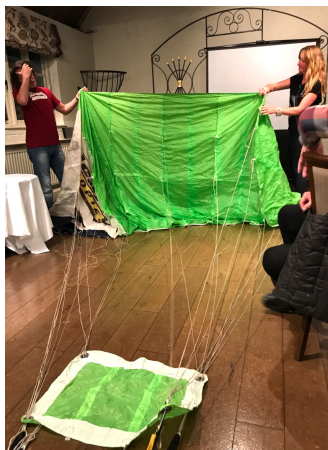




Newsletter July 2017

June Club Night

For the June Club Night, we were fortunate enough to have a guest speaker, Phil Hartree, ably supported by his partner, Bev. Phil is a renowned and highly successful skydiver, the holder of many trophies and records for his sport. Firstly he gave us an overview of what skydiving actually is, and by way of an introduction he showed us a video of a television advert that Honda had commissioned to be broadcast live from Spain in 2009, and in which Phil had taken part. This very impressive advert consisted of a team of skydivers who spelt out the letters of Honda in turn as they descended. Phil then went on to go through the various forms and disciplines of the sport, and how a newcomer might work his or her way into skydiving, and what they could get from the sport. He finished his presentation with a video of his team, MicroClimb8, participating in the 2015 Dubai World Air Games, in which they were the highest-ranked amateur team. A fascinating presentation that was extremely well received.



Phil shows us a canopy



Jake wonders if it will fit back in...



... Phil proves that it will

After the break, Phil encouraged us to get hands on with the equipment items he uses during skydiving, from the helmets and jump suits – he had brought along two of these, his standard suit, and a special suit and helmet that he wears when acting as the cameraman for the team, his new role in the sport – and the altimeters and other safety kit. But most fascinating of all, he demonstrated how the main parachute deploys, by actually doing so and showing how the various elements combine to ensure that the canopy opens and fully inflates. We needed a lot of floor space for this demo, with the parachute fully laid out – we were fortunate in having arranged to use the Coach House for his talk! With Bev's help, he then explained that the canopy is rectangular for a good reason - it is hollow and contains nine compartments that are open at the front and closed at the back, so that they inflate on the ram-air principle, which gives the canopy an aerofoil profile, which imparts both lift and forward motion. A very clever design, which is quite a bit smaller than I would have expected.

Then, to everyone's delight, Phil proceeded, whilst surrounded by a very interested audience, to re-pack the parachute back into its container. I had envisaged a long table and a squad of people to perform this task, but I was surprised to see that this is one-man operation, carried out on the floor. A hugely entertaining evening and a big thank you to Phil and Bev for coming to talk to us.



MG Live

Nothing much to report on this, since I didn't go this year. Jack Martin did, but he was jet-lagged from his holiday/son-in-law's wedding and can't remember much of what was going on, but he still managed to come back with a full shopping basket! It was far too hot for me, and Silverstone is such a sun-trap I would have suffered way too much in the heat. A couple of days afterwards, I took my MGA over to Steeple Claydon for Graham Coles to have a look at, since I had never got to the bottom of a jangling noise from the front suspension when driving over bumpy surfaces. Graham took two cars to race at Silverstone, and neither finished – fuel vaporisation on one, and a broken half-shaft on the other – and he said he had never known such a rate of attrition among the race cars, mainly because of the heat. With my MGA, after a test run and quite a bit of searching, Graham found the problem – the disc pads in the offside front caliper were slightly loose, because the anti-rattle spring was acting on the pistons rather than the pads. But he did say, even with the problem cured, the brakes were not as efficient as they should be, and advised changing the pads for EBC greenstuff ones, which I duly did, and he was absolutely right!! Thanks, Graham!

British Heritage Flywheel Festival.

I went along to this on the Saturday, and as last year there was a lot going on all day. Also, the event was even bigger than last year with a full programme of events going on all around the field and the restored buildings, as well as in the air, with many more trade stands to help us spend our pocket money. Highlights this year were again the sight of iconic racing cars taking to the track, WW1 and WW2 dogfights, and a display by one of the Battle of Britain Wing Spitfires. The WW2 dogfight was particularly good, since this was between a Spitfire and a Messerschmitt BF109 (actually a licence-built Spanish Hispano Buchon).



Racing Alfa and view across the site

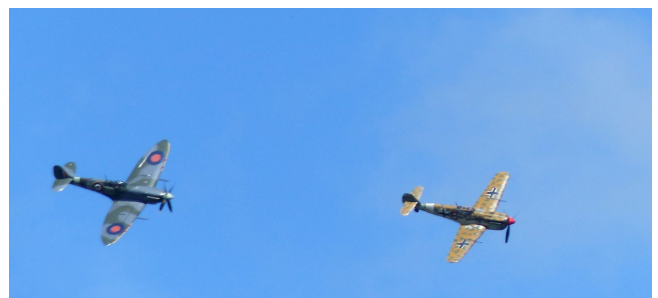


RR Merlin and Bristol Hercules Engines

Also fascinating was the sight and sound of a Rolls-Royce Merlin and a Bristol Hercules engine being run on static trailers.



