

Chairman's Chat

The last few weeks for me have been a bit lean so far as MG activities go because of other commitments such as helping my son move house, gardening (that's his, not mine), and visiting grandchildren taking part in a musical concert in Cardiff. On the subject of musical concerts, along with a number of other Wessex Members we enjoyed an afternoon at Stourhead Gardens where a collection of singing groups and choirs performed at various locations around the grounds. We were there at the invitation/encouragement of Jeff Rattle who performed as part of the Wiltshire Wailers. I was sorry to hear that June was not well enough to attend and I hope she will soon be back to good health. The weather was beautiful and the music was fun and came over very well in the serene setting around the lake. A quintessential English summer afternoon, one might say.

Meanwhile, on the same day a separate group from the Club attended MG Live at Silverstone. Yet to hear about the event but on the journey home the clutch of Vic's car failed at the A420 roundabout and he was towed to a safe refuge by Kevin who was in his saloon car, before sending for the rescue services. Yet another example of having a modern car available as

back-up on some of our trips. Subsequently I managed to borrow an engine hoist and help Vic with the engine removal. The problem was not the clutch itself but the carbon release bearing which had totally disintegrated damaging the pressure plate in the process. An engine hoist, by the way, is an example of the equipment that I had in mind when a few meetings ago I raised the matter of the Club purchasing some specialist tools for the benefit of members to borrow, possibly at a nominal charge out rate. Perhaps we should visit this matter again.

MGA's have a justifiable reputation for getting very hot in heavy traffic conditions or on long inclines owing to the modern petrol we have to use. My car is no exception and though I am keen to keep it as original as possible, I have taken a pragmatic view about certain modifications such as the recently installed five speed gearbox, and now I have purchased a thermostatically controlled cooling fan. I have yet to install it so I am not yet in a position to judge its effectiveness. More in the future.

By the time you get to read this the Calne Classic Show would have happened. Our next Club evening is the BBQ at The Bell, bring your own food. This will be quickly



WESSEX MG CLUB
At the Bell on the Common Broughton Gifford
25th Anniversary Year - 2010

For your diary in the coming month

June

28th Club night 7:30 pm – BBQ.

July

4th Club Picnic.

followed by the Annual Picnic on Sunday 4th July for which Sandra and I have been designing a scenic route and finding a venue. Start at the Wharf Car Park, Devizes at 10.00 am.

Finally, don't forget about the 25th Anniversary event! Tickets are available and you should think about securing yours and your friends as soon as possible. Your Committee will be meeting later this month to finalise details before the big event on 11/12 September.

Gordon

Is there anything to worry about? – *Ethanol in Petrol*



Some of you may remember my short dit on the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) in the November 2009 edition of the newsletter.

I was talking to Philip Bussey the other day; he mentioned an article he had been reading in a classic motoring magazine – standing in Smith's no doubt – about ethanol in fuel and its affect on classic cars.

It certainly got my attention and I thought you may be interested in how the green world may be affecting your pride and joy. The main source of this piece is the FBHVC mentioned above. The following is a précis of their thoughts with a few added comments from me.

The first thing to make clear is that at concentrations of less than 5% there is no obligation for petrol pumps to be labelled at point of sale, so the petrol that you put into your car can contain from 0% to 5% ethanol. So what are the issues?

Fuel Volatility

Excessive fuel volatility may produce unwelcome symptoms of poor hot starting, erratic running including running too rich, or too lean.

Blending small amounts of ethanol (up to 5%) into petrol does produce a measurable increase in volatility. Oil companies must ensure that fuel volatility meets specified limits (EN 228) so petrol containing ethanol will be adjusted to this specification. However, if fuel containing ethanol is mixed in your fuel tank with purely hydrocarbon fuel an increase in the volatility of the blend in the tank can result. There is a wide range of vehicle ages in our club, and it is highly probable that some will be less able to cope with an unintended increase in fuel volatility, and also some time-related deterioration in performance of cooling systems. As I have said you wouldn't know that the fuel that you are pumping into your tank contains ethanol, so the chances of mixing two types of fuel in your tank is a realistic one.

Octane quality

The addition of 5% ethanol increases petrol octane quality by about one octane number. For this reason high octane unleaded petrol (nominally 98 Research Octane Number or RON) is more likely to contain ethanol than the normal 95 RON standard or 'Premium' product. Refiners do not like giving quality away, so if ethanol is added to the standard product, the blend may be adjusted so that octane quality remains at 95 RON. Those owners of high performance cars originally requiring high octane five star petrol are more likely to buy 98 RON unleaded, so they are more likely to encounter blends containing ethanol. I seem to remember back in the early seventies when we had our MGB it was recommended that 5 star was used. I also use the higher grade fuel now to avoid the dreaded run-on problems. However, given the high octane quality of ethanol, and the EU-driven enthusiasm for bio-fuel inclusion, it seems that the use of ethanol in the normal 95 RON unleaded petrol cannot be ruled out. This enthusiasm will make it increasingly likely that our cars will have fuel containing ethanol as time goes on.

