



WESSEX MG CAR CLUB THE TOLLGATE INN-HOLT

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

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SUSPENDED FOR THE
FORESEEABLE FUTURE**

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

The good news this month is that there should be a potential Covid 19 vaccine available in the forthcoming months and then hopefully the restrictions will ease and the country will be able to avoid further lockdowns and we will be able to adapt to what will be a new normal.

The current lockdown means that my plan to visit the new displays at Haynes Museum will now not happen until hopefully sometime in December.

It was sad to learn of the passing of Don Hayter, who some say was Mr MGB as he was one of the small team of designers for the MGB, he also had input on the MGA Coupe, and after the closure of the MG works at Abingdon continued to work for British Leyland at Cowley.

In the October newsletter the Draft AGM Agenda

was published and members were invited to comment and approve the proposals, as no comments have been received your committee have passed the proposals.

Because 2020 has been a non event year, it has been agreed that all members who paid membership fees for 2020 will have their membership extended until the end of 2021 at no extra cost.

In the January newsletter there will be a list of provisional events for 2021 that hopefully will go ahead as planned, making it a really busy year.

Usually your November newsletter would be the last of the year, but you will be pleased to know that this year Paul is producing a one off special Christmas edition.

Martyn



WESSEX MG 2020 AGM

Wessex MG Club

2020 Virtual Annual General Meeting

Record of Outcomes

1. **Apologies for absence** - Not Applicable
 2. **Approval of minutes of 2019 AGM** - Approved by the Committee.
 3. **Chairman's Annual Report** - Accepted without comment
 4. **Treasurer's Annual Report** - Accepted without comment
 5. **Election of Committee for 2021** - With the notable exception of the passing of Vic Wright, the committee will remain the same for 2021.
 6. **Presentation of Awards** - Awards held by members during 2020 will be retained by them.
 7. **Arrangements for 2021 AGM** - 22 November 2021
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How Do They Know When You Are Cheating On Them

Steve Todd

Friday November 6th 2020. It's the second morning that I've been plunged into another lockdown and my business has completely stopped. I started to do what anyone in my position would do, and began ramping up my attentions to Autotrader and the like.

I've been carefully keeping an eye on an MG ZT and an MGB, not as a replacement for the Toddster, but 'just because'. Serious thought was being put into these two for most of the day. Late in the afternoon I had a short errand to run with Pippa, my 5 yr old daughter. Only a short hop up to Hilmarton and back so an excuse to get the Toddster out. She seemed a little rattly when I set off (Toddster, not Pippa), but nothing I was too bothered by. We completed our short trip up to Hilmarton with little incident. The time to return home came, and Toddster was fired into life - only this time it sounded like somebody had dropped the kitchen utensil drawer under the bonnet somewhere. I tried using an age old technique that I've mastered now - the 'off and on trick'. AND IT WORKED! "Look!", I proudly proclaimed. "This car is so clever that it can even fix itself!"

We drove away, all seemed fine - I'll take a look tomorrow at what that noise was about I thought. And then, after about 100 yards, I thought to myself "what is that smell"? And "what is that smoke all about"? And "why when I pull over to take a look is there a big puddle under the car"? From the passenger seat I hear a small questioning voice, "Have we broken down Daddy?". A quick peek under the bonnet confirmed that Toddster had thrown a wobbly. The water pump had gone, water everywhere. Knowing somehow that I was looking at possibly spending time with another, she had decided that this was a good evening to remind me how faithful she had been for 9 years. But not anymore!

With just 10% left on the phone battery of course, and darkness setting in, I called the wife to come and collect the small person and the RAC to come and collect the

small car. The RAC arrived very promptly - around 20 minutes - and confirmed to me that I knew exactly what had gone wrong with the car. This actually made me feel quite good, I'm finally starting to recognise what those metal bits under the bonnet are for.

Not all of them, but some of them at least!

