



WESSEX MG CAR CLUB THE TOLLGATE INN- HOLT

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

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**NEXT CLUB NIGHT
BOULES**

Monday 24th June

Start Time 7:30pm

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

Before I begin this month's chat, I want to say how sad I was to hear of the passing of John Thomas, a former member of the Wessex MG Club. I'm sure all those that new John would join me in sending our thoughts to his family at this time.

The last month has been busy and I have been to several shows, with the largest being the MGCC SE 100 celebration at Brooklands Museum, there were MG from all eras at this show with cars from the 1920's up to current models including the new Cyberster, for the first time in right hand drive, the next show was the Chippenham Lions Show, then last week MG's in the Cotswold Wildlife Park, it was good to be joined by fellow Wessex members at all of these events.

Thanks to Sue and Terry for organising our annual Mystery run which was well attended and finished with a great meal at Southwick.

Unfortunately I was unable to join members on the Welsh weekend away but would like to thank Graham and Jane for organising it.

I am hoping that the weather is reasonable for our visit on Sunday 23rd June to the Abingdon Museum to see the MG100 exhibition and also to Nuffield Place, if you are not already on the list for list please let me know if you would like to join us.

Our next club night on Monday 24th June is our annual boules tournament at The Tollgate and will start earlier at 7.0pm, again lets hope that the weather is good to us!

Martyn



John Thomas RIP



John's funeral is on Wednesday 3rd July at 11:45 at Semington crematorium.

Further To Last Month's "The Way It Was"...

RE-BONDED

Paul's picture in last month's newsletter, of a lady changing the rear wheel of a Bond Mark D brought back many memories.

My first car (???) was a Bond Mark B. The B was the same as the A except that it had the much more POWERFULL 197cc engine, as opposed to the 125cc engine in the A?

The early A's and B's never had the big, cumbersome, imitation front wings of the later cars, so were much more streamlined. But much cruder underneath.

The later cars had electric starters, sort of. The electrical generation was by means of a magneto which had a magnetic flywheel mounted directly on the crankshaft. This was then reversed to act as a motor to start the engine. Dynastart, it was called. You were also supposed to be able to start the earlier cars from inside. The Villiers motorcycle engine was mounted in a cradle on the single front wheel. So when the wheel was turned, the engine went round with it. The kick starter had a cable attached to it and this came back through the bulkhead and was attached to a lever under the dashboard. You yanked this back to operate the kick-starter and start the engine.

That was the theory, usually, the engine would backfire and hence drag the lever viciously away from you. The result being that it would skin your fingers or try to drag you under the dashboard.

I gave up using that and resorted to opening the bonnet, sticking my foot in and using the kick-starter. That was alright when first starting the car, but was a bit of a palaver if you stalled the engine at the traffic lights?

For those that can remember the winter of '63, things were a bit troublesome. I think the snow started on Boxing day and stayed around till May?

I went to pick a couple of mates up to go somewhere, probably the works social club because the booze was cheap. I had them both jammed into the passenger seat and lost it coming down an icy hill. At the bend at the bottom I lost the back end and side swiped a big snowdrift.

There were no doors, just scallops and no side-screens. The result was that the car scooped up tons of snow and filled the cab with it. We had to dig ourselves out of the snow in the car before we could dig the car out of the snowdrift.

Those were the days.



Malcolm Taylor



Club Spring Weekend Break in North West Wales

Paul Warn

The old adage a picture is worth a thousand words is certainly captured in the title photograph of our four nights away in the mountains of Mid-Wales on the stunning banks of Tal-y-llyn Lake. Courtesy of Graham and Jane Bennett.

The lake nestles in the Southwest corner of the Snowdonia National Park, at the southern end of the lake was our "home" for four nights the Ty'n Y Cornel hotel.

I looked out of our hotel room on the first morning and could scarcely believe my eyes, All of our rooms looked out onto this scene.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Graham and Jane had planned a route with a first stop at Tintern Abbey for everyone to catch-up. We once again set off - with the hood down as it was for the whole of our break - this time for our lunch-time destination - the Honey Cafe in the Brecon Beacons National Park - via Monmouth and Abergavenny. As we arrived a few cyclists were preparing to leave the best table outside looking across to the Black Mountains. We managed to ward-off would be intruders until the others arrived.

Ever onward we set off once again on the last leg of our journey to our hotel located in the Snowdonia National Park. The route took us through Llandrindod Wells where the club stayed some years ago on another spring weekend. The last leg of our journey wasn't without incident as we were diverted as a result of an accident just the other side of Newtown. There was plenty to talk about as we met up in the lounge overlooking the lake before going into supper and a good night's rest.

