

# NEWSLETTER

## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

WESSEX  
MG CLUB  
AT THE BELL INN SEEND



Happy New Year to you all. I hope you had a good Christmas in spite of the wind and the rain.

We took advantage of that lovely sunny day between Christmas and New Year to take the roadster for a spin to Imber on the Plain. It's only open to the public for a short time each year. We approached via Bratton, which was not the most comfortable route, over rougher roads, strewn with potholes, avoiding cyclists on an event. The village is full of empty houses and the church was packed with visitors arriving in all kinds of vehicles, but only one MG. We made our way back via Lavington on a narrow, but just passable road.

On a sad note the MG is now rather sick, and un-driveable. I started to do a 12000 mile service on her, and found that the oil filter had been put on cross threaded, very difficult to

remove, and a new one will not go on. (This is the first time that I have had to service the car since I have had it as I have not had it that long, and covered little miles)! Anyway, MGOC cannot supply a new filter housing as they are not made any more. They have given me a telephone number for a place called Mech Spares should anyone have the misfortune to need them - 01777818238. Hopefully I shall have the bits by the weekend. The man I spoke to knew exactly what I wanted and seems to have a reasonable supply of MG bits.

Hope to see lots of you on the 27th for Nigel's talk on his African Adventure. Don't forget we are starting at 1930 promptly as it's a full programme.

Graham

For your diary in the coming month

January

27th - Club Night - Talk  
7:30

February

15th - Valentine's Dinner  
24th - Club Night

See pages 12 and 13 for details of events.

Club Night start time 8:00pm unless otherwise stated



### Lancaster Insurance Classic Vehicle Show - NEC Birmingham

As you probably all know, my other passion besides the MGB is my motorbikes. In particular a 1975 Candy Gold Honda CB750 Four K2 which I exhibit a few times each year and have won a several trophies over the 10 years of owning it.

In November the "750 Fours" (our specialist club) set off to the NEC for our final show of 2013.



There were some fantastic vehicles one Roadster belonging to club member Martyn Lucas- see left and photo gallery.

Also the Morgans were out in force.

Jaguar was prominent this year with their hybrid Jaguar C-X75 super car that has the efficiency of a low emissions city car. It has a 1.6 litre turbo and super

charged four cylinder engine, with 502bhp. The electric motors add another 350bhp - meaning a combined output in excess of 850bhp. Achieving a top speed of 220 mph.

A friend who belongs to the Police Car UK Club told us they were asked to make up an exhibit of Jaguars and his XJ6 PS and S Type were amongst them. These two vehicles came from the Devizes 6



Region Police Driving

School which was disbanded a few years ago and Adrian was offered them to add to his collection of Police vehicles, which you would also have seen if you attended the Goodwood Revival this year.



As this is an article for you MG enthusiasts I have also included a stunning MGA with a 3.9V8 engine shoehorned under its bonnet. It took the owner seven and a half years to complete and is a credit to his skill.

I have included a few pics of the vehicles mentioned to hopefully brighten up your winter days.

It was also nice to see Ron Alderson visit our stand.

## The MG Post-Christmas Walk - or how we learnt to stop complaining and get on with it.

Too much Christmas indulgence? This was not a problem for the hardy group of souls who, in the hope of shedding a pound or two, volunteered for the Binney Burn: an experience not to be forgotten! After three hours of torrenting rain that morning, we



THE VIEW

bravely set off in the minibus with Roger at the wheel, just like a bunch of over-grown school kids off for a cross-country ramble. Did we really know

what lay in store? A little way up the Salisbury Plain slope we were spat out into the teeth of a gale! Were we downhearted? Not a bit of it! Off we went, not an MG in sight (thank goodness) and just Tuppence-the-dog to save us if all was lost. Soon we discovered just how several weeks of pouring rain can affect bare paths: mud, mud, glorious mud! Our boots, wellies, socks, leisure shoes were soon all a uniform beige colour, rather sticky and very wet.