Effects on fuel system metals

Briefly, the presence of ethanol in petrol increases the risk of corrosion of metallic fuel system materials. This difficulty is recognised from long experience, and effective corrosion inhibitors have been developed. Responsible fuel retailers should employ a suitable additive to protect their customers' treasured possessions, but this may not always be the case.

CONCAWE Report 3/08* (I have copied a reference from the CONCAWE WEB-site explaining what they do, see end of this dit.) gives a list of metals not recommended for use with petrol containing ethanol which reads like a metal who's who for vintage and classic cars, i.e. zinc, brass, copper, lead-coated steel. On this basis, the type of car favoured by those represented by the FBHVC could have problems in the petrol tank, fuel pipe, carburettor and most fittings.

Modern vehicles have tended to maximise the use of engineering plastics, so will have less of a problem. However, to avoid sounding too gloomy, it should be remembered that corrosion inhibitor additives are usually very effective in providing protection, and if the products used by the fuel retailers do not perform, a low cost after-market product may well become available for owners of vulnerable vehicles to use.

Effects on seals, plastics and other materials

Other no-no materials mentioned by Report 3/08 are shellac, cork, nylon and GRP materials, plus various elastomer and seal materials. Recommended materials include Viton, Fluorosilicone, neoprene and Buna-N for hoses and gaskets (but neither of these for seals). Teflon tape is recommended in preference to alcohol based pipe and thread sealing materials.

Tank lining materials used to prevent small leaks in tanks are also in the not-recommended category for ethanol fuels. It is not currently known whether tank sealant manufacturers are able to supply products compatible with fuels containing ethanol, but their availability would certainly be an advantage. If such products are not available, their use is likely to decline and rather more traditional methods of tank repair, or even re-manufacture, may become a growth industry. Any tank sealant manufactured in USA should not be affected by ethanol as ethanol has been in USA petrol for some time. To be sure of avoiding problems customers should check that any such product does indicate it can be used with fuel containing ethanol.



A solvent is available to remove existing tank sealant, Epoxy Remover made by Tank Cure. However the active ingredient in this product is methylene chloride, aka paint stripper, which unfortunately is the subject of a proposed EU ban. Many seals have a 'memory' and may leak when introduced to ethanol when they are old. The same type of seal may not leak when new.

Effect on gums, sediments etc.

Over time all fuel handling systems tend to accumulate deposits of one kind or another in crevices and corners. Sediments, gums, rust, lacquer and other materials fall into this category, and generally the older the fuel system the more of such material there will be. Unfortunately fuels containing ethanol tend to loosen these deposits which then move on to plague the driver with mysterious fuel starvation problems. There have been a number of references to such problems recently, including cars used for racing, which arguably may be more likely to be using fuel containing ethanol through the high octane route. Irritating though this problem must be, there is arguably a finite amount of such material in fuel systems, and thus after a certain time, which will be shortened by thorough cleaning, further use of ethanol fuels will not dislodge more sediment to block filters or jets, so hopefully this problem will fade with time.

The effect on specific Gravity of blending ethanol into petrol



Petrol metering systems in general are affected by the specific gravity of the fuel. Devices which employ a float as part of the mechanism to control either the pumping or metering of fuel are likely to be affected by changes in its specific gravity, or density. Petrol in the UK is sold under the BS EN 228 specification which permits the density of the fuel to lie anywhere between 0.720 and 0.775kg/litre. Adding 5% of ethanol by volume (5.35% by mass) to petrol will raise the density of the blend by a small amount, i.e. about 0.4% from 0.745kg/litre to 0.748kg/litre.

This change is clearly well within the normal range of variation in density which is permitted by the EN 228 specification, and in truth is unlikely to make any significant difference to the operation of fuel metering or pumping systems.

So there you are. I've not read the article Philip referred to and whether it came to any practical conclusions, whilst the above merely highlights the issues providing plenty of food for thought. I contacted the editorial staff at **Enjoying MG**, suggesting that they may want to consider addressing this problem through the magazine. They were very receptive to the idea, although they were wary of panicking readers, even though they have had questions relating to engine issues that could be the result of ethanol in fuel.

