



WESSEX MG CAR CLUB THE TOLLGATE INN-HOLT

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

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

I hope that everyone is keeping safe and well.

With the expected gradual relaxation of lockdown restrictions in the coming weeks hopefully we will be able to organise some form of club meeting and get together again safely in accordance with new parameters of normality.

Since the first virtual quiz night, by popular request several more have been held and by participating in the quizzes I have certainly learnt things that I did not previously know. Thanks to all who have organised these quizzes and congratulations to all the winners.

During the past weeks I seem to be finding more little jobs that I need to do on the cars and around the house and have worked on

the basis that if it's not broken don't try to fix it!!

Unfortunately I have heard of more events which have been postponed to next year, including MGF25 and The MG Saloon Car day at Gaydon in July, The Gloucester Steam Rally at South Cerney in August and The White Horse Car show at Westbury in September.

Certainly 2021 is going to be a year packed with events and we will be spoilt for choice.

Let us look forward to brighter times in the forthcoming weeks when hopefully we can get out and about more and meet up again.

Martyn



One of the privileges of editing this newsletter is that I get to know the depth of talent that resides within our club. Also, the interesting lives and adventures fellow members have had. Take for example this month. As you can see below, John Thomas is a model boatbuilder and also builds model aircraft.

Rick Meopham has provided a tantalising introduction to his life with MGs before he tells his story next month of his adventures in his MG TD.

Ken Scott has included an account of his life with MGs.

And regular contributor Malcolm Taylor never ceases to surprise me with his tails of the unexpected.

So to John first....

I've had a life long interest in building model aircraft and boats. Attached is a picture of the boat that I have been building during lockdown. It's about 4.5 ft. long and about 5ft. tall. Radio controlled on the rudder and sails, there is also an aux. motor. The foresails need to be added and are being prepared. The picture is my progress so far.

John Thomas





MGs - My Introduction

Rick Meopham

We can all recall how our first love affair commenced. I was eight years of age. It was the early fifties and the sun always shone.

A friend of my eldest brother arrived at the house in this beautiful sports car. It was love at first sight. White, green leather upholstery with green wire wheels. It gleamed like no car I had ever seen before. And oh, that memorable, distinct, never forgotten smell a combination of leather and oil. A smell that later in my life I was to associate not just with old classic cars but also with old aircraft. It transpired that this magnificent machine was a 1948 MG TC. The first I had ever set eyes on. Not that I had seen many cars before.

In the small, rural community of Kent where I lived, there were only a handful of car owners and certainly my father, was not one them. As I recall, I had only been in a car on one previous occasion when the village doctor rushed me into hospital in his car following an nasty accident to my finger and the only thing I can remember about that trip is bleeding profusely over his back seat.

You can perhaps imagine my excitement when my brother and his friend invited me out for a spin with them around the beautiful countryside of what truly was The Garden of England. It was at a time when the county was all lanes, lakes and larks. Little did I realise that in a few short years the the developers would descend to concrete the place over. But squeezed into the back of the TC, hood down, roaring around the country lanes, hanging on for dear life, this was an experience never to be forgotten.

One day, I was determined to have an MG.

Fast forward to 1959 when as a fifteen year old schoolboy I managed to get a part time job at our local garage as a general dog's body doing everything from pumping petrol (pre self service) changing tyres, helping the mechanics when

needed - you name it, I did it. AND, I got paid for doing something I loved. Being around cars.

The owner of this garage, one of the old school of true gentleman, had a passion for British sports cars and we had a constant stream of second hand Jaguars, Lotus, MG, Austin Healys etc on the forecourt for sale. The turnover was considerable for the simple reason that the garage location was quite close to an active RAF flying station and these chaps were our primary customers. I would spend hours close to the airfield perimeter fence in my free time watching the aircraft operate from the runway and observing these RAF fellas driving around the locality in their sports cars often with a beautiful girl at their side. How glamorous it all seemed.

One of my duties during the school holidays was to drive these splendid vehicles out of the garage onto the display forecourt in the morning and put them away again in the evening. Can you imagine today entrusting a fifteen year with this task? Perhaps I should point out that I did however have some driving experience acquired on the local farms with tractors and Land Rovers by then so it was not as foolhardy as it might initially appear.

We seemed to always have at least one TC, TD or MGA for me to manoeuvre onto the forecourt, and by now, with a greater understanding of the various MG models, my love affair with the TC had waned slightly as my affections were transferred to the TD.

This coincided with my career decision. A desire to travel, a passion for aircraft made the choice extremely easy. So at the age of sixteen I left home to join the Royal Air Force with all of the optimism of youth not realising that I would in essence never return home, would travel the world and have many MG encounters along the way.