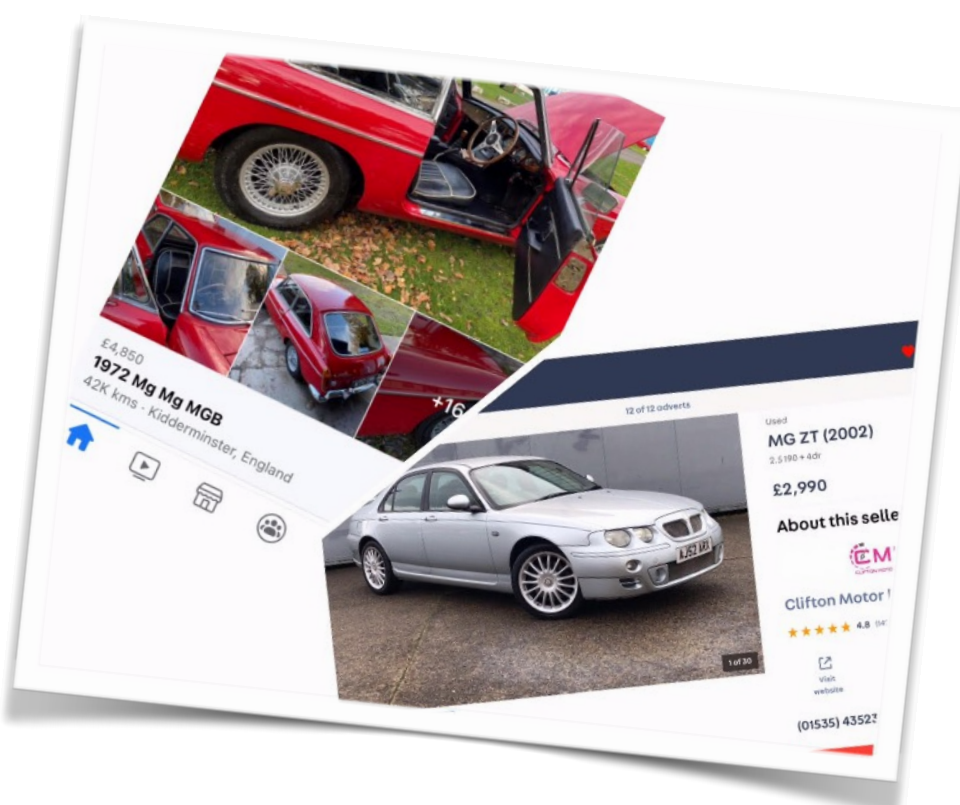


Due to COVID (what isn't due to COVID anymore), the short return home was great fun. I couldn't be in the van with the RAC patrolman, so was sat in the passenger seat of my own car, which was being towed, and facing the wrong way. I waved at a few of the drivers following us just to see their confused faces. We returned home, Pippa crying because "That's my favourite car Daddy".

Toddster is back in the garage, and at the time of writing I have ordered a new water pump, gasket and bolts, plus antifreeze. These are essential for the car to work again of course. I'll paint the fan yellow again whilst it's out as well. I've also ordered a new boot badge, and an interior trim kit to replace the door and footwell panels. Not so essential perhaps, but I see it as 'buying flowers' to make up for considering cheating on her with another. I've got absolutely no clue how to do any of the work, but with no likelihood of me having much work to do now until 2021 I can take 2 months to do a 2 hour job.



Wish me luck....I wonder if those other 2 cars for sale work well?...





Metal Grinder

Malcolm Taylor

My first MG was a 1947 Y type saloon. Well half of said vehicle actually, as it was jointly owned by a friend and fellow engineering apprentice. The car was purchased from my friend's brother for the princely sum of £18. Even for those times, mid-sixties, it was cheap. This was because it had already been ravaged by another vehicle and one of its swooping curvaceous wings was somewhat misshapen. This was partially remedied with some energetic hammer work, the general shape being restored but not to its original smoothness. I can tell you that this took some doing as the old girl had rather substantial bodywork. Job done, she was our pride and joy and ticket to ride.

Unfortunately, this situation didn't last long. One evening after college and on our way to socialise, the old girl was even more seriously reshaped. My friend was driving and my attention to events was grabbed by some sudden and drastic manoeuvring. We were on a main road, attempting to overtake a rather heavily laden, two up, moped on the approach to a T junction with traffic islands. Maybe not the best thing to do, but entirely possible, had not the moped driver decided to turn right without looking or signalling.

The squeal of our tyres obviously alerted him to approaching doom. On checking over his shoulder, he decided to abandon his intended manoeuvre and head back towards the kerb. Unfortunately, we by this time were heading for the widening space between him and the kerb, which now ceased to be widening. So, our chariot received instructions to again change course to try and get between him and the traffic island.

As previously stated, the old girl was rather weighty, also the springs were not as firm as they once had been and the dampers were probably not in tip top condition. At this juncture, she gave up the struggle and proceeded to perform aerobatics. I noticed that the sky had become tarmac coloured, then blue again, then, etc. etc. I'm sure if there was an Olympic acrobatic class for cars, she would have brought home gold.

Miraculously, she missed the white and shaky moped riders and the traffic islands and finally came to rest on her wheels, on the opposite side of the road and facing in the direction in which she had come. She was, though, seriously lowered and far more

aerodynamic than she had been. When all the noise and gyrations had stopped, I found myself in the drivers foot-well in the foetal position with foot-pedals stuffed into various orifices. My friend was still roughly in the driving position but with me between him and the pedals.

