

## Chairman's Chat



Hi to you all.

It doesn't seem like four weeks ago since I wrote the last one - time seems to go so fast these days.

Since the last magazine a small group of us went to the COTSWOLD WILDLIFE PARK and spent a good time looking at the animals and cars. About lunch time the weather looked a little grim so we hot tailed it to the local pub for a roast lunch - now there's a surprise.

I have just got back from a 5 star trip up the Norwegian fjords, fantastic trip, well worth thinking about. I'm still trying to find my land legs.

The next event on the calendar is the BBQ at The Bell hope to see you all there RAIN OR SHINE. Don't forget to

bring your food to cook on the BBQ. START TIME 7.30-8.00. The following weekend, the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, is the WESSEX MG PICNIC. Details in the magazine. Hope to see you all at the BBQ.

***Vic Wright, Chairman***

For your diary in the coming month

### June

27<sup>th</sup> - Club Night, BBQ

### July

3<sup>rd</sup> Club Summer Picnic

3<sup>rd</sup> Cotswold Caper

17<sup>th</sup> Sherborne Classic Car Show.

25<sup>th</sup> Club Night

For details see page 5

## The Right Crowd and no Crowding – *The 1931 Double Twelve*

You may have seen in the April edition of *Enjoying MG*, a piece promoting the Goodwood Revival and in particular it mentioned that there will be a recreation of the MG Team's 1931 Brooklands Paddock. For those who may be going to the event this year or indeed anyone with an interest in the MG marque's racing heritage I thought you may be interested in the background to that 1931 event.



It was 80 years ago this year that Lord March's grandfather, the 9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond (Freddie March), along with Chris Staniland won the 1931 Brooklands Double-Twelve in a 746cc MG Midget for the Works MG Racing Team. MG also came first in class and won the team prize.

To celebrate this achievement, it seems that this year's Revival will mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Freddie March's win, with an authentic recreation of the MG team's Brooklands paddock. It will include a line-up of supercharged racing MGs from the early thirties. When I talked to Hamish McNinch about it at the Bristol Classic Car Show – see last month's newsletter – he wasn't sure how many racing MGs of the time would be there as it clashed with a MG Car Club race weekend elsewhere.....

Anyway, in 1927 the MG Car Company had been officially formed and Cecil Kimber worked to ensure that the new marque had a separate identity to its parent company Morris. Yet it was difficult to shake off its origins despite two Frenchmen winning in an MG in South America.

By this time the Le Mans 24 hours had established itself as an event for manufactures to promote their cars through competition. Cecil Kimber was quick to recognise that he needed a Le Mans type sports car if he was to establish the MG marque and appeal to the sporty types of the time. Kimber favoured a more up market approach with a competition version of the 18/80 – the Tigress. As I said last month, although it looked the part, it was too heavy making its one and only competitive appearance in the 1930 Double Twelve where it failed to finish.

Luckily in parallel with the Tigress project, Kimber was persuaded by his engineers that what he really really wanted was a small agile and most important affordable sportscar. But he needed a suitable engine – an overhead camshaft engine.

In 1926 Wolseley Motors was declared bankrupt and was put up for sale by the receivers. They were not renowned for their car designs, but they certainly knew how to build engines. Wolseley was famous for its single overhead camshaft (shc) engines – based on the design of Hispano-Suiza aero engines – and also transmissions. Now Morris was looking for a suite of engines for his cars and bought the assets of the Wolseley Company along with the SU Carburettor firm.

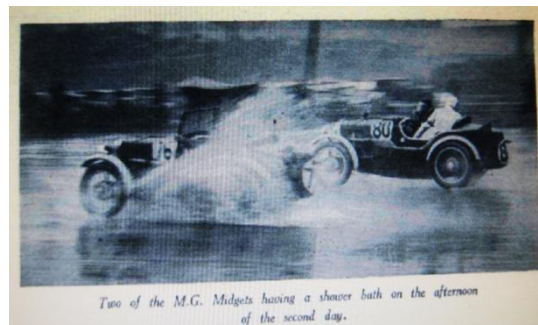
By 1928, Morris was installing the small Wolseley shc engine in the Morris Minor. Kimber's engineers got to know about the Minor and recognised the potential of using the engine in a sports body to compete against the successful Austin Seven. But Kimber was still to be persuaded of the commercial value of a small, cheap sports car; yet was shrewd enough to recognise the publicity gained by Austin in competition.

