



## WESSEX MG CAR CLUB



## THE SPENCER SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

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**CLUB DIARY & CLUB ASSETS REGISTER****NEXT CLUB NIGHT**

AGM Monday 26th

November at 7:30pm

[http://](http://www.wessexmgclub.org.uk)[www.wessexmgclub.org.uk](http://www.wessexmgclub.org.uk)

It is with great sadness that this month I have to report news of the passing of Jeff Rattle, a valued and long standing member of our club. On behalf of all of our members I would like to express our condolences to Jeff's family.

This month's club night on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November is also our AGM, which will include the usual awards for member of the year and the photo competition, both of which will be voted for by members attending the evening. Also the evening will give us the opportunity to recall the winning year that the club has enjoyed, and vote for your 2019 committee.

If you have not already done so, there is still the

opportunity to put your name on the list for the club spring break to Llandrindod Wells in May -, more details are elsewhere in this newsletter.

The AGM night will be our last at the Spencer Club as following the majority vote of the membership we will move to the Tollgate Inn at Ham Green Holt from the January 2019 meeting.

For those who have not yet given their menu choices for the Christmas party I need these at the club night at the latest and also Peter needs the balance of payment.

Hope to see you at the Spencer Club on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November.



## IN MEMORY OF JEFF RATTLE



My wonderful dad, Jeff Rattle, died peacefully at Dorothy House on the 26th October.

I've been so touched by the kind messages I've received from members since. He, with June, certainly enjoyed many happy times with you all both in & around MGs but also the various excursions (I seem to remember Box Quarry), parties and occasionally writing for this newsletter. At June's funeral he observed:

"The purchase of a 1974 MG opened up a whole new experience for us through membership of the Wessex MG Club and a host of new friends and we enjoyed some magical journeys and holidays with the Club both in this country and abroad."



Nic Rattle

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

**The AGM - Monday 26th November - The Spencer Club**

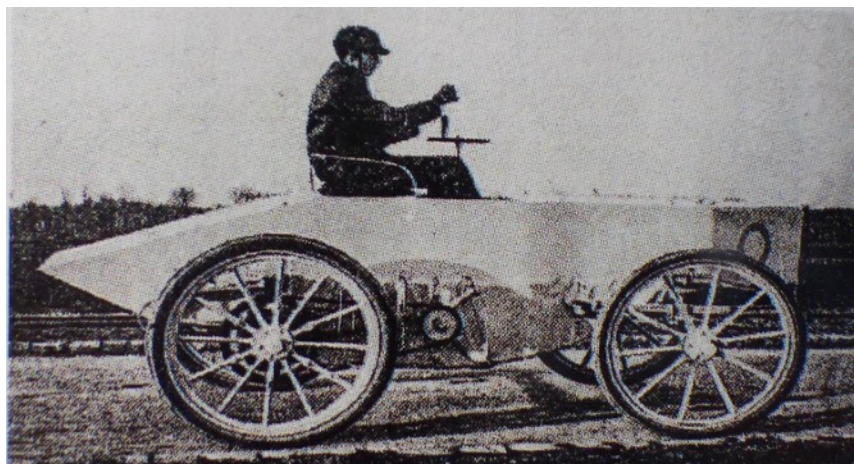
**Earlier start - 7:30 to allow time for Peter Hine to collect annual membership subscriptions for 2019 and balance for the Christmas Dinner.**

- You will be asked to vote for member of the year.
- Also bring along your photos for the photographic competition. A bottle of wine will be awarded to the winner.

**Subject must include MG**

**The Christmas Party Saturday 15th December - The Leigh Park Hotel - 7:30 for 8:00pm.**

- **Don't forget your secret Santa present. Each person to bring a present to the value of £5 to £8. Can be suitable for male, female or unisex.**
- **There will be a raffle on the night with great prizes.**
- **Don't forget to wear a Christmas related prop - a jumper or bauble or tinsel or all of the above!**



## The World's First Land Speed Record

Paul Warn

Reviewing the 2018 newsletters, I noted there was a bit of banter when I kind of bemoaned the gradual marginalising of the good old combustion engine. Tongue-in-cheek, I asked the question: come the day, would we allow an electric vehicle into the car club.

