




The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set

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September 2018

MICK'S MESSage

My Car No 33

After what seemed to be a never ending winter, it certainly seemed like that to me, finally mid-April arrived and with it some sun and warmth. I took the opportunity to finally prepare my car for the coming season.

While doing the engine I discovered a slight tickover fluctuation that was caused by a



leaking gasket between plenum & inlet manifold. I could just hear a leak and a splash with a trigger sprayer produced bubbles and a slight change to the tickover. The gaskets were not the easiest item to source, I tried Burtons & Ford but no joy. I had a thought - Ebay. I was very lucky as there was only one on the site. Not only that but it was a genuine original Ford one & in the original Ford Motorcraft packaging.

On removal of the manifold it was clear that there was an issue at one corner and on checking with a straight edge I discovered that the mating surface was not true. This meant I had to get it re-ground flat. This is certainly a first for me! I have also had to change the 'S' PAS hose from the pump to reservoir, this is another item that is getting harder to get. (this hose is Escort Cosworth).

As mentioned in the last MESSage I will be taking the car abroad this year so 'belt & braces' I changed both of the V belts, checked all of the hoses and treated her to some new oil. I have been using her for work and have been out for a number of good runs, more of which later in the MESSage!

MESSEMBly

A monthly MESS meeting is held on the first Monday at 7pm in The Elms Pub, Lutterworth LE17 4HB.

Food available and Travelodge next door. Every enthusiast is welcome to join us, owner or not.

Banter expected and encouraged. Ditto rude jokes.

Auctions, Sales and Lend/Lease

This MESSage we are trying a new idea. I am continually amazed, and pleased, with the help our mailing list members are willing to give to other owners. Following a suggestion from Dan about a for sale section this expanded with Mick offering a unique Middlebridge item for auction to raise MESS funds and Pete Humphries suggesting including spares for free or a loan for fault diagnosis.

So, here goes—let us know what you think.

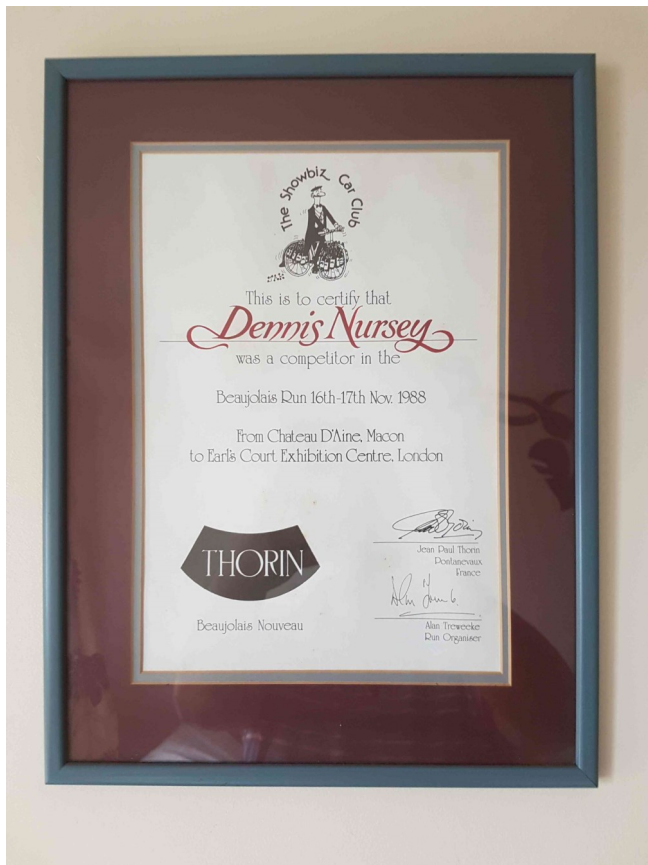
Email Auction—Middlebridge Scimitar GTE Framed Original Certificate

Middlebridge Scimitar No 1 was driven on the 1988 Beaujolais Run by the then Middlebridge Chief Executive Dennis Nursey. Dennis told me the story of the trip when he

gave me this item. He left the Chateau with a Porsche on route back to the ferry, unfortunately the Porsche grounded its sump on the gate mounting on the floor as it went out of the gate. Dennis pushed hard for the Ferry and for the win but on arrival back at the port he was greeted by loads of unhappy queueing truck drivers as the French had stopped all Ferry crossings! Needless to say it would not have been a good idea to push to the front of the queue.

