

NEWSLETTER

**WESSEX
MG CLUB**
AT THE BELL INN SEEND



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We have had a couple of busy weeks once again.

We were going to Portsmouth last weekend for one of my grandson's birthday. Unfortunately the youngest had caught chicken pox and we had to cancel, so a visit to the bowling rink in Bristol had to do.

Jane and I have just come back from a short run with the MG. It was quite stressful for Jane at first, as it was the first time she has actually driven it. Heavy steering, less efficient brakes, wipers and lighting switches on different sides of the steering column made it interesting. I'm sure you have all been there. Tomorrow we are in London where we have

been booked into a hotel, by two of my sons, a birthday present from last month. We will spend two days there, see a show and have a meal. Probably visit The Imperial War Museum. A welcome break.

This month's club night sees another beetle drive, which went down well last year. Our usual venue has been sorted thanks to Paul. Thanks also to Vic for getting us into the Greyhound at short notice last month. Hope to see you all on 23rd.

Graham

For your diary in the coming month:

March

23rd - Club Night

28th - Skittles Evening

April

9th - Committee Meeting

19th - Club run Cotswolds

27th - Club Night - Talk

See page 2 & 4 in this edition for more details.

Club Night start time 8:00pm unless otherwise stated



Tom's Field

If you have difficulty finding Tom's Field and put it into your satnav you had better pack your surfboard. You will, in all probability, end up in Croyde Bay on the north Devon coast and will be out of place without your board.

Mind you, if Tom could get planning permission, as the other Tom obviously did, he would be in the market for a few more classic cars! I also include a picture of an ancient monument. Naughty, naughty! The structure on which Pat is standing is Tarr Steps on Exmoor, said to date back to 1000 years B.C. That's definitely pre MG.



Malcolm Taylor

SKITTLES EVENING

I would like to welcome all members to an evening of entertainment - Skittles! The alley is reserved at the Cross Keys Rowde for Saturday 28th March with the first ball thrown between 7:30 and 7:45 pm.

Supper will be included - Sweet & Sour Chicken, Chilli Beef with Rice and Chips. The cost will be £6 per head - a bargain! I need to know ASAP if you would like to join in so I can finalise arrangements with the pub.

Please phone/email [01225 704685](tel:01225704685)/vic@devizes-domestic.co.uk

Vic



AA uses potato to mend 1960s Land Rover

Tom found this little gem - is that a lettuce or potato...

An AA patrolman has described how he used a potato to get a broken-down Land Rover up and running again.

Mario Papademetriou, 59, said he used the root vegetable to revive a stricken Series II on a callout to a farm in Hertfordshire, when he needed to get the classic off-roader to a garage 12 miles away. He used the potato as a condenser after his efforts to fabricate one from tin foil and silicone repair tape didn't do the trick. "As the vehicle was on a farm, there were a lot of vegetables around, so I thought I'd try wiring up a potato with a couple of screws to act as a condenser".



The AA replicated the fix on a Series I it uses on the breakdown firm's recovery fleet - and amazingly, it worked second time around too.



AA technical director Donald MacSporran said: "Amazingly, it started instantly, so I followed the member to the garage and he said the vehicle had never driven so well! The potato, once connected to the switching side of the coil and then to earth, serves half of the function of the condenser in that it absorbs some of this

energy/voltage at the coil reducing the arcing at the points allowing the coil to produce a reasonable spark.

"We were sceptical, which is why we had to try it ourselves. The Land Rover we tried it on would not start with the condenser removed but started instantly the potato was connected to the coil switching terminal. Although vegetables are best left on the dinner plate, Mario's use of a potato was definitely a chip above the others - an excellent example of thinking outside the box, or should that be sack."

Useful Contacts

Having now spent some time on the restoration work on my Lea Francis, I have discovered two suppliers that have provided excellent service, and who may be of interest to other Club members.

The first is an automotive paint supplier, who have a spectrum analyser, which can provide a very good colour match. They can then provide paint either in tins for spraying, or in aerosol cans for DIY use. I tend to use the aerosol into a small container and then use a fine brush for applying.

The company details are: Rainbow Paints Ltd, Westbury and their details can be found at <http://www.rainbow-paints.co.uk/index.html>

The second company refurbish steel & alloy wheels and they work to a high standard and are very competitively priced. They have refurbished 4 very rusty steel wheels which required some repairs, stripping and repainting. They are not registered for VAT and so their prices are very competitive, but more importantly, they work to a high standard. Their details can be found at http://www.wheelworx.biz/wheelworx_about.html

I have no vested interest in either company other than being a satisfied customer.

