

NEWSLETTER

WESSEX
MG CLUB
AT THE BELL INN SEEND



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Another month has come and gone I wonder where the time goes. It's also time to decide what to do about the cooling system on the MG. It certainly needs sorting before we go to France next May.

Although I do not follow F1, I found Paul's talk most interesting and thank him for the great deal of effort he put into it. I think Peter was the wise one though, as he brought along a cushion to sit on!

The Ghost Walk also went well. Because of the change of dates and one couple forgetting, we were down to ten people.

We toured parts of Devises which we did not know existed. We also heard of a Victorian princess who was up to no good. Towards the end,

our guide had us using de-veining rods to search out spirits where the old hanging post used to be. Most of us were able to get the the rods to react, but personally I have a feeling there was a large electric cable or water beneath us!

Moving on. Our AGM is coming up on the 24th, with a 7:30 start to enable Peter to collect subs for 2015 and also payment for the Christmas Party.

Hope to see you all there. It will be a chance for you to have your say.

Graham

For your diary in the coming month:

November

24th - Club AGM 7:30pm

December

13th - Christmas Party

See page 10 in this edition for more details.

Club Night start time 8:00pm unless otherwise stated



Classics - Original or Modified - the last word

If you're an MG purist you would be well advised not to read this article. What follows is an attempt to explain how my very non-standard, non-original red MGB was "born".

The hunt began in 2006, but I soon discovered the incompatibility between maintaining a busy job and hammering around the country looking at prospective MGs. Whilst visiting a friend in London I eventually found a handsome looking B - it was British racing green, but of course I am used to the fact that I can never find one the right colour! I invested in an RAC inspection, wisely as it turns out, to be informed that the "reputable" dealer who had this gleaming beast for sale was vastly more skilled in camouflaging faults than I was in detecting them. Hmmmm.....

It was at this point, with my very indulgent wife's consent, that I decided to start from scratch. Being an aero-modeller I always like to have a building project on the go, so it



seemed quite natural to undertake a car project - but to be brutally honest, I have become worryingly deskilled over the decades when it comes to mechanics. I lost track a long time ago of what all those black boxes and tubes do under the bonnet. Whilst surfing the web I learned about Heritage shells, discovered that MGB parts are fairly cheap and readily available, and located a specialist garage in Bristol who were happy to supply a donor car and build me the car of my choice. Authenticity, accurate restoration and fidelity to the original were not going to be issues that troubled me: I simply decided to choose all the MGB features that I liked best. Since this was the reincarnation of a boyhood dream, it also wasn't going to boil down to value for money. Apologies to any purists who may have got this far, but in fairness you were warned at the start!

It had to be tartan red, chrome bumper, pre-1972, have the four bearing engine, chrome wires, overdrive, a chrome radiator, a decent hood (I got fed up with replacing cheap hoods on the Sprites), a boot rack and a stainless steel exhaust system - both Sprites seemed to eat exhaust systems voraciously! Given that I don't plan to sell the car, I opted to have a re-conditioned engine, gearbox and rear axle along with a Koni conversion on the suspension and various other new bits with a view to creating a reliable classic rather than Frankenstein's monster.

A trip to the MG Owners Club Headquarters at Swavesey proved to be a massive help in selecting the various goodies that would be needed to deck out the cabin. I've always liked wooden dashboards and leather seats, so it was really only a matter of selecting the colour and design that I fancied most. It's rather odd being in a warehouse trying out lots of car seats that aren't actually bolted to a car: being prone to a touch of sciatica, I went for the

most comfortable ones, the heated MG Club sports recliners. In all honesty the "heated" bit didn't make them any more comfortable, but along with an uprated alternator and a beefier heater matrix, I hoped to stay warmer on those colder English days - that is most days, come to think of it! Having a Motolita steering wheel was irresistible, and it was fun selecting the wheel boss, gear lever knob and other bits of trim from the displays in the MG headquarters. Did I do any of the building myself? No, only in a chequebook sort of way.

Collecting the car was lots of fun, but you'll all be keen to know if my rebuilt MG was as good as one that had rolled off the production line at Abingdon. The truth is that the car has proved to be like the proverbial curate's egg - it was good in parts. It was immediately apparent that something was wrong with the rear suspension given the spine-jarring nature of the ride. "Just stick a bag or two of cement in the boot and the springs will soon bed in" was the advice. To



cut a long story short, the MGOC parabolic springs that I'd had fitted (and which were deemed to be the problem) were replaced with standard springs before somebody eventually noticed that various bits of the suspension had been wrongly attached to the Heritage shell.

