



The MESSage



Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set



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Mick's MESSage

This year we 'The MESS' regulars and attendees decided we would attend a myriad of different event formats and also organise a few 'Club' events; below is just a sample of the events attended. George had the idea that we should look to inform non car people and make them aware of the Middlebridge marque as well as the car enthusiasts that attend specific car events. So far, it's been reasonably successful with my car being a Capri, Jensen and even a Maserati - Hmm.. The downside is umbrellas, bags and even cans very close to the cars; one car at Market Harborough even had two people get in to try it for size, incredibly they were not happy to be asked to get out by the owner. I do admit to being nervous about my own cars paintwork especially when small kids were yielding umbrellas!!

MB 33

Time to be honest, I felt I had not given my car the care and attention it deserved over the last two years, this year I was adamant I would give the paintwork a proper 5 stage treatment in preparation for the year ahead. Firstly, she was washed and de-contaminated, secondly I did a very light duty clay job, thirdly a cleaner was applied and hand buffed, fourth I applied a polish and hand polished with a puk, finally I finished off by waxing the bodywork. Sounds a lot of work but I did this over many days in the garage, apart from the wash of course. Personally, I think she looks well and I'm pleased I spent the time hopefully protecting the paint for the future. I did of course clean the wheels and interior prior to going to the event below.

My car did develop an annoying exhaust leak that was found to be the cylinder head exhaust gasket, needless to say all three on one side were replaced and she sounded great again.



Market Harborough, Innovation Centre Monthly Meet

I had selected this event to be my first outing in my MB in 2025, George and Alan Timmis MB50 said they would come along too. I have to say that the event was a refreshing change of format for me, £3.00 entry fee (thanks George) and that's it, it's a business car park and you simply park up along with about 130 other classics. The beauty was that cars were coming going constantly meaning that there was always new vehicles to see. Incredibly, there was a huge variety from a Yank Peterbilt truck, huge army trucks, Yank tanks, vans, modded & classic, classic cars, classic pick ups and a myriad of bikes and trikes as well.

It starts about 08.00 to 13.00hrs on the third Sunday of the month, I will go again but may have a lay in and aim for 10.00ish arrival and take some lunch and hopefully sit in the sun.

Market Harborough (Annual Classic Meet) 06.07.2025

This, now annual event attracts a myriad of classics all parked throughout the whole town centre. I arrived at 08.00 and got the last place on the high street. After being beckoned to park in a particular spot, I reversed into position just in time for the heavens to open up, sadly the rain continued throughout the day but luckily for me, just rear of where I parked was a set-back Pharmacy that did not open on the Sunday, Needless to say my chair was soon in position, next to me was a wonderful Ultima that sounded awesome and another two seater in Le Mans 1970's style (They were husband & wife, she built the Ultima and he built the other car and based on a Scimitar SE5 chassis and tuned running gear). Now I realised why I was beckoned to park there. There were many awesome cars there but unfortunately the weather was just awful. This event is on my calendar for next year already.

Northampton 'Classics on the Square'

Despite trying to attend different show types this year, I had to do my new local one that was held in the 12 million pound refurbished Market Square. Personally, what a waste of tax payers' money! The old market stalls had a traditional quaintness and drew many people into the town centre while the new Market Square has 5 or 6 stalls and little fountains etc but does not draw people in and more and more of the surrounding shops are becoming vacant.

As for the Vintage & Classic Car show, it was gorgeous day weather wise and there were many cars on display but we were surprised to see a couple of 2023 Ford Mustangs in the line up!! The event was free to enter and clearly open to anyone in the town centre to attend and this seems to be the problem.



Several owners including me had issues with people trying to get into, sitting on and poking the bodywork of the cars. Yes, they are not car people but where is the respect for other people's property, We, the owners found the whole experience quite stressful and we even had to look after each other's cars should we need to pop and get a drink etc. I took one of my granddaughters for the first time and had intended to hopefully treat her but I could not leave the market square. Needless to say I won't be doing this event again. "Lesson Learnt"

Scimfest 'Curborough Sprint Circuit'

This event is the RSSOC annual Sporting Weekend and all Scimitars are welcome, I make the trip annually not only for the cars, the racing, the auto jumble but also to meet up with old friends for some much needed banter and a good catch up. As many of you know I enter my MB in the concours and have done so for some years, I have always felt that the MB needs to be part of the concours scene and I do hope more will come on board in the future, Bruce has brought his wonderful Porsche marine blue car a couple of times and got shields for his effort during the prize giving ceremony.

