

WESSEX MG CLUB

AT THE BELL ON THE COMMON BROUGHTON GIFFORD



Wessex MG February 2009 – Issue 2

Chairman's Chat



As I sit here at home and look out onto our back lawn the snow continues to fall heavily and open top motoring is nothing but a distant dream. The snow certainly has caused widespread disruption, but for me I no longer have to go out in it or grapple with decisions about when to salt the roads of Wiltshire or how to keep the major routes open in this fairly exposed county. The current issue appears to be shortage of salt and arguments about that can fill a whole evening for a couple or three blokes sitting round the fire down the local with pint in hand. In my day we used to stockpile lots of salt but the disadvantage is that this ties up a lot of funds which could be used for other purposes if there is a mild winter and the pile remains more or less intact. The salt also degrades, gets washed away and can pollute the area around the stockpile - witness the lack of tree growth around the salt dump at Semington. The current policy I understand to be along the lines of manufacturing industries of "just in time" deliveries to maintain a minimum tonnage. Problem here is that the stuff has to come from Cheshire and many cus-

tomers want deliveries at the same time. I guess that is the current problem. Even with adequate supplies there is still the matter of keeping up with the weather, adequate trained drivers and drivers' hours. Never very easy.

The snow also brought about the postponement of the Bristol Classic Car Show. Disappointment for me because I am looking to carry out a few enhancements to my newly acquired MGA including purchasing a boot rack (essential equipment for an MGA) in readiness for the Guernsey trip in April. I was hoping I might be able to get one at the show a little cheaper than the MGOC have them on offer. However there is still time to sort that and to carry out an engine oil change and filter before the spring. My garage will have to warm up a little before that is likely to happen though.

The global economy continues its chaotic path with weekly closures on the high street and household names dropping like flies. But no need for total despair at least fuel costs are substantially less than a year ago which means we can all look forward to a few more miles to the pound unless our revered Government has got something up its sleeve to fleece motorists in an attempt to help fill the black hole in the country's economy. We must all take advantage of this small blessing, throw caution to the wind and

For your diary in the coming month

FEBRUARY

Club events:

14th – Valentine's Dinner

23rd - Club Night – Travel Talk, Roger Binney.

Other events:

22nd Stoneleigh, MG Day.

MARCH

Club events:

6th - Skittles night

8th – Cobweb run

23rd – Club Night – Grand Prix talk Paul Warn

get those MG's out as soon as the weather permits. I notice that daffodils and other bulbs are poking through the snow so spring can't be too far away now.

Gordon



A far off place...not far at all...Hampi

We have never previously had much time to spare when we visited Bangalore, and neither did we ever want to stay too long either, as the city is rapidly losing its call-centre/IT hot spot, full of new-investment. But this December, a us the excuse to visit for the wedding's unexpected cancel-due to "irreconcilable differ-to invest. So, prompted by our vious visit, we ventured out to see west of Bangalore, after visiting our Bangalore Club and a spot of dinner at



Colonial and Indian identity as the country's ly wealthy young folk and high rise friend's son's wedding there gave second time this year and the lation two weeks before our trip, ences" meant that we had time youngest's urging, based on a pre-Hampi, 7 ½ hour's drive north friends, a couple of nights stay at the some very nice eateries.

We had considered taking the overnight sleeper (always great fun) but our friends provided us with an SUV and a driver from the moment we arrived to the moment we left Bangalore, so it was by road that we went. A week after the Mumbai bombing, the airport was on full alert as one of the perceived prime targets and sandbags and machine-guns were all about, but the good news that the English cricket team was to return for the tests was the focus of all the friendly small-talk.

