

The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set



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January 2022



Mick's MESSage

Once again, I find myself writing my portion of the MESSage during a week where we have suffered snow and sub-zero temperatures. Work for Matt and myself is still manic with Matt recently unable to attend the NEC despite booking the time off months ago! We have not had a real break since the covid outbreak began and quite frankly roll on Xmas for a small break.

Euroboxes

Many moons ago when I got stung for a sensor on my v6 Golf and just out of warranty I decided that enough was enough! I sold the car went diesel and had my trusty Rangers for many years, I decided I needed a 3.5 ton transit because I always loaded 1ton pallets and the trannie had an extra 300kg payload over my Ranger. Happy days and a great van until the DPF filter went recently. I was told it went because of the



MB33 at NEC Stand Build

lack of a good run which I could not do throughout covid. Anyway some £965 later, I feel robbed again. Apparently, it had to be cleaned 3 times and two studs were sheared in the process. Rant over but modern vehicles.....

MB 33

Well, how quickly your plans can change. In my last MESSage I spoke about upgrading the front and rear brakes on MB 33 however, after reading an article on the government's potential changes to classic cars and alterations /modifications upgrades this has certainly made me think twice about the work. I will cover this in a little more depth below.

As I write this, I'm looking at Paul (GT Evolution) fitting just the front Willwood conversion ensuring that I have all of the parts to return the car back to original specification, Paul will also be doing rear axle work and replacing both outer bearings with new Timken replacements. While my car is at GT Evolution I will speak with Paul about some other work as well. Incredibly and according to the history file the heads have

never been off in 32 years. Surely she is due a decoke but hey, she is running great. I discussed at the NEC how incredible it was that the heads have never been off my car and both Bruce's and Alan's cars have also never had any engine work done other than routine servicing.

MB 69

Sadly, the respray on MB 69 had been put back but good news! Paul has come back to me, and we have a plan, on Tuesday 21st December my Sierra headed South from Huddersfield and Lee dropped and re-loaded with the red Middlebridge and head straight back to Pauls. (Happy Days). I have used Lee before, and he really looks after the cars in his care.



MESSy Meal

I'm sure this will be covered elsewhere in our Message, but I just wanted to thank everyone that attended the Brewers Fayre and made it an evening to remember, our MESSy Xmas dinner is going from strength to strength and we had a great turn out. (See picture) Sadly due to work in the aftermath of storm Arwen, Will and Jane were unable to attend in spite of booking months in advance. The location is very central M6 J1 and we would love to see even more people attend in 2022. May I take this opportunity to thank everyone that attended and made the event such an enjoyable occasion.

George and others suggested that in future we meet earlier to discuss the coming year, personally I think that is a great idea as no sooner do we sit down to dinner it's time to call it.



Our other money pits!

As above but I'm quietly hoping that another of my classic cars will return home over the Xmas period, this one has been in Scott's garage (Obsessive car care) for over two years! (I will wait and see and keep any saved storage monies).

Potential Government Policy (Dept' for transport)

I was shocked to read of proposals from the 'Dept' for transport' about and in their words, "tampering with vehicles" they are looking at creating offences for advertising, supplying and installing tampering products for vehicles, this covers both mechanical and electrical modifications. They state that their aim is to modernise vehicle standards and address areas of transport regulations that are out-dated. Needless to say, this would

have a devastating effect on the car tuning industry.

I have no idea where people with modified cars would stand and this proposal has certainly affected my own forthcoming ideas. As usual half of the issue is a lack of communication and data. I do hope to have further updates before the next MESSage deadline. There is talk on some of the forums about the effect of this potentially disastrous legislation with some people saying that it is aimed at modern cars that are going round popping and banging everywhere etc but I and many others are still concerned that we could be affected even if accidentally by the wording of the new act itself.

Thankfully most of my cars are standard but I did want / intend to upgrade the Middlebridge braking, I'm now keeping the rear standard and going Willwood at the front but as always keeping all the parts to convert back if needed in the future.

Talking above about the FBHVC (Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs) we can confirm that the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set hold full membership of this body. The FBHVC exists to uphold the freedom to use historic

vehicles on the road. You can read their response to the consultation here:

<https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/news/article/fbhvc-position-statement-on-the-future-of-transportregulatory-review>

And the link to the latest FBHVC magazine (and archive) is here:

<https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/newsletter-archive>



NEC "Lancaster Classic Car Show" 12-14 November 2021.

