



WESSEX MG CAR CLUB THE TOLLGATE INN- HOLT

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

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THE CLUB'S DIARY

NEXT CLUB NIGHT

23rd May -BBQ

7:45pm

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

Since the last newsletter was published we have had the Club Spring tour to Llanelli. Some of us took a scenic route around Abergavenny and made a stop for lunch in Brecon, before continuing again on A roads to our hotel for the weekend. Over the weekend as usual groups of cars made their way to various places of interest, on the Saturday the group I was with explored the Gower peninsular and I would like to thank John Thomas for giving us the benefit of his local knowledge of the area, On Sunday some of us drove west and visited Pendine Sands, where at present there is under construction a Museum of Speed which will celebrate the Land Speed Records which have been carried out on the sands. Once this is open I aim to revisit the area, another highlight of the day was our visit to the house where Dylan Thomas did a lot of his writing.

Last week by chance I found out that there was a

new informal Classics and Coffee meet being held in Mere on the Sunday, and went along in the B. There were about 40 cars there and I plan to go to the next one which is being held in July, and as it was a really nice day I then took the long way home!

Thanks to Gordon and Sandra for organising our trip to Exbury Gardens, this was a very enjoyable day despite the slightly inclement weather.

For future club runs we are considering getting some reusable magnetic rally boards. Details of this proposal can be found on page 10 of this newsletter.

Our next club night is on Monday 23rd May at the Tollgate starting at 7:45pm, this is our Club Barbecue night and the pre orders will have gone into the Tollgate by now, but if you have not already ordered and want to join us please let me know and I hopefully will be able to add you to the list

Martyn



Club Member Car of the Month - 1969 MGB Roadster



This month's featured car is owned by Nigel Johnson

It was 1971 when I pressed my nose against the window of Hartwells Garages in Bath and saw what I thought was the perfect British sports car, the MGB Roadster.

Having recently passed my driving test and the proud owner of a 1959 Mini, cost £70 and no second gear, at least I had 'wheels'. I'd had 'wheels' before in the shape of a Lambretta LI but a Mini was what I thought so cool 'til I saw the MGB.

That was the car I wanted and did for the next 50 years. I'd have got one sooner but silly things like a deposit for a house, a wedding, a mortgage, two children, university fees and more kept that car just out of reach. Well, a long way out of reach truth be told.

But as they say good things come to those who wait and wait and wait.

So here I was, no mortgage, kids left home and retired. What do I do? Live the dream and seek out that beautiful Roadster.

Where to start? Well here in Box we're very lucky we still have a proper old-fashioned garage with 3 guys who know what they're talking about. Real mechanics with greasy hands. Box Hill Motors was where I started my quest, Alan Sheppard was the man to speak to. Not only because he knows all there is to know about the makings of the motor car but he did his apprenticeship working primarily on MGs! I couldn't have found better knowledge I was seeking if I'd gone to Octagon House, Cambridgeshire, the MG Owners club HQ. I'm sure they will disagree!

Alan told me what to look for, the pitfalls and the good points. What not to buy, what to avoid. Spend time looking in the engine compartment, check panel gaps, check rust points, overdrive or not, electrics, tyres, history and much more. Do I buy privately or go through a recognised garage dealership?

Well after approx. 6 months of looking Wendy and I found what seemed like a 'good un'. Location was at Former Glory, Postcombe, Oxon. A trip was arranged and in September 2016 we found a real beauty. SKR197G is a 1969 chrome bumper Roadster in tartan red.

Examination and test drive completed and 24 hours later 'Betty B', as she is affectionately named, was delivered to Box Hill. A quick trip to Box Hill Motors was arranged and after a thorough examination Alan gave Betty B the thumbs up.