Kimber was persuaded and a two seat sports body was built onto a Minor chassis, with the engine and gearbox taken straight from the Minor. In this guise, the new prototype two seat MG sports car was 25% lighter than the open topped Morris Minor, setting new standards of performance for a small 850cc capacity car. It was displayed at the 1928 Motor Show and made an immediate impact with over 200 orders taken.

The little MG was in production by April 1929 and road tested by the motoring press who declared it a success – the M-type MG was born. One of MGs first customers was Freddie March, who raced the M-type in minor meetings at Brooklands in 1929.

A team of cars was entered for the new and important Double-Twelve race at Brooklands in 1930 the same race as the Tigress mentioned earlier. Six hour races had already been organised on the Brooklands circuit, but this was on a different scale both in terms of distance and organisation. However, the local well heeled residents were not in favour of the sound of cars racing around the Brooklands track at night. Nor were they too keen on the associated noise and general hubbub of attractions to keep spectators interested for 24 hours.

So the concept of two races was born - two twelve hour races back to back – the Double-Twelve. To say the Double-Twelve would rival the Le Mans 24 hour is perhaps a little ambitious. The race was not as arduous as the Le Mans event, in that it was 2 races of 12 hours duration, over 2 consecutive days, rather than a continuous race, with the cars impounded in parc ferme overnight. But to race for two twelve hour stints and finish on Brooklands notoriously bumpy track was a great achievement.



Two of the M.G. Midgets having a shower bath on the afternoon of the second day.

The first Double Twelve took place in 1929, 'sponsored' by the *Daily Telegraph* who provided the prize money of £1,000 and a gold cup. That first race was won by the works Alfa Romeo 6C1500 of Rampogni.

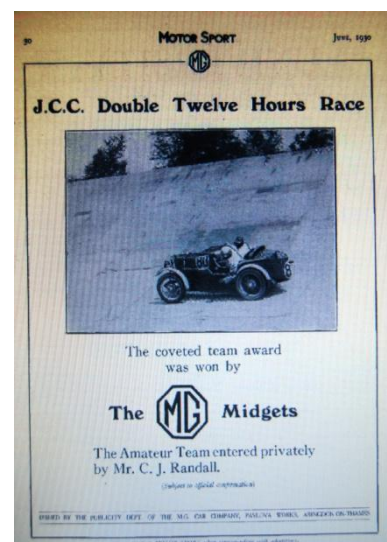
Back to the plot. For 1930 Kimber provided support a group of MG enthusiasts led by a Mr K C Randall, to race a team of MG Midgets in the 751/1100cc class of the JCC Double-Twelve. They easily took the team prize, all averaging 60mph for the 24 hours. As the road car could easily achieve this speed, it was not difficult to promote the Midget to the sporting motorist of the time. For that 1930 race Freddie March raced an Austin 7 coming home in 7<sup>th</sup> place.....



After the race Motor Sport Magazine was able to take car number 76, see left – the first home of the trio that won the team prize – on an extended road test. The car was untouched following the 24 hour event and was driven 200 miles nonstop to the

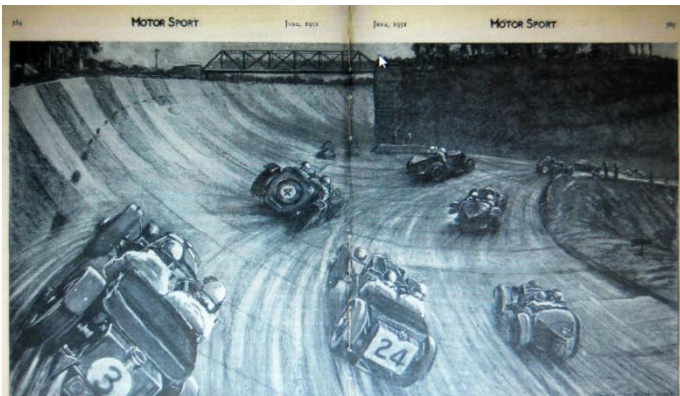
West Country with an overnight stay and back to London. Apart from oiling up number 1 cylinder as a result of allowing the engine to tick over too long, the car didn't miss a beat.

