



Newsletter April 2021

First thing – you will have seen Dave Barton's note about his health, and I have no doubt whatsoever that you will join me in wishing him a successful outcome to his treatment and a speedy return to good health. And also, as he steps down, a big vote of thanks for all the work he has put into the success of the club in his tenure as Chairman. He will be a hard act to follow, but that should not deter you from trying! So, please, let's have some candidates for the post.

Recent Postings on the Website:

Club Meetings via Zoom
Jack adds to his Collection

Update on the Covid-19 Virus

It seems that we may soon be slowly coming out of the government-imposed Covid hibernation. I hope you have all kept your sanity and sense of humour over the last 12 months, and that you and your MGs are primed and ready to go. We will have to watch carefully how the restrictions are eased, but we may soon be able to gather together, outdoors at least, in some numbers, although it doesn't look as if we will be able to return to our venue in The Lion until June at the earliest. But, Haynes Motor Museum seems soon to be resuming social activities with their breakfast meets, so perhaps we could arrange a run from an outdoor venue sometime in May – bringing your own breakfast perhaps - any ideas for a route and/or volunteers for having a go at arranging this please? I can provide guidance and help.

Ethanol in Fuel

I understand that the government is planning to introduce E10 eco fuel from this September. The current level of Ethanol in fuel is 5% (E5, 95 RON), this government ruling increases the Ethanol content to 10%. E5 should still be freely available for the next 5 years, but small filling stations may opt not to stock it – so be careful when filling up your tank. This won't make much difference to modern cars built after 2011, but some cars built after 2000 may be affected, and our classic older MGs definitely will be, as Ethanol is a solvent and causes neoprene rubber seals to deteriorate, affecting among other things carburettors and fuel pumps, as well as having a lower octane rating. The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) recommendation is that for our older MGs, in order to avoid any damage to our car engines we should use the Super unleaded fuel (98 RON, as opposed to 95 RON) if we are unable to use 4-Star. Now I have not seen 4-Star on a forecourt in donkey's years, so from September it will be Super Unleaded for my MGA and BGT V8.

AGM

We will hold this when we are able to meet indoors at The Lion – no date yet, but I will circulate a note when we can arrange something. You already know that Dave Barton has stepped down as Chairman and I will be doing so at this meeting, and we hope that there will be members willing to step forward to take over both roles.

What have you done with your MG in the lockdown?

I have done some minor fettling to The V8 during lockdown in readiness for using it again on Drive It Day (See below). I have refurbished the air cleaner system, which is quite

complicated on the factory V8. In order to avoid a bonnet bulge, the carburettors are sited at the back of the block, and the air cleaner comprises an air collecting box behind these, to which is attached a pair of air filters, one above each rocker cover, and an air control valve attached to each filter. The valve has a bi-metal strip-controlled flap which allows warm air from the exhaust manifolds to be drawn into the carbs when starting from cold, and, when the engine warms up, switches to colder air from the under-bonnet air stream. All this was looking a little untidy and needed cleaning, derusting, sanding and respraying, and new stickers. Whilst doing this I noticed that one of the air control valves had split along a seam and had been rather amateurishly welded up, so I tidied this up with my Dremel grinder and made it much more presentable before painting. It still didn't look quite 100 percent, and it niggled a bit. MG only built a handful of factory V8s, and the air cleaner system is unique to the model, so a good replacement is a rare beast indeed. However, I have had some success advertising V8 parts on the MGCC V8 Register website, so I decided, although a very long shot, to see if I could find a replacement by advertising there. Without much hope I placed the advert. Guess what? In just 24 hours I had an email offering me a new, old stock valve, and at a very reasonable price! When the weather turned a little warmer, I resprayed this to match, and it is now fitted. The power of advertising ... So I now have a spare usable air control valve if anyone needs one!