Relief at last, but the DPL 132B was proving to be remarkably incontinent - that is the car, not its owner! Yet another trip back to Bristol revealed that the cylinder head was faulty and had to be replaced. The replacement head also proved to be faulty. Back to Bristol. Then the overdrive packed up. Back to Bristol - at this point you will have noticed the recurrent theme! All these items were replaced under guarantee, but the replacement overdrive unit left me with an incorrectly calibrated speedo and my MG driving seemed limited to a particular stretch of the M4 motorway. And then the breakdowns started: the first happened to Priscilla when she was trying to impress our daughter's new boyfriend. It just wouldn't start after a nice pub lunch somewhere in Somerset. The car was recovered to Bristol where the starter lead was found to be hanging on by a couple of strands - an ancient one must have come from the donor car. And there had always been a weird misfiring problem which twice resulted in it not firing at all - once in the rain coming back down the M5 from Birmingham, and then during a local test drive after it had been "fixed". Twice more the car disappeared in that embarrassing fashion on the back of a recovery truck, and I eventually discovered that a new fuel pump worked a whole lot better than the one that had come from the donor car.

At this point I should pay tribute to my daughter's advice, perhaps occasioned by me getting into yet another black apoplexy, which was the reminder that "Dad, it's not a new car, it's a project!" That's right. I'd forgotten. There was no time frame for getting things right and I only had myself to keep happy. There have been countless other small hiccups which I've been able to fix myself, such as a shard of metal getting stuck in a carburettor float cham-

ber causing a petrol flood but, touch wood, it's started on cue all this year and has only stopped when I cut the ignition.

I must confess that for a long time the project seemed more trouble than it was worth, but Priscilla and I have really enjoyed making a whole new group of friends at the Wessex MG Club. The problems were largely down to two sources: faulty reconditioned parts and worn bits from the donor car. Quality control is hardly the same as in a modern automotive plant, so I'm inclined to put the problems down to bad luck rather than anyone's fault. Purists may disapprove, but this has at least been my project and yes, it has been fun starting from scratch and "giving birth" to a new car.

And this time it is tartan red, and it is an MG!

John

Pre-Sorn Treat

On the last day of October we decided to take advantage of the unseasonably good weather and take the B for a last spin before a four month SORN. Lodged in the deep recesses of my brain was the recollection that an interesting art gallery had earlier this year been opened in Bruton, Somerset and the web site duly confirmed it.

The modern art gallery and exhibition area is based around the old Durslade farm complex and has been modernised and added to by Hauser & Wirth who also have galleries in Zurich, London and New York. Car parking and entrance are free but the excellent coffee shop and restaurant prices are pitched to recoup the "loss leader". The exhibits both inside and outside provide a mixture of amusing, confusing and challenging descriptions. Some are set in a prairie garden, designed by the renowned Dutch landscape architect Piet Oudolf. Back in 2000 the farm was used for the filming of "Chocolat" with Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp.



If one were travelling to or from the Haynes Motor Museum at Sparkford, this place would be a good stopping off point for coffee, lunch or tea. It is on the B3081 Bruton to Wincanton road, just through the railway tunnel and on the left as you leave Bruton.

In the grounds is a lovely old private building with a large sign on the outside saying "EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT" - a good omen to take home with us.

Jeff

Track Days - Manna from Heaven or Marmite

Ever thought of a track day? Thought that your precious MG wouldn't be up to it or it would all be a bit too hairy for yourself. Well that was my initial thought but having completed one of MG's on Track (MGOT) days at Castle Combe recently then I can assure you that it is a great way to drive your car in a spirited fashion in as safe an environment as is possible.

MGoT is an offshoot of the MG car club (ya boo!) that organises track days around the country for MGs both old and new at some of the most prodigious circuits including, Silverstone, Brands Hatch, Goodwood and our lovely local circuit at Castle Combe. It costs nothing to join and you only have to sign up on their website and the track day forums are then open for you to book. The only requirement is that your car has a valid MOT.



Following an engine replacement after my old one started consuming nearly as much oil as petrol, I thought it would be good to see how well it went on a closed circuit and whether my engineering skills were up to much. Prior to going I did take it to a rolling road at Castle Combe garages where the very competent guy there managed to squeeze another 10BHP out of the the new lump.

