



The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set

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December 2022



Mick's MESSage

Once again winter has arrived and boy, does it feel cold out there. Thankfully I have the AGM notes to write up to keep me busy. In a bizarre twist and as per the last 3 years I suddenly once again have had my serious breathing issues return. I'm currently a month in and still not good.

I did manage to attend the AGM but no way could I stay for the dinner as I was just not well enough. Those that know me will know it's out of character for me to miss a nosh up! The good news (if it's good) is that I believe I have found the cause and its work related. As I write, I have a dilemma, I did not want to retire early but I can't cope with the current and probable/possible long term effects on my health.

I am still working in the background on another Middlebridge Project that will lend itself to

future MESSage updates as soon as there's a story to tell.



MB 33

I have promised No 33 a Wilwood brake upgrade this winter and also new Timken bearings for both outer rear axle stubs, I think I can hear a light bearing noise at 70 mph but due to 'olde ears' I can't blumin tell which side it's coming from. Hope fully Paul Turnbull will be doing the work early in 2023.

I do have to say that I was delighted with the comments made about her at the NEC especially the open cheque book offer made. The gold MB is the only car I don't want to sell and I think many people would be stunned at some of the machinery gone in favour of the Middlebridge.

MB 69

The final instalment from me, I'm delighted to say that No 69 is safely in the hands of her new owner and I sincerely hope and believe we will see her at events in 2023.

The new owner is an engineer and is already going through the car top to bottom and addressing all the potential issues that he finds.



Our other money pits!

I'm 3 down this year, and not looking to sell any more until 2023, when my minter Cossie will be next but sad to be moving a perfect car on but I do need to stick with the programme.

I was recently posed this question, re selling my other cars & why?

“Please explain why you have sold cars worth a lot more money and also considered much more exclusive than your gold Middlebridge.”

As the Gentleman asking owns a Middlebridge I said I would respond via my next MESSage, Here goes. You are correct, they are more valuable money wise, they are certainly cars that are very recognisable and rare on the road, people love a big tea tray on the boot, they are also very sought after, very quick and have a massive following. “what’s not to like eh’?

My Middlebridge; she was re-commissioned in 2002 by me & Matt my Son, In my opinion she still looks great, she can't rust away to dust, She's incredibly reliable & incredibly simple mechanically throughout, This actually means that she can be looked after, cared for and run by anyone with a basic mechanical knowledge and ideally stored in a garage with NO cover on.

My tin cars have to be stored professionally or reside in cossetted luxury de-humidified garages. A blemish on the suspenders or the underside is

considered taboo, a relay even slightly out of position would be sacrilege, Oh and should you go out on a damp day or worse still any rain appears you will potentially find yourself on FB with your number plate of course for all to see.

There is however one over-riding reason for keeping the Middlebridge and that is the MESS and the camaraderie it evokes, Everyone just wants the same goals, to promote the marque and to travel in our cars to venues like IOW etc, My tinnies would have to be in a covered trailer only to pop out 1 mile from the event due to the mileage rising, oh and the rain.

Xmas Pressie

My Daughter bought me 'Facts Disc' essentially a tax disc that goes in the car window, the difference is that it has a barcode on the front so that when a mobile phone is aimed at it they will get as much history and pictures of your car as you have uploaded. I'm just getting the data together and will hopefully present the disc at our next meeting at the Brewers Fayre.

For full details of this product please navigate to www.FactsDisc.com



George's Jargon

AGM

Our first physical AGM was deemed a success though 2hrs were (clearly) not enough to cover everything, surprisingly. Time just whizzed by. I know a lot of folk groan at the idea of an AGM, personally I've always enjoyed them, 'found them to be of interest, 'have answered queries as to why something was decided at a particular time, and can bring people to task, of course! Generally it clears the air and confirms that it's all going in the right direction. (Perhaps I should get out more?)

A future Zoom meeting may be the answer then (for now), to cover those items not discussed. Mick took the Chair and presented a 'SWOT' analysis – S: Strengths. W: Weaknesses. O: Opportunities. T: Targets. Input came from everyone attending which is exactly how it should be and much was gleaned by that.



Peter Freeman was the only one of us to turn up at the AGM in a Scimitar, just not a Middlebridge!

FINANCES

Rather than repeat or report the AGM from my perspective, I shall concentrate on the money side of 'The MESS'. Mick and I thought a precis of the Accounts would be fine, however I did offer to show the Books to anyone interested, no one did, so...

Money in: There were 15 folk who sent donations (one member donated twice), which amounted to £790.00. Added to that, Mark and Sue Cropper paid for the PLI and the MESS's Membership to the FBHVC, a total of £144.00. Total amount of Donations: £934.00. Thanks go, once again, to all those who donated to the funds – it is very, very much appreciated.

