

Chairman's Chat

Sandra and I managed to escape the snow in early January with a sojourn around the Caribbean in a cruise ship. We were lucky enough to get one of the last flights out of Gatwick before the snows came and caused the closure of the airport. The weather conditions when we arrived in Barbados were the complete opposite with clear skies, bright sunshine and temperatures in the low thirties. After a two day stay in a beach hotel we boarded the cruise ship and sailed from one island to another for the next two weeks. In total we visited nine different islands before returning to Barbados and the return journey home. The weather stayed dry and hot throughout with the exception of one day when we were visiting St. Kitts, but even then the light rain was warm.

We were sailing between Trinidad and Jamaica when we heard the news of the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Later in the holiday we called into the neighbouring country of Dominican Republic and so sailed to within 30 miles or so of Haiti. Couldn't see any of the damage of course neither could we do anything to help except to make a collection. A day or two later we sailed very close to the island of Montserrat.



You may remember that in 1995 this island suffered a volcanic eruption which destroyed its capital city, Plymouth, and two thirds of the population was forced to flee their homes. The eruption continues today but on a much reduced scale and this provided a spectacular sight as we sailed just a couple of miles offshore. My photo shows the rays of the setting sun catching the dust cloud drifting away from the volcano.

On return to Blighty we were plunged once again into the cold January weather but a couple of weeks on and the weather is showing signs of warming up sufficient for me to start the MGA and go for a very brief run round the block. The time has come for us all to be thinking about getting our cars ready for the year ahead – maybe an opportunity when we go for our Valentine Lunch.

25th Anniversary events are



The WESSEX MG CLUB

At the Bell on the Common Broughton Gifford

25th Anniversary Year - 2010

For your diary in the coming month

February

22nd Club Night 8.00pm.

March

20th Skittles Night.

still progressing so don't forget to spread the word to families and friends so that we get a full crowd to make the celebrations go with a swing!

Next Club Night we are having a quiz, so I hope to see you there.

Gordon

My MG - Josephine

First encounter

I first met Josephine one Thursday morning down near Wincanton; it was a bright December morning in 2001 and I went armed with trolley jacks and overalls. She lived in a rather large posh house so I thought it was only fair to explain to her that if she agreed to come and live with me she wouldn't have such a nice room!!! She was white and sleek and so good looking, it was love at first sight but I was determined not to buy if I could find any faults. I rang the doorbell to be greeted by a very nice lady who explained her husband was at work so 'help yourself'. I never need telling twice. Two hours later I had crawled under her, over her and driven her extensively and she finally agreed to come and live with me. (Josephine that is, not the owner's wife) All I had to do now was convince 'she who must be obeyed' that living with Josephine would be a rewarding experience for us all!! Chris took me to pick her up on the Saturday morning. That first drive home was a blast, what a joy to drive.



The fun begins

The only faults I had picked up in the test drive was firstly the overrun valve was sticking and puffing smoke out the back every so often and secondly the carpets could do with replacing. I set about these tasks with gusto and threw in a good service, clean and polish just for fun. (How times have changed I hear my friends say) I threw away that MG travesty called an overrun valve and piped the breathing system in the MG traditional manner, a pipe dangling out the bottom. In the photo please note the fancy manifold plug I fitted!! Smoke had gone and she still does 800 miles to the pint after 9 years of daily use, what a classy Lady. The fitting of the carpet set was an entirely different ball game. I purchased the 'Ultimate



Carpet set' from the Owners club, which I have to say fitted beautifully and has hardly worn in nine years, worth the extra money. I removed the old carpets, check fitted the sill and wheel arch sections and then got the evostick out. Now I can understand why you can't sell evostick to under sixteen's, I ended up as high as a kite and so Josephine and I had a good singsong. (Her voice is better than mine!!)

Normal life

After that we settled down to the daily routine, over the years I have rebuilt her front suspension and brakes and re-shimmed the steering rack twice. She has broken down twice on runs, the first time was a broken wire in the distributor and the second was a cracked cylinder head. We came home on the back of a lorry that time and she was sooo indignant, as the lorry was dirty!!!