SKR197G is in pretty good shape for a 50-year-old car. Body-wise and rust wise she is very good having spent, as far as I know, some 20 to 30 years in California. The legally required roll bar with the Santa Monica sticker is part testament. She was kept a right-hand drive and is lovely to drive even though she has no overdrive. What you ain't had you don't miss. Still comfortable at 60 to 70mph. Not a lot of maintenance issues in the past 6 years. New front brake callipers, pads and hoses and a new indicator stalk as the original just disintegrated on a picnic trip.

I have also replaced the exhaust. A bomb was fitted but really was too noisy. The new exhaust has the 'purr' of the original MGB.

To smarten Betty B and create the original look, new all leather seats with the 1969 design in red piping have also been fitted to replace black velour. A well valued upgrade.

I've had scary moments with Betty B, especially when her steering wheel came off at 45 mph! Luckily, I remembered what a very good friend told me, and that is 'if you're going to panic, panic slowly!' Good advice in such a serious situation.

We've had great fun with Betty B particularly at the Wessex Club events.

So that nearly 50-year wait was worth it, well worth it.

I'm pretty sure that old car will still be going long after me. But in the meantime, we'll look out for sunny days and enjoy retirement together.



Nigel Johnson

Exbury Gardens Visit (Wet) Sunday 15 May 2022



In spite of threatening skies but with a promise (from the Met.Office) of sunshine by mid-day, a band of twelve intrepid travellers set off to head South through the New Forest to Exbury Gardens but unfortunately, by the time of arrival the rain was falling steadily! However, after a coffee we took the enjoyable steam train ride around the Northern part of the grounds but on returning to base the rain was still very much in evidence and so our picnic lunch was taken in the marquee provided.



After lunch the rain thankfully eased and the group were able to venture around the expansive grounds to see the wonderful displays (slightly rain-damaged) of azaleas and rhododendrons as well as wonderful trees and other plants.



With wet feet and soaked clothing, and promises to return again one day in better weather, the happy band returned to their cars and after a well-earned hot drink and a piece of cake, made the journey home.

Sandra & Gordon



Two Lords and an Austin Pedal Car

Paul Warn

Every Saturday when I was just knee high to a grasshopper, my brother and I were taken to Plymouth by our parents to carry out the weekly business of shopping and whatever else needed doing. In those far off days the major car manufacturers had showrooms in and around the centre of the city. My father would window shop and I would probably have been a nuisance wanting to clamber into any car I liked the look of. I remember always wanting to visit the Austin showroom because Austin had introduced the J40 pedal car and of course I wanted to sit in and try it out for size - which I was allowed to do. Little did I know that some 60 or 70 years later I would be watching these same cars being 'raced' at Goodwood in what became known as the Settringham Cup - but I'm getting ahead of myself.

The idea of the J40 was conceived by the first Lord in this story - Leonard Lord then chairman of the Austin Motor Company. Lord joined Morris Motors Ltd in 1923 and by 1933 he was managing director, having made Morris into a very successful company. By 1938 he had had a falling out with William Morris - as indeed he did with William Kimber when in effect he shut down MG at Abingdon in 1935 - and joined the Austin Motor Company. Hubert Austin's son had been killed during the war and was looking for someone to direct his company, Ultimately Lord was selected to manage the company. Hubert Austin died in 1941 and Leonard Lord became the most powerful man in the company.

It was in 1946 that Lord had the idea of producing a child's pedal car - a miniature version of the real thing. He assembled a small team and the first prototype was built based on the Austin 8. One member of the assembled team was Alf Ash, a body design specialist who would be crucial to the success of the project. His eight year old daughter Marcia was chosen as the model for the dimensions of the first working prototype.

Lord had a reputation for being a hard man but as you will see he also had a caring side. He decided that the whole car would be built at a special production plant by disabled coal miners. Miners that had been injured or were incapacitated because of pneumoconiosis. He also stipulated that the car should be built out of "off cuts" of



metal from the full size cars. The car was launched in front of the dealerships and UK motoring press in June 1946. It was to be assembled in a purpose built factory in Bargoed in South Wales. The only change from the prototype was that the car would now be based on the Austin A40 Devon. A racing model was also devised called the Austin Pathfinder, it was the assembly of this model that was used to test the assembly lines for the J40 which went into production in July 1949. The Pathfinder was

only in production for a year and consequently is now one of the rarest pedal cars and highly sought after as indeed are the J40s.