Nigel

Wessex MG Bourton Run Sunday 19th April - A reminder

A reminder that there is still time to join fellow members on a scenic run to Bourton on the Water, with the opportunity to visit the Cotswold Motor Museum or the Model Village and enjoy the other attractions in this scenic village.

We have reserved parking for 6 to 7 cars on the museum forecourt, if we have more cars I can hopefully arrange extra parking at the British Legion, 5mins walk away. The visit to the museum should take around 1 hour, but I have arranged that we can use the parking until they close at 5:30 pm. This will enable us to explore the village, visit other attractions or get refreshments at one of the cafes in the village.

My plan is to take a scenic route to Bourton to arrive around 2:00 pm, with a lunch stop on the way at around 12:00 pm. If you are interested in the trip please let me know at this e-mail address martyn.lucas2@btinternet.com

Martyn

A Letter to the Editor

Dear Ed,

It was kind of you, Ed, to mention us in your intro to the February Newsletter. I was singularly impressed with the dispatch from your Far East Correspondent John. Clearly JB has learned much from Hon Sec about the use of modern technology to communicate from distant parts. I am pleased that JB used his time in Cambodia well.

We, on the other hand, struggle in sending monosyllabic messages to our offspring to say we are OK, so a missive from India would have been either;

- a) Incomprehensible or
- b) Very, very short.

Now that we are back in Blighty, I hope that you find Snail Mail to be a suitable alternative to live chat from afar.....

Several members have mentioned to us about their affection for India and we were assured that our feelings would be similar on our return. At the end of our first day, that is not the way we felt. We landed in Kolkata (Calcutta to you and me), described by Roger as "the most typical of Indian cities", and thought we had landed in Mayhem. It was ear splittingly noisy, dirty and shambolic.



As time went on, however, we started to recognise the charm of India. Our route took us to Darjeeling and then Pelling in Sikkim. Sikkim is sandwiched between Nepal and Bhutan and, at 7000 feet or so, is deep in the foothills of the Himalayas. We were rather plagued by mist but on our final day we had a wonderful view from our bedroom of 28,209 foot Kanchendzonga which is the third highest mountain in the world.

Sikkim is a semi-independent province of India and because it is a bit inaccessible, was wonderfully unspoilt and quiet after the tumult of Calcutta. Definitely a highlight of our trip. We moved-on from there to Meghalaya which is in the far North East of India and overlooks the plains of Bangladesh. It also has the wettest place in the world, Cherrapunji (with a record of 2621mm of rain a year) but it was bone dry when we were there!

We then flew to Hyderabad (80% of Calcutta's mayhem) and took the overnight train to Hampi, an enormous area of 15th century palaces and temples.



For those that know Burma, this is similar in nature to Bagan and something we don't have in the west, a proliferation of temple after temple over a large area.

After the chill of the Himalayas, Hampi was a stark contrast at 34 deg.

but the buildings were enthralling. Many were in a fairly poor

state but a well preserved eleven bay elephant house was stunning in its architecture and engineering.



Our next major stop was in Kerala in the south west. This meant two consecutive nights on trains, with a visit to Bengaluru (Bangalore to us) in between. Bangalore is apparently the Silicone Valley of India but this was not particularly apparent to the casual observer. We also realised at this stage that we hadn't seen a western face since leaving Darjeeling ten days earlier. This slightly surprised us but as it had been our intention to avoid western tourist spots and seek out Indian India, this must count as a success.



Two consecutive nights on trains proved a bit of a trial but our destination was worth it. The Kerala is well known for its Backwaters, a vast area of canals and lakes in the low-lying coastal strip, running from Kollam to Kochi. We took a boat trip from Kollam through the Backwaters where we saw rope making from coconut fibre or Coir (good, provides

employment) and fresh water prawn farms (bad, due to attendant pollution). The following day we took the service ferry from Alleppey to Cottayam on our way to the hills beyond, known as the Western Ghats.



This was another region used by the Brits in the 19th century to get away from the summer heat. We didn't notice much change in temperature at 5000 feet but it was peaceful and

picturesque. We hired a car and driver for a couple of days - ridiculously cheap at £50 all in - and visited, amongst other things, a wildlife sanctuary in the hope of seeing tigers.