Outgoings: Eight cheques were issued totalling £1804.84. These were for various panels/publicity that mostly will be used again in future shows. On the plus side 'The MESS' now also have a sturdy Gazebo that we can customise, and should last for many years. On the minus side, the new carpet for the NEC cost £526.18 and had to be left behind, as we had nowhere to store it!

Balance: At the 22/11/2022 was £604.36.

Current Balance: £454.36. A cheque for £150 was raised for the webmaster which I presented along with a Christmas card from The MESS.

Summary: The current system of voluntary donations isn't ideal but most members subscribing seem to be inspired to donate around the time of The MESS Anniversary,

February 6th. It would be nice to have more folk donating, no matter the amount (big or small), especially in these difficult and challenging financial times.

Expected Future Costs: Some exhibition display panels will need replacing, due to wear and tear, plus the copy will need revising as situations change or fresh additions to some panels are required. There are also...:-

Webmaster's fees. PLI. Customising the new Gazebo. NEC Carpet. The latter gave a certain edge to 'The MESS' Stand, and this year's green carpet was remarked upon as being different, attractive and classy, not only by us who manned the NEC Stand, but by Joe Public too.

SHED THE LOAD

This is probably an ideal time to ask if any member has the facility to store such a carpet for the MESS, which is usually 4 metres long? Can we put a shed in your garden (say) to store it? Preferably somewhere in the Midlands. With such a small membership and relying totally on voluntary contributions, we like to get value-for-money and if we can re-use the carpet (for Instance) then that aim is achieved.

Should anyone wish to see the full accounts (except Alan Timmis, of course!), I can send photo copies.

A slightly irritating problem that I did have with this account with Lloyds Bank was not knowing if anyone had donated until I received a paper Statement, or if I physically visited my local branch to enquire. I still receive the Statements, but now I also get regular messages on my moby confirming the balance. If it differs from the last statement I can visit the Bank to see who-has-sent-what and I can then contact the donor accordingly to thank them, etc., sooner rather than later.

MESS 10th ANNIVERSARY

February 6th 2023 sees the 10th Anniversary of 'The MESS' which was mentioned in the last MESSage. There was no real response to the alternative suggestions made, regarding some kind of celebration(s), so for now Mick and I (possibly Dan), will have a beer at The Countryman, Staverton, near Daventry, Sunday lunchtime(ish) on the 5th February. You are most welcome to join us and will be allowed to buy us a pint or two...

Should the situation change, such as a flurry of members demanding something more than just a beer, an updated email will be sent.

CHRISSY DINS

It has to be said that this year's meal at 'The Brewers' wasn't the best, so new venues are already being sought for next year. The Rugby part of the world seems an ideal location and I have been inspecting some alternatives that are comparable to 'The Brewers' or 'The Elms'.

One such hotel is actually in Rugby, very close to the famous School. It is used by many parents to visit their child who boards at the School. It doesn't have its own car park, unfortunately. Immediately behind it though is the main public car park for Rugby, part of which is underground, but it's only for 3hrs. I've yet to find a nearby 24hr car park. Problems!

Apart from the hotel's menus, immediately next door is a Thai Restaurant which Maggie and I have used and enjoyed. Does this appeal? Or would the canal-side pub, next door to a Travelodge, and is contiguous with a large retail park with yet another retail park just across the road be more attractive? That is less than a mile from 'The Brewers' with all day parking.

There are others, of course, and I shall collate the info to present to the MESSEMBLY, perhaps those who regularly attend will accompany me to inspect them again for their appraisal...? No doubt this can also be discussed on Zoom which is available to all who wish to join in...and that is your choice.

MIDDLEBRIDGE SCIMITAR 35th ANNIVERSARY 2024

Yes, I know it's over a year away, nevertheless such events do take an awful lot of time to sort out and organise, I can assure you! A number of venues have been suggested, including Gatcombe Park, Althorp, Stanford Hall, Sulgrave Manor, Warwick Castle (hellishly expensive!), etc. I have begun to contact the dozen or so potential sites and will publish the outcome after discussions with the MESSEMBLY mob and the Zoomers.

Mick has suggested a 'themed' venue could add interest, such as the big house in Ashby-St-Ledgers where the gun-powder-plot was hatched out, it was the home of the Catesby family. The lovely village Inn was a place where I used to regularly imbibe and would have been a strong possibility, sadly it's just gone out of business,



but (who knows...), it may be taken over and re-opened before the due date.

WISHING YOU....

...a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year from Maggie and me, or for you of a certain age and time 'a Cool Yule and a Frantic First'. Whatever...have a good'n.