The plant in Bargoed mirrored all the production facilities used at Longbridge. From press tools, body assembly, welding lines, paint and trim shop. It also had extensive medical facilities to care for the workforce which grew from 100 to more than 500 in the mid '60s. Having been identified to work at the plant the men were trained in the most suitable task to match their disability. Lord also used the facility as a training placement for up and coming managers at Longbridge. For example Harold Musgrove served as Manager at the Bargoed plant and would later become Managing Director of the Rover Group.

In the day, only the well off could afford one of these pedal cars, as a consequence I only got to sit in them in the show room! The J40 sold for £27 plus £6 added purchase tax. At the time the average working man would have had to save 2 or 3 weeks full wages to buy a J40. However apart from those lucky few who woke-up on Christmas morning to the sight of a J40 under the Christmas tree, the pedal car quickly became adapted for many uses including the teaching of road safety and for fairground rides.



Which brings me onto the second Lord in this story - Lord March - or at least he was a Lord in 2012 - since the passing of his father he has now been elevated to the Duke of Richmond, I think in 2017. For those of you who have visited the Goodwood Revival, you will have no doubt witnessed the running of the Settringham Cup for the J40 pedal

car. It was held for the first time in 2012 and has now become a very serious affair indeed with the sons and daughters of well known historic racing drivers being encouraged to take part with all the training and practicing that goes with it - remember it is just a pedal car! For winning the event carries much prestige...

The race is named after Lord Settringham the name given to the eldest son and heir to the Goodwood Estate. The current Lord Settringham is being groomed to continue the various businesses associated with his father the Duke of Richmond ie the Goodwood Estate and all that encompasses from the Festival of Speed, the Goodwood Rival, the Goodwood Racecourse and the 12,000-acre estate itself.

So there you have it a lowly pedal car which was beyond my reach. The concept of which Leonard Lord developed, combining a centre of production, medical facilities and 100 per cent registered disabled shop floor workforce. Which 60 years or so later Lord March reawakened in me those memories of a child with his dad wandering around a car showroom..

Original Specification taken from the Austin J40 Pedal Car Club

- Treadle operation, with pedals adjustable for leg reach
- Drive taken through right-hand rear wheel only, to give differential action
- Two position adjustable hand-brake, operating asbestos lined brakes
- Pressed steel wheels fitted with Dunlop 12-1/2 x 2-1/4 inch pneumatic tyres
- Spring spoke steering wheel with easy direct action
- Pressed steel bodywork with felt-padded seating and leather-cloth upholstery
- Dummy O.H.V. "engine" complete with sparking plugs and leads, under bonnet
- Chromium bumpers front and rear
- Brilliant overall finish
- Two 4.5 volt batteries on J40 roadster to operate horn and twin built-in headlamps

Thirty two thousand were made and sold between 1950 and 1971. You can expect to pay a couple of thousand for a well restored J40 and considerably more for a Pathfinder.





Like Father Like
Son

Malcolm Taylor

I have recently acquired a new next-door-neighbour. He is ex REME and a self confessed tinkerer.

The picture shows he is a Land-rover/Range-rover fan. It also shows what he spent his time doing during the first lockdown.

He built the miniature replica for his son. It is built on an electric mobility scooter.

Just before I took the photo, I saw it coming past the house on the pavement. His wife was driving with the son sat beside her. She had taken it down to the local park so that Sonny Jim could have a drive.

The wife commented that her son had suddenly become very popular.

Neat, eh?





Photo Gallery

Club Spring Tour Courtesy of Terry Warder, David Collier and Malcolm Taylor





Photo Gallery cont...



Wessex Rally Boards

As some of our members like to have a rally board/ plaque on their car when we are on a club run or tour.

