



Synchro!



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The Newsletter of South Staffs and North Birmingham MG Owners Club

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Presentation of the cheque for £1000 to St. Giles Hospice representative, 10th. September 2008

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

I once read somewhere that the English climate consists of eight months of winter, followed by four months of bad weather. Well I think that this summer rather nicely proves the point. It really has been abysmal, and yet every day, on just about every news bulletin and every TV programme we are brain-washed by various learned people and 'experts' that we are all about to be roasted alive by Global Warming.

Well all I can say is that I personally have not seen a lot of evidence lately. My personal mileage in the MG must be well down on the same period last year, which itself was a rather crummy summer, weatherwise

How many times did you manage to have a barbecue? How many nice warm summer evenings did you manage to sit outside in the garden? I imagine the answer, as Paul Daniels would say, is "not a lot".

Despite all that, life goes on, and we have had some good events during the (so-called) summer. Keep smiling!

Apologies for the howler in the last newsletter. Future meetings will be held at THE ASCOT TAVERN, in Cannock, not at the Talbot, wherever that might be! Sorry for any confusion.

Contributions to the newsletter are thin on the ground. Please send me anything that you think could be of general interest

MG'S IN THE TREES; A SIDELONG GLANCE

An interesting little sideline on the event came in an email with a breakdown of the types of MG's which participated in the event. I thought it quite revealing that there is quite a shift towards the modern MG's. The details were compiled by the most learned hon. club statistician, Gareth Gwilt

MGA	5
MGB Roadster	41
MGBGT	17
MGB V8	1
MGBGT V8	3

MGC roadster	2
MGCGT	1
MGC V8	21
MG Midget	10
AH Sprite	2
MG 1100	1
MG Maestro	2
MGR V8	5
MGF	21
MGTF	30
MG ZR	2
MG ZS	2
MG ZT	3
(Morgan	1)

Looking at the numbers, the first thing that strikes me is that the modern MG's, that is from the MG1100 onwards, i.e. post Abingdon models, represented about 40% of the total entry. For example 51 F's and TF's.

Personally I think that this is excellent. It shows that we are not just rooted in the past. Someone recently (a club member who will remain nameless) said that the older MG's (MGB's etc.) are pretty useless outdated cars, driven by old farts who really ought to know better!. An interesting point of view!

At least the figures show that the modern MG's are just as welcome as the old ones. Have you ever thought how different this for the MGOC compared with many other car clubs. If the club is based on a car which has not been manufactured for a number of years, then there is only a finite number of those cars in existence. For example, they have not made any new Triumphs for about 30 years. It follows that the average age of club members is probably gradually increasing, and total numbers of cars gradually decreasing as the worst examples rot away.

The other factor which severely limits these types of clubs is the ever-increasing cost of ownership. It is becoming almost impossible for a young person, no matter how interested, to run an old car. The running cost of an everyday car is bad enough for all of us.

The MGOC is different in this respect. Some younger members are able to run a modern MG as their everyday car. A gradual influx of newer and younger members bodes well for the future.

Having said all of that, older MG's, the pre-war and immediately post-war models are very interesting, and part of our heritage. It would be very good if, as the 'Trees' becomes more established as an event, we could manage to entice some of these cars to our event in 2009. I think that they would naturally merge in with the overall mix of MG's very nicely.

THE MG RACE DAY, MALLORY PARK,

By Nigel Preston

First, and most importantly, to everyone who came along, and all the interest that was shown, a big thank you.

In our short time with the MGOC this was the first time that we had done anything like this. Your support and enthusiasm made us feel "at Home"

Well, we got up nice and early at 5 a.m. to blue skies and lovely sunshine. (the words *nice* and *5 a.m.* don't sit together too well for me on a Sunday morning! Ed.) We loaded up the ZS, and set off at 6.30 (still sunny) on a lovely cruise down to our rendez-vous, at the "Royal Red Gate" pub, just off the A5 at the corner of the A444, arriving there at 6.55, in order to be first there to meet the others (still sunny).

From there we set off in convoy through a nice bit of countryside. It took about 25 minutes to Mallory Park. We pulled up in an impressive line of MG's at the entrance, and then rolled in and sorted our pitch out.

It was at this time that things were changing, The sun had disappeared, and "The Trees" weather came in—WIND! So after another struggle with the gazebo we decided to give up and make do with the tent. We were brave souls; t least the flags stayed up!

But the racing was what it was all about, and we did have some. Every race was entertaining, fast, and with numerous spins and shunts, exciting or what!!

You could go anywhere, and the paddock was very interesting, mingling with the drivers and their cars. Viewing was great; what a very pleasant circuit Mallory is.

Everybody enjoyed the whole day, so this

could become an annual event. Next time, I'll try to get some parade laps for the club, and yeah... some sunshine!
It was nice of Sam to have his caravan so conveniently on the back of his ZT, where the ladies could warm up.

The MGOC, whose racing we had come to see were very pleased with our display, and to see us there, and took a few photos.. I think we may appear in 'Enjoying MG' next month. Watch this space.
Many thanks again to all who took part.