After much deliberation we eventually decided to go-ahead with a marque stand this year but with a few conditions, we would fence our stand off so that only invited people could enter and we would also have a sanitizer station in place. I have to say these precautions worked perfectly over the weekend.



We had three cars on the stand. Bruce's car was on one side drawing the attention of people walking in the centre aisle while my car and Alan's were directly facing the Silverstone Auctions entrance.



Alan's electric blue Middlebridge was spec'd and driven originally by Dennis Nursey (MB CEO) who would be joining us on the Sunday along with Khoji. Dennis brought along an original photo of Alan's car with the Reynard 'Cadbury' race car, the photo was given to Alan and was very soon signed by both Dennis and Khoji, it's fair to say that Alan was delighted.



We discussed the event at a local Pub over dinner and all agree that the NEC was once again a huge success for the marque and for myriad of reasons. We met up with several owners and enthusiasts, we had people looking to purchase cars including my gold car from the stand, we also had the Gentleman that owned 'Old Bentley Number No1 visit us on the stand to discuss the

events surrounding Middlebridge Scimitar & the infamous Bentley No 1 and of course Ed Hubbard.

I do hope the pictures do the event justice and please note. They were taken prior to opening time or you would not see the stand for people.



Finally, it's once again time for the thanks, starting with George for storing and bringing the carpets to the NEC on the Thursday morning and for helping to lay the carpets & erect the stand. Laying the carpets is not a five-minute job as once again and to be different we decided to go for the red, white and blue colour theme.

Another BIG thank you goes to Alan for bringing along Dennis Nursey's (MB CEO's car) MB 35 to

display on the stand & also to be re-united with Dennis. Alan also helped to erect, dismantle & man the stand over the weekend.

Will, once again drove down from the Scottish Highlands and arrived early on the Thursday, helped erect and manned the stand throughout the event before having to jump in his car Sunday afternoon to punch it straight back to the Scottish Highlands that night (Phew). Once again thank you from us all Will.



Finally, Bruce, once again Bruce computer generated our proposed stand in advance, please see his plan below in the pictures area. Again, we had many people remarking on it

being the best stand at the show! Surely this is one of the main reasons that we have such a prominent position at this prestigious event. This year we were at the entrance to the Silverstone Auction, probably one of, if not the best stand locations at the event. It never ceases to amaze how Bruce manages to get the whole stand in his MB and tiny trailer. Once again, Thank you, Bruce from us all.

It was also great to finally meet up with my brother and his Wife Tracey after two + years separation because of covid.

Sorry for going off piste but my 'other' car of the show, this beautifully ugly car really hit the spot. What do ya all think or am I just plain crackers. If you were unable to attend the NEC please view our awesome stand at the address below.

[www.middlebridgescimitar.co.uk/
previous_events_full_details.php?id=41](http://www.middlebridgescimitar.co.uk/previous_events_full_details.php?id=41)



Jack's Hill Cafe

Sadly, another Classic Meeting point bites the dust. Jacks Hill Café on the A5 has sadly been forced to close after holding Classic car, bike and lorry events for many years. Indeed, it was situated close to Silverstone at Towcester with myself, George and Bruce using it when we were in the area as a meeting point. The reason for the closure was never ending road works which I can confirm and the effect of covid on the business. This café will be very much missed in the area.



RSSOC Chair

On the 1st January the current RSSOC Chairman Kevin Cooper will stand down as demands on his

time have increased dramatically, We wish you all the very best and will no doubt see you again at events in the future. I'm also delighted that Kevin Osborne, the "Colonel" from Colonel Mustard fame will be taking over the roll as Chairman of the RSSOC.

The MESS wish you good luck in your new role and hopefully will meet up in March at the restoration show.

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.

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.

ZOOM Meeting

We are continuing with our zoom meetings as they have proved to be extremely successful with many owners and enthusiasts taking part that simply live too far away to attend. Indeed, we have people from Europe joining us during the evening, The zoom invites are emailed out by Will our host.

MESSembly

In person. The monthly MESS meeting has resumed and be held on the first Monday 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.

George's Jargon

Should this missive be published in time, I wish all recipients of 'The MESSage' a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. If not – I hope that you did have and will have...

