

## Chairman's Chat



The Anniversary Celebrations have come and gone and I trust all who attended had a good time. I certainly did and I consider it to have been a most successful event thanks to the hard work of Committee Members and others. Much of the work to put on an event like this goes on behind the scenes and it is gratifying to receive complimentary and appreciative comments from the Membership. At the time of writing work is still being carried out on the finances so I don't know the final situation but I am hopeful that we will be able to make a small contribution to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal. I will keep you informed in due course. Thanks again to all who attended and helped make this a memorable occasion.

Looking ahead, the year is coming to its end but there is an opportunity to insert another day out on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September to the Classic Car and Motorcycle Show at Shalbourne Manor. Shalbourne is just a few miles south of Hungerford. I went last year and the event is a cross between a classic car show and a village fete with craft stalls, jazz band, hog roast, beer tent and is held in the grounds of a very pleasant

manor house. More detail is provided in my earlier e-mail and in this newsletter.

At the next Club meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September we will review the weekend trip to the Isle of Wight held in April and consider what might be arranged for next year. At the October meeting we have a speaker from the Institute of Advanced motorists so no doubt there will be something we can all learn from him and maybe sign up for a course leading to the IAM Test.

In November we will hold the Annual General Meeting and in accordance with the Club's Constitution you will find formal notification of this elsewhere in this issue. At the AGM a new Committee and Officers of the Club will be elected, so have a think about any member you would wish to nominate for a role after first getting their agreement or perhaps you would like to put your own name forward. I shall not be putting myself forward to fill the Chairman's position for a further term. As I always say at this time, I am a great believer in having "fresh blood" on the Committee and a turnaround of its makeup is both healthy and encourages different ideas and maintains enthusiasm. By way of lightening proceedings we always hold a photo competi-



For your diary in the coming month

### September

26<sup>th</sup> – Classic Car & Motorcycle Show, Shalbourne.

27<sup>th</sup> – Club Night 8.00pm

For details see page 9

tion. So look through your snaps associated with Club activities and prepare to bring your best/funniest one along on the evening.

The final event of the year will be the Christmas Dinner, but it is far too early to contemplate that, so more in the future

**Gordon**

## The Wessex MG Club's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend

The following account of the anniversary weekend - with some minor differences - has been sent to Enjoying MG, hence the formality of the text.

As Gordon said in his chat, the club's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend has come and gone. It almost felt like an anti-climax, in the sense that so much work had gone into planning the event during the year, yet it was over in a blink. The 24 hours from the start of the anniversary run at 11:00am on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September to the judging of the MGs at around 11:00am on Sunday simply flew by – with only a few hours of sleep in between!

The event was held in the Lydiard House Conference Centre, located within a Grade 1 listed 18th century Mansion House, once the ancestral home of the Viscounts Bolingbroke. The Palladian house, beautiful church, formal parkland and surrounding Wiltshire countryside are the striking remains of a great estate which reached its peak in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.



The weather forecast leading up to the weekend was all doom and gloom. The rain threatened during the drive to Lydiard Park to the west of Swindon, but on arrival the sun came out and the weather set fair for the rest of a great weekend.

Most folk were staying overnight, so the first objective was to book into our rooms and store our belongings before signing onto the to record the start, as each car each car and its crew. As with involved in the planning and route took us through magnifi- joy to be out in open topped countryside seemingly un- founded. Lunch was had en leisurely pace, afternoon tea.



run. A photographer was on hand pulled up pictures were taken of all club runs a great deal of work is this event was no exception. The cent Wiltshire countryside, it was a MGs, driving through villages and changed since the marquee was route and for those taking a more

It was late afternoon by the time most cars had arrived back at Lydiard House, where a dedicated parking area had been assigned in the cobbled stable block area opposite the entrance to the house. By the time stories had been exchanged and a refreshing drink taken, it was time to prepare for the main event of the weekend. Dinner was 7:00 for 7:30.

Our Guest of Honour was Roche Bentley secretary of the MG Owners Club. We also welcomed guests from outside the club, some of whom had travelled from as far afield as the Midlands, having read our invitation in *Enjoying MG*. The restaurant was transformed to reflect the life of the club, with memorabilia from past events and each table was assigned an MG model name and decorated in the club's colours. There was also a rolling slide show which brought back memories of the many activities organised by the club - not to mention the fashions! Mention should also be made of the club's teddy bear mascots, who were also assigned a table for the evening.

Our special thanks must go to those outside the club who took the time and trouble to come to our event, most of whom sat at our table. Kevin made them particularly welcome, as can be seen from an example of the pics taken on the night.