We had flown in by Kingfisher airlines (of Force India fame) direct from Heathrow and the service was absolutely excellent. Real, edible food, reasonable legroom and a host of very pretty, delightfully polite hostesses (handpicked apparently by the boss) to look after you. An unplanned working day for me, early home by 5, packed and in Heathrow T4 by 8, we took off at 10 and landed at 1pm lunchtime the next day. A couple of good Indian meals en-route to get into the swing of it, a bottle of wine or two, noise cancelling headphones and Lone Ranger eye-masks on, and before you knew it we were in warm sunshine and raring to go! Easy!

The drive to Hospet, the nearest town to Hampi was typically great fun. Goats, cows, camels, idiots and potholes all adding to the fluid panorama passing by outside our air-con bubble. Delicious breakfast in a cheap roadside caf, consisting of Indian Chai, Dosas, Idlis and Sambar curry on grubby tin plates whilst being intensely watched by everyone broke the journey, but soon we were there and our hotel was surprisingly good.

It was Lynne's birthday the day we arrived, so I had secretly arranged for a bouquet of flowers in the bedroom and a birthday cake at dinner but, the manager welcomed us warmly shaking Lynne by the hand and wishing her a happy birthday and that a cake would be provided! This was India after all and the cake proved to have Technicolor icing and an iced handwritten message on it saying "Happy birthday Mrs Lynne Binney". Nice touch boys and masses of Brownie points for me. We dispatched the driver for the day and he went to see a movie, flush with cash since we were giving him £3 a day for food, and lodgings and he was therefore in surplus.



The rest of our stay we simply enjoyed Hampi, probably the most inspiring place I have ever been.....

Hampi is a UNESCO World Heritage site and you can get a great image and tour of it by searching for Hampi on Google Earth. The site is some 20 square kilometres of palaces, temples, bathing gatts and beautiful scenery. The atmosphere is like going back in time to the 60's, since the main centre Hampi Bazaar is full of hippy backpackers aged from 18 to 70, who have made a lot of effort to get there. The area is alcohol and meat-free respecting that the site is essentially a holy site, and whilst we

were there many ceremonies were taking place in the different temples.

The site is bounded by magnificent granite boulder hills, forming a basin through which a river runs. This made the site fertile, wealthy and defensible and so in 1250 AD the Vijayanagar Kingdom was formed there in response to marauding invaders from the north. The Kingdom lasted some 200 years before it was defeated by the moguls and subsequently the Brits, but in the intervening period the most magnificent structures were built. Water was the key of course and the availability of granite, so all structures are massive and have survived with much of their carved detail, and water enabled gardens and baths to be built supplied by hand-hewed granite irrigation aqueducts and channels. Granite was split off huge boulders using natural fissures in the rock and the evidence is clear to see everywhere.

There are too many wonderful buildings to describe, but the elephant stables, granite chariots, bridges, musical columns and massive temples are just some, many with their massive wall faces covered in carved stories of battles and religious events. Everywhere are temples big and small and in and around them are monkeys, goats, cows, pigs, dogs, priests, children and the odd back-and Edington. One high spot for us but water travel and the people. a small village across the river, to raft along with several others and like fury to get us across before the liant and worth all of the 10p. Over original capital city, now a very interesting sleepy rural village alongside the river. Flooded with children desperate to know your name and have their photo taken we spent the afternoon watching a fisherman netting fish in a smaller version of the coracle that we had come across in.

