



The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set



: middlebridge@live.co.uk



May2021

Mick's MESSage

Well, what an anniversary zoom meeting, I have to say that I'm stunned, delighted and dare I say it proud to be a part of the MESS. The camaraderie of the owners and enthusiasts after George's request for donations was nothing short of incredible and Will's zoom meetings have brought many new faces to our monthly gatherings including ex Middlebridge employees that we were delighted to see and have join us.

At the time of writing this in April, I'm now definitely feeling the effects of two cancelled holidays in 2020 and nothing booked this year as yet and it's still a little too cold to spend hours in the garage. I have just gone and collected my Middlebridge from storage, she's been there for many, many months and to be honest I was plain missing her, she is the 1st car I have ever owned for 20+ years and I felt the need to bring her



Matt's Middlebridge 69

home, clean her and needless to say drive her, the trip home from the storage site was brilliant, not only did she run perfect but everything on the car also worked. Oh yes, finally there's no to-do list at all. No 33 will now be used as the weather improves and I for one sincerely hope to attend a few events this year, all things permitting of course.

MB 69

Matt purchased MB 69 because it was one of the two Middlebridge Scimitars that attended Curborough at the time we were recommissioning our Middlebridge No 33 (approx. 2001 / 2002). We used her as a reference point to help us. John Cassingham's superb car won many RSSOC Concours d'elegance competitions. John sold the car some years ago and it came up for sale recently after being used on a regular basis.

Matt's plan is that No 69 will be returned to her former glory. Already the seats are out and two buttons replaced prior to a thorough clean. An original Alpine stereo and aerial has been purchased and will replace the current high end CD player and DAB aerial. She will have a full & thorough "old fashioned service" and finally she does also need some paintwork, Matt is adamant that she is only painted as required to ensure that the car

remains as original as possible. Matt loved No 69 when John owned her and she was one of the cars that spurred us both to take up concours.

It's friendly family rivalry but Matt has suggested that he intends to challenge me at Curbs concours! "Bring it on" I said— I hope I don't get to eat my words. ;o)

John, If you get a chance could you please email me re' MB 69 as the address I have is bouncing back.

Our other money pits, whoops, (Classic Cars)



Both Sierras are now with Scot at Obsessive Car Care, the white car is coming to the end of a concours restoration and the Moonstone blue

car is having a full and thorough service, cam belt etc and once complete Matt would like to bare metal respray her to bring her to A1 condition.



Middlebridge Models (Frog)

I have been speaking with Rory of Middlebridge Frog model fame and he has mentioned that he currently has two Middlebridge orders to fulfil and if any owners or new owners would like a model in the colour and interior finish of their pride and joy now would be a good time as a minimum quantity is required to run the models. Rory can be contacted directly via rory@cullenconservation.org

Middlebridge Stolen

It is now over two months since Middlebridge No 48 was stolen and still no sign of her, I'm not sure what to think. Has she been stolen to order or for

parts, I can only presume it must be for parts as there's no export value, (well not that I know of).



I did own MB 48 some years ago and she is a high specification car with an interior to die for, The light cream leather seats with contrasting piping is quite rare and the light cream dash and door panels would be extremely rare. . Can I please urge everyone to be vigilant as the market for her parts is very limited and to please keep an eye on eBay, Facebook & Market place etc for cheap or rare parts.

I did manage to get some publicity in Classic Car Weekly and the article is reproduced on the last page of this MESSage.

Regalia

The Middlebridge logo'd regalia is now available, please just navigate to the For Sale area of the Middlebridge website and open the lower link.

Website

The website started to play up in March, we have now doubled the site capacity to take account of future updates and to allow for site growth, April once again sees our annual hosting charges.

George's Jargon

Some Good Stuff, at last!

February 6th saw the MESS celebrate its 8th birthday using Zoom to contact folk in these very difficult times. Fourteen owners were involved, some for the first time ever. Really good to see both old and new faces chatting, the usual banter flowed, and the hours simply flew by.

A REALLY BIG 'THANK YOU!'

I gave the result regarding the appeal for donations on that particular day with a follow up on the 8th February to confirm the situation. Sixteen owners had responded with donations, plus one 'enthusiast', an ex-owner at that. I have thanked everyone (hopefully) by email, however if you have donated and haven't received any confirmation from me, do please get in touch and I'll look into it. There is one such donation from Andrew Jackson whose email address keeps bouncing back as not available. Thankyou Andrew, your kind donation is also appreciated...

The following weekend showed that nineteen owners and one enthusiast had led to a very healthy bank balance of £1685.36. A big 'Thank you' then to every one for their wonderful donations and for entering into the spirit of celebrating the MESS's official beginnings. This successful appeal seems to have been encouragingly inspirational, this will probably be the way that we raise funds in the future.