The M-Type established a new class of inexpensive small sports car. But there was intense rivalry between MG and Austin to achieve the honour of being the first to exceed 100mph with a 750cc car. A special single seat MG using many M-Type parts exceeded the 100mph target at Montlhery in February 1931. From this a new sports-racing MG, the 750cc C-Type, was developed and made ready for the 1931 Double Twelve.



A number of changes had been introduced for the 1931 race which was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> May. The cars would, for the first time, race clockwise. This in itself would provide its own problems. As I have said, the Brooklands circuit had a reputation for being very rough, but with time the cars had smoothed over the rough edges. Now the race would be run in the opposite direction, the cars were once again exposed to 'new' sharp edges and would add to the challenge of completing the race.

The picture below shows an illustration from the June 1931 Motor Sport of the cars running clockwise, turning right before the members' bridge. Those that went to the Brooklands MG ERA event earlier this year, may recognise this part of the track. The winning MG of Freddie March can be seen in the foreground on the right.



The following is a quote from my archived Motorsport of June 1931 reporting on the performance of the MGs in the 1931 Double Twelve race:

"Their performance as such deserves of the highest praise, while Mr Cecil Kimber is to be congratulated on the progressive policy which has enabled him to bring the MG, a few years ago unknown, into the

very front of things in the world of racing."

Although the Motor Sport Magazine carried adverts publicising the 1930 success – which I've included, I couldn't find any in the June 1931 edition of MG promoting their even greater 1931 successes.....

As you may have read in last month's newsletter, one of the MGs that took part in that epic 1931 race was on display at the Bristol Classic Car Show, now owned by Hamish McNinch. It was one of the original batch of 13 cars built for the 1931 Double Twelve - ordered by the Hon A D Chetwynd, principally for the use of his wife. The Hon Mrs Joan Chetwynd was an experienced and respected lady racing driver of the time. The car was painted as seen in the picture taken at the show, in the Chetwynd family colours of silver and scarlet.



The car retired from the 1931 Double-Twelve with a broken valve spring. The following month the car was entered in the Le Mans 24 hours. Driven by Mrs Chetwynd it retired after 30 laps with a broken crank. Since buying the car in 2002 Hamish McNinch has restored it with its original engine and gearbox. JO 2288 competed in the 2010 Le Mans 24 hour Classic – remember the Wessex boys on tour last year? – driven by Hamish, Barry Foster and Fred Boothby and was classified 15<sup>th</sup> overall and 4<sup>th</sup> on handicap.

And so this year's Revival will reflect on that great win by MG with the first 5 places taken up by MGs headed by the Earl of March and Chris Staniland, with the class and team prize also going to MG.

**ED**



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	Valentine's 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			
11-Mar	Skittles Night	Yes	Cross Keys Rowde	See details below
06-Mar	Winchester MGOC Cobweb Run	No	Hursley Park	
28-Mar	Club Night - History of Grand Prix Racing - Part 3 -The Sixties	Yes	The Bell	Paul Warn - paul.warn@homecall .co.uk
10-Apr	MG ERA day Brooklands	No		For Info
18-Apr	Club Night - Prod & Poke	Yes	The Bell	Rescheduled from the 25th April to avoid Easter Monday
06-May	Spring Break Weekend - North Wales	Yes		Vic Wright
08-May	Abingdon Air Day			<b>TBA</b>
23-May	Club Night - Club Mystery Run	Yes		David Whiteley
05-Jun	Cotswold Wildlife Park	No		
27-Jun	Club Night - BBQ	Yes	The Bell	
03-Jul	Club Summer Picnic	Yes	Newark Park	Paul Warn - paul.warn@homecall .co.uk
03-Jul	Cotswold Caper	No		
17-Jul	Sherborne Castle Classic Car Show	Yes		
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	Yes	The Bell	<b>TBA</b>