We are considering getting re usable magnetic rally board plaques made by a company who specialise in these.

The board will have the Wessex MG Logo on it and the wording Wessex MG On Tour and an outline of an MG car

The club will subsidise the cost by £5 per board and the cost to members will be between £5 & £9 after the subsidy dependent on quantity produced.

To get the lower price we need orders for at least 25.

Please let me know if you are interested in ordering one of these

Martyn



"Forever Young or Times Were When"

A series of random photos of members from a long time ago...
Another biker - at least this month's contribution is in colour
See page 16





Secretary's Scribbles

The Ministry of Munitions essay is now submitted, and I am concentrating on preparing for my dissertation which is on Whippet tanks in the First World War. Next, I have to write a Dissertation preparation essay first which discusses the key questions and reviews the current literature - wish me luck.

My TF has had a chunk of the wiring done for the Spotlights and I just need to sort the switch out now and connect to the power. I am using a relay and piggy backing some of the other switch feeds to make the switch illuminate etc. like the rest.

I tried to reattach my high-level brake light on the ZB Magnette with special 'rear view mirror glue' onto the rear window and it lasted until my return journey from the last club night - I need a better solution, especially as I live on the A4 but options that I am prepared to accept are limited. Hope to see you all soon - hopefully at my Birthday BBQ on the 23rd!

Take care.



Tom

PS I've included a picture of my new graphics on the TF





CLUB DIARY

2022 EVENTS DIARY				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/ Time
23rd May	Club Night - BBQ			8:00pm
11 - 12th June	Thruxton Classic		Thruxton Race Circuit	Martyn Lucas - Club Stand booked
11 - 12th June	MG Live		Silverstone	
19th June	MGs in the Park			
20th June	MGs Track Day		Castle Combe	Steve Todd - TBC
27th June	Club Night - Boules Evening		Tollgate	8:00pm
10th July	Chippenham Lions			Martyn Lucas - Club Stand booked
16th July	MG40 - MGs later than 1982		The Gloucester & Warwickshire Steam Railway - Toddington	Martyn Lucas
17th July	Club Annual Picnic		Keyneston Mill & Kingston Lacy	Gordon and Sandra Newman
25th July	Club Night - Mystery Run		TBA	Gordon & Sandra Newman - Start Point etc TBA
6 - 7th Aug	Gloucester Steam Fare			



Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/ Time
6 - 7th Aug	Bournemouth MG Meet		Sandy Miller Motor Bike Museum	
22nd Aug	Club Night - Talk by Gordon Newman			
29th Aug	Tom's Action Day		Tom & Nancy's House	Tom Strickland
4th Sept	White Horse Show		Westbury	
24th Sept	Castle Combe Classic			
25th Sept	MGB 60		Gaydon	
26th Sept	Club Night - Talk by the "Bobby Van" Trust			Martyn Lucas
TBA Oct	Pre AGM Committee Meeting			
24th Oct	Club Night - Talk by Frank Bond		Tollgate	
21st Nov	Club Night - AGM		Tollgate	
10th Dec	Christmas Party		Tollgate	



Club Asset List

CLUB ASSET LIST			
ASSET	CURRENT HOLDER	CONTACT DETAILS	
Engine Hoist	Tom Strickland	012489 447125	stricklandto@hotmail.com
Club Sail Banner	Kevin Meakin	01380 727151	kevinmg1@live.com
Event Shelter + Sides	Kevin Meakin	01380 727151	kevinmg1@live.com
Projector	Gordon Newman	07597 374405	gornew@yahoo.co.uk
Speakers	Paul Warn	01225 768676	paul.william.warn@gmail.com
Projector Stand	Paul Warn	01225 768676	paul.william.warn@gmail.com
Projector Screen & Cover	Gordon Newman	07597 374405	gornew@yahoo.co.uk
Set of Boules	Terry Warder	01225 766068	suewarder60@gmail.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.

Answer to "Forever young or times were when".....

Yes, you've guessed it - or have you - Peter Hine