When Dennis gave me this item I said I would auction it and the proceeds would go straight to the MESS funds. The lucky winner could use our 'DONATE' button on the website to pay. I will pay the postage personally.

With the above in mind please dig deep to have a real piece of Middlebridge history hanging on your wall.



Auction Rules (Small Print!)

In the interests of fairness, and because Mick wants to bid, the editor will act as seller. Closing date for bids will be 30th September 2018. Anyone wishing to bid should email will_anderson@live.com with the subject line Beaujolais and in the body of the mail the amount they wish to bid and their contact details. I will reply to confirm receipt.

In the event of a tie in the amount bid then the first received will be the winner.

At the closing date I will publish the number and amount of bids received in an email to members but not the names of anyone other than the winning bidder. The bid emails will be forwarded to another MESS member (not bidding) for checking to confirm that I had taken all into consideration fairly.

The bidders have to agree to this as a condition of taking part.

Auctions, Sales and Lend/Lease

Original black luggage cover,
£85, Dan Mitchell,
01926 814484,
Warwickshire

A Brace of Load Covers

Well, like buses, you wait for ages
then two come along at the same
time!

Please contact the sellers directly if
you are interested.

A folding luggage cover in
brown, £100,
George Sampford,
07816 448494 Rugby
(George will donate the
Proceeds to the MESS)

Skimmed Flywheel/Potentiometer

- Peter Humphries has a skimmed flywheel that is free on uplift and a potentiometer that he would be willing to post out for diagnosis on a loan basis.
- He would like to know if anyone has a spare engine management unit on a similar post and return basis
 - Email: - peteandmariehumphries@sky.com



Brake Master Cylinder

- Brake Master Cylinder and Reservoir, £100 plus postage. (It's heavy!)
- Email: - will_anderson@live.com



Dash & Console Veneer Kit

- MB, 6A or 6B dash & console veneer kit. From QRG £175 on offer at £100 plus postage
 - Email: - will_anderson@live.com



The MESS "ACE'd" it!

MESS at the ACE

Five of us met up on 23rd May at the iconic Ace Café venue on the North Circular Road, London where owners and enthusiasts had a great time with people coming & going during the day and it was good to welcome David Bend to his first Middlebridge event. It was a very relaxed affair with visitors showing a lot of interest in the marque and indeed many finding out that another truly British marque even existed. As with all MESS events all of the cars are driven to and from and our furthest travelled on this occasion was Bruce from Derbyshire.



(Pictures Bruce Beauchamp)

GEORGE'S GABBLINGS

Here's another one to watch...

Maggie was organising a rental car for our next trip to Spain, "You do have a full international licence, don't you?" she inquired. "I'm sure that I do, but I'll check it..." Yes it was, BUT - it was over two years' out of date!!!

Crikey, how did that happen! Well, in January, just over 2 years' ago, I moved to my current address, amongst all the necessary documents to have altered was my Driving Licence, which I did. On its return I simply checked that the COA, was correct, however what I didn't notice was that the new Licence was only valid for 3 months – up to my 73rd birthday in May.

Once you reach the age of 70 years you have to renew your Licence every 3 years. No reminder was sent this time and, according to my local PO, reminders are no longer issued. In something of a panic I sent off for a renewal immediately. A very anxious few weeks were experienced, I can assure you. It also raises the question, why on earth did they not renew my Licence to include my next birthday? Is it really so complicated to include the bleedin' obvious?

I contacted my local MP to seek his advice, he was in a bit of a quandary here. If he had made an official inquiry, the Police would have to be notified of my misdemeanour. I have been driving and riding the Highways illegally, dear reader, quite unintentionally, but completely illegal all the same. Consider – had I been involved in a RTA, I wouldn't have been insured, because I shouldn't have been driving...

Discussing the situation with others of a similar vintage (to me), has revealed that some more old

drivers were also unintentionally illegal, one chap's was 5 years' out of date. An 86 years old friend of Maggie's was not only over 3 years out of date, but had successfully claimed on her Insurance for a RTA, no-one had asked for her Driving Licence details! She insists that she wasn't sent a reminder either. This begs the question: just how many oldies are driving on the roads without realising that they shouldn't be?