Following an excellent supper, it was time for the formalities. This included an excellent after dinner speech from Roche which included a test of our predictive powers and a hilarious story which was far too complex to remember! The winners of the afternoon's run, Andy and Diane, were presented with their prize. Andy and Diane are past chairman and secretary of our club and had travelled from Germany to attend the celebrations. Our current chairman Gordon Newman was presented with an elegant glass trophy to commemorate the club's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To round off the formalities there was the cutting of the delicious cake – designed and baked by Verity, Jeni and Vic's daughter - by the club's longest serving member Vic Wright, ably supported by his wife Jeni and Roche.



The formalities complete, we all rock and rolled the night away to live music from a great rock and roll band called the Echoes.

Following a hearty cooked breakfast it was time for our last event of the weekend, before we said our goodbyes. Rather than the formality of judging the 'best car' we decided on a more informal competition where one of the Lydiard staff volunteered to judge the car she would most like to drive home. The winner was John and Priscilla Bishop's well presented red MGB roadster. The irony was that when



Priscilla came to move the car ready for their departure it wouldn't start – beauty is only skin deep!

Although the weekend's celebrations were now complete, there was no reason to leave Lydiard Park. Our weekend coincided with Heritage Open Days. Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually either closed to the public or normally charge for admission. As part of the weekend we had free access to Lydiard House and the walled gardens.

Our thanks go to Roche Bentley for accepting our invitation, to our guests from outside the club, to the staff of Lydiard House and finally but by no means least, the club membership, for making the weekend such a memorable occasion.

## PS

In addition to John and Priscilla's car breaking down, Phillip and Gina also had problems. Both were resolved by replacing the condenser.....

## ED

## Mystery Car

As part of an occasional item not necessarily related to MG cars, I included in last month's newsletter this photo taken during our trip to the Classic Le Mans event and asked for any suggestions.

Richard Tranter thought it may be one of the AC family but also suggested that Ken Scott would probably know. Ken sent this piece, which is right on the button:

The mystery picture in August magazine is a Swallow Doretti. This was a car designed by American Dorothy Deen, a motor sport enthusiast, and her father Arthur Anderson, who were importers of British sports cars including Triumph TR's. He was a specialist in working with thin wall tubing and in conjunction with Frank Rainbow of Swallow Coach building (1935) Ltd., designed a new car around Triumph TR2 running gear. The car's name 'Doretti' was taken from a village in the Midlands in 1954/5 and a export to USA.



Swallow Sidecars was formed in 1922 by William Lyons and William Walmsley to manufacture sidecars and subsequently to manufacture special examples being the Austin Seven Swallow. William Lyons became more involved in this aspect of the company so in 1927 a new company was formed, SS Cars Ltd. and moved to a new factory in Coventry. The two companies continued until 1935 when the original company was made independent under the name of Swallow Coach building (1935) Ltd. and SS Cars continued to make cars under this name using Triumph chassis and engines. In 1945, after the war, the name was changed to Jaguar Cars, for obvious reasons, and the rest is history!

low Coach building (1935) Ltd., Triumph TR2 running gear. The car's name with a slight change to were built at Walsall airport in total of 276 were built mainly for

In 1954 Swallow Coach building was sold to TI Group and this brought about the demise of the Doretti when Jaguar, a major customer of TI Group, forced them to stop production or they would take their business elsewhere! It was not helped when Sir John Black, the head of Triumph at the time, was severely injured in one when leaving the Triumph factory and so their interest in supplying parts diminished!

## Ken Scott

## MG Factoids – MGA Deluxe

The Editor's account in last month's newsletter of the summer exploits of The Wessex Boys On Tour made reference to the possibility of Roger's MGA being the Deluxe version. A little bit of research reveals some interesting information that might help to establish the provenance of Roger's car.

The first thing to say is that the designation "Deluxe" was never attributed to any of the MGA models by BMC, so the description is probably a long term traditional misnomer. It is also important to be aware of the various models produced. The first to come into production in 1955 was the MGA 1500 using the B-Series engine and was given an enthusiastic welcome. It was a radical change from MG's traditional square riggers and the streamlined body gave it a top speed of almost 100mph. Three years after production commenced the Twin Cam was introduced. Apart from the special disc brakes all round and centre-lock wheels it also featured Dunlop disc wheels. After only a short run production ceased in 1960. In 1959 the original roadster, which subsequently became known as the Mark I, was replaced by the MGA 1600. The most important change introduced was an engine size increase from 1498cc to 1588cc the same capacity as the Twin Cam. The Mark II was introduced in 1962 featuring an even bigger engine of 1622cc. Other external differences included a new radiator grill and new rear lights, *(neither of which was an improvement on the original – personal opinion)*.