8th Sept came around and thankfully we were greeted with a glorious early Autumn day. It was a bit of an early start with the circuit opening at 0715 and sign on from 0730. Some had earlier starts than others with about 40 cars coming from all over the UK including North Wales and Kent. Cars included Midgets, MGB's V8's ,RV8's MGF's MGTF's and some rather exotic track day only cars including the 4.8 litre in the photo. No Magnette,s or MG3,s so scope for you Tom. I also saw a Ford Capri go round the track several times so I am assuming he got the wrong day!



Once I had removed everything from the boot and checked fluids and pressures for the umpteenth time, we were into Driver briefing at 0800 which was followed by scrutineering. As Castle Combe is rather noise sensitive you have to have the exhaust noise level measured at a steady 4500rpm. The limit is 100db and I only managed a rather paltry 88db. In fact one of the scrutineers was

heard to whisper that it was hardly worth turning up, hmm. Each session is 15 minutes long with about 10 cars in each. The track opened promptly at 9 with the first group going out.

As I was the newbie, the committee members went out of their way to find me and make me feel at home and with that one of the instructors came out with me for the first session to give me a few pointers. Well what great fun. The first three laps are behind the safety car which is no slouch and then onto the open track with no restrictions. As its a track day no actual racing is allowed and if faster traffic comes up behind then you just need to indicate then let them past without hindrance. Soon though the group spreads out although it becomes a matter of honour to keep up with similar cars.

Once your 15 mins is up its back into the pit area to let everything cool down and a quick cup of tea and then its out again this time on your own.

This goes on all day with a total of seven sessions so about 1hr 45mins on the track overall. You certainly get value for money and the instruction, if you want it, is first class. By the end a pecking order had emerged with my handiwork seeing me go by a couple of tweaked midgets, several MGB's and, much to my surprise, a few MGF's.



The last session of the day was a little bit quieter as some people had started to head home but still great fun nonetheless. Despite the number of sessions and cars on the track the whole thing was still running to schedule and my group finished at 1630. Once I had picked up all the stuff from my boot I started home for a quick turnaround as we were heading up the M5/M6 in the MG for a 6 day holiday around Northern England that evening but that's another story.

I suffered only one mechanical mishap in the form of a leaking rear brake master cylinder late in the day, probably caused by over enthusiastic braking into Quarry. However this didn't affect the day and it managed to keep going until we arrived back from holiday. Overall I have to say it was a fantastic experience that I would recommend everyone to try at least once as the opportunity to be able to drive your MG with like minded people in such an exhilarating fashion is not to be missed. I'm certainly looking at dates for next year, so if anybody else is interested please get in touch.

To be fair I've never been a marmite fan!

Ken Binstead

Auction Car Quiz

Rather than have a Mystery Car this month, how about a guessing game. These six cars were auctioned recently - how much did each sell for? Guesses in sterling, dollars or euros will be accepted and there will be a prize at the AGM for the closest set of estimates.



1948 Tatra T87 Limousine



1963 Shelby 289 Cobra



1968 Toyota 2000 GT



1955 Jaguar D-Type



1967 Ferrari GTB/4 S NART Spider
Scaglietti



1939 Mercedes-Benz 540K Special Roadster by
Sindelfingen

The 1939 Mercedes-Benz 540K is an interesting one. A few months ago, our illustrious Editor brought a 1958 copy of Motor Sport to one of our meetings. There was a car very similar to the one auctioned for sale and you will weep that it was for sale from a dealer for £395. Oh, for the wisdom of hindsight! **David**

The Unable to Getaway Car

On a lovely warm cloudless day, the bullion van swung off the road on its daily trip to the supermarket. As it trundled between the rows of cars towards the front of the store, Ron, the driver exclaimed to Barney, his partner, 'cor look at those two beauties.' He was distracted by two young women sitting in separate cars, with the windows open, lolling back in skimpy summer attire and licking ice creams. They both had on wide-brimmed floppy hats that obscured their faces but Ron could assess the desirability of the rest of their bodies. 'Suppose they've sent their blokes to do the shopping. I wouldn't mind doing the shopping for a go at one of those,' he exclaimed.

'Down Rover' answered Barney, 'just concentrate on the job in hand.'

Ron hurrumphed and turned the truck parallel to the shop front and then reversed into the corner to be out of the way of traffic. Barney adjusted his helmet and checked he had all his other security paraphernalia and climbed out of the truck. Ron locked the doors behind him and settled back to wait for Barney to return with the cash box.