We can only hope for a better 2022 and see a return to a further semblance of normality, personally I think we need to be thankful for what we have had and accept that the 'new' normality is necessarily more restrictive – we just have to work with it.

STOP PRESS!

Micky G was rushed into Northampton General Hospital on Christmas Day having collapsed at home, suffering with breathing difficulties. He phoned me on Boxing Day also the following day when he sounded a little better. He hopes to be released from hospital Wednesday, perhaps Thursday but certainly before the New Year. (*This happened and Mick is hopefully on the road to recovery Ed.*)

Mick has had this problem before, hopefully the doctors will investigate the cause this time and not just treat the effect. Every time he gets a chest infection it weakens his chest, consequently he becomes more susceptible to more infections... Get well soon Mick, it really is time to slow down to a gallop.

Should you wish to contact Mick, I suggest an email or text is the route to take rather than a

phone call, as he can struggle to find the breath to speak.

I recently received a concerning email from Ian Young, son of the Rev. Maurice, who owned Middlebridge no. 28. Maurice has now entered the Four Rivers Nursing Home, Bromfield Road, Ludlow SY8 1DW. Those of us at the ChristMESS Dinner in Rugby signed a personalised Card that Bruce made, which was sent on behalf of The MESS.

Some of you may remember Maurice and may want to send him your own Best Wishes. He can receive visitors, however there are some Nursing-Home rules to adhere to. Ian says that Maurice is unable to look at his emails as he hasn't access to a computer and is struggling with using a tablet (the electronic kind).

EVENTS UPDATE - Midlands

Topics often discussed on zoom are regarding places and events for The MESS to visit. These have included WWII Museums, Cutty Sark, Brooklands, and much more.

A recent inquiry was made to Warwick Castle for us to meet and show our cars there. It is considered the finest medieval castle anywhere in Europe. A swift reply revealed that they could indeed accommodate us in the 'Pageant Field' location which would take around 500 cars. It could be ours for only £7,500 per day, plus VAT. This didn't include tickets to see the Castle though...

Just thought you'd like to know...nevertheless I will say that it has been added to (and pretty near the bottom of) The MESS wish list – for now. Sorry about that!

EVENTS - South

Enquiries were made with Vic Gallucci regarding next year's Classic Car meeting on the Isle of Wight. Details were circulated to the Usual Suspects to gauge interest. Crikey, and wasn't it!

Some MESSers have already booked Hotels and Ferries! Maggie and I have booked a caravan site via Red Funnel for a week which includes the very expensive ferry. It's September 3rd and 4th. It could be an important meeting for 'The MESS' and may be THE event for us next year.

Around 1,800 cars are expected to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of this show, so it will be busy. Victor has asked that I/we contact him around February when he should have more finite details, *including a deal with the Ferry company leading to a reduction in fare costs.* It is possible that the MESS could become a main attraction - if suggested negotiations pan out in February.

It's entirely up to the individual of course, *but what you must consider is whether you want to risk waiting for a cheaper crossing or booking one now along with some accommodation.*

A few have booked into the same hotel as Asbo man. Peter H sent me some important information relating to his hotel, called 'Yelfs'. He has rebooked with the hotel *directly* rather than through 'booking.com' saving £12 on the hotel which is now costing £240. The hotel has also sorted a better price for the ferry which was between £160 - £185 and is now a more acceptable £84.96. That's for a car, 2 people, return from Portsmouth to Fishbourne.

If the idea of damaging your kidneys appeals to you, then join Peter *et al* at Yelfs by phoning Chyrl (?) on 01983 564062. I must add that many IOW hotels have similar deals which include the ferry at

the more realistic price, It's still expensive and is famed for being the most expensive ferry in the world, based on distance alone.

EVENTS – North

We've often asked members to suggest worthy events in their locale. With so few cars made and scattered throughout the Queendom it shouldn't be a problem. It would also make a change for the 'US' to attend places other than the 'Midlands'. Sooo, it is intended to support the show in Seaburn, Durham which is June 11th and 12th. The RSSOC always attend this one which overlooks the sea. Peter Freeman has often supported this event and it is claimed to be a superb show and location. We are hoping that 'localish' Middlebridge owners, who don't normally attend such meetings will make the effort to swell the MESS numbers. *(I was there 2015 & a number of MB owners attended in 2016. Good show and great banter with fellow Scimitar owners. Lots to see in the local area too, Ed.)*

Once again, I will tow our caravan and make it a couple of week's holiday for Maggie and me, exploring that area. We have booked

a couple of sites, the second one arriving on the 9th to leave by the 14th as I shall be Marshalling at the VMCC's Banbury Run the following Sunday.