As with all the other Wessex weekend breaks we've been on, most folk had things planned for the duration of the stay. The Blaenau Ffestiniog railway was a popular choice but we had done that on a previous visit so decided to take the coastal road overlooking the coast and beaches to Harlech Castle.

Coffee and cake was a popular choice as we mooched around the village surrounding the castle. We were now in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park and decided to take the longer drive back through the centre of the Park. The roads were a joy and very popular with bikers and other car clubs on similar breaks to ours. It took a while to get used to the fact that there were no potholes! Yippee! We stopped off at a cluster of artisan workshops before returning to our hotel.

Every morning were awakened by the sound of woodpeckers and a cuckoo, whilst woodpeckers are not uncommon, to hear a cuckoo was quite special. The other thing we noticed on our motoring around the countryside was the purple foxgloves on the banks and grass verges of the roads.

Most of the time we were surrounded by mountains either side of the road with sheep grazing on the mountain fields - how they managed to cling onto the sides of the mountains...

Now I must mention the Machynlleth Loop. Machynlleth is a small town just south of where we were staying and the loop is situated between Dolgellau to the north and Machynlleth to the south. The loop is used by the RAF and USAF for low level training. Regular visitors include Tornados, Typhoons and F15E Strike Eagles. If you are into this sort of thing there are various vantage points to take photos. The famous Cad West Mach Loop car park was just up the road from the northern end of "our" lake.

Leisurely breakfasts, great driving roads, talking to many clubs on our travels with like minded people, great weather and wonderful colourful scenery with a glass or two of wine at day's end. Suffice to say that we all had a most enjoyable stay.

And to top it all we celebrated Malcolm Taylor's birthday.

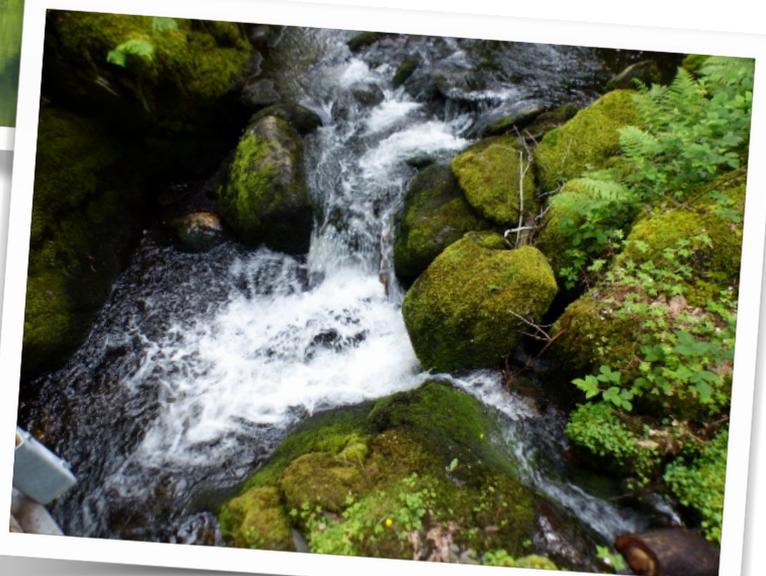
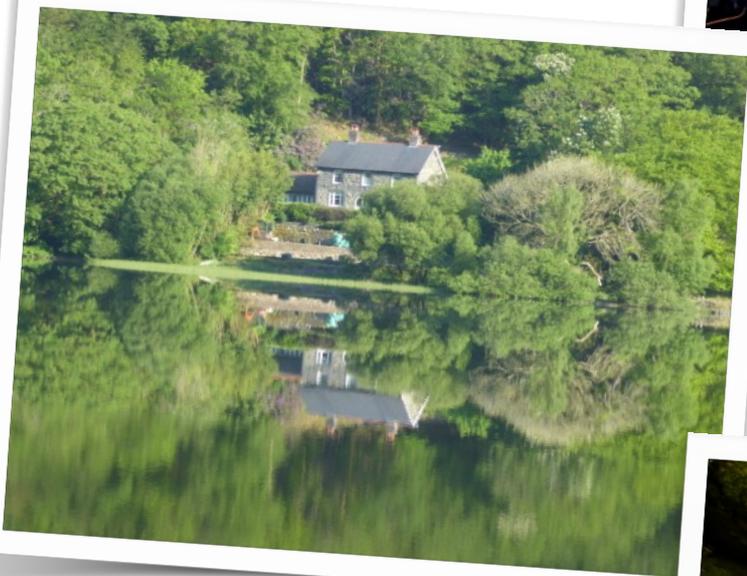


Very many thanks to Jane and Graham Bennett for making it happen.