Soon after cessation of the Twin Cam production MG introduced the option of Dunlop four-wheel disc brakes and centre-lock disc wheels on the 1600, a variant which has become known as the Deluxe model. This was referred to by MG as the "Competition Option". Other parts in this package came in the form of "Competition Deluxe Seats" and a close ratio gear box and some other more minor parts. There is an opinion that the deluxe was introduced to boost flagging sales and use up surplus Twin Cam chassis parts. A more likely explanation is a contract with Dunlop to supply a fixed number of the steel wheels was allowed to run until expiry.

Total production of all MGA variants amounted to 101,081 of which only 395 were the "Deluxe" so the rarity of these models is clear.

So where does this leave us with Roger's car? Well I have not examined it closely enough to form an opinion, but clearly the shiny chrome wire wheels are retrofit and therefore give no clue. The most reliable indicator is probably whether or not there are Dunlop disc brakes all round. But beware as this alone would not define the "Deluxe" because as we all know most pre-1980's MG's of all marques are a composite of parts from other models and eras as well as modern up-dates to make our cars perform more appropriately for present day driving conditions. Nothing wrong with that, of course, after all I believe it is representative of the ethos of Cecil Kimber when he took a Morris Saloon and put a lightweight body on it amongst other modifications to create a racing car.

**Gordon**

## My MG – and other cars

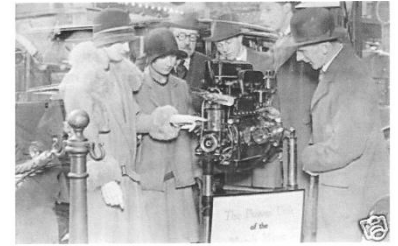
The 'My MG' series was put on hold in the spring as there are usually enough stories during the summer months to include in the newsletter. Ken (Scott) has sent his story to continue the series into the winter.

My motoring history begins before the dawn of MG as we know it. I bought my first car in 1952 and drove it every day to work as an engineering apprentice for some time before I took a test. We did that in those days! There was consternation on the face of the apprentice supervisor when I asked for time off to take my test. It was a 1929 Morris Minor 2 door saloon with a fabric body. This was the first



small car produced by Morris specifically to compete with the Austin 7. Under its bonnet was an 850cc OHC engine developed by Wolseley following its acquisition by Morris. It was a very advanced design for the time using a vertically mounted dynamo at the front to drive the overhead camshaft. Cecil Kimber immediately saw the potential of this mundane 'family' car and fitted it with a 2

seater fabric body and the now very familiar MG radiator grill, christened it the 'M Type' and it was launched in 1929. Prior to this MG's were big saloons and tourers based on the Cowley and Oxford and were not seen as performance cars but more as grand tourers. The photograph, unfortunately, is not of my car as none have survived the passage of time! The other is the introduction of this legendary engine at the 1928 motor show.



Morris-Minor-1928-introduction-Earls-Court-

With a new cross flow head and twin SU's it launched the Midget range with the introduction of the J2 in 1932. Fitted with 4 speed gearbox with a beautiful cast aluminium remote control for the gear change, centre lock wheels and slab tank on the back; the MG as we know it had arrived. Without this engine we would not have had all the beautiful sports and racing MG's that we all love. In fact, I doubt if MG would have continued as a company without this development. This became the basis of the MMM range. In 4 cylinder form it continued up to the PB of 1936 and, in 6 cylinder form, in all the Magna and Magnette variations up to 1936. The 6cylinder version was also used by Wolseley in the Hornet.



My next car was an Austin 7 Special based on a 1929 chassis but fitted with a beautiful, professionally made all aluminium body along the lines of a swept wing J2 complete with slab tank and spare wheel on the back. The photo doesn't do it justice due to the young 18 year old leaning on the back, but it was a lovely car! At the time I bought this, a local 'dealer' had a K3 Magnette in BRG for sale. If I remember correctly, it was priced at £380. This was way above my means as a lowly paid apprentice but just think what that would be worth today; possibly £100K or even double that! This was the first great MG opportunity that I missed!

I then had a succession of interesting but sensible cars, but not MG's, until I bought a 1936 TA in 1959. This was rather 'tatty' but bought as a restoration project and also to release funds to get married, which we did in July that year. We used it on our honeymoon for a touring holiday in Devon but did not keep it long as the pressures of setting up home coupled with not having a garage precluded the 're-build' and so it went for yet more sensible cars.