As mentioned, reminders are no longer issued apparently, however another 86 years old neighbour did get a reminder this year, so just what is going on?

Further inquiries have shown that you can let your Licence lapse for 2 years before you have to

take another Driving Test. My renewal application was months over that time and the full implications were frightening. Taking another Driving Test is not a problem, indeed, time permitting, I intend to take the Advanced Driving Test this year. There is also an on-line campaign, that

I endorse, which is seeking to have regular Driving Tests, once you reach 70 years. The Motorcycle Test, however, is unbelievably involved and difficult. I'm convinced it's simply a way of stopping folk from riding motorcycles by design.

Well, I did get my Licence renewed without further ado – so, is there a DVLA problem that's being covered up, are renewals now being issued because of known problems, was my Licence issued because someone hadn't noticed it was over the allowed 2 years?

I offer no answers, I merely broadcast my experience as a warning to the masses, coz the consequences could be life changing – and very costly.



Time marches on...

Sorting through masses of paperwork, I became aware that I have now owned my Middlebridge for exactly 10 years. Where has that time gone? The Scimitar was my everyday means of transport until I bought my VW T5 Transporter which I am converting into a swish Camper Van. Occasional use these days only underlines how much I enjoy driving the Scimitar, how it is driven in a more relaxed and sedate manner, how it's never lost in Sainsbury's car park, how fuel consumption is better than my van. Its recent MOT has highlighted a couple of issues to be addressed, nothing serious, especially considering it's almost 30 years old. The VW, by comparison, has cost me a fortune to keep road worthy, and because it's the rare 4wd version, its fuel consumption has never exceeded 30 mpg, and just 19 mpg when towing my caravan. Difficult to compare in some respects as both vehicles do a completely different job, nevertheless, I enjoy driving both but one is much kinder to the wallet.



Monies

As you should be aware, The MESS also has a PayPal Account, I've still been unable to find out how it works, how to access it, how to transfer its contents into the Nationwide Account. All good intentions, and meetings organised to educate my ignorance, have been interrupted by personal

reasons, both mine and Marks, who set it up for us. Problem is, life (and death) keeps getting in the way...additions to the MESS Funds are always very welcome anytime. Indeed, a £100 donation was gratefully received from Will Anderson, who, amongst his many roles as you know, edits and publishes The MESSage. Thanks Will. *(No problem George, I can hardly encourage others to donate following the sale of a car if I don't practice what I preach!! Ed.)*



Bollotics* - again...

It has taken a hell of a lot of work, time, effort, and even risk to health, and considerably vast amounts of money to get where we are today in successfully raising the profile of the Middlebridge. I make no excuses whatsoever for that achievement, especially given the history of how The MESS was forcibly born.

It is concerning then that the attitude which we hoped had been laid to rest seems to have resurfaced over the allocation of stand space between MESS and RSSOC at one of the regional shows. Will, who is also the RSSOC MB Registrar, has assured me that this is not a universal opinion within RSSOC and that, equally, members have been supportive of the MESS stand. He has agreed to take this up with the RSSOC Committee to ensure mutual support to the benefit of all. I hope he is correct but I will be watching!!

(*A new word I've invented, the meaning should be obvious.)

Middlebridge 67

As mentioned in the last report, I was discussing the sale of MB67. Paul Crocker, and his wife Kate, had visited the Middlebridge stand at Sywell in 2017 and were quite taken with the GTE and the versatility and practicality when compared to his Marcos and Lotus Europa. They had then looked at a couple in the past year which did not tick all the boxes before realising, as we all eventually do, that with such a limited run of cars the “ideal” one is often unrealisable! Having spoken again to Mick Gaughran to see what was about; he let them know that MB67 could be for sale as I had never formally advertised the car.



MB67 at The Grand Entry, Cullen House

There was only one problem, Paul was about as far south as it is possible to get in England and I am on the Moray coast in north east Scotland. That made it

somewhat difficult for him to view, so I emailed a comprehensive set of photos and as accurate a description as I could.

I knew the car was essentially sound (it had passed every MOT it had from 2006 until this year with only 2 advisories) but as it was an incomplete restoration when I acquired it there were a few minor issues that needed fettling before it could be driven any distance.