MG TD - THE ACQUISITION

To be contd. Work in progress



More Unfinished Projects

Malcolm Taylor

I've had a number of car projects that have not been completed and here's a couple more.

When I was on my third house renovation project, I decided I had had enough and wanted a change. So I bought a Triumph Mayflower to rebuild. I know, I know, not the most sensible thing to do. I would just get bogged down in another endless drag on time.



Well I didn't, I never even got the engine running. But a couple of cool dudes took it over as their own plaything.

But I did make a 100% profit. Minus 100%, that is, I gave it away!

Then the cool dudes seemed to make demands on my time, witness the fort at the bottom of the garden, built from packing cases from work.

The fort led to another interesting project. It became the envy of rival youngsters in the village and could be accessed via a gap in the hedge from a public footpath at the bottom of the garden. No. 1 Son became concerned about this and set about building his own alarm system. This consisted of a home-made pressure pad switch to bury in the gap in the hedge and an alarm panel with buzzer and light to be housed in his bedroom. Hence he would be forewarned of any incursion into his pride and joy.

All it needed was a 2-core cable to connect them both. Only trouble was the garden was extremely long. I kept being badgered and kept promising to get it sorted.

Then one day I came home from work to be told I didn't need to bother any more as No.1 Son had sorted it himself. The boundary on that side of the garden consisted of tubular aluminium posts with 2 straining wires pulled through holes in the posts. The wires were a single core with a green plastic sheathing.

No.1 Son had worked out (unlike his father) that he had an insulated circuit from top to bottom of the garden. He connected the pressure pad to the bottom end of the wires and cabled the top end up into the alarm panel in his bedroom. QED.

It was Terry's writings about the electric car he built for his son that prompted me to write this. I also built an electric car for the aforementioned cool dudes.

However, I cheated and started with a complete car. For the project we were donated a decrepit Fiat 600. This was delivered on the works lorry with crane. We then proceeded to cut away all the external body panels. Easy job, most of them were rotting away anyway. Then remove the rear engine leaving the trans-axle in place.



The car was cut down to the waistline and with it's wheels exposed looked like a baby jeep. A large starter motor was rigged up to drive the input shaft of the trans-axle. Fit a hefty battery and bingo, a ticket to ride.

Unfortunately after a few circuits of the lawn, the starter motor burnt out. Failure to source a suitable replacement motor led eventually to complaints from a certain quarter about the pile of rusting metal detracting from the ambiance of the property.

Said pile of metal was removed to the scrap yard by the same means that it had arrived. Another project successfully uncompleted. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your view) I can't find any photo's of this cutting edge project.





My MG Story

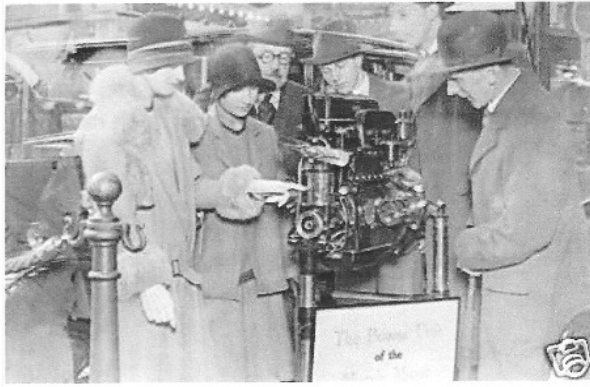
Ken Scott

My motoring history begins before the dawn of MG as we know it. I bought my first car in 1952 and drove it every day to work as an engineering apprentice for some time before I took a test. We did that in those days! There was consternation on the face of the apprentice supervisor when I asked for time off to take my test. It was a 1929 Morris Minor 2 door saloon with a fabric body. This was the first small car produced by Morris specifically to compete with the Austin 7.

Under its bonnet was an 850cc OHC engine developed by Wolseley before its acquisition by Morris. It was a very advanced design for the time using a vertically mounted dynamo at the front to drive the overhead camshaft. Cecil Kimber immediately saw the potential of this mundane 'family' car and fitted it with a 2 seater fabric body and the now very familiar MG radiator grill, christened it the 'M Type' and it was launched in 1929. Prior to this MG's were big saloons and tourers based on the Cowley and Oxford and were not seen as performance cars but more as grand tourers. With a new cross flow head and twin



The photograph, unfortunately, is not of my car as none have survived the passage of time!



Morris-Minor-1928-introduction-Earls-Court-

This photograph is of the introduction of this legendary engine at the 1928 motor show.