Many thanks to fellow
travellers for the pics









A Wanderer Returns

Malcolm Taylor

Ethel was cleaning the windows of her tiny terraced house in Spring Gardens, Reading. She stepped back to admire her handiwork. Then she looked up the street and saw a man in military uniform, with his kitbag slung over his shoulder, tramping wearily towards her.

Her heart leapt into her mouth. She knew that walk. She couldn't see his features from here but she instinctively knew it was her missing man coming home to her. She dropped her cloth and ran up the street screaming his name.

Bill put down his kitbag and braced himself to receive the impact of this crazed woman. William Durbridge had left for war, four years earlier, but when the war ended in 1918, he had not come home.

As the Great War had progressed, Bill had tried to do his duty and enlist, but he always failed the medical due to flat feet. He became ever more frustrated as his pals joined up, one after another. He even received an envelope containing a white feather, which spurred him on to try again, but with the same result.

Bill drove a motorised dray for the local brewery and one day a friend gave him a tip. An Indian Maharajah was volunteering, or had been prevailed upon by the government, to fund the equipping and training of a motorised ambulance brigade. 'You can drive and the training will only be basic first aid. Why don't you apply. It will be as a non combatant, but at least you will be doing your bit.'

Bill applied and was duly accepted. In late 1916, after medical training and the receipt of

the vehicles, Bill drove off to war. He left behind Ethel and their young son, Ernest. They were assigned to the Western Front and saw service in some of the bloodiest carnage of that terrible conflict. During one momentous battle a cease fire was arranged to allow each side to administer to their wounded. Bill and his compatriot had been out in 'no man's land' and the ambulance was full of stretchers in the racks in the canvas covered rear of the rudimentary vehicle. The rear wheel of the truck must have struck some unexploded ordnance and there was an almighty explosion which lifted it into the air.

When the dust and noise abated Bill and his mate were still sitting in the cab, but the rear of the vehicle was torn to shreds. Of the previously wounded, there were no survivors. The two of them had no option but to make their way back to the British lines on foot and report the loss of the vehicle and its load of wounded.

In 1917, Bill's unit was attached to the troops of the Greek campaign and transferred to Thesoloniki. Although there was not so much fighting there was plenty of deprivation and hardship. This was where Bill was when the war ended.

By this time, the glamour of going to war had well and truly worn off. Everybody was looking forward to going home and being demobbed. Then one morning the units commanding officer called the men to order to announce that the British Government were sending an expeditionary force into southern Russia to assist the 'White Russians'. A civil war was raging in that country after the 1917 revolution that had taken them out of the war.

After the announcement the officer asked if there were any questions. Bill decided to ask the question that everybody was probably thinking. 'What if I refuse to go to Russia?' The Officer retorted that he would be forced to remove his gun from it's holster and shoot him. 'OK, OK' said Bill. 'I was just checking.'

It was about this time that communications between Ethel and Bill broke down. Obviously the move to Russia foiled the forces mail system. It also was not well handled by the military bureaucracy. After months of receiving no reply to her letters to Bill and not knowing of his whereabouts, she tried repeatedly to get information from the government. However, she was told that they had no record of him being killed in action or taken prisoner. So, they would list him as missing and she was informed that she would continue to receive his pay to support her, now extended, family. Ethel had given birth to a second child, Dorothy, in April 1917.

With the war over, the men began returning home and families were re-established, if their menfolk had survived. Ethel waited in vain, but of Bill there was no sign. Her friends tried to get her to accept the fact that he was not coming back. She was urged to think of the future, to socialise, to look for a new man in her life. Her friends were taking this



seriously, unattached men were going to be at a premium, so many had died.

However, Ethel could not accept that Bill was dead. She refused to do anything except to keep her little family together and wait, until she had something concrete to prove that Bill was dead. And here she was, vindicated. Bill was back at last.

When Ethel finally calmed down, she said, 'you had better come in and meet your daughter.'

Dorothy, born in 1917 was my mother. They had another daughter after Bill's return. I'm not sure if the photo of Bill and his ambulance was taken in France or Greece?