The most obvious was a brake judder which was similar to that I had experienced in MB14 and to cure it I had the rear drums replaced. That made a great improvement but revealed that there was still some judder from the front. Other things included getting the passenger electric window switch working, the boot lock and finally door fit, as the trimmer failed to remedy this before handing the car back to the previous owner and although this was improved it still needed new seals. I had this work done at a local garage after purchasing the new drums from Graham Walker.



MB67 showing the depth of the paint colour in the late sunshine

Despite this Paul still arranged to fly up to look at the car and in mid August I picked him up from Aberdeen airport (It's a brave man that arrives in Aberdeen in shorts, even in August!) following a very early morning start from his home and took him back to Cullen to inspect MB67.

After a test drive and check over we agreed on a price and Paul set off just after lunchtime on the first leg of a journey that a popular search engine reckoned would be 612 miles and slightly over 10 hours, albeit he intended to break that with an overnight stop at a B&B near Scotch Corner.



MB67 with its new owner

Now, not that I am in the least competitive but I thought I held the record for the longest buy and drive back in a Middlebridge, having bought two cars from the south and driven them back from Bristol but this trip beats me by about 50 miles!

Paul managed to get back home without any drama but noticed some noise from

the transmission tunnel that he is going to investigate and is not impressed with the brakes (like a few other owners) so is looking at a brake upgrade.

Coming and Going

We have been contacted by the new owners of MB45 and MB60 and welcome David Bend and Andrew Kerr to Middlebridge ownership. MB54 appears to have gone straight to Graham Walkers and was seen there in a thread on Scimitarweb recently.

MB67's change of ownership has been covered but we know of another Scottish car that is "tentatively" for sale after talking to the owner at the recent Historic Wheels show at Brodie Castle. Robbie Williamson is considering selling MB48 in the right circumstances. If anyone is interested let us know and we will pass on details.

Check Your Nuts!

Have you all still got your nuts ?!

Wheel nuts of course. But have you all got the washers on the wheel nuts as they can be left off after wheel changes ?



MB Nut with Correct Washer

Over my 29 years experience owning the prototype several cars with Performance wheels have been running around without the washers. Another car without washers surfaced recently.

It is worth checking your car to make sure that the washers are all still there.

It is easy to lose the washers when wheels have been off the car for new tyres or balancing the wheels.

Dan

Belt Up!

Chris Bartlett has been doing a lot of digging around to identify the correct alternator V-belt to put on his car when he fits the new alloy rocker covers as this needs to be longer for the alternator to sit higher to avoid fouling the covers.

This has brought to light a question over the size of belts listed on the Middlebridge website FAQ. The information there quotes that the Quinton Hazell (QH) alternator belt should be QBA1225. However, this is a rather long 9.5mm belt, and the one that would be correct for his engine is QBB1200 - 13mm wide and an inch shorter. The other belt, QBB1000, for the power steering matches the Gates belt on MB61.

He has also found that:

1. the belts used for the Scorpio/Granada are NOT the same as for the MB (the Ford cars use shorter belts, presumably the bodywork differences allow this)
2. the standard MB belts from Gates are

6470MC for the power steering – 1000mm by 13mm and 6478MC for the alternator – 1200mm by 13mm

This intrigued me so I went to look at my cars. MB14 has the QH QBB1000 power steering belt so that ties in and it has a Halfords alternator belt HB1187b which probably fits because it is a narrower belt and sits down in the pulley. MB67 also has a Halfords alternator belt but it is a HB1200c and that would seem to tie in with Chris' suggestion that the alternator belt length should be 1200mm by 13mm. The Granada\Scorpio belts may be shorter but the 2.9 Sierra lists a belt 1196mm by 13mm that is very close to the specification.



Peter Freeman has put his alloy covers on and he used a 1225mm belt but you might notice on the photo that he has taken a V out of the filler cap so ideally a belt 1250 would clear that problem and still would not have the alternator hitting the water tank, although he has moved the tank slightly to allow extra space, just in case.

Private Plates—A Process Primer

Most of you will know my interest in number plates and a quick check of the Register suggests that about 19 cars have private plates and 32 have had either a private registration from new or a plate change at some time. Chris Bartlett expands upon the whole personal plate minefield having just acquired the G1 GTE plate for MB61: -

Ever since FAB 1 adorned Lady Penelope's 6-wheeler Rolls and Parker uttered those immortal words "Right Ho, Bee Laydee" we've all known about Private Plates – and how mostly we can't afford any of the half-decent ones like R5 SOC. But we all know plates like these are bought and sold and even the government has got in on the act – since as long ago as 1989 in fact.