**CONCAWE was established in 1963 by a small group of leading oil companies to carry out research on environmental issues relevant to the oil industry. Its membership has broadened to include most oil companies operating in Europe. The scope of CONCAWE's activities has gradually expanded in line with the development of societal concerns over environmental, health and safety issues. These now cover areas such as fuels quality and emissions, air quality, water quality, soil contamination, waste, occupational health and safety, petroleum product stewardship and cross-country pipeline performance.*

ED

Caption Competition



Paul Adams:

"Having established that he was most definitely not on a promise, Roger went in to sulk mode"

ED:

"It's not fair, you said I could wear this cap *and* you have the best part of the newspaper".

MG Factoids – The Early MG Society

For those that didn't go down to the Bristol Classic Car Show, you missed a treat. I mentioned to Ron Alderson that I would be going down and he offered me a lift in his MGC – a treat in itself. Ron had arranged to meet up with fellow members of the Norton Radstock Classic Vehicle Club (NRCVC) and to motor down to the show together. We were a little early for our meet so Ron gave me the opportunity of driving his 'C', another treat!

Eventually we all arrived at the show and I helped take various bits and pieces to their stand which they had set up for the show. The stand featured classic commercial vehicles from the club, involved with road works to stop a mains water leak. All very well thought out, down to water 'leaking' from below the road surface.



Using the stand as a base for refreshments during the day, Ron and I mooched around the show. The usual array of auto jumble, displays and car clubs. But to our surprise, hidden at the end of one of the display sheds was a stand called 'The Early MG Society' – the treat I was alluding to earlier.



Now neither Ron nor I had heard of this society, nor apparently have many others according to owners of the cars on display.

Apparently The Early MG Society was formed in 1992 to support the owners of 14 and 18 horsepower MG cars built between 1924 and 1932. We were told that only 101 examples of 14/28, 14/40, 18/80 and 18/100 models survive today. The aims of the society are to foster friendship between current, past and future owners, to assist owners in keeping their cars working, to keep records of the history of these rare vehicles, and to promote their existence.

The society provides help with obtaining parts and technical support in order to keep these cars on the road and to bring more back to working condition. It issues a magazine twice a year and has an archive of photos, manuals, drawings and sales literature. The Society organises events both within the UK and on the continent.

Seeing these cars served as a useful post script to my two pieces in the January and February newsletters on the origins of the MG badge and "Old Speckly Hen", both stories involved the 14/40. The silver/burgundy example seen on the stand is a 1927 14/28 MG Super Sports 4 Seater Tourer, which was the last MG to be built around a Morris chassis and carry the MG/Morris badge – see photo. Only 10 of these cars have survived



out of something like 290 built. These cars were built from 1926 to mid 1927 only. Some 150 had the 4 seater open sports body fitted as seen in the photo.

Next to it was a silver/red 1929 14/40 Flatnose MG Super Sports 2 Seater with Dickey. This model carried the first MG badge – see photo - and it was this model that the “Old Speckly Hen” was based. Only 22 of these cars survive out of something like 316 built. The cars were built between 1927 to mid 1929. Some 58 examples had the 2 seater open sports body fitted.



Including the 2 mentioned there were a total of 7 cars on display. A couple of others of interest were the 1 MG Six 4 Seater Speed



18/80 model. One was an Mk Model the black/red car pic- 18/80s survive today. These

were expensive cars in their day at £520 for the 2 seater open sports, £525 for the Speed Model, £525 for the 4 Seater open sports, £565 for the Sportsman’s Salonette and £580 for the 4 door saloon.

The other 18/80 was an Mk II MG Six deluxe Saloon – the Blue/Black example below. Built between 1930 and 1932, a total of 236 were built, of which 50 were deluxe saloons. Only 25 Mk2 18/80 cars survive and this car is the only deluxe saloon to survive intact. The price new was £625 for the 2 seater open sports, £630 for the 4 seater open sports, £660 for the Sportsman’s Salonette, £675 for the 4 door saloon and the deluxe saloon was £699.



The detailing on the cars are what you would expect, examples of which were – ventilation duct and retaining nut for the spare wheel on the 14/40 Flatnose.



Very many thanks to Ron for the lift. Oh and by the way his club won the best stand at the show – the road works.

