

## Chairman's Chat



The WESSEX MG CLUB  
at the Bell on the Common Broughton Gifford

Hi to you all,

Another month has rolled by and the weather is getting better (no snow). Great things have come about after many hours spent by our treasurer/membership sec, the club has now:

A Business card

New supply of car badges

Teddy Bears

And operating systems to enable the club to run smoothly – which could be just the start!

If you have changes to your membership details please inform Peter Hine (you know who you are).

This is the time when thoughts turn to getting the car warmed up and tested, ready for the good days ahead.

For those who made it to the Valentines dinner/murder mystery

evening - and got back - I would like on behalf of all of us to thank Lord & Lady Edington (Roger & Lynne) for a very enjoyable evening.

Having arrived home around 12ish, I set my alarm for 6.00am – what a time to start to go to the Stoneleigh MG spares day! I treated myself to a trip with Tom in his Magnette wow! say no more. We arrived at 9.15 and wandered around making several purchases. The show still holds a few surprises, but was that much smaller than previous years.

The next item in the calendar is the monthly meeting, a talk by Tom on what effect women had during and after the war years on our society.

An update on the Welsh trip is due shortly, so dust off the cheque books, deposit required soon.

See you all on the 28<sup>th</sup>

**Vic Wright, Chairman**

For your diary in the coming month

### February

28<sup>th</sup> – Club Night 8:00pm

### March

3<sup>rd</sup> - Committee Meeting

11<sup>th</sup> - Skittles evening.

28<sup>th</sup> – Club Night 8:00pm

For details see page 7

## My MG – Well Worth the Effort

**B**ack in February 2009 I wrote a piece in this Newsletter briefly describing some of the variety of cars I have owned including five different MG's. I will now expand a little on the experiences of one of my current MGs – a 1960 MGA Mk I.

I first fell for MG cars in the late 1950's when my (older) sister started going out with a guy who had a black MG TC. I thought this car was the height of style and elegance and thought there and then that I would one day have one of those. That didn't happen of course and many decades passed when marriage, mortgage and children got in the way of any ambitions of that sort. However, shortly after the release of the all-new MGF in 1995 it was time to renew my car and whilst out with Sandra one day we stopped for a coffee at the Little Chef at Nunney and in the car park was our first sighting of this car. We immediately took to it and convinced ourselves that this could be a viable car for our every day motoring. And so after a test drive at Henley's of Bristol the then MG dealers, we acquired a red MGF, initially on a three year lease. We enjoyed it so much that before the lease had expired I negotiated a deal to purchase it.

That was when the rot set in (to me not the car) and my interest in older MG's was rekindled. My ambition now was not for a TC as in years gone by but for an MGA. Having already restored a MK II Midget I was keen not to go through all that work again and so I started the hunt for an MGA that was in good order without the



**The Victim**



**A Painless Extraction**

need for work and at a reasonable price. A rare beast I soon found out. However after months of trawling the web without success, EBay was displaying a reasonable (not the Clarkson definition) car. It failed to meet its reserve and because the seller put his phone number on the web I was able to get it touch. To cut a short story even shorter I went to view the car at Horndean near Portsmouth, did a deal and brought the car home on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008.

Considerable work had been done by way of restoration by the previous owner during his ownership of some 15/16 years, though not many miles travelled in that time. On the journey

home the car dropped out of top gear whilst descending a hill and at the time I thought that it was my unfamiliarity with the car that had been the cause of this. Over ensuing months I continued to use the car without incident and then whilst taking part in the Cobweb Run to Hursley near Winchester it jumped out of gear a number of times. Decisions had to be made to correct this fault. A couple of avenues were available to me but whilst I pondered these and researched the work involved, I continued to use the car but with a rubber bungee wrapped around the gear stick and held back to the seat frame to stop it jumping out of (top) gear. An old trick learnt in my youth with a wreck of a Mini.

I carried on like this for the rest of that summer including the Club weekend away in Guernsey all the while considering the repair options. One of the options available was to replace the gearbox with a modern five speed box from the Ford range and with a shortened prop shaft, modified gear box mounting and a new bell housing the jobs a good 'un. Simples!!