THE TOUR GUIDE AND HIS FLOCK

A highlight of the walk was watching Ron repeatedly running after his hat! (The gale worsened as we rounded each corner). It turns out that Roger is a secret tour guide; we appreciated the commentary on medieval history and ancient Wessex as

well as imagining distant points of interest that might have been visible on a bright sunny day.

Actually, of course, Roger and Lynne were model hosts: they arranged for the rain to hold off long enough for us to complete our first round trip ramble and a shorter one to the Bratton watercress beds (beautiful forest!); they drove us right to the door of the excellent Three Daggers pub where we ate a copious lunch; they entertained us and shepherded us and guided us



THE SUMMIT

and we were all very grateful to them (or should that read: we were all very grateful to stop?).

I was reminded of a poem by John Smith which our daughter recited aged 4 at a local Festival. It seemed particularly apt on this occasion. Those of you who came along for this most enjoyable outing will understand!

### Mud

I like mud.  
I like it on my clothes.  
I like it on my fingers,  
I like it on my toes.  
Dirt's pretty ordinary  
And dust's a dud.  
For a really good mess-up  
I like mud.



### Priscilla Bishop

#### FOR SALE

MGB starter motor, Part No. GXE4441, as new, used for one season, less than 2000 miles. £60.

Mota-Lita wood rim steering wheel, 14" diameter Flat 3 spoke polished aluminium. No boss (Tom has an MGB boss!!) as new, £125

Ken Scott Tel. 01249 750597

## A Poem and a Joke

I came across a Pam Ayres poem I hadn't seen before and it features a couple of our chariots. She is lamenting the death of her trusty old Morris Minor 1000 which has taken her 90,000 miles and she is taking it to the scrap yard. The final verse goes :-

I could buy a bright and new car  
And go tearing round the town  
A BGT! A Morgan!  
(With the hood all battened down)  
But as I leave you in the scrapyard  
Bangers piled up to the skies  
Why do your rusty headlamps  
Look like sad, reproachful eyes?

What dates it is the fact she is scrapping a Minor instead of selling it as a project. Also that she could buy a new BGT?

Whilst watching the final episode of Cold War Britain, Dominic Sandbrook recited a Soviet Russian joke that reminded me of Tom's wait for his new MG from communist China.

Man goes into car showroom to order new car. He pays over the full purchase price and fills in a form. Fills in another form and then fills in another form. Right, says the salesman, that's all done, I'll push that through. Come back in 10 years. Morning or afternoon enquires the customer?

What does it matter, says the salesman. It's 10 years away. It's just that I've got a plumber coming in the morning, says the customer.

**Malcolm Taylor**

Photo Gallery



Prize giving at the AGM



NEC classic motor show  
in November.  
Courtesy of Martyn Lucas



## MG B Batteries

In my calling notice for this newsletter, I included a request from Viv Alexander for advice on changing from two 6 volt batteries to a single 12 volt system for his MGB.

Viv received a number of responses which I include here:

Terry Gazzard:-

"I have had my MGB converted to 12 volt and it has transformed the resilience of the car. The nature of the conversion has been kept as simple as possible to allow a straight forward change back to 6 volt for the purist buyer. In essence the battery is connected to the existing feeds and placed in the existing holder area which was used for one of the old 6 volt batteries. The whole thing is left unprotected, because the car is only used in good weather. The process was relatively straight forward and I would be happy for Viv to call round to see the installation, but do be aware I am trying to sell the car. **My number is: 07583 273738.**"

Nigel Fowler:-

"If Viv would like to contact me I can send him a copy of an article from the MGOc magazine which shows how to do the conversion. It is easy, just as Terry has said. It may require a new connection lead if the length is incorrect. No other modification to the car is necessary as the polarity remains the same after conversion."