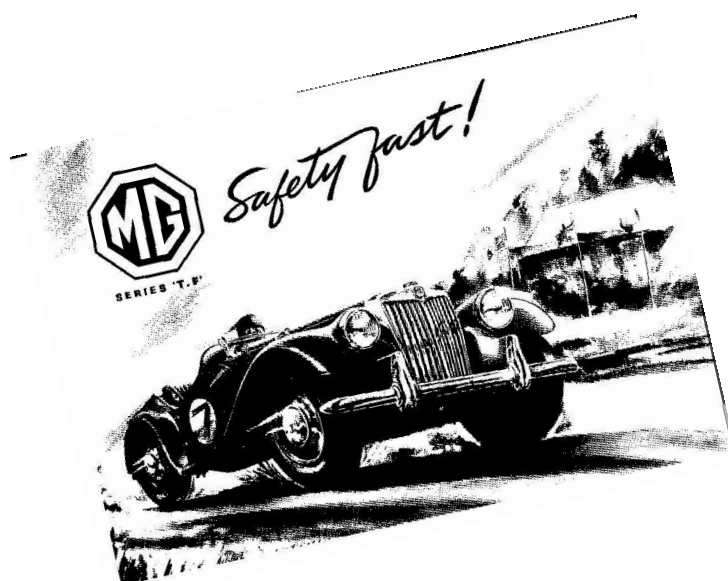


packer from Brazil or Auss, Canada however was not buildings and histo- We needed to cross the river to get to do so involved climbing on a wicker three mopeds and the owner paddling thing sank from the rising water. Brill- on the other side, the village was the

You can live cheaply in Hampi, a room was £2 a night, a motor scooter £1.50 a day to hire and a good meal 60p. And, you can buy clothes, rugs and artwork by the bucketful and have a wonderful massage for £1.50

Hampi is difficult to describe, it carries a real presence and serenity and you cannot fail to be inspired by its beauty, the simplicity of life there and the friendliness of the people. I can't recommend it enough. It really is easy to get there, it's just that people mistakenly go to the tourist hotspots of Agra and the Taj Mahal or the Goa beaches. You can easily do it in 7-8 days and if anyone wants a tour guide or a bag carrier... I'm your man!

Roger & Lynne



What exactly is a “CLASSIC?”

Doubtless this question about what a “classic car” might be will have prompted informed responses from MG owners who are far better versed than I in restoration, renovation and reconditioning. As an English teacher I would like to offer the following linguistic ramblings, which I hope will prove interesting in their own way. Let’s look at the problem of defining “classic” car caused by the word itself and the way we under-

To begin the lesson, please put down your pens and your hands attention as we take a look at “classic” as an **adjective** (remembering words?) as defined in your handy dictionary. Here find the **denotation** of the word: what it actually means. The my trusty Chambers dictionary begins with “of the highest class and continues “having historical associations, traditionally accepted, long established...excellent.” The point is pretty clear: at this level of meaning, “classic” and the idea of quality go together.



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But of course “excellent” is a matter of **opinion** and we move swiftly into the realm of **connotation** (what we meant when we said it and what someone else heard or understood). This, of course, is far more difficult to pin down. As individuals we all harbour our own unique preferences and prejudices, so to Mr. Jones, a “classic” may conjure up images of gleaming paintwork, a special edition, a place in motoring history, whereas to Mr. Smith, a “classic” might be a banger driven by a nerdy geek, something that should have gone to the crusher years ago and a bag of bolts that he certainly wouldn’t be seen dead in. If you noticed that the adjective has suddenly been used without a **noun** (object, i.e. car), award yourself a gold star and give out any books you happen to have lying around.

*Some musings on what the term
“classic car” might mean,
prompted by Roche Bentley’s
challenge in the January 2009
edition of “Enjoying MG”.*

The next step is to factor in an awareness of **collocations** – those pairs of words that we so often use together, such as “careless driver” or “chrome bumper”. Now try the word “classic” with some other nouns. The **connotations** of these **collocations** may be all positive as we reminisce over a classic summer, cricket match or wine, but on a more negative note, we can also make a classic mistake...

The problem is, as I’m sure by now you’ve begun to realise, that the meaning of “classic” can weave around to express different attitudes depending on who’s using it. Consider one of the most commonly used collocations, “classical music”. Does that phrase summon up feelings of rest and relaxation, a good tune and beautiful thoughts? Then you’re probably one of the older generation! How about “classic music”? Even my twenty-ish-year-old children would see that as something “cool”, despite knowing that it was created in my youth! So **audience** (who’s hearing the words) is a factor too.

What we cannot do under any circumstances is to hang on to one definition of a word and, because it makes the most sense to us, claim that it is the only correct one.