The current 'Statement Closing Balance' of the MESS Account held at Lloyds Bank on the 15th February 2021 is £1715.36. This Statement was issued on the 1st March and the balance remains so on the 11th March. Please note this account has now been moved to Lewisham from Blackheath. All other details remain the same.

CAP-IT-ALL BADGES

During the Zoom meeting Alan Cavendish-Tribe asked about purchasing hub-cap badges to add to his new hub-caps, bought from Dan Mitchell. I put up the money for the bubble-badge's manufacture some 10 years ago and I had some left, however they are no longer of an acceptable quality – Alan has the last nine bubble badges that are still ok. The remaining 59 badges I shall destroy as the silver background has become 'foggy' in places. I am not comfortable with supplying tat.

That leads me onto the following question, how many current owners have badges that could do with replacing? Are yours looking past their best?

Enquiries with the company that made them originally show that they would cost a little more this time. Rather than me stump up my own money again, they will now be funded by The MESS. I'm quite happy to hold them in stock at home and Post them out to owners when required. The only difference being that the money would be paid directly into the MESS account rather than my personal one.

Please let me know if you're considering replacing your hub's badges, so I can order enough with a few extra as spares. A set of 4 would now cost you £10 plus p&p, instead of the £6 plus p&p charged 10yrs ago. This time, there is a small profit to be made for The MESS at these prices, something I never achieved!

I do have 78 steering wheel bubble badges left that cover over the printed silver one, no sign of deterioration is noticeable and cost the same £2.50 plus p&p, as before.

SHIELDED x 2

As mentioned in previous epistles, we now have some 36 different owners from our humble MESS beginnings, so it's worth mentioning the enamel grill badge situation, should it ever need replacing. Mick stumped up the money for their

limited-edition manufacture, they are made from brass, chrome plated and enamelled to a high standard. Every one fitted to a Middlebridge confirms that it is a genuine car. Not all Middlebridges have them fitted of course, but those that do have them have all been authenticated.

On the back of the badge is a coded number that I have engraved and it is recorded on a list that I hold. *Should your badge become damaged, you will need to return the remains to me before I can issue a new badge.* I will compare the codes to confirm that it is absolutely genuine. It is vital that this rule is followed as it prevents these unique badges from falling into the wrong hands and possibly being used to pass off Reliants as 'fake' Middlebridges. Yes, it has been known. No, they didn't get away with it...

PERSONAL PROTECTION

The red, white and blue umbrellas should soon be available. My recent visit to Tailor Made reveals that they have now spoken with the various suppliers that I had sourced. The company selected have gamps containing 8 panels alternating in the 3 colours, 2 red, 4 white, 2 blue. There are alternative suggestions in style. The original shield logo (without the word 'Scimitar') could be printed

on 2 white panels, the car's build number could be printed on the remaining 2 white panels, all opposite each other. That gamp will cost £31 with the 2 logos and 2 numbers, or £27 with 2 logos but without the numbers. The other alternative is to have all four panels printed with only the shield logo at £39. All plus VAT of course. Postage will be another £5. (see pic of mock-up). I shall confirm prices when I have some idea of interest, please see below...



I have recently been asked if the 'fold-up' type of umbrella is another possible choice. TM say that it can be made in the 3-colour panels, but these would be an extra £5 each. It's also worth remembering that they wouldn't be as strong as a golf type, but it would fit neatly into your hand bag.

These prices depend on ordering 25 gamps or more from the manufacturers, if it's only 10 ordered the price will be slightly higher. There is a minimum order of 10 demanded by the manufacturer, but no maximum amount. Without committing yourself, please let me know if you would like one or more even, so I have some idea of how many to order initially. If it's an odd amount, say 27, Tailor Made will buy 30 and have a few spare ready for the graphics to be applied, but to re-order more after the initial amount will demand the minimum amount of 10, as stated, hence the need for you to respond now, please.

IT'S A REAL PUZZLE

Maggie and I quite enjoy doing jigsaws and lockdown has allowed us the time to do quite a few. As part of her 95th birthday presents, I had a 1,000 piece jigsaw made of our back garden in all its flowering glory. It was supplied with an out-of-register A4 print to compare – the next best thing to useless really. It was quite handy to peer through the conservatory window however, to confirm what went where though... (see pic of back garden).

Discussing this exciting and riveting part of my hectic lifestyle with the usual MB suspects has



George's Garden Jigsaw Present
(You wouldn't know he was a sadist, would you? Ed.)

led to the idea of having a Middlebridge jigsaw made. What pic should it be though? The suggestion is of the three cars circulating Silverstone which became part of their Official promotion of the event, and was also our 30th Anniversary Event, plus it was aired across both



the East and West Midlands TV local news programmes, consequently the chosen subject has some considerable and historic credibility. (see pic.)