EVENTS - General

The Restoration Show at the NEC is also being investigated, this occurs in February, it's a smaller show than the November CC event and attracts a different kind of enthusiast.

Next year looks pretty busy already as we will attend Sywell and the NEC too. 'Shame about Warwick Castle all the same, don't you think.

MONEEEE

The funds remain healthy at the moment and currently stand at £1151.41. Next year we will probably purchase a sturdier gazebo, as mentioned in a previous epistle, depending on raising sufficient funds by our next birthday in February. Further expenses known for next year (apart from the PLI), will be the need to buy new carpet for the NEC. They were thrown away after the last show as they had been used a few times, requiring some dextrous cutting to fit each stand's differing dimensions and obstacles.

Bruce's superb stand (Best in Show, I suggest), has a strip of red, then white, then blue carpet and so on... I understand that the fitters at the NEC won't fit it to that specification, so it's down to us. I think we've done a pretty good job to date, however it's worth asking, do we have a tame carpet fitter within the MESS? If so, your skills would be ever-so welcome.

CHRISTMESS PARTY

The aftermath of the storm in Scotland prevented Will and Jane from joining 17 other party-goers in balmy (in comparison), Rugby. Will sent photos that showed the devastation in his area – I nearly wrote 'neck of the woods', but that's not quite the case anymore. In no particular order there was Peter Freeman, who drove his Middlebridge from Northumberland, Alan Cavendish-Tribe, Alan and Sandra Timmis, Paul and Kate Crocker, Matt and Nina Gaughran, Micky boy, Bruce and Alison Beauchamp, Peter and Marie Humphries, Mark and Sue Cropper with son Aaron, Maggie and me.

Despite starting at 7pm the night just flew by and I (for one), certainly didn't get round to talking with everyone - a comment also endorsed by others. Jokingly, I have suggested that we should

start at lunchtime next year, however others have seriously commented that 'it's not a bad idea...'



Just a taster of what kept us from the
Christmas Meal, Ed.

No-one took up the idea of going for a trip to the localish cidery pencilled in for the Sunday morning. Peter F sped off at 6am hoping to get home and watch the disputed Formula 1 Final. His later email revealed a journey time of 4.5 hours, about half the time it took to get down to Rugby.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and many trooped off to the Travelodge next door for some well-needed kip, except for Maggie and me and Mick who is somewhat 'house bound' at the moment. It seems the 'Meal Deal' was a popular choice which added a free drink to the dinner and a breakfast making it value for money.

LECKY TRANSPORT

The storms experienced in Scotland led to some poor souls being without electricity for up to 10 days. This must be yet another reason for not buying an electric vehicle, surely... here's a few more.

Maggie's son recently hired a Pole Star, Volvo's electric car. Having driven from Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire (less than 70

miles away). Maggie and I met him at the brand-new, state-of-the-art service station, near the M6 junction at Rugby as there was only 38% in the battery. His journey to Leeds was a total of about 180 miles and wouldn't complete it without a charge.



Firstly, there wasn't a 'queuing' system, so drivers were milling around discussing who was next to hook-up. Secondly, having hooked-up, he made 3 attempts to charge it – it wouldn't. (There were a couple of other charging points that weren't functioning properly either). Each of the 3 times that he tried to connect, £25 was deducted from his bank account. A phone call thus ensued seeking some help. Thirdly, having found a hook-up that worked, we all went into the Services proper for a welcoming hot drink as it was bitterly cold, with no shelter. An hour had now gone by. Quite what you do when it's belting down...

Having returned to the car, we hung around for a while longer as there was still only 76% showing. It was saying that another hour was needed to charge it fully. We left them to it as we had now seen 90 minutes slip by, and still not fully 'fast-charged'! It seems that the site's 'sub-station' is not powerful enough to charge all the outlets at the same time - and this site has only recently been opened. It seems some other sites have added a generator to provide sufficient power, which defeats the whole idea of an electric vehicle I suggest.