The whole discussion so far has centred on **semantics** - the meaning of an individual word - so now let’s change up a gear (note unsubtle use of a motoring **metaphor**).

All this is complicated by the fact that words change their meaning depending on where we are when we say them (or, for those of you collecting all this language stuff to learn for homework, **context**). For example, after an accident we may discover that the guy who just pranged our recently restored MGB was driving uninsured, prompting us to spit out, “Oh, that’s just classic!” What we meant to say, of course, was, “You stupid, irresponsible b*****!”

On the other hand, you might be at the Classic Car Show looking at the most immaculate and rare example of an MGA Twin cam. “That’s a classic example of the marque” you comment, meaning “Shame you never drive it on the roads and anyway just how much did it cost you?” These are **pragmatic** elements of language – we all understand what was really meant; we’re good at ‘reading between the lines’.

A little Googling (new word for my dictionary!) provides some real-world examples. The Classic Car Club of America (in the excellent glossary in their as one that is on “an exclusive list marques built largely between 1925 displacement, custom coachwork, help determine whether a car is con-



dingly the Club keeps an exhaustive list of the vehicles it considers class-admitted. The British HM Revenue company taxation purposes as being over 15 years old and having a value in excess of £15,000. Some event organisers have adopted an “over 21” rule.

This is all very confusing, so can the wonderful Wikipedia shed light on the darkness? “There is no fixed definition of a classic car” it states, sensibly but unhelpfully, pointing out that one valid interpretation is to consider *any* older car to be a classic (makes sense to me!) So if I go to insure my 45-year-old MG, will I be told, “Sorry, mate, your car just isn’t classic enough. We’ve de-classic-ed that model.”? After all, can you have an “un-classic” classic car? I digress... but essentially we’re back to **context** and **audience** again: where you are and who you are talking to seem to affect how you define a classic car.

Now for your next exercise, let’s turn to the effects of the commercial world, the mass media and the general public. Most people would tell you they know what is meant by “classic car” – but how do they know?

Maybe they see Classic Car magazines on the shelves in the newsagents, perhaps they’re aware of the Classic Car Show at the NEC, and probably they see groups of older cars with funny plaques on the front as they head off to rallies or get-togethers on sunny days in the summer. It doesn’t bother Joe Public if these vehicles are totally authentic; authentic on the outside but fitted with modern goodies under the bonnet; built in 1935, 1964 or 1976; or badged with the Bentley, MG, Jaguar or any other name.

They will still be called classic cars – and that’s where I’m heading with all this.

The ultimate answer to “Define Classic Please” lies not with the experts, specialists, motoring historians and know-it-alls, but with the ordinary public. In other words it all goes back to **audience** and the general **usage** of the word: sorry, but that’s the way it’s been since Man first began to use language and that’s the way it’ll stay. Words take on more or less positive meanings, they mean specific things or more general things as time goes by - they just never stay the same!

As we contemplate a future with cars powered by hydrogen and/or electricity that emit only water vapour from their exhausts, who knows what a “classic” car will be in 50 years’ time? Maybe **deterioration** will take place and “classic” will be a byword for inefficiency and social irresponsibility. Or will **specialisation** occur so that a “classic” car is one that has an engine powered by fossil fuel? Or will **generalisation** happen so that you can call any car a “classic” once you can’t buy a new one anymore and a few years have gone by?

So, by now you will realise that I am very far from understanding exactly what makes a “classic car” myself and have conspicuously failed to come up with a natty list of criteria, but I hope to have shed some light on why everyone has a different answer, why any answer is unlikely to last for long anyway, and to have convinced you that no perfect definition exists that is likely to be accepted by everyone.