The foyer was busier than normal as there were two characters dressed as a rabbit and a cat collecting money for some charity. People were stopped, hunting in their purses and pockets for change to put into the collecting bucket. 'God, my uniform is hot enough, I wouldn't fancy being in those furry oneses,' thought Barney.

Barney was met by a member of staff who swiped his magnetic card through the security lock to let him into the staff offices to collect the day's takings. The money was placed into the strong box shackled to Barney's wrist. He signed the release document and returned the way he had come.

As he was passing through the foyer, the rabbit playfully shook his collecting bucket towards him. 'In your dreams', said Barney. A few paces further on as the rabbit had gone from his vision, Barney suddenly felt his legs violently swept from under him. He hit the floor with a sickening thud that knocked the wind out of him. Before he could gather his senses, the cat was on top of him and he felt the prick of a sharp knife at his throat. 'Don't even think about activating anything', growled a voice from inside the cat suit. He watched as the rabbit withdrew a giant pair of bolt croppers from inside his outfit and effortlessly severed the chain attaching Barney to the strong box.

The next second they were gone, sprinting towards a car that had accelerated to the front of the shop. Another car with a young woman at the wheel sputtered across the roadway and parked immediately in front of the bullion truck, boxing it in. The woman withdrew the keys, leapt out and as she too was sprinting for the other car, locked her car doors with the remote.

With all four in the getaway car and the rabbit shouting, go, go, go, it accelerated rapidly up the roadway towards the car park exit.

As the getaway car commenced its run a frail little old lady started to pull out of a parking space further up the row. Suddenly she heard the roar of the accelerating car's engine and looked at the source of the noise. The noise of the straining engine was joined by the blare of its horn. The old lady saw a car careering towards her with a giant cat and a giant rabbit in it. Both were waving frantically at her. She fainted.

As the old lady slumped forward her foot pressed on the accelerator and her car plunged into the side of the getaway car. The momentum of her little old car was enough to deflect the bigger car from its path and it careered into the line of parked cars to its left, dragging the old ladies car with it. The car gradually lost its momentum with a grinding of metal as it became entangled with one car after another. It finally stopped and the horrendous noise of grinding, tearing metal abated.

The 'would be' robbers were shouting and swearing and flailing about, trying to get out of the car but all its doors were jammed shut and it was trapped between the old ladies car and the carnage to its left. As their world quietened down they could hear the sound of police sirens in the distance.

During the mayhem of the collision, the little old lady had stayed unconscious. Now, she started to stir. She groaned and pushed herself up off the steering wheel. She ached all over. She shook her head and tried to focus her vision and recall what had happened. She became aware of another car immediately to her left. In the car were two women and a giant cat and a giant rabbit, all looking malevolently at her. She fainted.

Not their most successful job. The best laid plans of mice - and - cats and rabbits!

Malcolm

Club News

2014 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
24-Nov	Club AGM	Yes	The Bell	Formal notification will be included in the Sept & Oct newsletter.
13-Dec	Christmas Party	Yes	The Bell	Peter Hine 01672 512847 peter_hine@btinternet.com

Hi All

Just a reminder that subs are due for payment at the AGM - Joint membership £25, Single £16. Also, if you are going to the club Christmas dinner, it's £14 per person.

Please make cheques payable to 'Wessex MG Club'. If paying by cash, the correct amount will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks

Peter Hine

Secretary's Scribbles

This month I have been inspired by Paul Wheal.... Paul and I had a quick chat at the end of October's Club-night, he showed me some LED lamps he was making up himself to light the dash dials better in his GT.

I was thinking about this on my way home - there are a lot of benefits to going LED- less current through old wires and less heat at the bulbs and of course better light to see the dials. I also remembered something I had seen on a MG Facebook page advertising ready made up LED bulbs available via ebay. I sent Paul a link and he replied to say he had ordered some so..... I ordered some too.

Typically for me at the moment they remain in their envelope on my bedside table rather than in my car so unfortunately I can't tell you if they are any good.

Search for MGB MGC MIDGET CLASSIC CAR LED INSTRUMENT BULB UPGRADE SET 4 BULBS E10 SMD MES on eBay. I know Moss Europe also sell similar although more expensive.

I enjoyed Paul Warn's talk last month and although I know about some of the drivers I had no idea about the politics behind the season - amazing how Bernie has got so much power in F1!

Don't forget to 'Like' our club Facebook page - search for Wessex MG Club.

Tom