Another suggestion is the pic of Princess Anne that HRH specifically posed for 'The MESS' website, taken at Gatcombe Park. This would need her permission, I respectfully suggest. Please let us know if there is any interest in this particular idea, if there is sufficient, we can only seek her permission.

I have contacted about 10 companies who manufacture personalised jigsaws, only one offered what I wanted. Venus Puzzles will send me a link of the base order pic which you also need in order to buy a copy - but altering the name and address from mine to your very own. On request, I will send you that link. All the other companies would only do 'one-offs', though it was possible to order (say) 20 and I would then have to do the repackaging and postage.

Original cost for a 1000 piece Venus puzzle is £24.99, there is a discount of 15% amounting to £3.75, their shipping charge is £5.98. Total price then is £27.22. I'll probably order 2, maybe 3, one I shall keep and play

with, the other will go with the car when my time as its current custodian ceases as will the Personalised Handbook.

I should add that I was hoping to swell The MESS funds by buying (say) 20 puzzles, at a greater discount, but it all got a tad complicated then having to repost them to potential purchasers. A lot of messing around for perhaps a £1 profit per puzzle.

The 'Princess Anne' version however may have greater appeal to Joe Public and could be sold with the potential of a reasonably bigger profit. Your opinions or thoughts sought on the ethics of this one, dear reader. Having such a jigsaw available for the world to buy would certainly raise the Middlebridge profile once again, even if it was as a limited edition.

As an aside, a couple of jigsaws we have are called 'wasgij' which is 'jigsaw' spelt back-to-front. The picture on the lid differs from the actual jigsaw! The illustration shown is of a cartoonish scene painted (say) 2-300 years ago and you have to imagine what it may look like now. Different...

WHERE SHALL WE...?

This year may see some kind of 'normality' return to our restricted lifestyles. Whether events, such as those at the crowded NEC, will ever be allowed to happen again is still up for speculation. What may be possible is that small groups attending smaller shows may be the way forward.*

With that in mind, would YOU attend something like Sywell? Meet in a pub car park or its grounds? Our MESSEMBLY pub in Rugby has been suggested, or The Countryman pub in Staverton where the MESS was born? The Beekeeper pub in Beeston as used by the team that built our cars? We had a number of places lined-up to visit and to show off our cars, such as The Cutty Sark at Greenwich...

All food for thought, folks, and we would really like your input, ideas, suggestions, comments, so we continue going in the right direction. When our (no doubt) conditional 'freedom' is granted, it may be a matter of sending an email at very short notice simply stating what's happening and where. As usual, your input is always welcomed and appreciated, as is your company via Zoom. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Take great care all. My email address for responses to the various queries raised is: peckhampoppy@hotmail.co.uk

George

*STOP PRESS! Just as I was going to send this copy to Will an email arrived from David Williams who helps organise the 'Classic Stony'. He was seeking Marshalls for Sunday 4th July's Classic & Vintage Vehicle meeting in Stony Stratford near Milton Keynes. It's a show I've usually supported or marshalled at for the New Year's Day event. The lovely little town is shut off to everyday traffic and is filled with all manner of cars, motorcycles, army lorries, etc, lining the streets and car parks. The vast majority arrive under their own volition and some very rare stuff is driven there.

If you fancy marshalling please contact David Williams, jendavew@outlook.com to volunteer your services. You may just wish to display your car in one of the designated car parking lots, alternatively...

If the former suggestion appeals, we could all meet at Jack's Hill Café, A5 near Towcester and drive in together as a group. Both Bruce and Mick will hopefully accompany me and

we will line up our cars as seen in the Silverstone pic - and jigsaw. Good eh!

PS (If you've ever used the phrase: 'it's a Cock and Bull story', the term emanated from Stony Stratford).

MB35: A New Era

During Barrie's custodianship of MB35 between 1991 and 2020, it had travelled the length and breadth of England. Due to the time he had MB35, Barrie was known in the village where he lived throughout as 'the man with the GTE'.



Alan's SE5a when bought in 1990!



MB35 and SE5a together in 1998

Since June 2020, MB 35 has motored more miles that it did in the past 3 years. Alan and James (son and grandson of Barrie) have been progressively giving the car a very thorough service and inspection following its annual MOT. It has been 20 years since Alan sold his SE5a, a significant project, as can be seen in the before and after photos below.

The past 7 months have brought back many Scimitar related memories for Alan and he would like to take this opportunity to thank the MESS and in particular Will, George, Mick, Bruce and Dan for their advice during the Covid19 Zoom Meetings, including the supply of Middlebridge OEM wheel hubs and Middlebridge decals, and all the useful articles published on www.middlebridge-scimitar.co.uk and www.scimitarweb.co.uk.