**The New Gearbox**

This is what I chose to do and I set about getting the parts. Of course in order to remove the gear box it is first necessary to remove the engine. I saw this as an opportunity to check the condition of the engine and renew the clutch whilst everything was in bits. With much valued help from Vic and Paul Warn the engine and gearbox were removed. The engine was dismantled and sent to E&J Engine Services of Westbury Leigh for a re-bore, to have the block and head skimmed and to have the crank and its bearings checked.

No corrective work was necessary for the latter item. On return of the engine the new clutch was mounted and the new bell housing and the reconditioned T9 gearbox attached to the rear of the engine. The T9 'box was chosen because the ratios for the first four gears are virtually identical to those

of the original MGA gearbox and so the fifth gear becomes the equivalent to an over drive. Replacing the gearbox and engine in one unit is a three man job because of the small bonnet opening on the MGA and because it was necessary to tip it backwards. This was achieved by the three of us without so much as a mark on the car bodywork.

The new shorter prop shaft (supplied by Hi Gear Engineering) was then offered up but proved to be marginally too long and was an un-

acceptably tight fit. In a phone call



**Men at Work**

to the supplier a replacement was offered to the new dimension, but I elected to cut 5mm off the push-fit shaft at the gearbox end and this achieved the desired effect. The probable explanation for the misfit is that when the previous owner replaced the rear suspension which included welding to the spring mounting points, the whole assembly including the back axle got moved a fraction forward. Once satisfied with the prop shaft attention was turned to the engine head which was then refitted together with all the other auxiliary bits and pieces. The fine tweaking of engine and gearbox position relative to the transmission tunnel then continued as a 'work in progress' task for about another six months before the car was running satisfactorily. One of the most frustrating parts of this running in was that the engine ran very hot. The first thing to check of course was the thermostat and this

appeared to be working well when I boiled it up in a saucepan.



**Note the Hammer**



**All Looks Bright and Shiny**

car more suited to modern traffic conditions. But as always there are other areas that can be improved and I am currently working on the replacement of the front disc brakes and calipers.

Once running well the modifications carried out proved to be well worth the effort and I am pleased with the changes which make the

Meanwhile my other MG – an MGF - has had its traumas, but more of this on another occasion.

**Gordon Newman**



## Josephine's Successor

**Y**es 'Josephine' has gone to a new home. Paul and Tom Adams have bought her as a father and son project. My original intention was to buy another car, keep the MGBGT and restore her (more about that later). I decided I would like a modern sports car at a reasonable price and as new as possible which of course eliminates Merc's, Audi's and BMW's. The choice was between MGTF's, MX5's and MR2's. I compared the average price of 2005 cars and found the MG cheaper by £3000 against the MX5 and £3500 against the MR2, quite a saving.

Of course we all know about the dreaded MG head gasket problem and so I decided to find out more. I looked at the various online forums and then spoke to Roger Parker the MGOC's technical man. Firstly the 2005 cars had slightly softer suspension and a coolant level sensor. Secondly in the later Rover cars improvements had been made to the head gasket but the car was still lucky if it would go to 60000 miles without a failure. When Ford took over the Freelander range they produced a modification which strengthened the bottom oil rail and changed the gasket to a multishim type. Roger's comment on this was that to date it has proved to be a cure for the problem. Armed with this information I needed to find out how much would it cost to have the mods done. Garages seem to vary greatly in the prices they charged and in their knowledge of the problem. I then came across a guy who trades under 'MG Solutions' (web-site available with prices) and he has a well equipped van exclusively on MGF/TF's. He was an apprentice at a Rover dealership and has worked on Rover/ MGs for 30 years. A phone call to him decided me to go the path of the MGTF.



Interestingly I discovered cheaper through garages club magazine adverts. Via change and Mart I found sale in a 50 mile radius lucky that the fifth one I 2005 car, low mileage two owners and in brilliant condition. I paid over the money and drove her home. It was at that point that I decided not to restore the GT. There is no way I will go back to driving a 'B' after the TF experience. The TF, like the MR2, is a mid-engined car and as such has neutral steering and that edgy feel about it of a sports car. The front dives into the corner when the steering wheel is turned without any feeling of understeer. The MX5 feels very 'saloon car' after the other two. Sorry Tom but MG hadn't made a real sports car since the 1930's but at long last with the F/TF they did. (I love winding up our club secretary and see him go !!!!!)