SU's it launched the Midget range with the introduction of the J2 in 1932. Fitted with 4 speed gearbox with a beautiful cast aluminium remote control for the gear change, centre lock wheels and slab tank on the back; the MG as we know it had arrived. Without this engine we would not have had all the beautiful sports and racing MG's that we all love. In fact, I doubt if MG would have continued as a company without this development. This became the basis of the MMM range. In 4 cyl. form it continued up to the PB of 1936 and, in 6 cyl. form, in all the Magna and Magnette variations up to 1936. The 6cyl version was also used by Wolseley in the Hornet.

My next car was an Austin 7 Special based on a 1929 chassis but fitted with a beautiful, professionally made all aluminium body along the lines of a swept wing J2 complete with slab tank and spare wheel on the back. The photo doesn't do it justice due to the young 18 year old leaning on the back, - see title pic - but it was a lovely car! At the time I bought this, a local 'dealer' had a K3 Magnette in BRG for sale. If I remember correctly, it was priced at £380. This was way above my means as a lowly paid apprentice but just think what that would be worth today; possibly £100K or even double that! This was the first great MG opportunity that I missed!



I then had a succession of interesting but sensible cars, but not MG's, until I bought a 1936 TA in 1959. This was rather 'tatty' but bought as a restoration project and also to release funds to get married, which we did in July that year.

We used it on our honeymoon for a touring holiday in Devon but did not keep it long as the pressures of setting up home coupled with not having a garage precluded the 'rebuild' and so it went for yet more sensible cars.

In 1968 I met up with John Ratcliffe with whom I served my apprenticeship; his father was the designer and maker of the Ratcliffe Tail Lift. John was given a new TD for his 18th birthday and I asked if he still had the car. He showed it to me under a tarpaulin at the back of the factory, unused for some time! This renewed his interest in it and he suggested I return in a week and he would get it running. This I did and, with trade plates hung on, we drove it around Stevenage. All he had done was to charge the battery and it was fine! When I asked what he intended to do with the car, he said he might sell it and offered it to me for £250. As we had just had our first child, I had to decline his offer as being totally impractical! I have kicked myself ever since; my second missed MG opportunity! Just think, one owner, low mileage, 1953 Mark 2 TD. You could add two noughts to that price now!

Many cars, both owned and company, subsequently passed my way. In July 1991 my wife died and, to help fill the void, I decided I needed a project and another MG was the answer. As a 'died in the wool' slab tank MG fanatic it had to be a TF as the last of the breed but, looking around, the prices of both the TD and TF were outside my range, particularly in restored condition. At this time the Heritage shell had just been announced for the MGB and, although I hadn't really liked it when it was launched in 1962, or the MGA, it began to grow on me as a project and so started looking around for a B donor car. As a matter of interest, after visiting the 1953 Motor Show and the launch of the TF, I felt it was time MG updated their design and submitted a drawing to MG of my idea for a replacement. It was very similar to what became the MGA but with a TF radiator grill and hence a higher bonnet. I think it looked better and more like a true MG! However, the A went on to be a great success.

To return to my MGB project, I happened to buy Popular Classics and they were running a series of articles by Lindsay Porter on a B rebuild using a Heritage shell. He had carried out this restoration as the project car for his book, *MGB - GUIDE TO PURCHASE & DIY RESTORATION*; a book many of you will have, or have seen. At the end of this series of articles, it stated that, as he had now completed the book, the car was for sale. I contacted his office, but I felt the asking price was too high. Some months later, it was advertised in *Enjoying MG*. I rang him and arranged to go and see

the car. He lives on a farm near Worcester and the day I went it was raining very hard with rivers of mud running down the road and the first thing he said was that 'no way was I going for a test drive'! We spent some time discussing the car and looking around his garages at other interesting projects he had in hand. This was an MG opportunity I was not going to let slip, so after much haggling we agreed a price and he also agreed to deliver it to my house. Again in the pouring rain, on 4th December 1992 I took delivery of my new 'pride and joy' having never driven it or any other MGB for that matter! In effect, I had bought a 'brand new' MGB with only 857 miles on the clock as all parts fitted to the shell were either new or fully reconditioned. At the same time he had up-rated the specification to that of later models as well as fitting many modern parts. Some purists would not accept this as a true 1969 car but so what, I love it and it is tax exempt!