No tigers, I'm afraid but we did spot elephants, a Snake Eagle and numerous monkeys.



Our last stop was Mumbai (Bombay) where we stayed in the old city known as Fort. Surprisingly, Mumbai proved in many ways the most "civilised" of the cities we visited. The traffic was more subdued, with less honking of horns, pavements were less cluttered with traders, parked motorbikes and general dilapidation. There are dozens of well kept Colonial buildings, including the Bombay Yacht Club which looks more like a large five star hotel.

As well as exploring old Bombay on foot, we also visited Dharavi, a slum district wedged between two railway lines.

The film "Slumdog Millionaire" was based here, where one million people live in less than one square mile. Apparently, that makes it the most densely populated place on earth.....

Dharavi is an extraordinary place for living and working. There are numerous small businesses, predominantly based on re-cycling of all manner of things including plastics, cardboard and oil cans. 'Elf and safety is an unknown concept and any form of protective clothing non-existent.



Seemingly it works, though. There is no unemployment and whilst wages are generally at subsistence level, any efforts to upgrade the area are apparently resisted. Those one million people generate a turnover of over \$600 million a year.

This visit to Dharavi gave us an opportunity to travel on a suburban train which, in concept, are not very different to our suburban train except that there are no doors. As we travelled towards the city, the train got more crowded and many passengers hung-on in the doorways. It all looked very hazardous and I asked if anyone ever fell-out.

I was told that five or six people are lost every week in this way.

In some ways, this sums up our experience of India. It has many of the trappings of the West but these are used in a shambolic way. On a dual carriageway, both carriageways have vehicles going in both directions. There are plenty of pavements but they are used for parking trade kiosks and motor-bikes, so pedestrians have to walk in the roadway. Building projects are started then abandoned. Rubbish is swept to the sides of the roads but never collected.



There is of course a charm to these ways; They mark some of the differences between us and to some extent, they are the reasons for visiting. The other reason is of course the places we visit and we thought that India came up trumps for this. The Himalayas, Meghalaya, the Kerala Backwaters and Mumbai's Colonial buildings and slums: each was worth the visit on their own.

The Indians themselves were in general charming. True, the scammers are a pain and the beggars a worry but predominantly we felt welcomed. Eye contact yields a beaming smile and time after time we were approached to be photographed with them.

As ours is a motoring club, what about the cars? The vast majority are Indian Tatas or Korean Suzukis. We had to wait until Mumbai before seeing a Jaguar or Range Rover and we spotted only one Porsche - but that was a boring 4x4.

And what of MG? It was notable that all cities had an MG Road (the Indians love abbreviations) which was encouraging until I realised that MG stood for Mahatma Ghandi.

Downsides of our trip? Well, I love curry washed down with an Indian beer but after 25 days, this wears a bit thin and I yearned for a steak or fish and chips!

The big turn-off however was curry for breakfast.....

Carrie and David.

your temporary India correspondents,

Photo Gallery

A stretched MGB courtesy of Tom.



The March Mystery Car



I thought that this looked interesting and its origin surprised me. Any ideas?

David

Not a Mystery - the new Morgan Aero 8



Club News

Secretary's Scribbles

This month I have ordered a 5 speed gearbox conversion from Highgear for my Magnette.

I have been having occasional 'jumping out of gear' moments that I was just going to live with and hope didn't get any worse. However, with a little left over money from my Grandparents' estate I decided to use the money whilst I had it. The man from Highgear is overwhelmed with orders at the moment so I need to wait 7-8 weeks for it. I am nervously waiting therefore.

I have had differing opinions about its fitting in Magnostes. The man at Highgear says I can bash the gear box tunnel about a bit and it will go in. But he gave me a contact number for another Magnoste owner who has become a Guru on the subject. I have had a conversation with him and he says that I will have to cut off the top of the tunnel and create a bit more clearance before reattaching it. I am now stewing in worry...

Vic is kindly offering advice and guidance. I am going to try and get the instructions in advance and hopefully come up with a plan with Vic. We shall see what happens..... We are truly lucky to have people like Vic in the club.