Many people are confused by the process of buying and selling these registration

marks, and pay commercial dealers to do the paperwork for them. But hundreds of pounds can be saved by doing the transfers yourself, which is straightforward if you understand the process. This article aims to give an insight into the legal structure behind the process – once you understand what the process does and how it works, the rest is easy.



All UK registration marks are issued by the government, acting through its agent DVLA – that's what the "A" is for – "Agency" - an agent of HM Government.

In law, that means that all registrations are "owned" by the state. Ownership in this context is a rather misleading word, as there is no tangible object you can pick up and look at. Anyone can get a pen and paper and write any old "registration" down – FUN E1 for example – but you don't "own" it, and you can't use it on your car.

As an intangible 'thing', it's perhaps easier to regard registration marks in the sense of "having the right to use", rather like having a TV licence gives you the right to use (ie: watch) your TV.

When DVLA grants the right of use of a registration mark to someone, it says "you can use this mark on your car and you won't get into trouble". Now fortunately

for us they also allow us to trade that right – to assign it to someone else, or to pass it on to someone else, either for free as a gift, or for money as in trade, or in kind, as in bartering. They do this by giving you a Retention Certificate, which is a piece of paper showing your name and address, and the registration mark which DVLA is allowing you to use, subject to its prevailing terms and conditions.

For most people most of the time, this whole process is invisible, because it's subsumed within the ownership of a vehicle – you have a car, and that car has a registration mark, and DVLA lets you use that mark on that car by virtue of you paying the road tax and having the V5C and so on – but legally all of the above “grant of the right to use” process is still there, contained within the rights to use the vehicle.

When you sell the car, of course, the registration mark and all of the rights to use it generally pass to the new owner of



the vehicle along with the vehicle itself. Indeed, the vehicle is typically identified as the object of the sale transaction by its registration mark.

It's only when you separate the physical vehicle from the associated registration mark that you become aware of the rules



that apply to the rights to use the registration mark.

There are three ways you can get a Retention Certificate:

you can 'buy' a brand new, never-before-issued registration from DVLA (confusingly, DVLA use the term “buy private plates” on their web site – convenient but misleading);

you can buy the right to use a previously issued registration from someone else – a dealer, friend or whoever; or

you can separate the registration you already have on your car from the car itself, for example when you sell the car or if you want to transfer it to another of your own cars.

In each of these cases, DVLA grants you the right to use the registration mark. You become “The Grantee”.

Once you are the Grantee, you're stuck with it until the registration is assigned to a car – could be any car; could be the same one you took the plate from; could be someone else's car – whichever car it is, and whoever owns the car, you remain The Grantee until the mark is assigned to its new home.

In this process, the vehicle that is going to have the mark needs to be identified, and as usual that's by its current owner (which could be you, or someone else), their address, and the registration mark that is currently on that vehicle prior to the transfer.



If you assign the mark to one of your own cars, this is easy as you are the owner, you have all the V5 details to hand, and you have the same address (best not to combine moving private plates at the same time as you are moving house!!).

However, if you assign the mark to someone else's vehicle, all of these details will be different – you may not even know them all. Furthermore, the owner of the vehicle that is to receive the plate is of course not you – so he has no right to use the mark. At this moment in time, only you have the right to use the mark, granted to you by DVLA.

To get over this, you have to “nominate” the owner of the new host vehicle as your “Nominee” – and in doing so you allow him to hold, in your name, the right to use the mark.

NOTICE THE FINE DISTINCTION HERE – he does not have the right to USE the mark, he does not "own" it. He simply is allowed to act in your place – as your nominated

agent - in transferring the mark to a new host vehicle.

Let's suppose you have sold the Retention Certificate to another person. That person now has the paper certificate. But he is NOT the Grantee – that's still you – and neither is he the Nominee, until you make him so. He simply holds the paper certificate. This is important, because the registration mark is now in a kind of limbo. You, the Grantee, can't do anything with it because you no longer have the Certificate. The person you sold it to can't use the mark, because as far as DVLA is concerned it's still assigned to you – you are still the Grantee, and the new owner of the Certificate has not yet been nominated as your agent.