MB35 Winter maintenance and preparation for January MOT

Having collected a couple of advisories at the last MOT for front brake discs & pads and front anti-roll bar linkage pins this became the focus of the maintenance plan together with a pair of new adjustable shock absorbers and coil over springs. I believe the front springs were still the original

given their poor visual appearance, unequal coil spacing and the car sat ¾" low at the front.



I realise that even though one may have an idea of what to do, it is often worth reading any relevant articles on the web as well as the Reliant workshop manual. The article by Bill Sims

<http://www.middlebridge-scimitar.co.uk/downloads/ScimitarFrontSuspensionTips.pdf>

included a number of very useful pointers. With the hubs removed and recalling Peter Freeman's MESSage and Alan Timmis' article on felt seals

<http://www.middlebridge-scimitar.co.uk/downloads/Front%20hub%20felt%20seals.pdf> ,

I found that the only trace of the felt seal in the offside hub to be the steel backing, but the nearside felt seal assembly was complete.

At the time of writing this note, you will see in the photo that the work is in progress. Once both front suspension units have been thoroughly cleaned, removing flaking paint, grease and surface rust, these will be painted in situ.

Having seen the state of the felt seals, I purchased replacement pair, and as expected they were supplied oversize so these will be reduced to 5mm in thickness and the bore increased to fit the stub shaft as suggested by Alan Timmis. The other modification I intend to adopt while I have good access, is to replace the pop rivets securing the inner wing panels with stainless steel self-tapping screws.

At present I anticipate the reassembly to be straight forward and hopefully an advisory free MOT.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Bill Sims, Alan Timmis and Peter Freeman for sharing their experience with the MESS.

Alan

Coming and Going

MB6

Last time I mentioned that Tim had taken a deposit on MB6 and we now welcome Andy to Middlebridge ownership. In our email exchange just after he picked the car up he enquired about the throttle cable as it appeared a bit sticky. This reminded me that, several years ago now, we discovered these were no longer available and that refurbishment with the existing parts or modification to take a SS1 cable appeared the only route. Thankfully Andy managed to get oil into his own cable and working it back and forth to lubricate it seems to have made the action better and removed a lot of muck from inside the cable housing at the same time.

MB21

I also mentioned MB21 and I will let Martin introduce himself, below: -

Hi, I just wanted to introduce myself as the proud new custodian of number 21. My name's Martin and I have been into Ducati motorcycles for over 35 years now (which is handy as I'm the general

manager at Ducati Manchester!). I have been sort of looking for a classic car to enjoy in the summer this year, however I wanted a "turn key" no hassle purchase. I viewed some odd / unusual cars, from a Simca 1800 to a Lancia Fulva but nothing made me grab my wallet.

I wanted a car with decent performance, power steering and fuel injection as I have spent enough afternoons changing carb jets with my Ducati's in the past! So, I then found myself looking at Scimitar GTEs on eBay, however none of the cars offered were less than 150 miles away from me (too far to just pop over and have a look). I joined a few Scimitar clubs on Facebook as I know cars are often sold to other enthusiasts via social media, and would you believe that same day I saw an advert teaser placed by Dave Speed, showing a white Middlebridge!

The photos showed a white car on the back of a tow truck in the dark, so I messaged Dave and asked if I could secure number 21 with a deposit and arranged to view 4 days later my next day off. Dave was great and agreed to this. The next four days dragged on as you can imagine but I immersed myself in

Middlebridge history thanks to the amazing website.

So four days later I was up at 4.30 am which was totally unnecessary as Dave lives just 20 mins drive from me! I arrived at 10.00am and was driving away at 10.30 am (never been one to mess about lol!).

Dave was very helpful and easy to deal with, explained as much as he knew about number 21 and I would recommend Dave to anyone – thank you Dave!

The drive home was good fun, number 21 performed just as I expected, the driving experience was involving, noisy at times with that old car smell I hadn't experienced for a long time!

Number 21 is now sat tucked away in my garage with some Italian exotica with two wheels so its in good company. I wheel her out on my days off, just to have a good look and will carry out a full service and enjoy messing over the winter season.

I hope to attend any events and Look forward to meeting fellow owners in 2023, but in the

meantime here is number 21 with a 3 valve Ducati ST3 (A very rare engine with two inlet and one exhaust valve), this bike has covered just 2390 miles since 2004.



Thank you to Mick & Will who have extended a warm welcome to number 21s new custodian!

Kind regards

Martin

Alloy Radiators

Mick tells me that Nigel at QRG has an opportunity to get alloy radiators manufactured but needs an original radiator as a pattern.