I have now had the head gasket modifications done, as well as changing the cam belt, water pump and fitting stainless steel radiator pipes underneath. It went against the grain having a perfectly serviceable car repaired but hopefully it will be OK for the long term. If it works out I will have saved about £2500 over the TF's rivals and can remain in the club as an MG owner. Watch this space to see if my gamble has paid off or will I end up with egg on my face, time will tell.

As all of my cars have had names the TF is no exception and has been called 'Bluebell'. She has already been polished to within an inch of her life, (there is no hope for me !!!!!) and I attach the following photo of my new mistress !!

**Colin English**

## A Cat-astrophe - at local charity dinner

Cat lovers everywhere were shocked to hear that a rare Mongolian Smooth-Haired Howler was found dead at a local charity dinner. The dinner, in aid of the Wessex Cats Protection League was hosted by Lord and Lady Edington.

Amongst the distinguished guests was Pussy Galore patron of the charity and owner of the unfortunate cat. Speaking at a press conference this morning Lord and Lady Edington are said to be distraught that the charity had been **catapulted** into the media lime light in this way. Lord Edington is said to be tending to Pussy's every need.



Mr Volks Vaagen who donated the MG as the main prize in last night's dinner, said that all publicity was good publicity and passed out a number of **catalogues** of the cars available in his dealership in Holland.

David Lemmingstone a local big game hunter and guest came within a whisker of serious injury on a recent expedition. But all

this had been forgotten as he realised he had won the star prize of the MG.



Inspector Smalls-Closely a family friend and guest said in a press conference this morning that Netty Court was helping the police with their enquires. When pressed the inspector pawed for a few minutes cleared the **ca-tarrh** from his throat before declaring that there were a number of guests with motive to carry out the killing. However the inspector after revealing all shocked the conference, declaring that Netty had owned up to this **cataclysmic** event.



As a footnote to this **category** of events, the insurance company pointed out a claws in the policy covering the charity dinner, which invalidates payment under such circumstances.

The Reverend Dupp guest and vicar of the local parish **categorically** denied any wrong doing. He said that even though his organ could be in better shape, he would lead a service of remembrance, reflecting on the nine lives of the unfortunate cat.

If you want to catch up with further developments surrounding this tail then log-on to [www.mongolianhowler.co.uk](http://www.mongolianhowler.co.uk).

Very many thanks to Lynne and Roger for all their time and effort in making such a great and successful evening.

**ED**

## Photo Gallery



## Valentine's Murder/Mystery

The WESSEX MG Club 2011 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	More Information
24-Jan	Club Night - Quiz Night	Yes	The Bell	Paul Adams
12 - 13 Feb	Great Western Auction & Auto Jumble	No	Shepton Mallet Showground	<a href="http://www.bristolclassicarshow.co.uk/">http://www.bristolclassicarshow.co.uk/</a>
19-Feb	Valentines Day massacre – Murder Mystery Dinner	Yes	George and Dragon at Erlstoke	Roger Binney- roger.binney@btopenworld.com - Invites have been sent out via e-mail.
20-Feb	International MG Show & Spares Day	No	Stoneleigh Park	
28-Feb	Club Night Getting Even' Suffragettes to Flappers	Yes	The Bell	Tom Strickland - strickland-to@hotmail.com
03-Mar	Committee Meeting			
<b>11-Mar</b>	<b>Skittles Night</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Cross Keys Rowde</b>	<b>See details below</b>
06-Mar	Winchester MGOC Cobweb Run	No	Hursley Park	
28-Mar	Club Night - History of Grand Prix Racing - Part 3 - 1960 - 1970	Yes	The Bell	Paul Warn - paul.warn@homecall .co.uk
16-Apr	Corinium Run			<b>TBA</b>
18-Apr	Club Night - Prod & Poke	Yes	The Bell	Rescheduled from the 25th April to avoid Easter Monday
06-May	Possible Spring Break Weekend			<b>TBA</b>
08-May	Abingdon Air Day			<b>TBA</b>
23-May	Club Night - Club Mystery Run	Yes		<b>TBA</b>
27-Jun	Club Night - BBQ	Yes	The Bell	<b>TBC with new owners of The Bell</b>
03-Jul	Cotswold Caper			
25-Jul	Club Night	Yes	The Bell	
22-Aug	Club Night - Boules	Yes	The Bell	
26-Sep	Club Night	Yes	The Bell	
24-Oct	Club Night	Yes	The Bell	
28-Nov	Club Night - AGM	Yes	The Bell	
10-Dec	Christmas Party			<b>TBA</b>

More events to be added.