So where do we go from here?

In fact, this situation is very useful for the person now holding the Certificate, because it gives him three choices:

He can transfer the mark to his own car (by becoming the Nominee);

he can sell (or give away etc) the Certificate (at a profit or whatever, if he wants to) to a third person (who then is in the same position as the seller was before the sale);





Certificate (in boxes 1 and 6) before parting with it.

As long as the new holder of the Certificate doesn't sign or date it, he has all his three options open to him until he decides what to do.

When he has decided, he simply sells or gives away the Certificate unchanged (as described above) to a new owner who is then in the same position, or...

or

he can just sit on it – keep it for a rainy day; keep it until it goes up in value; keep it as an asset to be passed on to his heirs – as long as he does so within the ten years time limit.

However, whatever this person now holding the Certificate chooses to do, he must do it with the consent of the Grantee – remember, the original Grantee is still the person that DVLA gave the rights to use to.

Now you might say, well how can that work, if the Certificate changes hands several times, how on earth can the final owner get the consent of the original Grantee – he might not even still be alive!

The answer is very simple.

The legal process requires that the Grantee signs and dates the Certificate before it is sent off to DVLA to request the transfer of the Mark to the new vehicle (at which time the new vehicle's owner becomes the Nominee, and then when DVLA assigns the mark, that 'Nominee' now becomes the new Grantee, and at this point the original Grantee drops out of the scene altogether).

So all that is needed is for the original Grantee to sign BUT NOT DATE the

Or, he chooses to assign the mark to one of his own vehicles, in which case he dates the Grantee's signatures, fills in the new vehicle details in Box 1 of the Certificate, adds his own address details in Box 2 and sends the form off to DVLA – he can even do this whole process on line.

If he does it on-line, the change of mark for the new vehicle takes effect immediately, so he needs to inform his insurance company of the change, and put the appropriate new number plates on the vehicle before he drives it on the public road.



As at August 2018, because the original transfer fee of £80 was paid by the original Grantee, there is nothing further to be paid to DVLA. However, as mentioned above, once the mark has been assigned to a new vehicle the whole process stops. The

person who had been nominee now becomes simply the registered Keeper of the new host vehicle.



If he wants to move the mark on again he will have to pay a new £80 fee to DVLA, and he will become the new Grantee. You can see that the key to this whole process is the assignation of the registration mark to a specific vehicle with a specific Registered Keeper. Once it has been assigned, all of the past process ends, and if the vehicle owner wants to move the plate again without the vehicle it's been assigned to, he has to kick off a whole new process.

Inevitably there are exceptions and special cases – for example, a Q mark can neither be assigned to a vehicle nor transferred from it, once it has first been assigned by DVLA. It stays with the first vehicle for the life of that car and then it is withdrawn by DVLA.

Perhaps the most-cited restriction is that a car cannot be made to appear more recent than it actually is. For example, MB61 GTE (2011 mark) cannot be assigned to Middlebridge GTE 61 since the car was first registered in 1990. The plate would make it appear 21 years younger than it really is. Of course, with the timeless design of the Scimitar such confusion is entirely

plausible.... However, this car, originally assigned an H mark, currently wears G1 GTE, making it appear older than it really is, by one year.

Since many private marks are 'personal' and have some meaning special to the owner rather than the vehicle, these marks tend to be "moved on" from one car to another as the owner disposes of his old vehicle and buys a new one. This raises the question of what happens to the car the mark has just been taken from? DVLA has in recent years established the practice of, when a private plate is first assigned to a car, retaining the original registration hidden from public view, anticipating that when the personal plate is transferred off the car, that original mark will be re-assigned to it. In this way, the original mark effectively becomes stuck on its first car, almost but not exactly like a Q mark does.

This is not usually a problem, unless the lucky owner happens to have two 'interesting' marks. Suppose for example you buy a modern car which happens to have the mark IM 41 LIN. This doesn't have any special appeal, so you decide to buy a special plate from DVLA – B16 BOY. Your lately retired father then gets a flat cap and a Volvo, and fancying a plate of his own





thinks “IM ALL IN” would be rather appropriate. However, although this plate is not in use on any vehicle, DVLA will not allow him to obtain it as they have ‘locked’ it to your car, presently masquerading as B16 BOY.

