



Synchro!



The Newsletter of South Staffs and North Birmingham MG Owners Club

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SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLINGS

I will keep my ramblings very short this month, due to the unprecedented state of affairs that just for once, my moanings about lack of contributions for the newsletter have yielded such a large amount of material that it could be that some will have to be held over for the next issue. Absolutely great! Keep it coming!

My plea for any information on modifications to MGs, together with any information as to whether they were a wonderful investment or were a waste of money has, to date, yielded a very interesting article from Clive Webster, with some food for thought. This could hopefully be the first in a series.

I have also received an article which is a trawl through the archives by Pete Walker, again, hopefully the first of several trips down memory lane.

THROUGH THE CHAIR

By Steve Gwilt

It's nice to see a small glimpse of Spring around us, and so far most of our early events have been blessed with fine, hood down weather. Lets all keep our fingers crossed that this Summer will be the one that we have been waiting for.

Last Sunday the committee held an event of their own. It was comically billed as an 'erection afternoon', and was held in our garden. The afternoon wasn't nearly as exciting as it sounds, but it did get the old brains ticking. The truth is that we have purchased a new event marquee, and spent last Sunday learning to build it. The plan is that we can now 'cascade' the required skills down to the rest of the members.

During my time at the club I have seen several

tents, gazebos and other objects come and go. In the past we seem to have gone for the cheapest item in the bargain basement, and few have lasted more than a year or two. The best example has to be the large blue pop up gazebo which looks good in the club colours, but leaks like a sieve in the lightest of showers and blows inside out in the mildest of breezes. This time, after a lot of research, we have purchased a sturdy, quality, and attractive marquee of the type used by many exhibitors at the big outdoor shows. It is big enough to accommodate our needs, given the growing membership, and



The new event tent, with an all-female crew doing the work!

will enhance the image of the club at shows and events.

Obviously it is not the sort of thing that will fit in the back of an MG when on runs, and attending small shows. We still have the compact blue event tent for this purpose. Everyone will have the opportunity to see the new marquee, for the first time, on Sunday 9th May at the Berrington Hall picnic. Some of the other occasions when it will be used this year are; Ragley Hall, Shugborough, Cars in the Park, Club BBQ, and of course MGs in the Trees.

Let's keep those fingers crossed that it is used more as a sun shade than as a storm shelter this year.

CLUB TEXT MESSAGING

Following the acquisition of a club mobile phone we have started using it to send club text messages. The number is 07747 752783 please add this to your phone numbers on your mobile

A few points to remember, the phone is switched to silent so if you ring it don't expect an answer, but return texts will get answered but not always straight away. If you want to get a message out to the club if you're organising a run or making last minute changes to arrangements then please contact me and I will oblige. Normally texts will be sent after 19:30 and no later than 22:00 Monday to Friday and occasionally at weekends. If for some reason you want to be excluded from the list then just send a message to the club phone 07747 752783 and you will be removed from the list and not get another text.

Sometimes the message will say to reply back to the text if you are going to attend a run and your name is not on the run list. These names will then be passed onto the run organiser. For more information on a particular run then the first point of contact should be the organiser or the club website.

We have had a good response so far to receiving these reminders of club activities. If for some reason you haven't received a text then we probably don't have your correct mobile phone contact details, please inform a member of the committee. We will continue to use this method of communication to keep members informed of events and changes but our first port of call should be club nights and the website.

Steve Moore (for everything technical)

Easter break in Kirk Langley Derbyshire.

By Meryl Moore

A group of ten MGeers all met on Good Friday morning to go on the club's annual break at Easter. We took a leisurely drive to Tutbury where we had a cup of coffee and picnic in the car as it had started to drizzle with rain.

We hoped that this wasn't going to be the outcome for the whole weekend, but we were still optimistic as the forecast given last weekend had predicted heavy snow, so just a bit of drizzle was a bonus.

After a mystery tour to Kirk Langley we arrived at our accommodation in the middle of nowhere, a rambling farmhouse with superb views a mile or so up a very uneven track, made more for a MF, Massey Ferguson tractor than an MG. The owner gave us the guided tour then it was down to business for the raffle for each bedroom, who got which room. Whilst dinner was being prepared some of us went on a quick walk with Stan A leading, so he headed for the nearest field to hike across country, restraining him to keep him under 5 miles we headed back ready for a brew and dinner. After a super chilli provided by Elaine and Steve, we soon settled in



What better way of spending the Easter break..... Good company

to a night of entertainment of fun and games provided by Fran and Stan.

Saturday brought us cloudy skies but no rain (hurray), we went a short ride in the cars to Dovedale and then walked along the river Dove to Milldale, a rocky route which was only 3 miles long but felt a lot further. Leading our expedition was Sherpa Aleksandrowicz, renowned for his mountainous hikes in the past. We had some hairy moments but mainly laughs as we tried climbing and jumping along our path. We had been promised by the car park attendant at Dove-dale that at Milldale there would be a pub,



The murder mystery evening. The standard of attire is breathtaking!

how wrong he was! However we did manage to find a tea and pasty cafe and had a rest knowing we had the return journey to do.