Spit and BF109 - spot the deliberate mistake?*



He's right behind you

There was of course a fine collection of pre 1970 cars in the display area (including my MGA) and plenty of Military vehicles and displays, including the Oxfordshire Home Guard, who were entertaining the children while parents were in the beer tent, listening to the live music. I also



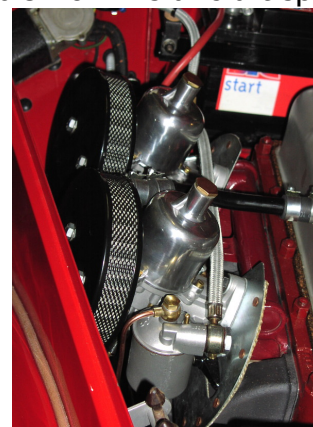
went to the Brightwells auction - I had my eye on a BMW 2002 tii, but it went for more than I wanted to pay – even though most lots were failing to reach their reserve prices. A really good day out for all the family.

Me And My MGs - Adrian Bennett (contd)

Having now corrected the V5 details on my TF, we contentedly used her for trips out and to attend MG events. I continued to have niggling problems with it – only one windscreen wiper would work, and periodically it would run rough because the carbs would lose their settings over time. The wiper issue was easily diagnosed – the operating cable did not quite reach the wheelbox. Not an MOT issue, because there are two knobs on the wheel boxes that can be operated by hand, but annoying nevertheless. I tried shortening the outer cable slightly, but still no joy. So I went to see the guru on all things MG – Peter Wood at Twyford. After the usual cup of coffee and putting the world to rights, Peter disappeared into his Alladin's Cave of spare parts and produced a new inner cable. Success!! Not quite. It was exactly the same length as the one I had, as were all in his stock. However, Peter is not one to be defeated so easily. He is an aeroplane enthusiast, and was at the time rebuilding a WW2 Spitfire in one of his workshops (it is now flying, and last time I visited, he is rebuilding another Spit). The wiper cable is by coincidence or design (Abingdon built Albermarle fuselage sections during the war), an aircraft-grade Bowden cable, so he was able to supply me with a longer cable from his aircraft spares.



My 1953 TF



New carbs fitted

The carbs were a bit trickier. I stripped and rebuilt them, which helped for a while, but after nearly conking out on an MGCC run over the old factory test routes round Abingdon, I decided that enough is enough. I had had a conversation with a chap called Tony Hebdon, whom I had met at the MG weekend at Silverstone. He had one of the trade stalls, displaying what looked like brand new carburettors, but in fact he had rebuilt. So I rang him and arranged to visit him in Sheffield, which we duly did, combining this with a visit to Hardwick Hall. Tony showed me his workshop (formerly a spare bedroom), and described the process. When he retired, he found himself at a loose end, and was asked by several MGCC members to refurb their carbs, and it grew into a thriving small business – not surprising when you saw the quality of his workmanship. Anyway, I went away with a pair of (probably better than) new carbs, which I fitted, and had no trouble with them thereafter.

In 2001 the MGF was replaced, confusingly, by the MG TF, and early the next year MG was offering MGCC members the new car at the factory workers' discount rate, a substantial saving. So I traded in the MGF for a TF 135 in LeMans Green with lots of extras. A very good-looking car. However, the ride was not as good as the MGF – much harder and bouncier, because MG had fitted coil springs in place of the hydrolastic suspension. So after enduring the spine-jarring



ride for a while, I had had enough, and changed the springs out for a set of Eibach units, which made a big difference. At this time also, I was finding the older TF a bit worrying, because on major roads I would have huge Juggernauts breathing down the neck of my little 1950s MG, and felt very vulnerable indeed at times. So I sourced a back axle from a YB, and a higher ratio differential from an early MGB and sent them away to George Edney in Hatfield Heath to fit so that I could cruise at a higher speed without blowing up the engine. However, before I could replace the axle, I spent a week in hospital having tests for a potentially life-changing problem.

Lying in hospital and feeling bored and sorry for myself gave me plenty of time to reflect on what I wanted to do with what remained of my allocated time, and one of the resolutions I came to was that before my time is up, I had to own an E-type Jaguar, preferably a 4.2 fixed-head coupe. So, when I was finally given the all-clear (pew!!) and kicked out of hospital, I resolved to look around and see what was on the market. I put a 'for sale' advert in the windscreen of the old TF when I attended MG Live that year, and quickly sold it to an Irish chap who ran a seaweed fertiliser agency, whatever that is.

After travelling widely to look at some horribly neglected vehicles, I settled on two more promising examples. One was being rebuilt by a specialist at Silsoe, and the other was a primrose yellow car in Southwell. The Silsoe car was just back from the sprayshop, but further work was being put on hold due to other commitments, so I went to see the yellow one. Nice car, but such a girlie colour which didn't suit it at all.However, new in the showroom was another E-type – a 5.3 V12 open two-seater (OTS) in gunmetal with red trim. Well, you would, wouldn't you? So I bought it, despite the fact that it ticked all the wrong boxes!