Oops!! There now follows a domestic in which Dad gives you an ear bashing for thoughtlessly denying him his only pleasure in retirement. If only you’d thought things through first ... The only way to appease him is to transfer on B16 BOY to a third car, get IM41 LIN re-assigned to your car, and then transfer it to your dad’s Volvo. Only at this point will DVLA assign a completely fresh mark to your own car – all rather needlessly complicated and expensive!

You can find all the conditions of transfer on the DVLA website – remember, you don’t “own” the mark, you only have assignment of the right to use it, so DVLA remains free to vary from time to time (and they do!) the conditions of use. These cover things like letter spacing, the font used, even the firms you are supposed to use to buy your number plates.

So there’s a lot more to private plates than

is covered here, but this article seeks only to help you understand why the process of transferring these plates is the way it is. And how to make it work best for you.

© CDB

2018 08 05

Original Suspension Units

Original Middlebridge Bilstein shock absorbers can be rebuilt by Leda/Harvey Bailey to original spec for a reasonable price and new springs provided.

Please DO NOT THROW AWAY ORIGINAL BILSTEIN SHOCK ABSORBERS if you change to another make.

<http://leda.com/>

Kind regards

Dan

Thank You

Part of the strength of the MESS is the mailing list and I am continually amazed by the willingness of the owners to help when we send round the help request emails.

After his distributor SOS Pete Humphries asked if we could let members know how grateful he was for all the help in sorting out the issue with his electrical problem.



“There were a lot of replies that went off in all interesting directions.

Nigel told me he thought the distributor,

ECU and throttle sensor were all colour coded. He had a spare ECU and when he looked at it, there was nothing on it.

Mark Wilson had also heard about the green dot. When he dug a dizzy out for me, that was new old stock from the MB auction, it had a back spot on it.

I think that the Hall effect sensor and the amplifier are the two bits that have to match up. Part numbers for dizzy and sensor were very similar but not identical."

And a further thank you: -

Message from Martin North, webmaster

I would like to thank the MESS for the generosity shown during my recent (big) birthday. I was very surprised to receive a card and gift and would like to thank you for your generosity ! For those that don't know me, I'm a long term Scimitar owner, inheriting the bug from my Dad when I was a toddler and I'm still driving his former SE6 over 35 years later. I've not had the pleasure of sampling a Middlebridge yet, but I do also have a 1965 Straight Six Coupe and a 1985 SS1 to go with the SE6. I enjoy looking after the website and learning about the Middlebridge, I remember seeing two fairly new examples in the late 1980's and being very impressed. It's also great to see the measures that you go to to keep your cars in the public eye and so well maintained / improved. "



MESS Meetings

Following the ACE café meeting reported last time the MESS arranged to meet up at the Lincolnshire Aviation Museum on 18th June and to have a photoshoot with the cars in front of the aircraft. These events raise funds for the museum and for the preservation of the Lancaster, a worthwhile cause. However, not all went well on the journey home as Mick Gaughran recounts below!