The main features of the modifications are:-

- 1800cc stage 1 engine with lead free head by Aldon Engineering.
- Twin 1 3/4ins. HS6 SU Carbs. On 'Special Tuning' manifold.
- K & N air filters.
- 'Falcon' stainless steel manifold and exhaust.
- Moss 'coil over damper' front suspension.
- V8 front brake assemblies.
- 'Piranha' electronic ignition (subsequently fitted by me)
- Power assisted steering (subsequently fitted by MGOC Workshop in July 2013)

I did have some early teething problems and had to design and make a heat shield for the HS6 carbs. as there was not one available at that time, as they were generally only used for racing where heat soak and fuel vaporisation was not a problem.

I have now had this car for 28 years, the longest I have owned any car, so that must say a lot about the fun of owning and driving an MGB. However, I still have a longing for a 'true' MG like the TF/TD or even a Naylor TF 1700 but it would have to be in addition to the B so, without a bigger garage, that will have to remain a pipe dream!

Those that know me will be aware that I don't keep my cars very long, so the B is very much the exception. As a matter of interest, I have added up all the cars that I have owned, or driven as company cars, and I have owned 20 (plus a Vespa scooter!) and 22 company cars; a total of 42!



1934 MG K3 1934 'JB 3180'

I Hope This Also Makes You Smile

Picked up a hitch-hiker. Seemed like a nice guy.

After a few miles, he asked me if I wasn't afraid that he might be a serial killer?

I told him that the odds of two serial killers being in the same car were extremely unlikely

It's been a bit of a strange day!

First I found a hat full of money.

Then I was chased by an angry man with a guitar...

You had ONE job...



I went to the grocery store and they now have a parking spot for Fat guys that like to grill. That's so considerate.

Secretary's Scribbles

Hi everyone,

Still not much to report on the MG front. I gave the ZS a good run to go round some local WW1 graves in cemeteries on the Plain. Quite moving to see the number of Canadian, Australian and New Zealand graves caused by disease and accidents before they even go to the front.

I started with Durrington where there are 228 graves and an Australian Memorial all within sight of the Kiwi carved on the hillside at Burford. Next was Burford with 74 graves and lastly Tidworth with 562 graves. All these cemeteries have some private headstones mixed up with the traditional CWGC ones. The private headstones placed before the CWGC headstones tend to have more information on them - so you get more of story - inscriptions telling of accidents and so on.

I also on this trip had the opportunity to go onto the army training area and see the practice trenches that were used in WW1. There was a lot of Juniper bushes, but we could just make out the zig zags and the various Machine gun positions etc. The trenches were also dressed at the time with shell holes to add realism and these stand

out through the undergrowth too.

I am due to be back at school on a more regular basis soon - I have a briefing this Friday. It is a very complex situation as governed by all the government restrictions to the point that even in September we may not be doing any formal subject teaching.

I will in effect be supporting a small pod of students once a week rather than actually teaching. They have to arrive at different gates - one for each small pod and then have their own computer room, toilets and hand washing facilities. They can't mix across pods at any time and even their breaks need to be socially distanced and in their own special designated area. It is going to be a challenge - but a first step towards getting back to normal. I personally think it will take a long long time to get schools completely back on track and expect to see some adjustments needing to be made for next years exams too.

I hope everyone is keeping well. Do join in with the Zoom quizzes - they are easy once you crack Zoom and are good fun.

Tom

Club Diary

2020 EVENTS DIARY				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
12th July	Summer Picnic	Yes	Newark Park	CANCELLED
25th - 26th July	MGF 25th Anniversary		Gaydon	Postponed to July 2021
27th July	Club night - Mystery Run	Yes		CANCELLED
1st - 2nd Aug	Gloucester Steam Fayre		South Cerney	Postponed to August 2021
24th Aug	Club Night - Social Evening	No		TBC
30th August	Tom's Action Day	Yes	Tom's House	TBC
6th Sept	Westbury White Horse Classic Car Show	For Info	Westbury	Postponed to September 2021
28th Sept	Club night - Talk TBA	Yes	The Toll Gate Inn	Talk by Tom Strickland - TBC
26th Oct	Club night - Talk TBA	Yes	The Toll Gate Inn	Talk by Paul Warn - TBC
23rd November	Club night - AGM	Yes	The Toll Gate Inn	Club AGM - TBC
12th December	Christmas Party	Yes	The Toll Gate Inn	TBC

Club Asset List

CLUB ASSET LIST			
ASSET	CURRENT HOLDER	CONTACT DETAILS	
Engine Hoist	Vic Wright	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com
Club Sail Banner	Vic Wright	01225 704685	vic@devizes-domestic.co.uk
Event Shelter + Sides	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com
Projector	Paul Warn	01672 512847	peter_hine@btinternet.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.