Paul Wheal

Photo Gallery

SHALBOURNE CLASSIC CAR & MOTORCYCLE SHOW

8 or 10 cars (not sure because not all were MGs) enjoyed a chilly run to Shalbourne - a delightful event with much better than average food and drink available. It was worth it for the hog roast alone. The TF is owned by Frank and Jacky, long-time friends of Vic and Jenni.

John Bishop

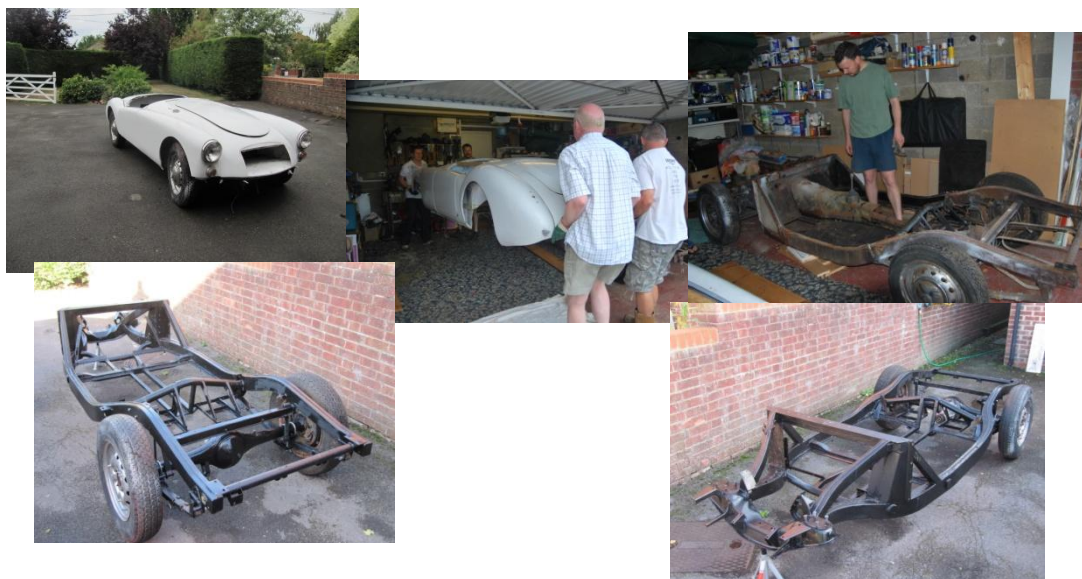


A PROJECT FOR THE WINTER

David Whiteley and his wife joined our club in September. He mentioned his MGA project and I asked for pics of progress:

"My wife and I have had (I think) 5 MGBs over the years but now have an embryo "A" in the garage. This was imported about 6 years ago from Texas and I bought it in July from a disillusioned guy in Wales! The aim is to have it on the road mid-2011 (optimist) when we hope to join in club events."

David Whiteley



Caption Competition



Gordon:

Priscilla shows off her green credentials to Roche Bentley.

Wessex Members' demonstrate their Secret of Eternal Youth to an amazed Roche Bentley.

Roger:

" shhh! - don't say anything, this way we get much better mpg"

ED:

Roche Bentley – "I hope it's not an MGOC part"

Club News

WESSEX MG 2010 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Details
25/10/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Institute of Advanced Motorists Talk
22/11/2010	AGM	YES	The Bell	See below
11/12/2010	Christmas Dinner	YES	The Bell	TBA

Secretary's Scribbles

I am tentatively waiting for MOT time for the BGT! This does involve quite a lot of stress and it has been worrying me. Last year Clive at CAMs told me not to bring the car back unless I had changed the steering rack but since Vic tightened up my brake calipers (Don't ask!) things seem much better so I have just decided to take the car to a different garage. Vic kindly had a look at the rack and he too doesn't think it is a problem so I am just having to wait and see.

Since I last wrote I have been up to the Goodwood Revival in the Mquette. I went with a friend and his dad from Birmingham and picked them up at the Winchester A34 services to waft them in the sophistication that is a ZB Mquette. We also made use of the special pre 1966 car park where I was lined up with Blower Bentleys and the like – quite an experience! The event was awesome and I will go again – I dressed in my granddads tweed suit and held on to my hat as Spitfires beat the circuit up with various Battle of Britain tributes. I bumped in to Andy and Diane – they had taken the costumes to another level – wow! There was also a period Tesco to get your shopping in! The Racing was the centre piece and although many people had told me that the really race all guns blaring I was still shocked at Aluminium E-types being smashed up and Pre-war F1 cars sliding viciously around corners. I particularly enjoyed the race that had MGBs and Midgets in and the little racers built on minivan chassis were awesome and I think one won the class trophy. I would recommend a weekend ticket as there is just so much to see and do.

See you all soon

Tom

The Wessex MG Club's Annual General Meeting

Please be advised that in accordance with the Club's rules, two month's notice is given for our Annual General Meeting.

The Wessex MG Club

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the above meeting will take place on the

22nd November

at

The Bell on the Common, Broughton Gifford

commencing at

8:00 pm

Preceded from 7.30 onwards by the payment of subscriptions for the 2011 season.

Notice of any resolution to be proposed at the meeting should be given in writing to the Secretary before the 1st October.

The proceedings of the meeting shall be as follows:

Agenda for AGM

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Approval of minutes of 2009 AGM.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Treasures Report.
5. Consideration of any motions received.
- Break
6. Election of Committee for 2011.
7. Presentation of Awards.
8. Arrangements for 2011 AGM.
9. Any other business.