The first 2 hours spent at this service station is free, after that you must obtain a parking ticket, otherwise you will incur a fixed penalty of £50. Number plate recognition will ensure that it is known when you arrive and exactly when you depart. This is something that I was penalised for on behalf of The MESS ages ago when Mick, Bruce and I met up at a service station to test/erect the new gazebo. Mick and Bruce arrived a little after me and left within the 2 hours, I was a tad over the 2 hours and unwittingly paid the price.

It also raised the question, if you are towing a caravan with your electric car, how on earth do you charge that? I assume that currently you would have to uncouple the caravan, charge the car and then reconnect it as there's certainly no room for a car and a caravan. The specially allocated caravan area at the Rugby site didn't have a charging point installed there either!

In some respects this episode is a repeat of the early days of motoring when a driver took along a few cans of petrol, as fuel stations were few and far between. Strict planning of any journey was vital and essential then, and so it is with an electric vehicle today.

On the plus side a total of 525 miles was covered during the hire period and that cost about £50 in electricity. The car was 'fast-charged' again whilst shopping in Lidl and again whilst in KFC.

Talking with my mechanic son-in-law, he said that some body repair shops are refusing to take in electric cars that have been in a collision as they present a real risk to the repairer, as in battery cracks or leakages, never mind using a welding or cutting torch near to a battery, especially with the volatile gases that batteries emit.

I'm sure that all these problems will be addressed eventually, nevertheless It really is a cause for some concern at the moment.

FUTURE FUEL? (unlikely)

About 18 years ago a chum sent me a newspaper cutting which announced that a University in nearby Coventry (Warwick University, perhaps?), that had modified a conventional engine to run on a fuel that was cheap, plentiful and non-polluting.

They had separated the hydrogen (which provided the bang) from the oxygen (which allowed it to burn) found in water, H₂O. It will

never be allowed to develop, because it would be almost impossible to tax, and we all know who is the most taxed person in the world, don't we? The extremely powerful oil companies definitely wouldn't permit it either.

This was not a screaming front-page news article, declaring how it would help save the planet, etc, but a 3-line filler found buried in that well-respected organ: 'The Sun'...

Ages ago I was told that there was a chap driving such a conversion done to a Morris Minor Traveller around the wilds of Scotland, completely illegal of course as he's not paying any duty on the fuel. Good luck to him, I say.

UMBROLLIES

Ages ago I collated a list of folk wanting brollies, numbering some 24 gamps in total. Some owners requesting two. The following folk have shown an interest in the new design, if your name isn't amongst them, and you would like one (or more), *please contact me as soon as possible.*

Peter Bowden 1. Peter Freeman 2. Peter Durham
2. Mick Gaughran 2. Will Anderson 2. Graeme
Conway 1. Andrew Sait 1. Ray Edwards 1. Dan
Mitchell 1. Matt Gaughran 1. Bruce Beauchamp
2. Roger & Eileen Brown 1.

Please be aware that you are only letting us know of your interest, you are not actually buying or ordering one now. That will happen when our new Regalia Shop is up and running (soon!). I need to order 25 minimum to get a decent discount. Currently it's just 17. It's not a problem if it doesn't quite make 25 as we intend to have a couple 'in stock', but it needs to be much more than 17!

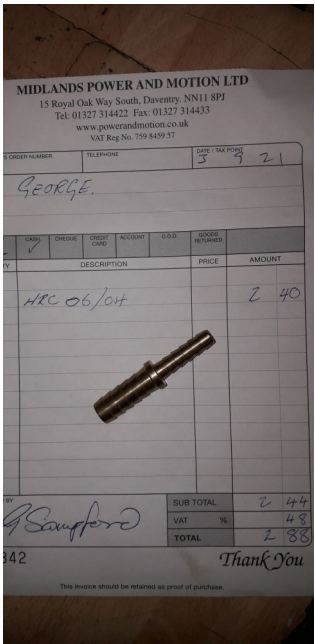
The MESS will purchase the gamps and 'Uniform Monster', who will be our new Regalia suppliers, will store them. You will pay UM the full amount, which will include your personalised printing, and they will transfer the cost of the gamps back into the MESS account.

The Regalia on-line 'shop' will be called 'MESS-SMART' and prices for all items will be there. I must add that all prices shown will have had £1 added to its cost which UM will also transfer to 'The MESS' Account, so if you buy 5 items, you will have also donated £5 to the MESS funds.