Since Alan began his classic car interests some 30 years ago, it is remarkable how technology and communication, including the internet, has made the wealth of information on our cherished classic cars so accessible. Alan has also reacquainted himself with Graham Walker and Queensberry Road Garage for the purchase of a few life expired items.



MB35 in December 2020

It is Alan and James' aim for MB35 to attend a lot more club gatherings and events.



A socially distanced and patriotic meeting with a SE6b, SE6a and MB35



April 25th was national "Drive it Day" and was fronted by the FBHVC on behalf of the NSPCC. We sent out an email to members and that encouraged George and Alan to get together, suitably distanced.

I failed to organise something of my own as all my cars were out of MOT. (I know the SE5a could have been used as it is technically exempt but I still don't feel comfortable without a MOT.)



Alan and George (in the new stunning Regalia and patriotic trainers!) at Moreton in the Marsh, part of the pretty Fosse Way route.

Both MB14 and my SE5a were hardly used last year and I knew the SE5a had an advisory on the outrigger and it was booked in to have that done, then the pandemic happened and the car did all of 14 miles last year.

This year it passed with advisories on all the brake pipes. I asked the garage to sort this and found out that only one was considered to have corrosion and that was marginal. Apparently the tester, if the pipe is covered with a protective material, has to note it down as "corroded, covered in grease or other material" because they are not able to clean off the grease to check the condition of the perfectly well protected pipe underneath.....

The car is now booked in for later in the month to have both the front outriggers done. That's no

shame in my book as they have lasted 49 years.

MB14 was another story, although it had done a little more miles in the past year it had sat for several months unused and was put in for the test unprepared so I was irritated when it failed on a number of non functioning bulbs which were down to earth issues, a dodgy exhaust clamp and a broken frame on the seat. (That must have been the MOT tester as it was fine when I drove it there!)

It shows the subjectiveness of some of the MOT advisories as the last MOT noted play in a wheel bearing, a deteriorated dust cover and play in the inner rack joints, none of which appeared on this MOT—make of that what you will.



Will's cars awaiting MOT

The tester also failed the car with a mileage of 19,941 miles. Lack of attention to detail as it is on 199,000 miles. They did the same thing last year and I had to get the mileage amended again!

Anyway, both cars have now current MOTs and hopefully will rack up more than 14 miles over the next year.

MB48 Stolen

I was shocked to hear of the theft of MB48. The car was well known to me having been located some 20 miles away from me for a number of years and I had attended local shows with the owner.

As Mick said in his piece, this is a very well presented and unusual car and we can only hope that it turns up again, although the longer it remains missing the chances of it being found intact are getting slimmer.

To that end, please bear that in mind if you are offered spares or if a SE6 "Middlebridge conversion" turns up for sale be very cautious.

Have you seen this Middlebridge Scimitar? It disappeared in the Nottingham area a month ago.

CRIME

STOLEN SCIMITAR SOUGHT

Club appeals for whereabouts of Middlebridge Scimitar Number 48

The Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set (MESS) has urged enthusiasts to keep an eye out for a stolen Scimitar a month after it disappeared.

The car – number 48 of 78 built by Middlebridge Scimitar Limited between 1988 and 1990 – is registered H855 TUA and its current owner, Shaun Websell, bought it in 2008. It was in good running order when it was taken, sprayed in Porsche Metallic Blue with matching piping in the cream leather interior.

Shaun became aware that the car had gone from his Nottingham home on 5 March, but admits that it could have been taken days before that. He said: 'The car was kept inside a marquee to keep it away from the elements. I had last been inside the marquee around a week or so before but we then had a really cold spell with snow and high winds so I hadn't bothered tinkering with the Scimitar.'

'I came out on 5 March and noticed that what had been a small tear in the side panel had ripped to about three feet with the high winds and it was when I tried to tape it up that I realised the car was gone.'

'There wasn't any evidence of damage caused to the car when breaking into it; the car must have been taken some time within the previous week.'

MESS founder and registrar, Mick Gaughran, said: 'This is sad news for the marque. All 78 Middlebridge cars were accounted for until number 52 was stolen and never recovered some years ago, and now number 48 has been stolen. 'Let's hope it doesn't suffer the same fate.'

CCW will forward any information on to the MESS and the Scimitar's owner.
editorial@classiccarweekly.co.uk



MB48, along with MB's 46 & 47 at the Brodie Castle Classic Car show in 2016

MIDDLEBRIDGE ACCOUNT

Lloyds Bank, Blackheath London Branch, BX1 1LT. (Address on Chequebook). This branch is being closed and will move to Lewisham.

Sort Code: 30-90-89.

Account No: 49350668.

BIC: LOYDGB21256.

IBAN: GB79 LOYD 3090 8949 3506 68.