ED

Photo Gallery

Roger Binney



John Bishop



Club News

WESSEX MG 2010 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Details
28/06/2010	Club Night (BBQ)	YES	The Bell	Bring your own food to prepare on the BBQ
4/07/2010	Club Picnic	YES	Hinton Ampner	See below
26/07/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Mystery run.
07/08/2010	Families day RAF Lyneham	YES	RAF Lyneham	TBA - POC Paul Wheal
08/08/2010	Club Run	YES	Athelhampton Bournemouth	TBA
23/08/2010	Club Night	YES	The Bell	Boules
29-30 Aug	Wings & Wheels	NO	Dunsford	See below
11-12 Sept	25th Anniversary Celebrations	YES	See Details	The Lydiard Conference Centre
26/09/2010	Driving test	YES	TBA	POC Vic Wright
27/09/2010	Club Night	YES	TBA	Review of IofW trip and ideas for 2011.
25/10/2010	Club Night	YES	TBA	TBA
27/11/2010	AGM	YES	TBA	TBA
11/12/2010	Christmas Dinner	YES	TBA	TBA

Dunsfold Wings & Wheels 29th & 30th August '10

This will not be a club event as there has not been enough interest. However, for those that are interested to make their own way there, the link is below for detailed info.

<http://www.wingsandwheels.net/>

For those that are planning to go, I have talked to somebody who has been in the past who warns of possible long queues to get in – he advises that to avoid these, it's best to get there before 9am!!

Pete Hine

Club Picnic

This year's club picnic run will be to Hinton Ampner in Hampshire. The vision of one man, Hinton Ampner is best known for its magnificent garden with stunning views to the south. The elegant country house was remodelled by Ralph Dutton, the 8th and last Lord Sherborne, in 1960 after a devastating fire, and contains his collection of Georgian and Regency furniture, Italian pictures and objets d'art. The gardens were also laid out by Ralph Dutton and are widely acknowledged as a masterpiece of 20th-century design, mixing formal and informal planting, providing all year round interest. Start at the Wharf Car Park Devizes 10:00am.



Could I have names of those who wish to go on our next club night – 28th June BBQ.

Gordon

Secretary's Scribbles

My Magnette now has lovely new seatbelts all round! Great news as now I can safely transport passengers about – in style of course! The car is running well but I am awaiting clutch master cylinder failure at any moment as it has a slight leak and can need an occasional pump up to get a decent bite – I reckon there will be a story here soon!

Over recent years there has often been talk of leaving spare wheels out of our boots and taking a bottle of this glupey stuff and a compressor instead. As far as I know no one has actually risked this yet – It is not a thought that I will have again! On The first Friday of half term we drove up to Nottinghamshire in the Honda Civic only to have a big bang and a flat tyre on the A46 dual carriageway near Leicester. There was nowhere to go and after limping along managed to wedge the car on a grass bank – we were perched between the fast moving carriageway and a steep drop. I couldn't get near the wheel as it was too close to the zooming cars and it was basically a scary place to break down! The other problem is that Honda Civics doesn't come with a spare wheel.

Now I did question this on purchasing the car and had been assured that the can of glupey stuff was all tested at Mira etc etc. I called the RAC as I knew I was in trouble – but as we waited the Police turned up and shut a lane so we could try to use the can of glupey stuff – This of course is rubbish and just bubbled out of the hole as froth when we tried to inflate the wheel. The RAC despite knowing that we had a 9 month old baby and that we were in a dangerous location with the Police in attendance took 3 hours to get to us!!! The RAC man was of course great and used another Mira tested fix-all this time a rubber plug that expands inside the tyre - this worked a treat and so we did have a happy ending luckily! The Policemen were interesting as they were the armed response unit for Leicestershire and were armed to the hilt – we have also noted how Claire likes to chat up men in uniform – is this something to be worried about? (Andrea any advice?)

I have had through details of the Exmoor Rut on October 10th from BUCKFASTLEIGH to Highbullen Hotel, Chittlehamholt. Email me if you wish further details

Tom

Car for Sale

This ad received via Vic, so any enquires please contact Vic.

MG Midget, 1979, black with red leather seats (these are in v. good condition!). 1500 cc engine, 98,000 miles and it's been a very reliable starter and runner in the year we have had it. No known problems with engine, gearbox, steering and brakes. However John (Stag Service station, Chiltern Foliat) says it needs extensive welding – floor pan, inner and outer sills, 'A' posts.

Value - it would be good to cover my maintenance and failed MOT costs – around £250.



Car sold

Richard Tranter has sold his "Black Beast" as advertised in the March edition of the newsletter. He now has the following items to dispose of:

MG tool roll in BRG cloth; MG leather key fob in BRG; and a quantity of this year's EMG and Safety Fast – all free to any deserving member who will collect.

Also the large rear "Wing" spoiler for a ZS180 and two part-worn tyres 205 45 R17. Offers – buyer collects.

Hope to see you all some time. We are just off on holiday for a couple of weeks.

Richard Tranter