Ken Scott:-

"You seem to be already receiving replies to Viv's request. However, I carried out the conversion last year and had a few problems. I believe that I took the details from the MGOc article to which Nigel refers. The battery that I used was a Bosch 063 bought on-line from Alpha Batteries for £60.90 including carriage and included a 5 year warranty. To fit this battery I had to shave the side pieces at the bottom of the battery for it to slide into the battery box and also cut the rounded corners of the battery compartment to enable the top of the battery to drop in. It was such a tight fit that no restraints have been fitted. Vic has also made this conversion on at least one of his B's and I believe he had less trouble with the fitting so may be he used a different make of battery. I would certainly recommend the conversion on cost alone; 2 6v from Owners Club is approx £160 plus carriage. The other major problem is that the 6v battery is almost unobtainable through the normal suppliers so you have to go to the Owners Club. Go for it, Viv, definitely worth the trouble!"

## MG B Batteries

David Whiteley:-

"When we restored our MGA, we had no batteries or electrics at all so had a clean sheet to work with. The 2 x 6 volt set-up is expensive (currently £140 from MGOCS Spares) and the longevity of this set-up is also a suspect. In the past, with various MGBs, we have experienced these lasting only three years, which seems to mirror the experience of others.

We decided to go the 12volt route but the supply of batteries small enough to fit the original battery carrier was limited and such batteries have very low capacity. We had also worked on the principal that any modifications to the car must be easily reversed, so modifying the cradles to accommodate a larger battery was out.

I then read an American article about using a gel battery in an MGA. The advantages of this route seemed to outweigh the disadvantages:

- Gel batteries can provide a high cranking current:
- Very good capacity retention with time:
- Easy to look-after - dry internals and sealed.

The main disadvantage is the relatively low capacity of these batteries - ours is 31 amp hour AGM battery (see below) which compares unfavourably with the 56Ah of standard 2 x 6v lead acid batteries. For the way we use our cars, I decided that, as long as the charging circuit is in good condition, this low capacity was unimportant.

I think I am right in believing that the battery cradles in the MGB are the same size as those on our MGA. This being the case, I found that the battery for a Mazda MX5 just fitted, though care must be taken because:

1. the terminals are in different places relative to the chassis. Thus, one battery cable fits fine but the other needs to be relocated, possibly replaced if it is too short.
2. Both terminals are vulnerable to fouling the chassis, risking short circuits:
3. Depending on the current (hem!) set-up, the battery cable terminals may need to be replaced if they are not a good fit on the gel battery.

Assuming that it is the (probably) negative/earth cable that needs replacing, the addition of a battery cut-off switch (£10.99 from the same source as the battery) is an easy and worthwhile addition.

Our set-up has been in place now for nearly three years without problem. Additionally, we have a total of ten trouble-free years with two MX5s with gel batteries, testament to their reliability.

I chose the gel battery route because of the reputation for hanging on to its charge when unused. One solution I considered but rejected was the use of two small 12v batteries wired in parallel. I see it is possible to buy 35Ah batteries for only £27.50 online, to which needs to be added a few pounds for additional cables and terminals... This would make a 70Ah set-up for a fair saving against the gel solution and a considerable gain against the standard 2 x 6v capacity of 56Ah.

Finally, I see that MGOCLIST list a 12v conversion - but no price is quoted and this is only a 50Ah set-up.

As they say, you pay your money and make your choice - I am pleased with ours!"

#### POST SCRIPT:

This is some information that I found on the internet on gel-type batteries:

AGM (absorbed glass mat) is a special design glass mat designed to wick the battery electrolyte between the battery plates. AGM batteries contain only enough liquid to keep the mat wet with the electrolyte and if the battery is broken no free liquid is available to leak out.

Gel Cell batteries contain a silica type gel that the battery electrolyte is suspended in, this thick paste like material allows electrons to flow between plates but will not leak from the battery if the case is broken.

More often than not AGM Batteries are mistakenly identified as Gel Cell Batteries. Both batteries have similar traits; such as being non spillable, deep cycle, may be mounted in any position, low self discharge, safe for use in limited ventilation areas, and may be transported via Air or Ground safely without special handling.