Terry Warder found this on his travels

Hi Paul we came across this at the vintage nostalgia meet at Codford a couple of weeks ago thought it strange a Ford van from Dagenham advertising MG spares . But talking to the owner it is being powered by an MGB engine and gearbox.



Terry





Photos from "MGs in the Park" courtesy of Martyn





Secretary's Scribbles

I had been enjoying driving the MG as the weather improved but, had noticed that it was taking two turns of the key to start the TF. I had noticed that people on the forums had mentioned cleaning up the starter motor connections and that this reluctant starting was common so, I had this as a job in mind for the near future. On the May Club night though, I jumped in and turned the key.. nothing – nada. If the car was an MGB or Midget I could then have opened the bonnet whipped off the connectors, cleaned them up and been on my way – not so with a TF! So, I missed the club night and started the lengthy process of accessing the engine and starter motor. The next night I did the cleaning up of the contacts and crossed my fingers hoping I had sorted it... nope, not so lucky. I could though hear the solenoid click, I had a good charge from the alternator and so I decided the problem had to be the starter and ordered a new one from MGFnTFbitz. I then sat down and typed into YouTube 'Changing TF Starter Motor' (This is the modern way you know) and watched a couple of videos of chaps swearing and cursing and saying how difficult a job it is. So, as it was getting closer and closer to the Mystery Run so I phoned Clive at Cams to book her in and get it done professionally. He didn't

have availability in time so there was only one thing to do – do it myself! Fortunately, it was half term so I watched the YouTube videos again and read the manual. I noticed that the manual talked about removing the rear wheel which wasn't mentioned in the videos - this was a vital part of the job as there is a gap in the inner wing to put a socket bar through. The starter is held on not by a bolt into something but, instead by a bolt with a nut so I had to get spanner/socket onto both sides. This was extremely tricky and involved finding gaps to insert hands, arms and spanners – often working by feel without any sight of the offending bolt or nut. After the old was out I was then forced to do similar boa constrictor movements to get the new one attached – often on tip toes leaning over the boot and armpit deep in MGTF engine ancillaries. I used the old trick of gaffer taping a nut into a spanner to finally defeat the job and had the car running again ready for Terry and Sue's very successful Mystery Run. The job was horrible but, it has added to my confidence in the car and in my ability to do jobs on a 'modern' MG. Things could have been worse – it could have given up on the Somme a couple of months back...

Tom





CLUB DIARY

2024 EVENTS DIARY				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
19th June	Poulshott Gathering on the Green	For Info		Martyn Lucas - From 6:00pm
23rd June	Visit to Abingdon Museum & Nuffield Place	YES		Martyn Lucas
24th June	Club Night - Boules	YES	The Toll Gate Inn	
29th -30th June	Inter Club MG/Triumph Weekend		The Malvern Showground	
13th July	Wings and Wheels day - The Army Museum of Flying	YES	Middle Wallop Andover	Martyn Lucas
14th July	Atwell-Wilson Museum Car Show	YES	Calne	Martyn Lucas
22nd July	Club Night - BBQ	YES	The Toll Gate Inn	
21st July	Wessex Summer Picnic	YES	Bucklers Hard	Gordon and Sandra Newman
31st July	"Noggin and Natter"		The George Longbridge Deverell	Martyn Lucas Official Start 4:00pm
4th Aug	Post Abingdon MG Day		Gloucester and Warwickshire Steam Railway	Martyn Lucas
17th-18th August	Post-Abingdon MG Weekend Show		Location (TBC)	
19th August	Club Night - Social Evening	YES	The Toll Gate Inn	
26th August	MGs in Tom's Field	YES	Tom & Nancy's House	Tom Strickland



CLUB DIARY

2024 EVENTS DIARY				
Date	Event	Club Event	Venue	Contact Details & Start Point/Time
1st September	Haynes Breakfast Club	For Info		
23-Sep	Club Night - TBA	YES	The Toll Gate Inn	
28&29 Sept	Somerset Festival of Transport	For Info	West Woodlands Showground	Martyn Lucas
28-Sep	Carpet Bowls		Eddington Village Hall	Roger Binney
Oct ?	Club Skittles Evening		White Hart Atworth	Peter Hine
28th October	Club Night - Tom Strickland Remembrance Talk	YES	The Toll Gate Inn	
23rd November	Scalextric Challenge		Eddington Village Hall	Roger Binney
25th November	Club Night - AGM	YES	The Toll Gate Inn	
TBA	Christmas Party	YES	The Toll Gate Inn	



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	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
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.