## Secretary's Scribbles

Last month I was whinging about batteries – well things happen in 3s don't they so at the end of January we changed our Civic to a larger Honda Accord Tourer (estate) and guess what – yes it had a flat battery when we tried to test drive it! Luckily Honda put a new one so this one didn't cost me a penny! This is the first car I have owned that is not made in the UK which I am not all that comfortable with but it is a great bit of 'family' kit.

I have bought some nice new number plates for the Magnette and I went for period raised digits in white – which are fine for the year of the car. It is amazing what small details can do to enhance the beauty of an MG. I have also had some fun fixing washer jets ready for its MOT next week – fun and games! In the end I bought new MGB pipes, T piece (with non-return valve) and chrome jet assemblies. I put all the new pipes on and then just changed over the unscrewable nozzles from the jet assemblies and hey presto! I have already changed from the original dodgy engine vacuum system to an electric pump and the non-return valve helps the pressure and quickness to spray. If your car doesn't have the t piece with the non-return valve then I would recommend changing it – especially if you spend ages pumping away with one of those manual push buttons!

I hope everyone is now aware of our award for Paul's newsletter and please do offer him congratulations when you next see him. The award was from the MGOC and we were up against hundreds of other club magazines so it certainly is an achievement!

See you all soon.

**Tom**

## Wessex Bear

For those of you that don't have a club mascot, 'Wessex Bear' is now waiting to join you on your travels in your MG. He has his Wessex MG hoody on, his own passport, and is ready to enjoy fun days out with you. If you would like to give a bear a good home (for a small adoption fee of £10) please see me at the next club meeting.

For those of you that already have Wessex 'Grey' Bear travelling with you, his close relative, 'Sandy' Bear has stepped up for duty now - why not get your 'Grey' bear a travelling companion...

**Peter**  
**Membership Secretary**





## Skittles Evening

Change of venue and date from that shown in last month's newsletter. This year's skittles evening will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> March at the Cross Keys pub, High Street, Rowde. Arrive 7:30pm for 8:00pm. Situated on the A342 near Devizes.

Curry type supper will be provided in price - £5/head. **Numbers required ASAP.** Please phone Vic 01380 859743/859618.

**Vic**

## Useful Contacts

I have, in the past, used information from the MGOC "Recommended Suppliers" booklet but, as there are a limited number of entries local to us, Wessex members recommendations are particularly valuable.

This is one (just one, Chaps) of the reasons I sought membership of Wessex MG.

Vic was very helpful in giving me some pointers and led, via a variously convoluted route, to several people who have helped me with the restoration of my car.

The following may be useful in the future:

M & J Engine Services, 8 Westbury Leigh, Westbury, BA13 3SG, 01373 823524 (Simon and Sean). Vic also has experience of this medium sized engine re-manufacturer.

Airfield Motors, Yatesbury, Calne (Simon) 01672 539627. Good for bodywork welding, also re-furbishes generally, though does not do paintwork. he had a beautiful Jensen Interceptor in while he was working on my car!

TES Transmissions, Westbury (Mark) gearbox and differential refurbishment.

Westbury Engineering, West Wilts Trading Estate, Westbury (Steve King) 01373 826664. Machining and manufacture of bespoke parts (made rings and machined back plate to accommodate a crankshaft oil seal)

Dave Prichard 07890 215985. Body spraying and welding (he is currently spraying my car and is doing a good job. Most of his experience has been with modern VWs and '70's Cosworth Escorts and Capris. Appears to have enjoyed his foray into proper cars.....

Charlie Boon, Southwick, Trowbridge 07775 322300. Body restoration and spraying. He couldn't take my car when I wished but his paintwork looks good and a Rover 2000 he was working on was progressing well.

Ron Edmunds, MG Services, nr Heathrow 01753 882904. For difficult to find secondhand parts for MGs. Does some parts swapping (e.g. RHD for LHD parts). Needs humouring and not cheap.

'www.mgaguru.com - excellent web site based in USA for MGA technical matters.

**David Whitely**

## For Sale

Differential for 1972 'B' roadster. With crown but without pinion. £50.

Contact **Philip Bussey 01249750486**