Well, what a Sunday, come mid-day the sun was blazing and there were lots of Scimitars and visitors. The concours went to plan. I did get the best MB plaque again with Bruce a close second. In the Master Class Concours de-elegance I came second to a lovely white SS1 that looked awesome.

I do enjoy a good chin-wag so I waved at Alan CT as he drove past several times however, he didn't wave back from the Booze Bus. It was great to meet up with MB owners, Alan Earl, Bruce Beauchamp, Graeme Conway, Ian Hodgson, John Unwin and Grahame Jupp who had come from Somerset in his Middlebridge.

Salon Prive (Blenheim Palace) 31.08.2025.

We were delighted to be invited, albeit at the last minute, to this extremely prestigious event, via a contact of George. The invite was to display our cars in the Great Courtyard right outside the front of Blenheim Palace and alongside the Jaguar Club. George also suggested it a great venue to bring The Princess Royal's car, Salon Prive were delighted to have this car on display but only thanks to the efforts of George and Alan CT who between them collected & delivered the car to and from the Great British Car Journey in Ambergate, Derbyshire. George also looked after the Royal car throughout the day and chatted about it to many interested people. Needless to say George found one of his old tiaras and it was on the dash of the car throughout the day. I'm told he was greeted by one gentleman with 'Good Morning Maam' I believe George did a curtsy and said 'tis a good disguise.

Alan, Bruce and Ian were also parked in the great courtyard and had a great display topped off with Bruce's mobile display stand and the brand new floor mats that looked truly stunning.

Thanks again to George, we were also invited to have one car judged on the South lawn for the Lifestyle Club Trophy and being judged by Richard Hammond of





What an experience! Many, many hundreds of people lining each side of the car and taking an

incredible amount of pictures. With Bruce in the co-pilot's seat I very slowly made my way towards the raised rostrum area and answered Middlebridge related questions via the Tannoy system. Phew, this done, Bruce and I slowly moved forward from the rostrum amid loads of hand clapping. From start to finish took approx. 15 minutes I hope that gives a clue to the sheer amount of people and includes 5 min's on the rostrum that usually has multi million pound machinery on it! One man actually stopped the car during the parade lap and signalled for me to fully lower the driver's window, I did and he said that in his opinion it was the nicest car in the show. Bruce and I were stunned and thanked him, what a lovely thing to say and in such company too.

MB No 58

Great to see Ian and his recent purchase, Middlebridge No 58, at events again, we look forward to see more of this car and Ian at events in the future and it was great to chat with Ian at Scimfest .



MB No 1

Yes MB 01 has changed hands privately, we really look forward to seeing this lovely car at events in the future with Alan the new owner. Alan has now confirmed his cars availability on the Middlebridge stand at the NEC. Our theme this year being “first and last”, MB No 1 and Graeme’s MB No 78.



Baston Classic Event. 29.06.2025

Alan Cavendish Tribe and Alan Timmis flew the MB flag and by all accounts it was a great event with a totally relaxed atmosphere as only a few clubs had stands, the cast majority of attendees simply parked in the ‘Pole Position’ parking on arrival.



MB 27 - ASBO Prepares for A European Adventure

Pete Humphries has been planning a European trip and, in true style, MB27 has been making sure that the preparations have not been straightforward.

The first issue was an electrical one which was tracked down to an earth braid. This is something which has been picked up by a number of owners and it is worthwhile checking the integrity of the braids, including the engine block to chassis, which can cause starting issues and the one from the fuel tank to the chassis as that can have an effect on the accuracy of the fuel gauge. Pete put a new earth lead from the battery to engine block and this helped with his idling issues.

As part of the planning he intended to upgrade the starter to a High Torque version and settled on the WOSP starter for the Ford Granada/Scorpio/Sierra (Cologne V6) Type 9 Gearbox. Pete's luck being what it is he was originally sent the wrong type (there are two) with 9 teeth when the MB needs the 11 tooth version which is Part Number LMS476. He did say the company were very understanding and that the starter now spins twice as fast.



Planning for the summer weather, he also decided to replace the radiator. It is not easy to get new radiators now that are not aluminium, QRG are the main supplier of these and also supply GW, I believe. They can be bought from Radtec but QRG are cheaper.