John Bishop reminded us through the columns of the newsletter that in all probability we would not be around and that it would be in the hands of our grand children. Malcolm Taylor also via the newsletter reminded me that the first Land Speed record was set by an electric car - so there. Well this is a short account of that first land speed record...

The driver as with most things involving aviation or automobiles at or around the turn of the 20th century was a Frenchman - Count Gaston de Chasseloup-Laubat, who was brother of Marquis de Chasseloup-Laubat a founding member of the Automobile Club de France.

The Marquis' first automobile was an electric Jeantaud built in Paris in 1893. It was created by coach builder Charles Jeantaud who built his first electric carriage in 1881. This new Jeantaud sent power to the rear wheels via a chain, with propulsion coming from a 36hp battery-powered electric motor. The driver sat very high - title pic - almost on the body, and steered via a system of bevel gears.

In December 1898 the Chasseloup-Laubat brothers decided to enter their Jeantaud in a competition, organised by the magazine "La France Automobile", to set the first world land speed record. A quiet road outside Paris, near the hamlet of Achères, was chosen and on 18th December - a cold and wet day apparently - the test began. Timekeepers assembled their primitive equipment, covering only one direction (unlike today's rules for such endeavours in which two opposite - direction runs are averaged) over 1 km (0.62 miles).

Given the Jeantaud's 19th Century battery technology, the attempt was limited to the the one run possible before recharging would be needed. The brothers' competition on the day included a well known racing driver of the time, one Camille



Jenatzy, nicknamed Le Diable Rouge - the Red Devil - owing to the colour of his beard. They would on a number of occasions meet in successive attempts on the record.

Sitting on top of the unusual machine, Gaston set off on his sole run. After their calculations were complete, the timekeepers proudly confirmed that he had achieved the kilometre in 57 seconds, which equated to 63.13km/h, or just over 39.24mph. In that moment the first world land speed record was established.

On the 29th April, 1899 Jenatzy - see right - set the first 100km/h land speed record with the electric car La Jamais Contente, powered by Fulmen batteries and built by Jenatzy's own company.

However Camille Jenatzy who was Belgian, was more at home racing petrol driven Mors and Mercedes Benz racing cars. He made history in the greatest races of the day racing for the Mercedes factory team. Its difficult to reconcile both these photos of Jenatzy - one sitting on top of a strange looking 100km/h battery car and below in a mighty chain driven 90mph Mors.



PS I personally think the future is in fuel cell technology.



## In-house designs: The BL Safety Research Vehicles

Steve Todd sent me a link, the subject of which I have included in the title to this piece.

Following Ralph Nader's 1965 report 'Unsafe At Any Speed', which highlighted the poor handling and/or crash-resistance of numerous cars sold in the US, the race was on by the car manufacturers to prove that they took the safety issue seriously, despite the old automotive adage that 'safety doesn't sell'.

Like all other companies wishing to maintain a presence in the US market, BLMC had already been forced to react to the pending Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards legislation (introduced in January 1968 almost as a direct result of Nader's report) by developing revised versions of the Austin 1300 and MGB with enhanced safety features. However, by the early 1970s, the company had embarked on a programme to explore the future of car safety technology, leading to the development of the Safety Systems Vehicle (SSV1) in 1972. Two years later, in collaboration with the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, a further five prototypes were developed under the Safety Research Vehicle (SRV) project. The MGB-based safety car is the example I thought you'd find more interesting and relevant of the group.

### **SSV1: MGB-based safety car**



The SSV1 was prepared by the development team at Abingdon in 1972 to demonstrate that even small cars were capable of being modified for optimum safety. This MGB GT-based car featured a wealth of innovative features, including airbags (which worked in combination with passive seat-belts), anti-lock brakes, self-levelling suspension, impact-absorbing side-panels and a rather curious roof-mounted rearview mirror which afforded the driver a 120-degree field of vision.