AGM Batteries outsell Gel Cell by at least a 100 to 1. AGM is preferred when a high burst of amps may be required. In most cases recharge can be accomplished by using a good quality standard battery charger or engine alternator. The life expectancy; measured as cycle life or years remains excellent in most AGM batteries if the batteries are not discharged more than 60% between recharge. There are some AGM batteries that offer excellent 80%+ deep cycle abilities.

Gel Cell Batteries are typically a bit more costly and do not offer the same power capacity as do the same physical size AGM battery. The Gel Cell Battery excels in slow discharge rates and slightly higher ambient operating temperatures. The big issue with Gel Batteries that must be addressed is the Gel charge profile.. Gel Cell Batteries must be recharged correctly or the battery will suffer premature failure. The battery charger being used to recharge the battery(s) must be designed or adjustable for Gel Cell Batteries. If you are using an alternator to recharge a true Gel Cell a special regulator must be installed.

## Club News

2014 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
27-Jan	Club Night - Talk Cape to Cairo & Beyond - Nigel & Sue Fowler	Yes	The Bell	<b>7:30 start</b>
15-Feb	Valentine's Night Dinner	Yes	The Bell	7:30 for 8:00pm <b>Peter Hine</b>
24-Feb	Club Night (Beetle Drive)	Yes	The Bell	<b>Jane Bennett</b>
2-Mar	MG & Triumph Show and Spares Day	No	Stoneleigh Park	
<b>TBA</b>	Cobweb Run - Hilliers Romsey	No		Meet at Devizes Wharf for 10:30 departure - <b>Vic Wright</b>
15-Mar	Skittles Evening	Yes	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Vic Wright</b>
24-Mar	Club Night (Talk - The Great War - Tom Strickland)	Yes	The Bell	<b>Tom Strickland</b>
<b>18 - 21 April</b>	<b>Easter Bank Holiday</b>			
<b>7-Apr</b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	No	The Bell	<b>Tom Strickland</b>
25 - 28th April	Club Spring Weekend Away	Yes	Norfolk	Details to be confirmed <b>Vic Wright</b>
<b>28-Apr</b>	<b>Club Night</b>	Yes	The Bell	<b>Tom Strickland to Chair Club Night</b>
<b>19-May</b>	<b>Club Night (Mystery Run)</b>	Yes	<b>A Mystery</b>	<b>Graham &amp; Jane Bennett</b>
31-May	Vintage Nostalgia 2014 - Warminster	No		<b>Roger Binney</b>
8-Jun	Gloucestershire Motor Show	Yes	Highnam Court	<b>Peter Hine</b>
14/15 June	Bristol Classic Car Show	No	Shepton Mallet Show Ground	<b>For Information</b>
22 June	MG90 Silverstone			<b>TBC Tom Strickland</b>
<b>23 Jun</b>	<b>BBQ/Prod &amp; Poke</b>	Yes	The Bell	<b>Paul Warn</b>

2014 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
TBA	Trip to MG Museum in Abingdon and visit to Nuffield House	Yes		<i>To be arranged end of June beginning of July David Whiteley and Martyn Lucas</i>
13 July	Summer Picnic	Yes	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Jane Bennett &amp; Sue Warder</b>
20 July	Classics at the Castle			<b>TBC</b>
<b>28 July</b>	<b>Club Night - Fun &amp; Games</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>David &amp; Carrie Whiteley's House</b>	<b>David Whiteley</b>
<b>18-Aug</b>	<b>Club Night</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>The Bell</b>	
August	Evening Trip to Butcombe Brewery			<b>EVENT TO BE CONFIRMED - Vic Wright</b>
24-Aug	Action Day	Yes	Tom's Field	<b>Tom Strickland time to be confirmed</b>
7-Sep	Run to the New Forest ending in Bournemouth for Classics on the Prom	Yes		<i>Martyn Lucas</i>
<b>22-Sep</b>	<b>Club Night (Talk - Road Pilot Heavy Loads)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>The Bell</b>	<b>Graham Bennett</b>
October	Devizes Ghost Walk	Yes		<b>TBC Jane Bennett</b>
<b>27-Oct</b>	<b>Club Night (Talk Part 4 - 1980-89 GP Seasons)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>The Bell</b>	<b>Paul Warn</b>
<b>7-Nov</b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	No	<b>The Bell</b>	<i>Tom Strickland</i>
<b>24-Nov</b>	<b>Club AGM</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>The Bell</b>	Formal notification will be included in the Sept & Oct newsletter.
<b>TBA</b>	Christmas Party	Yes	<b>TBA</b>	Peter Hine