In an astounding change from normal, Pete decided that he did not want a "blingy" radiator and would rather it was the original black. He spent some time trying to get suitable paint for aluminium that was heat resistant and finally found some in America from a company called Eastwood which is apparently resistant to 300 degrees Fahrenheit and doesn't need a primer.

The new radiator has a slightly revised bottom hose connection and the normal 300mm hose can be a devil to fit. The hose has a spring inside to retain its shape. Pete says he found a Gates Automaster 400mm hose at his local Fittapart which has the spring moulded into the wall of the hose which was easier to fit and didn't require a skin graft on his knuckles.

ASBO's 2,103 Mile Jaunt on a Organised Scenic Car Tour.

I have previously done one of the Scenic Car Tours accompanied tours to the Isle of Man, this one was unaccompanied and consisted of only 8 cars with an even split between classic and modern. Cost price was £3,000 that included Hull overnight crossing to Rotterdam, nine nights accommodation with breakfast and six evening meals. Places on the itinerary included, a bridge too far, two dams breached by the Dambusters and The Great Escape from Stalag Luft 3 in Poland. We added an extra night and dropped down to Southern Germany to visit a roadside memorial to the two organisers of the Great Escape.



Prior to the trip I spent at least a month trying to resolve the car randomly stalling. Last thing i wanted was a stall in Berlin and no start up. I hoped that £10 earth strap from battery to engine block was the cure. I was as nervous as a nun on a penguin shooting party.

I had stern words with ASBO and, in true Basil Fawlty style, threatened a damned good thrashing if it cut out, failed to start or locked me out again.

A check of my classic car insurance breakdown cover showed that it did indeed cover Europe. However only to the nearest garage and not back to the UK, not brilliant with a car unlikely to be seen on the continent. I was left with a choice of two options; the AA and RAC. The AA recovery cost back to the UK was to a maximum of the market value of the car. Now my agreed insurance value is £35,000 and I could see a potential argument taking place.

The RAC recovery cost back to the UK was unlimited. It was slightly more expensive but unambiguous, the hire car terms and other stuff was better too. This came in at £263 but I felt it was essential.

The weather forecast was for a heatwave during the trip and it did peak at 37°, so I fitted some fans which were just over £20 from Amazon. They rotate 180° and do not interfere with changing gear. I had them held down with Velcro so very easy to remove if they were not suitable. On fact, they worked brilliantly and Mrs H looked like she was having a permanent blow dry. We encountered a monsoon on the motorway at Spa in Belgium and I can see why it always rains for the Grand Prix. When not in use the fans folded down for easy access to the heater controls.

Navigation was with the aid of a Tom Tom and most of our travelling was done in Germany. I

noticed it showed a speed camera on the bottom of the screen but never it's location on the route. Apparently this is not allowed in Germany and the best you might get is 'danger zone', as if entering a teenagers bedroom. Fortunately i had bought and been using a Saphe Pro device some months earlier.

This is a Danish device that shows all cameras not only for the UK but all of Europe. It is a brilliant bit of kit which shows the speed limit, your speed and what the next limit will be and displays in MPH or KPH. It shows absolutely every speed and red light camera and saved me at least 3 times in Germany, particularly as one camera looked like a block of concrete. It is interactive with other Saphe users and notified us well in advance of road hazards. (<https://www.saphe.com/en-gb/pages/saphe-drive-pro>)

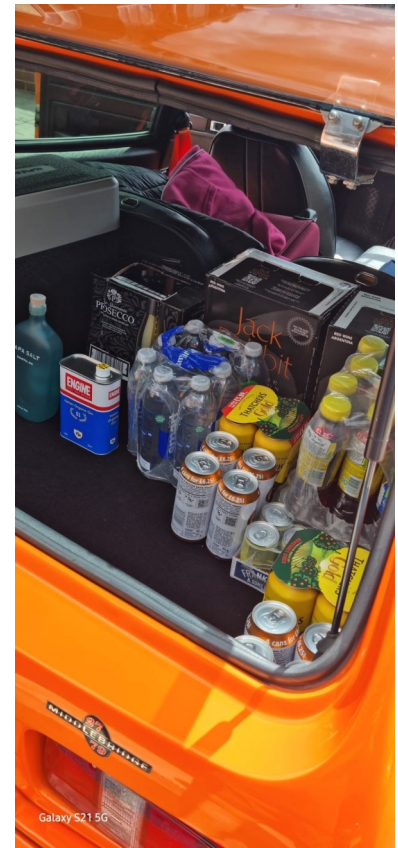


We did a booze cruise in reverse and took our favourites with us. In the top left of the picture is a refrigerator. This is new tech for me but we found it gets down to 3°C in about 15 mins and can be powered from 12/24 volt outlets and also can run off 110/240 volts. So, cold soft drinks whilst travelling and cold beers etc in the hotel. This really came into it's own as none of the hotels had fridges!