Obituary: Julie Lawrence 1949-2008

August saw the passing of Julie Lawrence, a very popular member of the club. The beloved wife, for 34 years, of Frank, and mother of Kerry, she passed away after a very lengthy cruelly debilitating illness which gradually over a twenty-five year period reduced her mobility and ability to even move her fingers.

For those of us who had only known her confined to a wheelchair it seemed very sad to hear that fifteen years ago she was very active as a mother and member of all of the usual community organisations, such as the local Townswomens Guild and Flower Club. She played an active part in the PTA for the local school. Having a nephew who was involved with banger racing in Burton and Rugby, she was known at that time for taking part in the final race of the day for ladies, assuming that there was still a car left in drivable condition.

Over the ensuing fifteen years as the illness slowly tightened its grip, her mobility became more and more reduced. A few years ago when it finally became impossible for her to get into the MGB, Frank decided to sell the car, but they have remained active club members ever since.

Her funeral took place at Hednesford, and a procession of about ten MG's followed from Hednesford on her final journey to Stafford. The popularity of Julie was very evident by the exceptionally large congregation at the funeral service.

Julie was an inspiration to everyone; despite the most awful and crippling illness, she was never known to be other than amazingly cheerful. She truly made the ordinary person ashamed of complaining about their own trivial problems. The thoughts of all of the club members are with Frank at this time. His recent life has been almost entirely devoted to caring for Julie, and we all have the greatest respect for him.

CLUB HOLIDAY IN FRANCE, 2008

By Chris and Ruth Austin

In late August we drove down to Portsmouth met Steve and Elaine Gwilt and caught an overnight ferry to Ouistreham the port of Caen. On Friday morning we visited Ranville the site of the gliderborne attack on the 6th June 1944 which seized the now called Pegasus Bridge in order to prevent the Germans reinforcing the 'D' day landing beaches.

From there we drove West along the coast to Arromanches the location of the artificial Mulberry harbour some of which still survives past Omaha Beach to the German cliff-top battery at Cap du Hoc and finally a hundred or so miles south to Rennes where our stay at the local Etap hotel was only slightly marred by a rather agitated bottle of cider! (*I can't say that I have ever encountered an agitated bottle of cider! Ed*).

Next morning we were joined by Dave and Jackie Ellis for a 255 mile leg to La Tacherie our final destination just north of Cognac in the Charente Maritime Department of France. Despite temperatures approaching 100 degrees F this journey passed uneventfully.

Our meal out that evening at the local Chateau Mesnac to celebrate Ruths birthday was rounded off by a thunderstorm and an after midnight maintenance stint using a set of ramps borrowed from the cottage owners for Dave to stem a petrol leak on his BGT – well with the price of fuel as it is you can't just afford to let it run away!

In the following week in between

cleaning paw prints and cat hairs off the cars and enjoying the swimming pool and the BBQ we explored the local area visiting the market and Roman amphitheatre at Saintes, Cognac, The Courvoisier distillery at Jarnac, Pons, Talmont, Royan and the ramparts of Angouleme which each September hosts classic car racing.

During this period the locals were obviously suitably impressed by Ruths Frank Spencer beret, Elaines French and Dave who acquired the nickname 'Buzz' – not because he held a pilots licence but his rather uncanny ability to attract mosquitoes from a wide area.

Although the weather was mixed, phone calls home suggested it was a lot better than in the UK and only rarely were we obliged to run with the hoods up.

The following Saturday after saying goodbye to the owners Lynn and Graham and to Dave and Jackie who were heading to the coast for a few more days we set off for Lisieux around 300 miles to the North dodging between threatening clouds for around 200 miles until a cloud burst finally forced the hoods back up.