Tom

2015 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
23-Mar	Club Night (Beetle Drive)	Yes	The Bell	Jane Bennett
28-Mar	Skittles Evening	Yes	Cross Keys Rowde	Vic Wright
2 - 6 April	Easter Bank Holiday			
9-Apr	Committee Meeting	No	The Bell	Tom Strickland
19-Apr	Club-Run Bourton-on-Water	Yes		<i>Martyn Lucas</i>
26-Apr	Sunday Brunch Scamble		Bicester Heritage Site	<i>For Info - see page 13.</i>
27-Apr	Club Night (Talk - Castrol lubricants)	Yes	The Bell	Graham Bennett
4-7 May	Club Spring Tour Brittany	Yes		<i>Roger Binney</i>
18-May	Club Night (Mystery Run)	Yes	A Mystery	Vic Wright
30-May	Vintage Nostalgia Warminster	No		<i>Tony Neale</i>
6-7 june	Gloucestershire Motor Show	Yes	Highnam Court	Peter Hine
13-14 June	Bristol Classic Car Show	No	Shepton Mallet Show Ground	For Information
22 Jun	Club Night (Prod & Poke BBQ)	Yes	The Bell	Paul Warn
12-Jul	Summer Picnic	Yes	TBA	TBA
27-Jul	Club Night (Games Evening)	Yes	David or Tom's House	TBA

2015 EVENTS LIST				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
24-Aug	Club Night (Talk) - TBC	Yes	The Bell	TBA
30-Aug	Action Day	Yes	Tom's Field	<i>Tom Strickland</i>
20-Sep	Club-Run Basingstoke Milestones Museum			<i>Martyn Lucas</i>
28-Sep	Club Night (Theme TBA)	Yes	The Bell	TBA
26-Oct	Club Night (Grand Prix talk - Duel of the Titans - Nazi sponsored GP racing 1930-1939)	Yes	The Bell	Paul Warn
TBC	Committee Meeting	No	The Bell	<i>Tom Strickland</i>
23-Nov	Club AGM	Yes	The Bell	Formal notification will be included in the Sept & Oct newsletter.
TBA	Christmas Party	Yes	TBA	

NB The last column includes the committee member responsible for the event. If you need to contact them, you will find their details on page 7. Just click their email address or give them a call.

ED

Sunday Brunch Scramble

Our 5th Sunday Brunch Scramble will coincide with FBHVC's International Drive It Day on the 26th April.

The gates to Bicester Heritage's airfield and Technical Site will open to welcome the public once more, with a hearty breakfast and an abundance of vintage and classic vehicles and aircraft on display. The 48-acre Technical Site will host a display of visitors' vehicles which, in a similar fashion to January's event, will fill the tree-lined avenues of the UK's most complete WW2 bomber station.

The Specialists based at Bicester Heritage will open the doors to their freshly restored 1920s and '30s buildings, allowing behind the scenes access to their showrooms and workshops (specialising in upholstery, vintage Bentley engineering, specialist storage, vintage, classic and racing car and bike sales, plus much more) on a site that is normally accessible by appointment only.

Visitors who arrive in and on their cherished vehicles are encouraged to park their pride and joy around the base, adding to a display of machines from all ages. Elsewhere on the Technical Site Brooklands Museum are planning a display, whilst the former RAF Motor Transport Yard will fill with automobilia stands and food stalls.



We are delighted to welcome the following traders:

Me and My Car, Richard Edmonds Auctions, Sue Scott, Shot by Products, Graeme Simpson, Terry Smith, the VSCC, Colin Warrington, Richard Wade along with our own Bicester Heritage stand. We will also welcome students and staff from the Classic Vehicle Restoration apprenticeship at Banbury & Bicester College.

Vintage aircraft are expected to land in the morning and form a static display on the edge of the airfield's perimeter track where, by popular demand, the WW1 Aviation Heritage Trust will start up and run their magnificent RAF BE2e biplane.

Entry for historic/classic vehicles, motorbikes and sports cars will be offered at a discounted price of £5 per vehicle, £10 for modern vehicles.

Gates will open from:

09.00 for historic/classic vehicles

10.30 for modern cars

Gates close at 14.00. Strictly no dogs please.

PLEASE CLICK BELOW FOR REGISTRATION AND TICKET SALES:

<http://bicesterheritage.gigantic.com/sunday-brunch-scramble-tickets>

- See more at: <http://bicesterheritage.co.uk/events/page/2/#sthash.QnDLadJX.dpuf>