So, the preparations over and the journey finally begins at Hull. We were pulled over by Customs and drove into the shed for a car search. Their first question; are you carrying any knives? My answer, I am glad I'm not towing a caravan or in a mobile home. We chatted about the car then.

At check in there were masses of paperwork. Marie upclipped it from our travel folder to get our boarding details just as I started the car up with the wind tunnel fans set to maximum. There was paperwork everywhere—well, at least I laughed.

Our first visit was to Arnhem bridge over the Rhine in Holland. This is the “Bridge Too Far” and was named the John Frost Bridge in 1978 in honour of the bravery and leadership displayed by the commander of 2nd Battalion during Operation Market Garden. We stopped in at the Airborne museum dedicated to the battle of Arnhem which had a very good recreation of an urban battle scene where sound comes



at you from every where.

We followed that with a “battlefield walk” which actually consisted of an urban walk, through some woods and two housing estates and we were not lost before it is suggested.

Next visit was to the Nijmegen Railway Bridge over the river Waal. This



was another strategic objective in “Market Garden” The middle arch of the bridge was destroyed twice during the Second World War, but despite this it survived the conflict. The first demolition was initiated on 10 May 1940 by the Dutch themselves when the Wehrmacht approached. The Germans repaired the bridge, and it was back in service by 17 November 1940.

The Germans modified the abutments by removing the top floor of each tower, strengthening the flat roofs and mounting anti-aircraft guns. The 82nd Airborne Division's assault on the bridge in September 1944 received the nickname "Little Omaha" due to the heavy casualties, and became a significant turning point in the battle. Despite the efforts of the Americans, frogmen from the German Marine Einsatzkommando were able to demolish the bridge again on 28 September 1944.

As we parked up the Sat Nav said, warning you are in a restricted area. Mrs H was first out the car

and managed to get a quick picture of a bridge “after the cars cleared”. In her haste she took a photo of the wrong road bridge to the left. The clue was....Nijmegen **Railway** Bridge!



The next day took us on to the site of the famous dambuster raids inspired by Barnes Wallis who not only invented the bouncing bomb but also designed the Wellington bomber.

First up was the Mohne dam then the Edersee dam. It was a long day and we got there just after the, by all accounts, excellent museum had shut. Doh!

The highlight of the trip was Colditz Castle. A private guided tour for our group included areas not normally accessible to the visitors. What an amazing experience! There were too many interesting escapes and attempts to detail here but the castle considered escape proof by the Germans had over 300 escape attempts over 5 years with 30 being successful. The Brits were top dogs at that amongst the many nationalities detained there. The most audacious plan was the “Colditz Cock”, a glider built in the attic of the chapel. There is a replica there today but a documentary team actually recreated the original design and successfully flew it off the roof of the castle. A

bath full of concrete attached to a rope was dropped to catapult



it off the castle. Having seen a shortened version of the documentary i have no idea how they got permission to do it!

Documentary is here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYMvCG38_dY and the flight is at 1:12:37.

“The Great Escape” - Stalag Luft III in Poland

This was a bit disappointing as the replica hut that has been built and is used as a museum housing various exhibits is nowhere near the remains of tunnel Harry. We managed to sneak ASBO in and get a photo next to the tunnel marker.

Those executed from the Great Escape are shown in the film as being machine gunned en mass. They were actually executed in one's and two's at numerous different locations.





To complete the story we added an extra day to the tour and drove to Southern Germany to a roadside memorial to the main two organisers of the Great Escape Roger Bushell and Bernard Scheidhauer who were executed by the Gestapo. Very poignant.

We also took in a couple of museums; the Germans certainly do not shy away from their history. One was dedicated to the rise of Hitler and everything associated with him.