Improvements

I have carried out a few enhancements over the years. The single largest improvement in road holding and handling was the fitting of Yokohama tyres all round. I fitted 175's to clear the wheel arches and I couldn't believe the incredible difference it made, the car will just hang on now and has a neutral steering. I kept on forgetting to switch off the lights in twilight so I fitted a warning buzzer system to the doors/lights which I wrote up in a previous newsletter, very useful, no more flat batteries. She has also been converted to a single 12volt battery, it saves weight, saves a lot of money (they are nearly half the price of two 6 volts) and because modern batteries are smaller but more powerful it gives better starting. After I damaged my left arm I fitted a central console to rest the arm and also put the windscreen wiper switches into it so I didn't have to reach forward, at the same time I put in electric washers and a smart screen system which is a really useful upgrade. Halogen headlights and dipping spot lights completed the successful modifications. The one alteration I made which I regretted was the fitting of the wooden style dashboard, I didn't like it once fitted and you can't remove it as you have to drill holes in the original dashboard to fit it.



The Future

There is a big question mark in my mind what to do next. Four years ago before my accident I had bought the paint and materials to restore/re-spray the car but now I find working on a car very difficult. She is still a sound and solid car but has nine years of daily use showing on her bodywork. To have her restored would cost more than she is worth so it needs to go to someone who can do the work himself (or herself – politically correct!!) or has more money than sense. I think I will put a new MOT on her and put her up for sale in the spring. *(Possibly says Chris!!!!)*

Colin

Guess What?

This photograph provided by Jeff Rattle, was included in last month's newsletter and attracted the following votes for a Citroen special.



Ken Scott

The mystery car is a Lomax 223. A kit-car introduced in 1982 based on the 2CV Citroen. Also available as a 4 wheeler - designated 224.

Paul Adams

Le Patron – a 2CV based kit.

Richard Tranter

I think it is a Lomax - probably a 223 - which is a Citroen-based special (usually using Citroen Dyane or sometimes 2CV donor vehicle) and would have been built probably late '80's to mid 1990's.

Caption Competition



Richard Tranter

"Well-known local car enthusiast caught loitering with-intent!"

Paul Adams

"I don't care if you've followed the instructions to the letter; I am not changing into my Bikini in this tent"

Vic Wright

"I'm not sure what we are doing here, but I'd better read the instructions anyway"

ED

"Frankly I don't care where the sides are, I'm more interested in that guy behind me who seems to be copying everything I do!"

MG Factoids – *the MG Badge*

My research for the original piece I prepared for this month's factoid, had the original 'MG' chocolate coloured initials set against a cream background in use until the end of MGA production. I wanted a number of photographs from our group to include with this article in support of the text. So I asked Gordon to send me a photo of the badge on his MGA. Well, it turned



out to be black lettering on a white background – not what I expected.

Crikey! Did Gordon have a duff badge on his car? I decided to ask Roger and Tom for photos of their badges – having cars of a similar age – and yes they were the same colour as Gordon's. So, not it would seem a duff badge, but duff sources of information.

This is the revised version in light of said photographs:

The MG octagonal radiator badge first appeared on the 14/40 Mark IV (the same car I featured last month of Old Speckly Hen fame) in 1928. It featured chocolate coloured initials set against a cream background. Although never officially confirmed, it is rumoured that Cecil Kimber was inspired by the livery of the Great Western Railway trains that served Oxford – I'd like to believe that. To go off-piste for a moment, in 1922, the year after Kimber came to Oxford; GWR reintroduced chocolate and cream livery of the 1864-1909 era to its carriages, after experimenting with crimson lake-hued rolling stock.

The design, the work of The Morris Garage's cost accountant Edmund Lee, was initially used for the Garage's advertisements in 1923 and registered as a trademark in May of the following year. Apparently Lee, who was a keen amateur artist, had drawn it with a little ruler he had brought from his Oxford High school. The eight-sided figure it seems was of no significance, although its design and lettering may have reflected the Art Deco style of the time.