After requesting that he reposition himself and grovelling out of my cave, we tried to exit the car. No go, the doors were jammed shut. But, lo, the metal sliding sunroof is wide open, obviously caused by the car sliding along on its roof at some point. So, we climb out and down to the road via the bonnet. At this time, we notice that the engine is still quietly running, so I climb back in and switch it off and remove the key. In case anyone tries to steal it!

My friend is seriously injured and his face and head are covered in blood. Onlookers take him to a nearby house. The occupants happen to know him and ring his father and the police and ambulance, etc. The ambulance and police arrive and my friend is loaded



into the ambulance. A policeman says that I should join him and go to hospital. I reply that I am OK and will stay to sort out the car. To which he says I should look at my left hand! Oh dear, one of my fingers is hanging off. Better go. After I had been sorted in casualty, my friend's father and I are waiting for news from the operating theatre. A doctor comes out to report and says, 'was your car green?' Yes I reply, why? Because we have retrieved loads of green paint from your friends head. In the event the top of my friends head is repaired with 41 stitches.

Unfortunately the top of the car is irreparable.

I concoct an account of the incident as previously described and try to convince myself and my friend that we are not to blame. His father makes him an appointment to see his solicitor. The interview goes :- How old are you? 18. What car were you driving? An MG. I should plead guilty. He takes the solicitors advice over mine.

Financially, we do OK from the incident. We break the car and make a handsome profit. We advertised the car for breaking in the Exchange and Mart and were contacted for the gearbox by Morris Garages. They were still then operating from a number of sites as a garage business. They sent a van from Oxford, to collect the gearbox as they were rebuilding a Y type for a client. I know that it is generally accepted that the acronym MG derives from Morris Garages, but I think it comes from Metal Grinder, read on.

Two years later, the same friend and I were travelling to Spain for a camping holiday in my 1959 Mini. We went via Paris and stayed with a couple of friends of his family. He

French, she English, who lived in a Chateau in a small village. He was away during our stay, so English was spoken exclusively. On a Sunday morning we departed and were warned to remember that we were in France, i.e. drive on the right. We travelled some distance and then stopped in a village for petrol. My friend spoke some French and thought he asked the attendant for 20 litres of petrol. The dial was pre-set for 30 litres (unknown to us). 20 odd litres in the tank and the rest over the attendant's boots and the ground. A heated dispute ensued over how much we were going to pay for. The outcome was that the attendant was thrown the money for 20 litres and we stormed away from the garage. It was Sunday, no traffic on the road, we were absorbed with what had happened and distracted. You've guessed it. We were driving on the left. The next bend in the village was completely blind and of course there was a rolly polly French car coming the other way. Head on, smack.

Granny in the back cut her leg on the metal deck chairs in French cars of the period. An ambulance was called, the villagers were aggressive, the police came and rescued us and dragged us off to the police station for interrogation. A waitress from the café next door was drafted in to interpret and we recounted the story of what had happened at the garage. The French couple from the car arrive having seen granny off to the hospital. The story is recounted to them and everything is then fine. It was a crime of passion. We made a mistake whilst our passions were aroused! The French understand such things. We both had to kiss the wife on both cheeks and they left. The police told us there would be a court case but if the other party had pressed charges we would have been flung in jail till it was sorted.



What about the car? The police shrug their shoulders. We find it at the side of the road where it had been pushed. It is 6 inches shorter on the driver's side, the headlamp is pointing downwards, the wing is punched into the tyre, which is flat, the floor and pedals are punched up into the cab. The front grill is wrapped around the distributor, which pokes out of the front of the engine. Amazingly, I put the key in and it starts, first time. We hammer the wing off the tyre, change the wheel and I drive back to the friends place with my knees under my chin. We have no fancy repair or recovery insurance so we have to fix the car. Disconnect the sub-frame from the floor, chain the corner of the sub-frame to a tree in the orchard and drive repeatedly away from the tree till the wheelbase is approximately the same both sides. We then insert a baulk of timber through the driver's door frame and beat the floor down till it meets the sub-frame. Bingo.

The bonnet catch won't retain the bonnet, so our French host, who has returned comes up with an ingenious solution. A large rubber strap made from a bicycle inner tube, stretched across the bonnet and kept down each side with a clip made from fencing wire and hooked under the tops of the wheel arches. He has a fancy Citroen DS21 Pallas and at one point catches his 3 year old daughter smacking the mini with a hammer, which she has seen us do. He rushes out and scolds her for doing it. No, it's OK, we say. No its not he says, after you have gone she will be knocking dents in my car!