The first iteration of the club's diary, usually contains caveats as details are firmed up. However, it is produced here in full to give you an opportunity to plan your club events for the year. It is regularly reviewed and confirmation of the coming month's activities is provided by the chairman at our monthly meetings. The "Club Event" column indicates whether or not it is a formal club event. Those attending these events are recorded on each occasion and the individual attending most events is awarded our trophy at the end of the year. **ED**

## SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES

I have been driving my MG3 around all Christmas and it is great! It is fun to drive and has real feel. It also has great technology with its phone and music integration. The critics have been a little harsh on the little car - we are used to MG bashing aren't we! This car, for this money, is brilliant. It is more than that ...You get a car that is cool, affordable, different, feels genuinely deports and fun - isn't that what MG is about? Autocar have a quite fair assessment on this link:

<http://www.autocar.co.uk/car-review/mg-motor/mg3>. I have to say me and my father (he has had his delivered too) both think the gear change is great and beats his old fiesta hands down on driving experience ... Well basically everything. Build quality seems good too. I admit that my car had a slight clonk at the front but the garage collected and returned it to my drive with it fixed - they loosened then re-torqued the suspension bits to sort it quickly. I honestly think that if MG can get the word out and get people driving the car they will be back in the game permanently in the UK. MG enthusiast magazine are coming to interview me and my father in a few weeks so keep an eye out for us! We are having a committee meeting this week so you should be reading some preliminary calendar items in this magazine - get them in your diaries! I got some good MG related stash for Christmas including Nancy getting all my old MGs printed onto table mats - they look fantastic but do make me feel nostalgic... I wonder where my old MG B is? Any good MG related New Year Resolutions?

**Tom**

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## The Bell Inn – Valentine’s Menu

### Starters

Pan-seared Scallops – Served with pea puree topped with crispy Prosciutto

French Onion Soup - Served with Cheesy Croutons

Camembert Wellington - on a bed of mixed leaves with a Cranberry drizzle

Spicy Chicken & chorizo Sausage Salad

Smoked Salmon, Smoked Trout & Asparagus Roulade - served with Melba Toast & Garnish

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### Mains

Sticky Belly pork – On a bed of stir fried vegetables & rice

Moroccan Spiced Lamb Shank – served on a bed of Mixed Vegetable Couscous

Chargrilled Beef Fillet Medallions – in a creamy brandy peppercorn sauce on a bed of ale & cheddar croquets

Oven Baked Lemon Sole Fillets – topped with a Crayfish & parsley Butter on a bed of Crushed Potatoes

Creamy Beetroot Risotto- served with rocket leaves & Sour Cream

Basil Roulade - with Goats cheese & sun-blush Tomato – served with salad & New Potatoes

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### Desserts

Baileys & Malteser Cheesecake

Chocolate Orange Bread & Butter Pudding

White chocolate & Raspberry Crème Brulee

Individual Apple, Raisin & Cinnamon Crumble

**Sharing Platter** – Crème Brulee, Panacotta, Crumble, Bread & Butter Pudding, Cheesecake Served with Ice Cream & Custard

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Tea, Coffee & Mints

**Two Course £19.95 Three Course £23.95**

All weights are approximate before cooking, some dishes may contain nuts or traces of nuts, lacto or gluten, and fish dishes may contain small bones