The 1930s saw many new models of MG, and although there were changes of direction along the way, the MG badge remained largely unchanged until 1952. In that year – when Morris merged with Austin of Longbridge - MG launched a new version of the TD Midget, known as the 'Series II', and the MG badge was changed from brown and cream to black and white. The new black and white colour was retained with the introduction of the MG TF Midget in 1953 and for the dramatically new MG Series MGA of 1955, as well as the MG Magnette in its various post-war guises. I'm sure you will agree that it's difficult to tell the difference between the earlier badge above left and the later badge as seen on the MGA and Magnette top right.

Ever onward. The enameled badge was continued on MG's sports car models until the MGA was discontinued in 1962. That year it was revised for the MGB and this cheaper version had silver letters and



surround set against a red background. It was mounted on a black shield, and this design continued until 1969. That year the B's front end acquired a corporate British Leyland look with a recessed grille that required a new badge. Although the red and silver colour scheme continued it was now mounted on a black octagonal surround. With the reversion, for 1973,

of a traditional grille, albeit a plastic one, the shield returned, but with a red rather than a black background.

The arrival of the 'rubber'-bumpered cars in 1975, required another change: the badge had a red background and the lettering was gold in the so called jubilee year of 1975. It then went to silver with a black background until the model ceased production in 1980. However, when the MG Metro appeared

in 1982, its badge had silver lettering with a red background that was similarly applied to the Maestro and Montego variants. The 6R4 rally car had a smaller design with the same colour scheme.



When Rover Special Products was planning the MG RV8, it decided to redesign the MG badge and re-introduce the original pre 1962 chocolate and cream livery. This was duly unveiled in 1992, and continued on the MGF of 1995. As you will probably agree – see left - not quite as subtle as the original.

Again referring back to last month's newsletter, a new modernised version of the pre 1962 octagon badge has been introduced with the launch of the MG6. As the PR blurb says, the new design is planned to be carried forward on to all new MG models.

ED



MGB – *But not as we know it*

They were known as the 'Spitfires of the sea' and formed a crucial part of the Allied war effort.

The high-speed boats, which were the fastest of their type, proved vital to Britain's wartime sea campaign. One, MGB 81, is an example of the vessel which was active during the U.S. landing at Omaha beach during D-Day. **MGBs - Motor Gun Boats** - were small in size and their high speed made them difficult targets for German E-boats. They were used extensively in the Mediterranean to sink German and Italian ships.

Two of the last remaining high-speed World War II motor boats - the HSL 102 below left and MGB 81 below right have been saved thanks to a £580,000 grant.



HSL 102 is the only surviving example of the 100 class high-speed launch which was used at RAF Calshot, near Southampton, to retrieve shot-down airmen from the sea.

During the war, the HSL vessels saved a total of 10,000 airmen of various nationalities.

The saved HSL 102 also featured in the film Enigma with Kate Winslet in 2001.

Now the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) has provided the money to enable the Portsmouth

Naval Base Property Trust (PNBPT) to purchase the two boats.

Despite an original life expectancy of 20 years, they have both been restored and are on display at Gunwharf Quays Marina in Portsmouth. It is hoped that one of the boats will be available for charter to enable the public to experience their power. Crewing the boats, which were built at Hythe, near Southampton, was said to be like riding on a massive petrol bomb, as they held 3,000 gallons of fuel and would simply explode if they were shot.

The MGB fleet was a crucial part of the Allied war effort. The MGB 81 still attracts admirers of all ages. The boats were designed and built by the British Powerboat Company, which later went on to build the famous Supermarine Spitfire.

The company's founder, aviation and powerboat pioneer Hubert Scott-Paine, along with T.E. Shaw, known as Lawrence of Arabia, pioneered these fast maneuverable craft for British military use. Shaw undertook the testing of the HSL prototype.

After the war, the saved MGB 81 was disposed of by the Royal Navy. In late 1945, it was sold to a private owner, achieving notoriety for being 'arrested' as part of a smuggling operation in 1958, and was then sold for scrap. Later, it became an accommodation barge for a sailing school and spent some years as a houseboat before restoration in 1988.

Both these boats will now join other great British naval achievements, such as Nelson's HMS Victory and the Mary Rose.