In 1968 I met up with John Ratcliffe with whom I served my apprenticeship; his father was the designer and maker of the Ratcliffe Tail Lift. John was given a new TD for his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and I asked if he still had the car. He showed it to me under a tarpaulin at the back of the factory, unused for some time! This renewed his interest in it and he suggested I return in a week and he would get it running. This I did and, with trade plates hung on, we drove it around Stevenage. All he had done was to charge the battery and it was fine! When I asked what he intended to do with the car, he said he might sell it and offered it to me for £250. As we had just had our first child, I had to decline his offer as being totally

impractical! I have kicked myself ever since; my second missed MG opportunity! Just think, one owner, low mileage, 1953 Mark 2 TD. You could add two noughts to that price now!

Many cars, both owned and company subsequently passed my way. In July 1991 my wife died and, to help fill the void, I decided I needed a project and another MG was the answer. As a 'died in the wool' slab tank MG fanatic it had to be a TF as the last of the breed but, looking around, the prices of both the TD and TF were outside my range, particularly in restored condition. At this time the heritage shell had just been announced for the MGB and, although I hadn't really liked it when it was launched in 1962, or the MGA, it began to grow on me as a project and so started looking around for a B donor car. As a matter of interest, after visiting the 1953 Motor Show and the launch of the TF, I felt it was time MG updated their design and submitted a drawing to MG of my idea for a replacement. It was very similar to what became the MGA but with a TF radiator grill and hence a higher bonnet. I think it looked better and more like a true MG! However, the A went on to be a great success.



To return to my MGB project, I happened to buy Popular Classics and they were running a series of articles by Lindsay Porter on a B rebuild using a Heritage shell. He had carried out this restoration as the project car for his book, MGB - GUIDE TO PURCHASE & DIY RESTORATION; a book many of you will have, or have seen. At the end of this series of articles, it stated that, as he had now completed the book, the car was for sale. I asking price was too high. Some Enjoying MG. I rang him and arrives on a farm near Worcester very hard with rivers of mud running he said was that 'no way spent some time discussing the es at other interesting projects he opportunity I was not going to let agreed a price and he also agreed to deliver it to my house. Again in the pouring rain, on 4<sup>th</sup>



contacted his office, but I felt the months later, it was advertised in ranged to go and see the car. He and the day I went it was raining ning down the road and the first was I going for a test drive! We car and looking around his garag- had in hand. This was an MG op-slip, so after much haggling we

December 1992 I took delivery of my new 'pride and joy' having never driven it or any other MGB for that matter! In effect, I had bought a 'brand new' MGB with only 857 miles on the clock as all parts fitted to the shell were either new or fully reconditioned. At the same time he had up-rated the specification to that of later models as well as fitting many modern parts. Some purists would not accept this as a true 1969 car but so what, I love it and it is tax exempt!

The main features of the modifications are:-  
1800cc stage 1 engine with lead free head by Aldon Engineering.  
Twin 1 3/4ins. HS6 SU Carbs. On 'Special Tuning' manifold.  
K & N air filters.  
'Falcon' stainless steel manifold and exhaust.  
Moss 'coil over damper' front suspension.  
V8 front brake assemblies.  
'Piranha' electronic ignition (subsequently fitted by me)

I did have some early teething problems and had to design and make a heat shield for the HS6 carbs. as there was not one available at that time, as they were generally only used for racing where heat soak and fuel vaporisation was not a problem. I have now had this car for 18 years, the longest I have owned any car, so that must say a lot about the fun of owning and driving an MGB. However, I still have a longing for a 'true' MG like the TF/TD or even a Naylor TF 1700 but it would have to be in addition to the B so, without a bigger garage, it will have to remain a pipe dream!

Those that know me will be aware that I don't keep my cars very long, so the B is very much the exception. As a matter of interest, I have added up all the cars that I have owned, or driven as company cars, and I have owned 20 (plus a Vespa scooter!) and 22 company cars; a total of 42!

**Ken**

## Wessex MG Re-enacts Thunder Run

This article has also been sent to Enjoying MG.

I received an email from the MGOC asking if we could help with a request from the Prehistoric Society. The Prehistoric Society which is a large international group of archaeologists and enthusiasts were celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and as an MG played a key role in their foundation they wanted to include some MGs in their celebrations. The MGOC had passed the request on to us as we are the local group to Avebury in North Wiltshire where the celebrations were to start.



What you want to know of course is what MG has got to do with a load of archaeologists 75 years ago. Well the Prehistoric Society was born out of a smaller group called the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia and to make the step up a controversial vote had to be cast. At the time one of the country's most celebrated archaeologists Stuart Piggott was at Avebury working with Alexander Keiller and desperately needed to get to Norwich in a hurry to cast his vote.