Considering that our navigators Ruth and

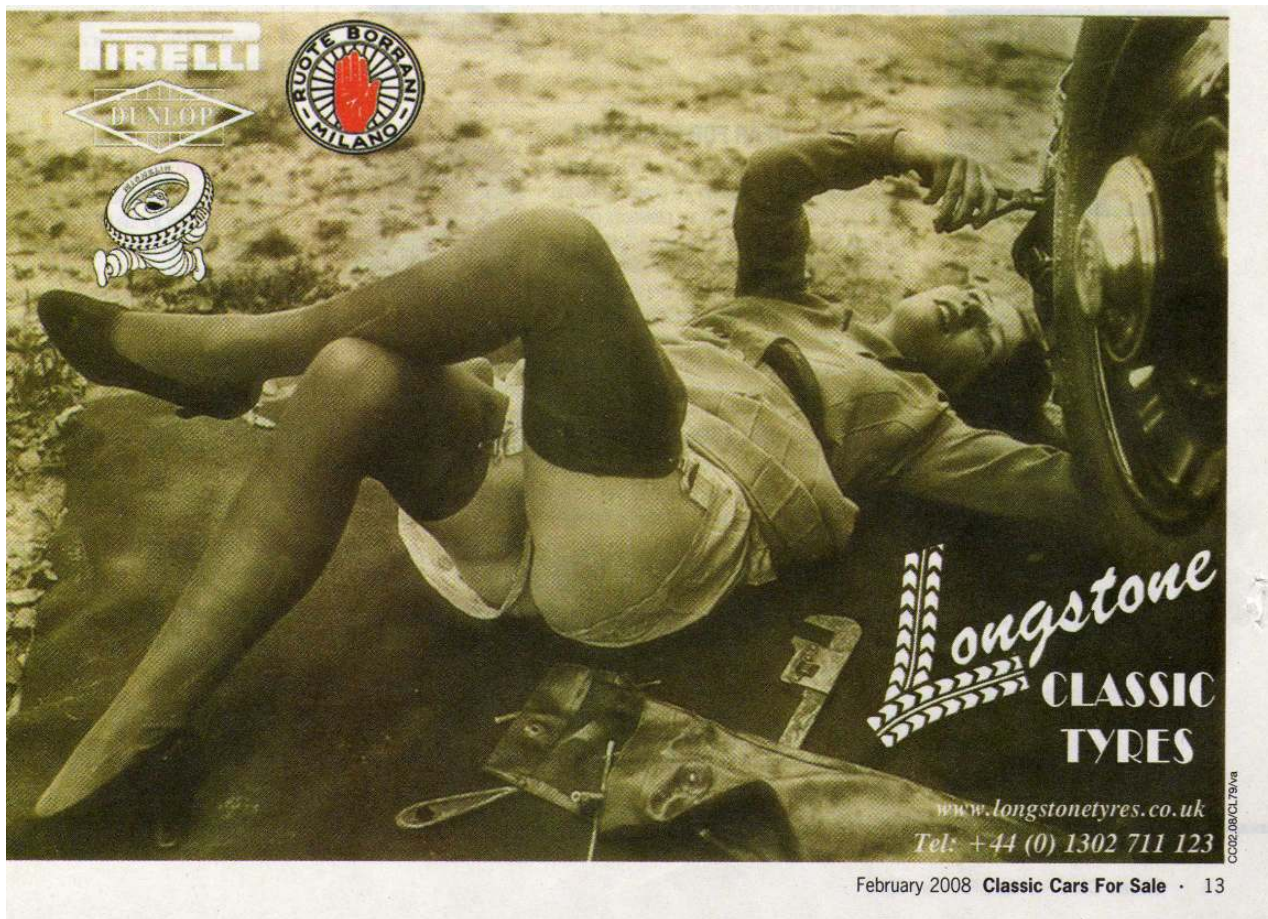


Elaine managed on one occasion to get lost between the hotel dining room and our first floor bedrooms we spent surprisingly little time off our intended route although Ruth did say that handling a one meter square AA road map at 60mph in an open top car could be challenging!

The Channel journey back from Ouis-treham to Portsmouth on the Vomit Comet (aka The Normandy Express)

in a force 6 blow proved a little too much for some of our fellow passengers to stomach (or at least for the contents of their stomach to stay put), although the cars were fine.

The final 180 miles home from Portsmouth was completed in a respectable three and a half hours giving a total approaching 1500 mile during which our elderly MGA never faltered; a tribute to British engineering of half a century ago.



Here is a little contribution sent in by Lawrence Downing some time ago.
His comment was:

“Weren’t those Land Girls very gifted and talented! Roadside Assistance ain’t as good as it was!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

As we approach the autumn, the outside events are of course drying up (more than can be said for the weather!)

October 8th. Club meeting, The Ascot Tavern

October 22nd Club meeting, The Ascot tavern

October 26th. The Restoration Show, at Stoneleigh Showground, near Kenilworth, Warwickshire. The club will have a stand, and the theme this year will be “The Sex-Change Operation”, i.e. the change from Rubber to chrome bumpers on the MGB.

November 12th Quiz Night. To be presented by Steve Moore. Remember the Treasure Hunt? I said then that some of the clues would challenge the code-breakers of Bletchley Park, so it will be interesting to see what fiendish quiz questions he sets! Should be fun.

November 26th. Club meeting, The Ascot Tavern

November 28th. The Grand Christmas party, to be held at The Roman Way

December 10th. Club Meeting, The Ascot Tavern

A short talk from Richard Hilton, of Hopton Garage, Stafford. His company have been appointed as dealers for the new generation of MG’s from China via Longbridge, and he will no doubt take the opportunity to fill us in on the latest MG TF LE500, and possibly shed some light on the company’s plans for the future.

PLEASE NOTE THAT BECAUSE WE HAVE DECIDED TO HIRE THE LARGER ROOM FOR THE CHRISTMAS PARTY, THERE ARE PLACES STILL AVAILABLE, SO PLEASE FEEL FREE TO INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY *Please also note that a limited number of rooms are available for the night at a discounted rate of £55 for a double room.*

Please make bookings directly with the hotel, on 0844 600 8706

And finally.....

IS THERE ANYONE THERE???

Once again, there are no items for Sales or Wants. Surely somebody has something that they would like to get rid of, or something that they really need!

Also, I have not received any ‘Letters to the Editor’. It would be great to have your opinions on anything (within reason), the more outrageous and contentious the better.