ED

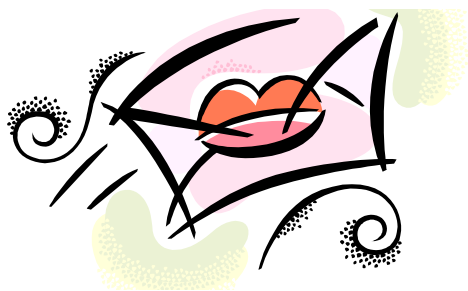
Photo Gallery

As you can see from the photos, the Valentine's lunch at the French horn in Pewsey, was very successful. Helped in no small measure by good food, fine wine, chocolates and red roses for the ladies of course and the essential ingredient - good company.

Our thanks to Paul Adams for a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.



ED



WESSEX MG 2010 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Details
22/02/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Quiz Night
20/03/2010	Skittles Evening	YES	See De-tails	Fox & Hounds Devizes - see more details below.
22/03/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Talk by Paul Warn - Post War Grand Prix Racing
11/04/2010	MG ERA Day	NO	See De-tails	Brooklands - For info only
16th - 19th April	Club Annual Tour	YES	See De-tails	Isle of Wight - POC Paul Warn - see update below.
26/04/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Prod & Poke with Questions
02/05/2010	Abingdon Works Centre	NO	See De-tails	For info only -MG Display by the Abingdon Works Centre as part of the Abingdon Air & County Show
16/05/2010	Treasure Hunt	YES	TBA	TBA - POC Vic Wright
24/05/2010	10 Pin Bowling	YES	See De-tails	The Christy Miller Centre Bower Hill
4-5-6 June	MG Live	NO	Silverstone	For info only - 3 Days of live action on and off the track organised by the MG Car Club
TBA	Club Trip	YES	See De-tails	GAYDON
28/06/2010	Club BBQ	YES	The Bell	TBA
TBA		NO	See De-tails	
26/07/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	TBA
08/08/2010	Club Run	YES	See De-tails	Athelhampton Bourne-mouth
23/08/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Boules
11-12 Sept	25th Anniversary Celebrations	YES	See De-tails	The Lydiard Conference Centre
27/09/2010	Club Night	YES	TBA	TBA
TBA	Driving Test	YES	TBA	TBA
25/10/2010	Club Night	YES	TBA	TBA
27/11/2010	AGM	YES	TBA	
TBA	Christmas Dinner	YES	TBA	TBA

Secretary's Scribbles

This is my first scribble as the new club secretary and I will use this space to update you on anything that comes through to me as the secretary. I may also pass on any recent dramas with my MGs.

The most stressful episode recently was one completely of my own making! My BGT was not running very well and even backfiring a little – this annoyed me as I fitted electronic ignition because I was fed up of the inferior quality points continually letting me down!! Anyway the problem turned out to be a loose screw – the one that holds the module in place inside the distributor. This problem was obviously fixed in about a minute much to Nancy's amazement! One of the things I noticed when putting everything back together was that the distributor cap had deteriorated due to the backfiring with the springy central bit almost not existing. I always have a spare (oopps I had better order another one now) so I switched both the cap and the rotor arm. Still all was going well and still in record breaking time. Here comes the catch- for some reason probably due to late night screaming baby syndrome I had pulled off the plug leads at the plugs and of course I had also pulled them off the other end to change the cap. How do they go back on? I dug out the photo album and used the agreed valuation photos to try and piece the puzzle back together – I tried it and the noise when I turned her over was truly awful – panic and before I could calm myself down I was bolting for the Vic Wright helpline number. Poor Vic often receives these rash phone calls from me and I think he is getting used to it. Anyway we worked out the firing order and by looking at the ZB and various manuals we managed to get the pattern of how they go into the cap – but it took several tries before rotating the pattern round before it worked. This whole process took a long time and much panicking from me! I should explain that the BGT is in use most days as Nancy uses the Honda thing with baby Claire and the ZB is sorn awaiting MOT in February Half term.

The ZB I hope will pass its MOT especially as I have had a new exhaust box made up by Bells in Swindon – this is much cheaper than buying one from a specialist. You should also note that they can supply and fit a stainless MG B exhaust for less than it costs to buy one from an MG supplier! The same brand- I presume their own "Bell" is advertised at a much higher price in an advert I saw in one of the Mags.

Tom

Skittles night



This year's skittles night will take place at the Fox and Hounds Devizes on the 20th of March. 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