## Secretary's Scribbles

A few weeks ago I was driving home from work in the GT and the Speedo failed and I got a loud whirring sound. I knew that this might happen at some point as a few years ago it I remedied a similar incident with one of those right angle drives that are sometimes fitted to allow easier cable access to the rear of the Speedo this made the Speedo work again but it was a bit erratic!

This time it was either the cable or the Speedo Gauge – the cable was the cheaper fix so with fingers crossed I ordered one and went for it. Changing the cable is straight forward and would be very quick indeed if you had a pit or a decent ramp. I struggled to get decent access to the gear box end and in the end I resorted to undoing the bolt that holds the whole pinion assembly in and out it popped along with a flow of gearbox oil! I soon had the new cable in and after a bit of reflexology (code for going upside down and head first into the driver's foot well) it was all connected and cable tied neatly away. A gearbox oil top up and a quick test drive made we whoop with joy – it wasn't the gauge and I 'MG fix-it god' had fixed it!

Next on my agenda was an attack on the window seals on the Magnette – these have been badly letting the car down. After much research and discussion on Magnette forums I ordered some seals from Woolies (trim specialist) and with the help of another Magnette owner they were in fairly painlessly. I still have ropey rear quarter light seals but these are unavailable and the replica ones are poor and a real bugger to do – so I am currently in the 'scared not thinking about it' stage. The seals that I have replaced are the ones that go against the main wind up windows and these have made a really massive visual improvement.

Coming up in August is the Chippenham Lions club event which was in the last newsletter and in an email from me – I have few replies so please can I remind you to let me know if you want to come as I have a deadline to enter us as a club.

**Tom**

## Club Summer Picnic

I have included below a repeat of last month's information on our summer picnic. We have a healthy eight cars so far.

I have arranged with Newark Park – a National Trust Property – to host our summer picnic on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Newark Park is situated 1.5 miles east of Wotton-under-Edge, 1.75 miles south of junction of A4135 and B4058 on the edge of the village of Ozleworth.



Not all of us are members of the National Trust so I have negotiated **free entry** for those non-members bringing their MGs.

From its Tudor origins to today, the Park contains elements reflecting 450 years of history. The house is lived in and is furnished with an eclectic mix of old and modern with fantastic views to the distant Mendips. The gardens are landscaped with pathways down to a beautiful lake.



I have included a couple of pictures of our visit last year.

Weather permitting, we have permission to park our cars on the lawn in front of the house – see top left pic - to have our picnic.

Please let me know if you would like to come so that I can provide numbers to the National Trust and also whether you are a member.

**ED**

## Jazz at Edington

I have been asked to include the attached poster (Page 8) in our Newsletter for a jazz evening at Edington. I believe a number of our Club went last year. Anyone interested in tickets should make contact with me and I will obtain a "Wessex" block.

**Gordon Newman**

## The Exmoor Rut

You will have also noticed an additional attachment accompanying this newsletter. Vic has asked for it to be included with the next couple of editions of the newsletter.

**ED**



**JAZZ AT  
EDINGTON PRIORY CHURCH**

**FRIDAY 29 JULY 2011  
7:30PM – 11:00PM**

***THE CASS CASWELL  
ALLSTARS***

**FEATURING TRUMPETER**

***MIKE LOCK***

**TICKETS: £7.50**

*FROM:*

**MARGARET RIDGERS (01380 830094)**

**MAGGIE ATTERBURY (01380 830452)**

**SUE DAVIES (01380 830174)**

**BBQ AND BAR AVAILABLE**

**(ALL PROCEEDS TO EDINGTON PRIORY CHURCH)**