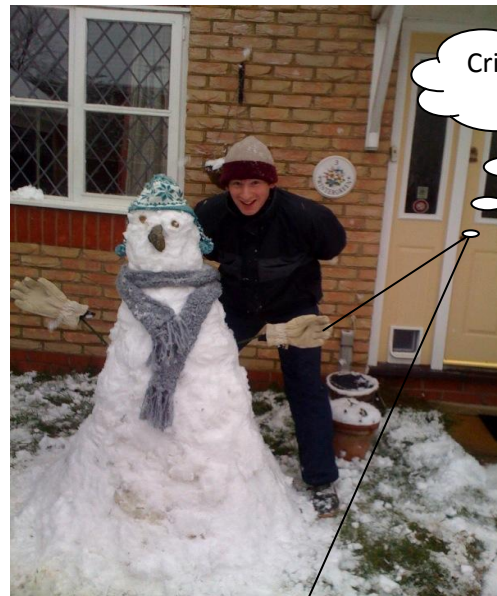
Oh, by the way, I've attached pictures of my own 1964 red drophead MGB with wire wheels, heated seats and over-drive - a classic far-from-original classic!



John Bishop

The Club Caption Competition

Don't bend down there!! If we're not careful, we'll end up in the caption competition.



Crikey!

Sadly there were no entrants for January's competition, so I have included a caption. It really isn't difficult.....Try this month's – Tom has clearly tried to cover up his excitement!

Club News

WESSEX MG 2008 EVENTS LIST			
Date	Event	Venue	Details
22/02/2009	Stoneleigh MG Day	Stoneleigh Park	
23/02/2009	Club Night	The Bell	Travel talk - Roger Binney
06/03/2009	Skittles Night	The Fox & Hounds, Devizes	See details below
08/03/2009	Cobweb run	IBM site Nr Winchester 11.00 - 1430	See details below
23/03/2009	Club Night	The Bell	Talk on Grand Prix racing before WW2 - Paul Warn
5 to 8 April 2009	Club trip to Guernsey		See update below
2 to 4 May 2009	Bristol Classic Car Show	Shepton Mallet Show Ground	Postponed from February - see details below.
27/04/2009	Club Night	The Bell	19.30 start - Prod & Poke - members to bring question about their car
04/05/2009	Popham Classic Air & Car Day		
18/05/2009	Club Night	Mystery Run	
14/06/2009	Cotswold Caper		
22/06/2009	Club Night	The Bell	BBQ
28/06/2009	Annual Picnic		

Skittles night

This year's skittles night will take place at the Fox and Hounds Devizes. You will find the pub on the left going out of Devizes for about 1 mile on the A342 towards Andover. Please arrive at 7.30 for 8.00pm. The cost per person is £5 to include buffet food. Numbers must be confirmed by the February club night together with money; either in the form of a cheque (Payable to V C Wright) or cash. There will be prizes!!



Vic Wright

Cob web run

Members to meet at the Wharf car park, Devizes. The club will leave in convoy at 10.00am.

Guernsey 2009

The Guernsey trip is beckoning with only 8 weeks to go! With that in mind I will need to pay the balance for the ferry in early March, so could I ask that cheques for £130 (97.50 for Kevin) made payable to P R Adams, are with me on or by the February club night on 23rd.

For those not able to attend the club night my address is 4 Peacock, West Overton, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 4HD, or I will be at the valentine's night if that is easier.

I hope you're all looking forward to it as much as I am.

Thanks
Paul Adams

Valentine's Night

The club had a very successful Valentine's night at The George Sandy Lane. Everyone seemed to be glad to get out and socialise – a week earlier would have been a different story.....Our thanks go to Andrea and Paul for organising a great event.



The Bristol Classic Car Show

'The Footman James 30th Bristol Classic Car Show has been rescheduled for Saturday 2nd May Sunday 3rd May & Monday 4th May 2009. Please keep all tickets as these will be valid as any day tickets for the new dates. With the weekend expected to be somewhat better weather we will be enlarging the area allocated to the classic car park. There will be a free goody bag for each of the first 2000 people to arrive on each of the 3 days.'