With the car like that we did 3000 miles down to Spain and back. I was going to say, without mishap, but there was one further incident. The car was a very early model off the line. It was made from much thinner steel than the later ones. Those early ones suffered a number of problems but were much sought after for racing.

We were bombing down the Spanish Mediterranean coast road towards Barcelona. It was very twisty and hung on the side of cliffs. We were two young lads on holiday, so coming upon two French girls in a Citroen 2CV, we gave chase. The Mini corners much better than the roly poly 2CV but suffers from the rough roads a lot more, so it wasn't a pushover. When going round right hand bends, the car started emitting clicking noises from the front end. I was getting concerned about this and was considering stopping to investigate. My friend, not wanting the mademoiselles to escape assured me that it was nothing to worry about. It's just the CV joint getting noisy but there is no danger. They have proved that they will not lock up however worn they become. It will be fine, keep going. So we pressed on with the noise getting louder and louder. Then the car started weaving about! It's no good, I had to stop. As we pulled to a halt, the car collapsed onto the ground and the wheel fell off. The rim with tyre on detached and the centre of the wheel was still bolted to the hub. The girls got away. Considering we were on the edge of a cliff, I think I pulled up just in time!



On return to UK, the French police case was dealt with by a solicitor appointed by the insurance company. The outcome was I was convicted for causing actual bodily harm to a French citizen and fined X Francs. I asked the solicitor if I had to pay. Depends if you want to go back to France anytime soon. Being a hard up apprentice I decide against parting with the dosh. Some time later, on the death of De Gaul or the accession of a new president or something, I receive through the post a certificate from the French Government, giving a general amnesty to minor foreign offenders. Its one of those things I meant to get framed but has been lost in the mists of time.

My second MG was a ZA Magnette, a real comfy passion wagon, but too thirsty for a

struggling apprentice. Unfortunately it had to go. My final and all-time favourite MG before my current MGF, was a 1956 1500 MGA. That also suffered the dreaded Metal Grinder, but not at my hands. I lent it to my brother. He was out with a friend of his and overcooked a bend. The car was up on its side and teetering. The passenger put his hand out and braced against the ground to stop it toppling over completely. As I was within weeks of getting married, my brother bought the MGA off me at its value before it's mishap. That was 1972 and I have been without an MG, till now. Well, I have finished with that four letter word beginning with W and now its playtime. For me the MGF is true to the original MG philosophy. Plus, they are cheap and so far jolly good fun.



This is a true story. Only the facts have been altered to protect the innocent.

UPDATE: As some of you will know Mata Hari, the MGF also suffered as some of my previous cars did, at the hands of the Metal Grinder.

Very shortly after our return from the club spring break in France in 2016, I was heading for Bristol on the A4 between Bath and Saltford. The traffic in front stopped, as did I, when I was shunted from behind and pushed into the car in front. Mata Hari was written off and subsequently replaced by Harvey, the MGTf, which I now have.

I won't mention that Harvey has a replacement driving door after the original one got caught on the gate post whilst reversing!



Secretary's Scribbles

Ummm I am beginning to really have to scrabble around for ideas now. Essentially we haven't done much since March have we...

Just before the second lock down we, as a family, went down to the Haynes Museum at Sparkford. I know the first question everyone wants to know is: 'is the red room still there' The answer is yes. We Had a good long morning there following the kids trail - which was well done except inevitably some of the crucial boards were missing (solved by my own car knowledge) and the girls were a bit disappointed to not even get a lolly pop for completing it.

The museum is good and has a fairly new Williams F1 section showing some of the famous cars - it is worth a visit, once we can travel, but won't take up a whole day. There was a nice MG Magnette for the girls to recognise and I enjoyed the Jaguar 220

and the posh early Rolls Royces.

To keep me busy during the Pandemic I have started a Postgraduate MA course led by Professor Gary Sheffield on Britain and the First World War. This I see as particularly good for me as all too often I focus on the human and physically left over parts of the war. I have quite a bit of reading to do as well as essay writing, all spread over two years. Nancy has kindly allowed me a Saturday off a month to attend the University lectures held in a strange northern place called Wolverhampton.

Universities are still working, like schools, so lectures are at the moment still taking place 'face to face'.

Tom



Club Diary



Club Asset List

CLUB ASSET LIST			
ASSET	CURRENT HOLDER	CONTACT DETAILS	
Engine Hoist	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com
Club Sail Banner	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com
Event Shelter + Sides	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com
Projector	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	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com

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.