LeMans Green MG TF



My V12 E-Type OTS

What a car! Huge, turbine-like performance – you ran out of nerve (or fuel for that matter, 18 miles per gallon if you weren't driving too enthusiastically) long before it ran out of puff. And what a head turner – wherever you stopped a crowd would gather, muttering 'I always promised myself one of these, still, when I come up on the Lotto'. It wasn't all good news though – it was a bit too big to fit in the garage until I took 9" off the back of my workbench! This lovely pair were my motoring companions for the next few years, and we had much fun with them. I attended MG events in the TF, and Jaguar events in the E-type, and quickly came to realise that the MG owners are a lot more friendly than the Jag lot!! Truly, MG is The Marque of Friendship, as the MGCC will tell you.

By 2006 I decided that I had had enough of work, and took the opportunity for early retirement, said goodbye to a life of toil, and settled into a life of leisure. *To be continued.*



Upcoming Events

3rd July AMGC Pride of Ownership

Our very own PoO with new judging categories, good food and music – a very special evening!! Remember, we start this event earlier than our normal club night, at 19.00. This year we have The Dairy at Waddesdon Manor for our venue, and The Five Arrows catering staff will be providing their celebrated Bangers 'n Mash as usual, to be ordered as you arrive. There will as usual be a raffle following the prizegiving, so if you could donate a raffle prize the committee would be very grateful. Clive's band, The Roof Thieves, will be entertaining us after the raffle, so an evening not to be missed! Remember also that one of the classes to be judged this year is for non-MG cars, so if you know someone with a nice other-marque car they would like to bring along on the night, please encourage them to do so! And, new this year, we are encouraging people to come to the event dressed according to the period of their car, so let's see some old service uniforms, hippies, Mary Quant babes etc! The entry price per car has had to be increased this year as this event has to be self-financing, so this year we are charging £5 per car, but this will include a strip of tickets for the raffle.

16th July – Grand Prix Barbecue

Being hosted this year by Adrian (me!) and Jackie Bennett in Bicester. If you haven't already done so, could you please let me know if you are coming so that we can assess numbers and organise the catering etc. There should be enough seating for the numbers expected, so don't bother bringing chairs – the only thing you will need to bring is your favourite tippie, and a dessert if you wish to. And bring some good weatherThe Grand Prix starts at 13.00 if you want to see it, so aim to arrive around midday (the ladies and some of the fellas usually prefer to drink wine, natter or go shopping or something while the race is on, so don't worry if you're not keen on watching motor racing on the tele)..

Monday 7th August – Club Night at The Akeman

For the August Club Night we have changed the venue to The Akeman, because we will be having an evening road run followed by a meal at the pub, as we did the same time last year. I have recce'd a run of about 33 miles, taking in some of the most attractive villages in the area, and will be handing out Tulip road books just before the run. You will need to arrive at The Akeman between 18.30 and 19.00 for the run briefing and to order your meals before you set off. The run should take less than an hour (unless you get hopelessly lost) so you will be back before the meal is served from about 20.00 onwards.

20th August – Wycombe Area MGOC Run

Keith Darbon has invited us to join the Wycombe MGOC Octagonal Run on Sunday August the 20th.

The Run this year is in aid of their charity, The Rennie Grove Hospice, who support people and their families in the latter stages of terminal illnesses.

The run will start with breakfast and finish with a BBQ at The Polecat, Prestwood and includes a 60 mile round trip through Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire with a lunchtime visit to the DeHavilland Aircraft Museum, Shenley.

Entry is £25 per car, with entrance to the DH Museum included, as is Tulip roadbook. Entry form



is on their website if you are interested. I have been to the DH Museum myself several times – a fascinating place where the famous Mosquito was developed (they have 3 examples of these including the prototype) and it is well worth a visit in its own right!

Saturday 26th August – Visit to Craft Fair, Stonor Park

Heather Barton has researched and organised a trip to the Craft Fair at Stonor Park on 26th August. The plan is to meet up somewhere in Aylesbury for coffee and a Danish, and then to drive on to Stonor Park, where we plan to park together. More details will follow in the August newsletter, but reserve the date in your diaries now.

Stop Press!!

Tuesday 25th July – Chesham Natter PoO

The Chesham Natter PoO, scheduled for June, had to be postponed because of bad weather, and will now be held on Tuesday 25th July. This event will be at the same location, which is Chesham and Ley Hill Golf Club, Ley Hill, HP5 1UZ, and the format will be as originally scheduled – start from 18.30, judging, award of prizes etc and BBQ.

... And Finally

Our Chairman, Dave Barton, pictured outside his holiday hotel in Crete with the manager, Dimitrios Perrakis and his 80th Anniversary TF LE....



Dimitrios has had the car from new, and it has done over 100,000 kilometers, and he plans to pass it to his son when he is 18, lucky lad!!

Adrian Bennett

adrian.mg@hotmail.co.uk,
Club Secretary

* For the keen-eyed anorak – the Hispano Buchon/BF109 is fitted with a Rolls-Royce Merlin instead of a Daimler-Benz DB601A engine!!