He borrowed Keiller's MG to do this infamous 'Thunder Run' On getting there he famously said: 'I drove from Avebury rather fast, in Keiller's MG Midget to cast my vote in favour'. This story has of course gone down in the Society's folklore. The Society is now flourishing with 2000 members in 40 countries. Interestingly in my research I came across the following in Piggott's Obituary: 'Piggott's beaky nose with his abundant silvery hair lent him a distinguished but not lofty air. He had very clear enunciation and he loved sports cars - driving an MG in his final years at Edinburgh.' So may be the Thunder Run left an impression that lasted throughout his life!



I explained to the Society's President, Alison, that I could not provide her with a prewar Midget and with just a few days to get everything organised it was unlikely that we could find one in time. She explained that she wanted the event to be 'in the spirit of' after all the group were travelling sedately in a minibus taking in various sites on the way to Norwich. What we settled for then was an MG ride for her between Avebury and Uffington and I said that I would try and round up as many MGs as I could so that some of the others could experience a ride in an MG too. She was very excited and promised to provide a bottle of Champagne to celebrate her Society's birthday but also Wessex MG Club's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.



On the day we managed two MGAs, an MGB, an MGBGT and my ZB Magnette. (One more MGA than expected as our expat Roger the Dodger had sneaked back into the country in a cloud of secrecy and turned up out of the blue in his Green MGA - all be it low on petrol and having to be bump started at each start - I keep telling him he has to use it more!) On meeting up in the Avebury car park we had a very social welcome and some celebratory Champagne before roaring off to Uffington (Roger's MGA of course was more cough cough roar!). We took 4 Archaeologist passengers and I took the club's WAGs in the Magnette (which despite the warnings from one husband wasn't too bad an experience for me!) We arrived at Uffington and it was nice to be reminded just how much fun going in an MG is by the massive grins on the archaeologist's faces. There was more friendly chatting before a cheerful wave off as we parted company with the archaeologists set off up the hill towards the White horse and us lining up to push start Roger's MGA.



Happy Birthday Prehistoric Society! Happy Birthday Wessex MG Club!

**Tom**

## Caption Competition



"I think he said it was free...C'est gratuit, si vous l'essayez sur ici



Bring along your translation to next Monday's meeting – the clue is there's no such thing as a free lunch!!

**ED**

## Photo Gallery

Looking back on a great weekend





## Club News

WESSEX MG 2010 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Details
26/09/2010	Classic Car & Motor Cycle Show	YES	Shalbourne Manor	<b>See below</b>
27/09/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Review of IofW trip and ideas for 2011.
<b>TBA</b>	Driving test	YES	<b>TBA</b>	POC Vic Wright
25/10/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Institute of Advanced Motorists Talk
22/11/2010	AGM	YES	The Bell	<b>See below</b>
11/12/2010	Christmas Dinner	YES	The Bell	<b>TBA</b>

An extra event has been inserted into the Club programme for Sunday 26th September. There is a Classic Car & Motorcycle Show at Shalbourne Manor. Shalbourne is just a few miles south of Hungerford. We went last year and if the weather is fine this is a super event which is a cross between a village fete and classic car show suitable for couples and families. More details can be viewed at <http://shalbourne.org/classiccarshow.aspx>. It's a pleasant drive to Shalbourne and the whole afternoon has a quintessentially English air about it. Entry is £5 each. For those who wish to go in convoy meet at The Wharf Car Park in Devizes at 11.15 am for a 11.30 departure. Food is available at the show or take a picnic if you prefer.

Please let me know if you intend to go as part of the convoy so that I can be sure we are all assembled before setting off.

**Gordon**

### Secretary's Scribbles

What a fantastic Anniversary weekend! It was worth every effort made by everyone involved. Remember that events like this have taken a lot of time and co-ordination and on top of the various committee members who spent hours checking out venues, bands and road routes etc the actual co-ordination by Gordon was a sizeable commitment and that should be fully recognised! I really enjoyed myself and I am sure that it has helped to bind us together as a stronger club.

I don't have much to say in regard to my cars this month as I have been out driving rather than under them (touch wood). I did have an oil leak on the ZBs diff but on checking the rear axle for oil – out came a stream of oil! This was a bit strange considering firstly I had filled it carefully to the edge of the hole when I did the hub seal a few weeks earlier and secondly because I knew it had been leaking I therefore expected it to be low! My current theory is that when I squirted in the oil it must have pooled in various places inside the axle that only made up made its way in to the main reservoir later??? Anyway now the level is correct I am waiting to see if this correct oil level will cure the leak.

Happy MGing everyone! **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

**22<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.