Refurbished air cleaners – new valve on the left



Boot carpet press studs on GT

Another couple of small tasks I undertook, and one of which may be of interest to other BGT owners. The hinged wooden spare wheel cover of my V8 has two press stud fasteners screwed to the forward edge, presumably to secure the boot carpet in place, but there were no equivalent press studs on the carpet to allow this. The carpet is new, so no particular surprise there. But this is the third GT I have had, and I don't remember these fastenings being present on the cover or carpet of the other two - but it always struck me as a bit odd that this carpet was not fastened down in any. So I asked Roger if he had these on his V8, and he has – on the cover, but not the carpet, which he reckons could be original. I scrutinised Anders Clausager's book 'Original MGB', and of the photos of this area, one shows press studs on the carpet, and a couple do not, so it seems there is no uniformity on how they left the factory. It seemed sensible to attach the other half of the press stud to the carpet, so I can now fasten it in place. I should be interested to see if other GT owners have these press studs too.

Lastly, I decided to replace the old and slightly tatty plastic yellow and white number plates with new pressed black and silver aluminium ones - since my car, although built in 1973, was registered in 1975, and any car registered before 1980 can legally have these plates. The old yellow rear plate was fixed directly to the rear panel with the plastic nuts and bolts, and as the characters don't align conveniently to use the pre-drilled holes in the rear panel without moving the plate sideways, I sent off for the proper backing plate. However, when you bolt the backing plate through these holes, the bolt heads protrude from the plate about 1/4", so the

number plate doesn't sit flush to it. I solved this by using countersunk setscrews in place of bolts. By inserting the setscrew through the plate, then using a suitably-sized socket between the back of the plate and the nut, carefully tightening the nut I was able to create a depression in the backing plate so the setscrew head sits in this and allows the number plate to sit flush on the plate. A couple of large washers between the backing plate and the rear panel and job done neatly. I must say, the new number plates look much more fitting on the car!

Enough of my antics. As you can see from the web post mentioned above, Jack has recently bought himself a new MG – a 1980 MGB roadster V8 conversion, and is just waiting to register it as a Historic Vehicle before putting it on the road for the coming season. But what about the rest of you? Please let me know what you have been up to in the lockdown period, so I can share it with our members.

Future Events (Hopefully!)

While we know that MG Live! and other events such as the Hambleden Sports Car Day have been cancelled again for 2021 and that there are no guarantees that any of this year's events won't be cancelled or postponed, we have to assume that we will be able to attend some events during the year, and so the following is a selection of some of which I am aware:

25th April FBHVC Drive it Day

Just get the car out of storage and go for a run! If it's a nice day Jackie and I may well end up at Little Haseley for a picnic. Wouldn't it be a nice surprise if we saw some of you there too?

June 5/6 – Bicester Heritage Scramble

This is an all-ticket affair and gets booked up quite early. Also, from an email I received from BH recently, I assume the April Scramble is another lockdown casualty, so tickets sold for the January and April events will be valid for the event, and any new tickets may be limited in number. So get them now if you want to attend.

June 25/27 London Classic Car Show

Venue is Syon Park in West London – 700 classics expected.

July 16/18 Auto Royale 2021

This is the inaugural meeting of a new Concourse d'Elegance, to be held at Waddesdon Manor. Don't know anything about this one yet, sounds interesting, will keep you posted.

July 30/August 1st Silverstone Classic

Another local event, 'nuff said

13/15 August – Triumph and MG Day

Another new event, to be held at the Three Counties Showground in Malvern. Sounds worth going to, perhaps we should arrange a breakfast meet somewhere and to go there in convoy?

September 1/4 – Salon Prive

Probably the most important UK Concourse d'Elegance and garden party, this year being held at Blenheim. For the super rich only to take part, but a fine spectacle for we of the proletariat.

September 11/12 Classics at Prescott

At the Prescott hill climb venue near Winchcombe. Run for charity by the Winchcombe Rotary Club, whom you may remember we met at Sudeley Castle in 2019. Interesting venue owned by

the Bugatti Owner's Club and is also the home of the Bugatti Trust, who have a small but very interesting museum on site, so every chance of seeing some old Bugattis racing up the hill.

- And Lastly, hopefully and fingers crossed, we will be able to enjoy our weekend away in Suffolk sometime in late September, postponed from last year

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