The Saturday evening was Fran's baby this year; our instructions were to dress as the character we had been given to take part in a murder mystery evening. Let's see if I can paint you a picture of the scene. Stan D was the butler dressed in a very dapper evening suit and white scarf, Frans character who was hosting our evening and also cooking a fantastic meal was a bit of a mis-match dressed in flowery leggings and flowery top all clashing of course. Brian was dressed in full military uniform including his father and grandfathers medals. Margaret had a Scottish themed evening dress and feathers, very fetching. Elaine was dressed all in black as she played the part of the merry widow including veil and tiara, Steve G was our polo player and donned full polo outfit including his chukka. Stan A had a smoking jacket on which he had shopped for weeks for. Whilst Diane had a beautiful evening gown in black and cerise. Steve M was an artist (steady I can read what you're thinking), wearing very revealing leggings (plus padding) and artists smock, I had to play the part of a tart, (no type casting there!) wearing a revealing dress (so that's where the chicken fillets were being poached) and tiara. The night went brilliantly and several people guessed the correct murderer.

On the Sunday we met the rest of the club in Ashbourne where Stan A had concocted a

route to Blue John Caverns. The weather was dry but quite blustery, we had our picnic in the bus shelter, we really know how to travel well. After lunch some of the club went down the cavern whilst others sat and drank coffee and cakes. Apparently so my sources tell me the cavern was really interesting but cramped in places. We left to return to the farmhouse for our evening meal, this time provide by myself and Steve except I had left the dessert in the freezer at home. With a lot of help from my friends various puddings were produced using up things we had left over.

The farmhouse was in a brilliant setting and next door there were three other properties sleeping between twelve and fourteen, we thought this maybe a possibility to look into for next year for more members of the club. We will do this closer to the time so watch this space when we ask for people who may be interested. We had a really good weekend away, not always relaxing but very good company. Thanks to everyone who stayed in the farmhouse and those that came to visit us. Meryl

ONE MAN'S CAR, by Clive Webster **One-owner 1980 MGB GT**

This car was purchased through the BRITISH LEYLAND EMPLOYEES CAR SCHEME, in 1980 by the sloe owner, Mr. J.C. Webster. The basic price of the car was £4805, which took into account the 20% employee discount. Extra charges, such as delivery, road tax and registration took the price to £5305 on the road (all of the original paperwork has been retained).

The car had the anti-corrosion process carried out by Cadulac Chemicals Ltd., which gave the car a six-year guarantee and a certificate. The car is now coming up for 30 years old, and has covered some 96000 miles. Even though the car had been garaged and kept out of unnecessary rain etc., and had been rust-proofed, it had new wings back and front af-



Clive's immaculate BGT. The picture does not really do justice to it

ter 22 years. The car still has its original inner and outer sills, possibly due to the fact

that I rust-proofed them myself by filling them up with a Lanolin solution and carried that process out every two years. Lanolin was probably the forerunner of the Waxoil that you buy today. *(Lanolin is great stuff, it is what keeps sheep waterproof! – Ed.)*

Incidentally the Lucas battery that was factory fitted went on for fourteen years. Despite the poor reputation that British Leyland cars of that era had for reliability, the car has never let me down once.

The car from outward appearances looks like a standard Rubber-Bumper GT, but certain modifications have been made, and are as follows:

The original standard 1800 cc engine unit has been re-worked to a 1950 cc fast road engine, which now produces 175 bhp at the wheels, a considerable improvement. The tuning was carried out by Peter Burgess, in conjunction with his rolling road equipment.

The engine is mated to a Ford Sierra type 9 five speed gearbox, whose gear ratios are virtually the same as the original MG box, with a bit more oomph in second gear. The 5th gear is the same as overdrive top but the ford box is a superior gear change to the original, making for more relaxed driving.

The car is also fitted with an MGRV8 front suspension unit incorporating the coil over damper set-up, and it has the larger four-pot

callipers and larger vented discs. This unit makes a big difference, and a big improvement to the car's handling ability.

The rear is less drastic, and consists of parabolic road springs and Koni telescopic dampers.

The last worthwhile modification is power steering, to cope with the larger wheels and tyres, and the smaller steering wheel, and works perfectly.

The car is now more enjoyable to drive and performs reasonably well in modern-day driving conditions.

Those of you who are MGOC members and take the monthly magazine "Enjoying MG" will recognise the car from the photo every month advertising the club shop etc. This photograph appeared on the front cover of the magazine for September 2005, and has been used ever since for their advertising.

The story behind this photograph is that the car was down at Swavesey in the workshop having a particular job done, and Richard Monk pulled it out of the workshop to pose with the rest of the cars for this promotional photo.



A moment of deserved 2009 glory; posing with the Red Arrows under threatening skies at RAF Shawbury

"FAME AT LAST"

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Our first TV Appearance

By Pete Walker

It was a club night early in March 1982 when the club area secretary asked for volunteers. He needed six cars in sets of two (two Midgets, two Bs and two BGTs), and crews for each car. This was a very hush-hush operation for Central TV. The volunteers were told to meet at a public house on the outskirts of Warwick, and wait for further details.