Auto Box Woes

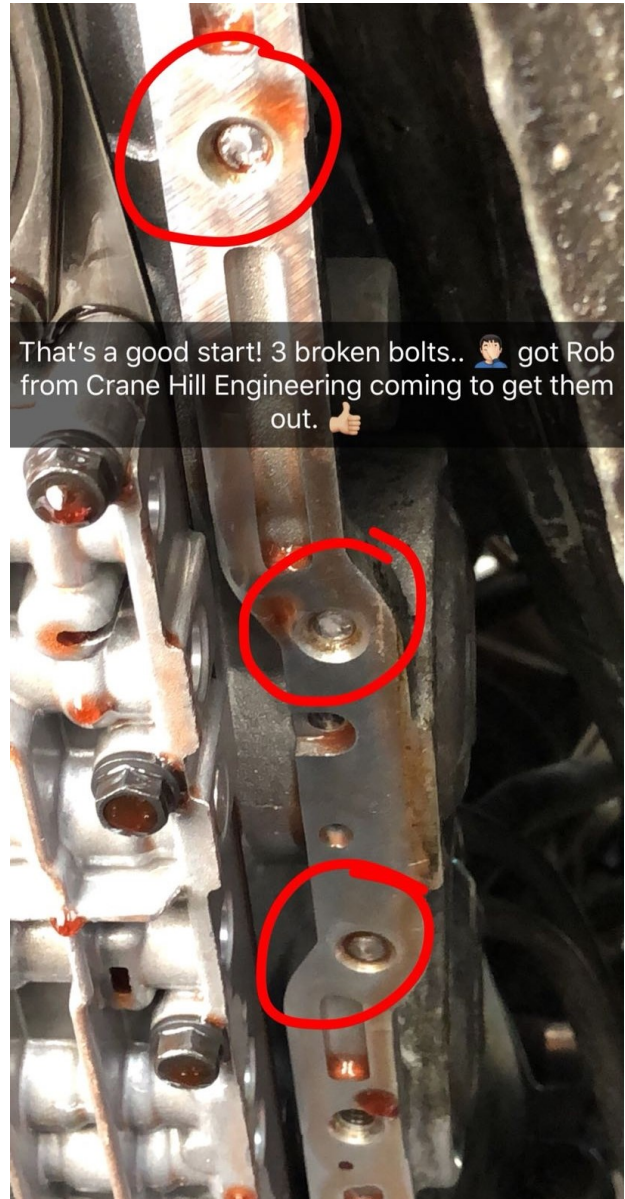
Bruce really went to town and organised a great event, complete with a very professional photo opportunity with our cars lined up with the Lancaster Bomber. Disaster struck me on the way home when I felt my auto-box change its characteristics. We pulled into the nearest garage and noted some oil on the floor, we put a litre of ATF into the box and continued on our way but now taking it



easy, after about 60 miles the box again felt slightly different so we pulled over, there was a bigger puddle of oil on the floor this time but with only 30 miles to go I decided to opt for the top up option 1.5 litres and risk it. Five minutes further down the road and we were stuck in a bad traffic jam, we were forced to pull up and call the AA who recovered us home.

After removal the box was sent to a specialist for testing, they could not find an internal fault 'the box was working perfect' I knew this I just needed it to stop pushing the oil out! I discussed the options with my garage, they were; recondition the box or change a 2 pence rubber O ring on the base of the dip stick tube that may be the cause.

We decided to go for the 2 pence option and 'fingers crossed' we also took the opportunity to replace the crank rear main oil seal while the box was out. With new engine rear main oil seal, a 2p dipstick O ring fitted and a new gearbox sump gasket fitted the garage road tested my car and all seemed fine but could I please give it a



good hard long run to ensure the box fault was cured.

I collected my car and gave it a good thrashing on a 40 mile run and all seemed good. The trip to and from Curborough was the test and thankfully she ran like a dream. However, I'm now quite a bit lighter in the pocket and all for a 2p rubber O ring! On checking my history my car had a reconditioned gearbox in 1998 and I suppose we should realise that rubber O rings don't last forever. Hopefully my saga will be of help to others who might suffer the same symptoms.

Following this Dan Mitchell Comments that he had spoken with a friend who has over

40 years experience rebuilding gearboxes, engines and differentials. He immediately said the O ring on the dip stick would have gone as he was well aware of this problem



All that oil for a tuppenny "O" ring!

on old gearboxes and suggested all owners with auto boxes would be wise to change the O ring on their Gearbox dip sticks for a modern nitrile O ring which is better able to take the conditions, thanks Dan.

Events and Shows

We are getting towards the end of the show season now but the MESS will have a stand at the Manchester Classic on 15th and 16th September

<http://www.manchesterclassicarshow.com/>

and Sywell Classic Pistons and Props on 22nd and 23rd September.

<http://www.sywellclassic.co.uk/>

So if you are able go along and give them some support.

We will also have a stand at the NEC in November and Bruce has included (next page) a discount code for those who are planning on going. This can provide a helpful £5.50 off and adult ticket or £12 off a family ticket for the Saturday or Sunday.



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LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!



Mystery Picture (Last Issue)

In our last MESSage we showed MB 33 in a mystery location. (nobody guessed the location) which was Laurence's Gate in Drogheda, Co Louth, Eire. It is a 13 Century mediaeval gateway that can be driven through to access part of the town. It is also thought to be possibly the best example left in existence.

Mystery Picture (This issue)

This month we have a picture of MB 29. Come on lets hope we have a winner this time.

Plea' come on, email over any suitable pictures and details for a future MESSage.