Mounting the thick rubber bumpers low down brought two advantages: firstly, if the car ran into the side of another, the point of impact would more likely be in the sill area rather than the more vulnerable doors; and, secondly, were the car to hit a pedestrian, the low point of impact would tend to result in the unfortunate soul being lifted onto the bonnet rather than thrown forward into the car's path. Pedestrian safety was to become a persistent feature of Leyland's future safety prototypes.

The car was also equipped with a novel system designed to prevent tired, inebriated or otherwise incapacitated drivers from taking the wheel. Do you remember the electronic game called Simon, where players had to replicate a sequence of coloured lights by pressing buttons in the correct order? Well, that was precisely what the SSV1 driver would have to do in order to start the car.

Get the (randomly-generated) sequence wrong three times in a row, and he would have to wait an hour before being allowed to try again. While designed primarily as a safety device, this feature also doubled as pretty effective immobiliser.

The car was presented at the third conference of the America's National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in Washington DC in 1972, but none of its innovations were ever to see the light of day on any production MG to leave the Abingdon works.



Andy Hole has a pair of new tyres to fit an MGB. They are Firestone Multihawk 2 175/70 R14 84T , a bargain at £60 the pair . They have never been fitted to a wheel and are less than 6 months old.





## GORDON NEWMAN'S OCTOBER MYSTERY CAR

The mystery car is a Tatra 600 Tatraplan. 6,342 of these were built between 1948 and 1952 at the Skoda plant in Mlada Boleslav. The name of the car celebrated the new Communist "planned economy". It had monocoque streamlined 6-seat fastback saloon body front suicide doors. It was powered by an air cooled flat-4 cylinder 1952cc engine.

Gordon



## NOVEMBER MYSTERY CAR





## SPRING BREAK - LLANDRINDOD WELLS

Surrounded by wonderful scenery from high mountains to deep valleys, glacial lakes to man-made reservoirs, the beauty of mid Wales is truly one of Britain's best kept secrets.

To complement these natural wonders is a plethora of activities. Llandrindod Wells boasts indoor and outdoor bowling greens, floodlight tennis courts, 18 hole golf course and activity playground. See the Dragon of the Lake, the Chalybeate spout of Rock Park, and Lover's Leap while enjoying the historic architecture of Llandrindod Well's Victorian buildings

### The Radnorshire Museum

One minute walk from The Metropole Hotel and Spa, the museum holds artefacts relating to the former county of Radnorshire, Archaeological and Palaeontological artefacts and items from the local ruins of Roman fort Castell Collen.

Winter (October to March) opening times; 10am-4pm Tuesday to Friday; 10am-1pm Saturday

**The Metropole Hotel Llandrinrod Wells** <https://www.metropole.co.uk/>

- The hotel is of course only one element of a motoring weekend. The second is the tremendous open roads that exist throughout Mid Wales.

From high mountain passes such as Devil's Staircase to the fast open roads such as the A44 from Rhayader to Aberystwyth. The scenery is spectacular, congestion minimal and all in all, a wonderful motoring experience

### **OUR HOTEL PACKAGE-**

**3 NIGHTS FROM THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019 to SUNDAY MAY 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**Includes Room, Breakfast and Evening meal , with choice of 5 starters, 5 mains and 5 desserts, use of Spa and reserved car parking,**

**Classic Room Double or Twin £152 per night per room**

**Single Room £86 per night per room**

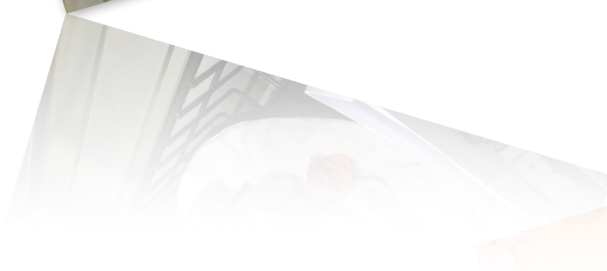
**Upgrades available- Superior Room £10 per night, Tower Room £20 per night**

**Deposit of £20 per person required by hotel,**

**To book, quote Wessex MG and phone 01597 823700**

## PHOTO GALLERY

The Binney's Bash this year had a bit of a Halloween theme. Thanks everyone for the effort and the excellent grub.