There are two radiator types, one for the auto and one for the manual gearbox. If anyone can help with a spare, please let us know. It would also be good to get an indication of the number of folk interested in an alloy radiator, other than me and Mick.

Middlebridge Authentication Register

As explained in The Essential Buyer's Guide series published by Veloce Books, classic, collector and prestige cars usually come with a portfolio of records that document the history of the car. For many makes of collectable car this could include a certificate proving the age and authenticity of a particular vehicle, sometimes called a 'Heritage Certificate', and a valuation certificate or letter signed by a recognised expert.

Mick Gaughran made numerous enquiries, establishing that the Middlebridge marque would likely benefit from Heritage Certificates due to the limited number of cars manufactured. The British Motor Industry Heritage Trust provided a sample certificate together with advice on how to certify a car when the manufacturer is no longer in business. Classic car insurance specialist, Adrian Flux confirmed that Heritage Certificates are considered in 'Agreed Value Insurance' applications.

Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set (MESS)

'MESS' Heritage Certificate

The details below are from the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set archive data files and are backed up with photographic evidence. Many of the original Middlebridge files were destroyed when the company went into receivership in 1990.

Make and Model:	Middlebridge Scimitar GTE, (Grand Touring Estate)	
Body Style:	Sporting Estate	
Date of Manufacture:	May 1989	
Chassis Number:	[REDACTED]	
Body Number:	SNM [REDACTED]	
Engine Number:	[REDACTED]	
Gearbox:	A4LD (Automatic)	
Exterior Paint Colour:	Pearl White	
Interior trim Colour:	Two tone grey	
Interior Specification: (extras)	Automatic transmission, Walnut, Full Leather, Wool carpets. Dim-Dip kit fitted, Sunroof.	
Original Dealer:	[REDACTED]	
First Registered for use:	01.08.1989	
First Owner:	[REDACTED]	
First Registration Mark:	[REDACTED]	
General Remarks:	Sold with full options package.	
Signature:	Date:	Position:
Signed

While every care has been taken to ensure the correctness of the information supplied, the 'MESS' Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set cannot be held liable for any errors or omissions or the consequences thereof. The 'MESS' accepts no liability if incorrect details or numbers have been quoted by the enquirer. It is not realistic option to manually inspect each car as we have cars Worldwide. We will be totally reliant on photographic evidence from the owners requesting the 'MESS' Heritage Certificate's. These photos will be stored for future reference. (Unfortunately, no original Middlebridge Scimitar Ltd factory records are in our possession at the time).

The MESS is pleased to announce that we are developing the Middlebridge Authentication Register that will provide a robust and auditable process for issuing Heritage Certificates whilst maintaining a record of supporting evidence. Data has been collected from a sample of cars that attended the Sywell Classic Piston & Props event.

The evidence required for the Register is:-

Scimitar Model Identification

(photo of car front showing grill and number plate)

Date of Manufacture

Chassis Number

(photo of Chassis Plate)

Body Number

(photo of Body plate)

Engine Number

(photo of engine number)

Gearbox: A4LD (Automatic OEM) or Type

9 (5 Speed Manual OEM)

owner statement)

Exterior Paint Colour (original)

(owner statement)

Exterior Paint Colour (current)

(owner statement)

Exterior Specification: (extras)

(owner statement)

Dim-Dip Lighting Kit; Cruise Control;

Sunroof; Tow Bar & Electrics

Interior trim Colour

(owner statement)

Interior Specification: (extras)

(owner statement)

Full Leather; Leather Seat Facings; Velour Cloth

Quality Veneer Facias; Standard Black

Facias; White Facias

Wool Carpets; Velour Carpets

Original Dealer

(photo of Black Book)

First Registered for use

(photo of Black Book)

First Owner

(photo of Black Book)

First Registration Mark

(photo of Black Book)

Current Registration Mark

(photo of car front showing grill and number plate)

Current Mileage

(photo of odometer)

Date of Vehicle Data

(date of authentication submission)

Further information will be emailed to each of the Middlebridge Scimitar owners with an invitation to participate in the Middlebridge Authentication Register and for a small

administration fee receive an official signed Heritage Certificate. The aim of the Middlebridge Authentication Register is to include all of the existing Middlebridge Scimitars and to promote the marque.



MESSEMBLY

In person. The monthly MESS meeting has resumed and be held on the Second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in The Brewers Fayre, Central Park, CV23 0WE. Every enthusiast is welcome to join us, owner or not. Banter expected and encouraged.

Virtual MESSEMBLIES will continue with the invitations sent to members by email.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
FROM ALL AT THE
MESS!

MIDDLEBRIDGE ACCOUNT

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