When we arrived at the pub we were met by the director's secretary, who filled us in with what was going to happen. After we had had a very nice meal, paid for by Central TV we would extol the virtues of a new wonder additive that had been invented by a professor at Birmingham University. The additive was called Petrol Ignition Suppression Substance.

You've got it; it was going to be an April Fool's item on a programme called Venture, which was a serious business programme. The director and crew turned up after filming the professor at his lab in the university. (He told us later that the liquid he had been showing them in a test tube was genuine; he had been to the Students' Union the night before!). We were told to ignore the camera, which was not easy, and not to let on to the cameraman that it was a set-up. He wanted some!

So we sat around the table extolling the virtues of the said substance, saying how the performance and fuel economy was greatly increased.

We then went out to the cars and were told to wait a while, while they set up the camera on a bridge, so that they could film us approaching the bridge, then film us going away on the other side. This meant driving under the bridge twice with the camera being moved from one side to the other.

So having done the first pass and found somewhere to turn round; not easy on a busy dual carriageway, drove back past the bridge, turned round again and waited for the camera to be moved and set off again. Then the great British weather took a hand in the proceedings, and the heavens opened up. Panic! The Bs and the Midgets had their hoods down on

the first pass, so for continuity had to keep them down, much to the pleasure of the GTs crews. An agreement was arrived at, where the hoods could be held up until they got to the bridge, and then dropped, so they came out with them down in shot.

The next shot was at a filling station, where the three cars not using the elixir had to peel in, whilst the three with the wonder additive carried on, waving. That's what we were told to do. I think that there may have been some editing with that scene.

The final scene was the three cars with the elixir pulled up down a narrow country lane and the drivers were seen to be topping up their tanks with the magic elixir.

After the final scene we retired to a local pub for a farewell drink and talk with the crew, and yes, the cameraman had worked it out! We were asked if we wanted payment individually, or a donation to the club. We opted for the donation.

At the next meeting we were very surprised when the treasurer announced that he had received a cheque from Central for £300, which was a lot more than we thought we would get.

So that is the story of our first foray into TV work, but not our last, but that is a story for another time.

And now for a short commercial break

MGS IN THE Trees 2010, June 13th

Two important items:

- 1) *Have you bought your T-shirt yet? This year they are the best so far, in Navy Blue. They are £5.75 each, available in the full range of sizes, and can be bought either at a club night or direct from Steve Gwilt. Please don't leave us with unsold garments on our hands. They are really good!*
- 2) *Please donate prizes for the Motorola. Anything with a vague motoring connection welcome. This is one of the main fund-raisers, so give generously. Either bring them to a club meeting or to any committee member*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday April 25th. National 'Drive-it Day' Visit to the formula 1 museum at Donnington Park. (See below)

Wednesday April 28th. Club meeting, The Ascot Tavern, Cannock

Monday May 3rd. Classic Car Show, "Rushall May Fayre"

Sunday May 9th. Berrington Hall picnic and quiz, near Ludlow, Shropshire. This is becoming a prestige event, where we will be joined by other MGOC groups.

Wednesday May 12th. Club meeting, The Ascot Tavern, Cannock

Friday May 21st.—Monday May 23rd. Club trip to the Circuit Historique, at Laon, France.

Saturday May 22nd. Moat Hall School Summer Fayre. Please contact Steve or Meryl, 01543 425738 or steve@s-moore.co.uk

Wednesday May 26th. Club meeting, The Ascot Tavern, Cannock

Sunday May 30th. Club stand at the Ragley Hall rally, near Alcester. This is a Transtar event. (also Monday May 31st.)

Sunday 6th June Mountains and Valleys Run (Herefordshire MGOC)

Sunday 13th June. MGs IN THE TREES Cannock Chase DON'T MISS IT!

NATIONAL 'DRIVE-IT' DAY

This is organised by the

Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs. The organisation itself represents the views of the member clubs on such matters as legislation, and organises some events. The idea of Drive-it day is to encourage those among us who do not use their vehicle(s) to the full, and need to be coaxed to get that old car of the garage and actually do something with it. Generally I don't think that we can be accused of not using our cars, so it has always been a bit of an oddity to me. Also, as we are supposed to be acting for the benefit of the 'Old Car movement' (which always smacks of a political organisation), I also wonder if our best interests are served by unleashing a million bits of mobile rust onto the roads all together! I would have thought that the environmental lobby would have a field day about all that terrible pollution etc.

Anyway, not that we ever need an excuse to drive our cars, we intend to join in with 'Drive-it Day' by having a club run, starting from the Ascot, and ending at the famous collection of vintage racing cars at Donnington Park, The Donnington Collection. For anyone who has not been there already, it is a truly wonderful collection of racing cars, accumulated over the years by the Tom Wheatcroft, and is certainly well worth a visit. The run has been organised by Nigel Preston, and please contact him if you wish to participate, 0121 351 4099, or ngl.preston@googlemail.com