Martyn Lucas has sent these pics hot from the NEC Classic Car Show:

Including the WW1 100year VCC tribute stand, which won the best stand in the awards ceremony and one especially for Vic.

Martyn reports that there were two electric MG projects on the go - an A and a B





## Secretary's Scribbles

We have now had the new ZS for a few weeks and it is a good upgrade from the MG3. The ride is good and the engine appears to have less of a flat spot in accelerating at low revs. The interior, which is essentially the same as the brand new MG3, is a really good step up. The seats are better, the dash etc is now soft leather style rather than hard plastics. There is a touch screen to access various tweaks that you can do - there are 3 steering modes, for example, depending on what sort of driving you are doing. The thing that Nancy and I adore is Apple Car Play, we can plug an iPhone in and the car's screen essentially becomes the phone screen. You can have the Apple Maps or Google Maps on the big screen or you can access your music and it all works seamlessly as the software comes from Apple. You can also press a button on the steering wheel and voice activate various features through Siri. Have I lost you all yet? Cars are getting much more techy and so far I love it. No niggles to go back to the dealer with yet so we are really pleased. The space inside is also a great step up from the MG3 - and yet when driving it doesn't feel giant. Nancy did reverse into a

parked neighbour on day 6, the bumper is scratched and it popped out in various places I managed to pop it all back in without losing my temper and the problem now is the scratch is so small that I reckon using touch up paint on the plastic bumper would actually make the damage more obvious so I am living with an imperfect brand new car from now on. Yes, it does have parking sensors - they even tell you in four sectors how far you are from objects..... (May be we should have gone for the top level spec and had the reversing camera too!). If I was being really honest the biggest problem is that the MGZS is not made in Britain - this is definitely a sad thing and Longbridge seems to be going the way of Abingdon. The brand lives on though.

Thank you to Paul for his great talk last month - I always look forward to these and book in my child care way in advance to ensure that I can make them. I knew of the GT40 story in basic outline but had no idea that there were different types of them or the British role in the development. Fascinating!



Tom



## Club Diary

| 2018 EVENTS DIARY |                 |            |                      |  |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|--|
| Date              | Event           | Club Event | Venue                | Contact Details & Start Point/Time                                 |
| 26-Nov            | Club AGM        | Yes        | Spencer Club         | Formal notification will be included in the Sept & Oct newsletter. |
| 15-Dec            | Christmas Party | Yes        | The Leigh Park Hotel | Martyn Lucas   |
|                   |                 |            |                      |  |

## Club Asset List

| CLUB ASSET LIST          |                |                 |  |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| ASSET                    | CURRENT HOLDER | CONTACT DETAILS |  |
| Engine Hoist             | Vic Wright     | 01225 704685    | vic@devizes-domestic.co.uk   |
| Club Sail Banner         | Vic Wright     | 01225 704685    | vic@devizes-domestic.co.uk   |
| Event Shelter + Sides    | Tom Strickland | 012489 447125   | <a href="mailto:stricklandto@hotmail.com">stricklandto@hotmail.com</a> |
| Projector (old)          | Paul Warn      | 01225 768676    | paul.william.warn@gmail.com  |
| Projector (new)          | Paul Warn      | 01225 768676    | paul.william.warn@gmail.com  |
| Speakers                 | Paul Warn      | 01225 768676    | paul.william.warn@gmail.com  |
| Projector Stand          | Paul Warn      | 01225 768676    | paul.william.warn@gmail.com  |
| Projector Screen & Cover | Paul Warn      | 01225 768676    | paul.william.warn@gmail.com  |
| New Set of Boules        | Vic Wright     | 01225 704685    | vic@devizes-domestic.co.uk   |
|                          |                |                 |  |

### NOTE:

If you need to borrow or take custody of any of the club's assets, the current holder should be contacted directly to arrange transfer. The new 'holder' of the asset should notify Paul Warn by email to ensure the asset list is kept up-to-date.