FLOWING OVER

The overflow hose connected to my expansion tank had become split (with age) where it joins the tank. As you all know (possibly) the pipe bore connections differ at each end of the pipe and can be a problem to physically replace.

I overcame this difference by fitting a straight, barbed, brass connector which matches those different sized pipes, see pic. It also shows where I bought it from and its code should you fancy this easy modification. Plastic connectors of the same dimensions are also available on Google, but brass will last longer and take more punishment.



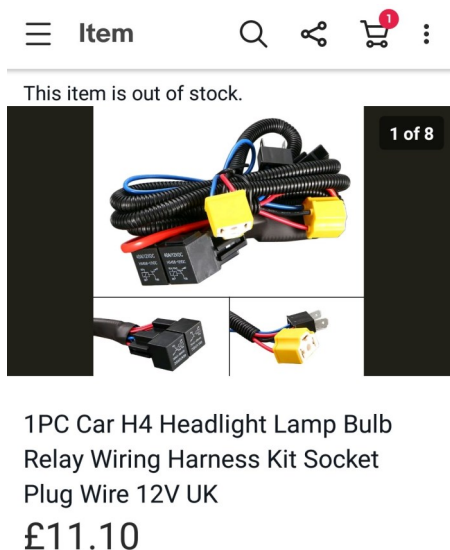
Relay installation for electrical numpties.

The need to fit dipped beam relays is often brought up as an important topic here and on the RSSOC forum.

I actually experienced something similar in my first SE5a when while driving from the Lakes to the Yorkshire dales one night I suddenly lost side lights and dipped beam resulting in me either blinding oncoming vehicles with constant full beam or apparently dropping into stealth mode when dipping. I actually can't remember what the problem was now other than we got safely home in the end.

I had played around with the idea of using Peter's excellent diagrams to wire in some extra relays but I am a numpty with electrics. So I therefore jumped when I saw Phil Howard's suggestion on the forum of a relay kit which I duly purchased from Amazon.

The kit appears to be OK quality although the power and earth cables are not quite as thick as they first seem but quite acceptable nonetheless.



The wiring from the first headlamp to the relays could also be a little longer as it rather restricts the positioning of the two relays but I ended up using an existing hole in the fibreglass close to the nearside lamp by which to fix them to the back of the lamp housing.



I also was a little wary of the quality of the relays so bought and fitted a couple of new ones from Car Builder Supplies – the ones that came with the kit now in the car as emergency spares.

Fitting is a doddle and the most time consuming part was extending the power and earth leads and ensuring a tidy installation. Took the chance to also upgrade to Night Breaker bulbs as well.



Moving to the interior, I was having some difficulty in removing and adjusting the head restraints.

With some “gentle persuasion” I knocked out the head restraint, used paint remover to get rid of the black paint (that now I look closer was probably factory finish) and get back to chrome, a little thin lock oil and I now have head restraints that are height adjustable. A small thing but, being an ex-ambulance officer, I have a bit of a thing about head restraints adjusted incorrectly and loose heavy objects in cars.....

Coming and Going

We currently have three cars for sale on the Middlebridge website. Mick decided to have a quick look and confirms that the Middlebridge Website has sold 50 Middlebridge cars, that’s the equivalent of 63% of the cars built (although some have been sold more than once!). Not bad when you consider that only 79 were built.



Middlebridge No 19 has been for sale for some time, it looks a nice in the pictures, but Mick has never seen the car in person.

Middlebridge 63, well, what to say George has decided to sell his trusty steed as he is not using her enough anymore and as we know they are better for being driven. Good luck on the sale George. (There was interest in George's car at the NEC event over the weekend as people were enquiring about how and where to look for Middlebridge cars).



Just recently MB78 has come back onto the market. This, now two owner, low mileage car was refurbished by Graham Walker in 2020 and has been well cared for by its current owner who has recently retired and is looking to reduce down to one car.



MIDDLEBRIDGE ACCOUNT

Lloyds Bank, Lewisham (309089)

120 Lewisham High Street, Lewisham

London SE13 6JG .

Sort Code: 30-90-89.

Account No: 49350668.

BIC: LOYDGB21256.

IBAN: GB79 LOYD 3090 8949 3506 68.