



Newsletter November 2018

Club Website and this Newsletter

I have now been initiated into the intricacies of updating the club website, and this means that the function of this newsletter will be changing. In future I will be posting reports of club activities in the News section of the club website as they happen, rather than waiting to report them in the monthly newsletter. So please go to the website regularly to read about our activities – and please notify me of any contributions that you would like to make, and I will arrange to edit and post them, with photos if you have them, on the website. The newsletter will evolve, still having some announcements and details of upcoming events, but will not be as comprehensive as before.

Recent Postings on the Website

News Reports:

Bicester Heritage Sunday Scramble – October

Alan & John's MG Memories

Isle of Wight Weekend away



Lovely early Midget seen at Bicester Heritage Sunday Scramble

Upcoming Events

Monday 5th November – Club Night

At the Five Arrows from 20.00

Friday 9th November – Sunday 11th November

Classic Car Show at the NEC, Birmingham. I'm going on the Saturday. Note that if you are a member of the MG Car Club you can benefit from a discount on your ticket – details in the next edition of *Safety Fast!*, apparently.



Monday 3rd December – Club Night

The Annual Quiz, Clive and Helen Wayland officiating. Five Arrows from 20.00.

Monday 7th January – Annual General Meeting, 20.00 in The Five Arrows.

This is where you get to stand for and vote in your committee and have your say about which direction the club should be going, and what events we should either be attending, or organising ourselves. Important evening, so please make every endeavour to attend.

Other Stuff

The Skinner Trophy

Another reminder that you need to inform me if you have participated in any qualifying events otherwise I cannot credit you with points towards the Skinner decanter trophy – for example, did anyone else attend the October Sunday Scramble at Bicester Heritage? Many thanks.

Me And My MGs - Adrian Bennett (contd)

This is the third part of an irregular series for when club news is in short supply

I became very attached to the MGF, and ran it as my daily driver for the next four years. It was powerful enough and had a very good ride with its hydragas suspension, derived from the Metro, but I can't say the same for the brakes – Mickey Mouse sized discs that may have passed muster on the Metro, but definitely not man enough for the F. Still, a really good car, but over the next couple of years I was beginning to become a little worried about the handling, despite frequently checking the tyre pressures. When it failed its first MOT I discovered why – the front tyres (10k miles) were completely bald on the inside edge, which you couldn't see because the car is so low to the ground. So new tyres and a trip to Brown and Gammons to get the suspension geometry sorted out – apparently the hydragas settles after a few thousand miles and the suspension geometry needs to be checked and reset at the first service, something completely and incompetently missed by the MG dealer in Newbury.

Meanwhile, the Jag and I were having a slightly more stormy relationship. To fit it in my garage I had to take 9 inches off the back of my workbench, and when I wanted to work in there the car had to come out. Whilst I loved the car, it was undeniably a complex beast, and finding a reliable garage to attend to its needs was an issue - the local Jaguar Agent wouldn't touch it, and so it had to go to specialists, few and far between in my neck of the woods. Jobs like bleeding the rear brakes takes hours since the callipers are buried in the rear suspension cage and can only be accessed from inside the car by small removeable panels in the heelboard – and the whole cage has to come off to change the pads. And synchronising four carburettors, two on either side of the engine, is a frustrating and time consuming task involving miles of walking around the car from one side to the other. As for cleaning and adjusting 12 spark plugs



Jag outside my local



The MGA 1600 mk II



Still, when everything was on song, the performance is every bit as exhilarating as you have read about! I had joined the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club, and attended a few meetings, but the fact is that the Jaguar crowd are not as welcoming and friendly as MG owners, and you have to have the right car to be accepted, and it would appear that I hadn't, so I eventually stopped going.

By this time I was hankering after an MGA, so, sadly, after 3 years of ownership, The Jag had to go. I had bought it from Sherwood Restorations in Southwell, and when I saw a nice red MGA on their website, I rang up Charles, the Sales Manager, to find out more. "It's gone" he said, "But I know how particular you are, so I wouldn't have recommended it to you anyway. However I'm negotiating on one that will suit you much better, if it comes off I'll let you know". And he did – a few weeks later I went to see an Old English White 1600 mk II. And she was a beauty, so we did a deal, and I drove the A home with a big grin on my face.

So now I had two MGs again, one for everyday use and one for fun days - a happy position to be in. Then, in 2002, MG released the *TF*. Hotter camshaft, alloy throttle body, 135 bhp on tap with bigger brakes that actually held out some hope of actually stopping it. What's not to like? But the clincher for me came when MG announced that for a short time, MG Car Club Members (like me) could purchase one at the factory employee's discount rate (about 20%). So, off to Kernahan's in Witney I went. And I could afford lots of nice toys for it. The deal was done, for a car in Le Mans green with green hood and beige leather trim, and they resprayed my hardtop too.



My lovely Le Mans green *TF*



PoO at The Crooked Billet, 2009

The extra power was very welcome, but somehow the engine didn't seem quite so torquey as the F, but this improved as the engine bedded in and I had put a few miles on her. But what I really noticed was that the ride was much firmer and harder than the old F – uncomfortably so. After some months of driving around with my teeth rattling in their sockets and blurred vision, I decided I had to do something about it. So, I began investigating how to improve the ride. There were a number of options open, but I finally settled on a new set of Eibach springs all round – these gave a more compliant ride, but had the slight disadvantage of lowering the suspension by about 2cm. Hardly noticeable unless you parked next to another TF, or drove over a sleeping policeman, when you had to be very careful where you positioned the car on entry, otherwise the exhaust was in danger of grounding.

About this time I noticed an announcement in *Safety Fast!* that there was to be a Pride of Ownership concours event near my home, hosted by The Aylesbury Natter of the MG Car Club at their regular venue, The Crooked Billet in Kingswood, one Monday evening in July 2009. So in what spare time I had I gave the MGA a good polish, and drove along to The Billet and entered it into the competition to see what this was all about, as I had never done anything like this before. It was a fine evening, and I got chatting to some decent types, and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. And to crown it all, when the results of the judging were announced, my MGA had won a trophy for best in class, presented by the guest, John Day, the Chairman of the MG



Car Club at that time. I made a promise to myself to join this seemingly friendly lot, but sadly, though, what with other commitments (and post-retirement apathy), it would still be another couple of few years before I finally got around to formally join the club.

To be continued.

Note: If you have an article or a technical tip which you think might be of interest to other club members, and have the time to write it and send it to me, I would be glad to include it in a future newsletter.

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