Next up was Autostadt which means Car City; to me and you, a VW factory. It covers some 28 acres and employs 60,000 people (not a typo) and produces 2.5K to 4K cars per day depending on demand. It is more like a theme park for young kids with all activities free once inside. A couple of the group peeled off the tour to stop in the VW hotel, do the train ride round the factory and go up in the glass round vertical storage tube. Tickets are like finding hens teeth in rocking horse droppings.

I emailed the place explaining our tour and asked for tickets for the tower tour. Nope, fully booked. Even the other couple couldn't get in. I had another go sending a picture of ASBO explaining that although the car was British, that the engine was made in Cologne in Germany. It worked!

It was strange to see no end of people waking around with number plates under their arms. Then a



massive queue of them at an airport size info board. They were all picking up new cars! I asked what discount they got by cutting the dealers out—€150! Madness. Probably cost more to get there.

We finished by visiting Dresden for two nights tourism taking advantage of the hop on hop off bus tours.

The car averaged 24mpg knocking about locally before we left. Five tanks across Europe varied between 27 and 31 mpg. Slowest it was driven was 60 to 70 MPH. A full on tour but excellent.

Would we go with Scenic Car Tours again. Yes and no.

The accompanied one to the Isle of Man was well organised with a section of mountain road closed off for our use. Not something you could do yourself, so yes to that type of tour. Un-accompanied, then no, the hotels lacked aircon, no room kettle or fridge.

Our intention is to plan our own European tour next year. That way you can pick the spec of hotel you want and avoid overnight public parking.

Auschwitz as a centre point is one option. Copying a bus tour itinerary for WWI is an option. One thing for sure, ASBO will be taking a ferry again.

Coming and Going

I mentioned before that MB19 had appeared on Facebook around Christmas and then was advertised on the Middlebridge website. We have now been contacted by its new owner and welcome Denis to MB ownership. He is working through a list of small niggles that are usual with a car that has not been run for a while but his first question was where to find a replacement centre cap as he lost one on the maiden run home. Having done that myself I feel his pain but at least at that time the wheel centres were more readily available.

A bit later than intended, because I misplaced the email but Ivor also let us know he has acquired MB54 and says: - "First registered in 1991 in Wales, our Middlebridge J6 LAC (no.54) has returned home to Wales and is here to stay. I purchased "Lacey" from an auction site on 28/08/2023 - sight unseen. We love the car and although a little tired in places she is used every week and is much loved by my family and admired by many an enthusiast. Lacey runs beautifully and the only work I have undertaken is to rebuild/poly bush the front suspension.



Back in the eighties I had an SE6A which unfortunately no longer appears to be on the road (POH 955R) and although much loved, the Middlebridge is a vast improvement.

We hope to use Lacey for many years to come - dog walking trips are a must!"

Dr Dan Mitchell's MB prototype is still for sale and he has let us know that after 36 years of ownership, he is pleased to report that the car went straight through its MOT without any advisories! Is this a record? After 50 years of Scimitar ownership (5A, GTC and Middlebridge prototype) he has never failed to get to his destinations and get back home.

He also reports that "in June we had 260 classic cars at our local Classic car event in Leamington Spa. It is certainly a growing event and included 60 motorbikes in a new motorbike section. It is now one of the best shows around, very well organised."

We also have a LHD Automatic Middlebridge with factory air-con etc and in very good original condition, all vehicles for sale can be seen on the Middlebridge website.

MB6 trials and tribulations, episode 2

Thus, we left off in episode 1 from a photo of the upside-down home made body frame which is now complete, with castors and cross bracing.

Thinking cap on. How do we lift the body off safely and not damage anything. Went mad and purchased a gantry frame plus block & tackle to lift the front end of the body, then constructed a frame across the rear wheel arches inside the car, for the engine crane to hang on to. By careful raising of gantry at front and engine crane at rear, the body rose gracefully into the air however why did the body keep swinging to "port". Because I didn't undo the two earth cables on that side, one to the chassis and the other to the battery. Once sorted the lift continued and the rolling chassis pulled out from underneath the body.



Old chassis now attacked big time at the rear, with many more ceased and rusted nuts & bolts cut off or induction heated off, all holding the back axle, anti roll bar and anti tramp mechanisms in place. Soon after, the rear swinging arms were off, soaked in my electrolytic bath to move rust followed by much fun braking up the old rubber bushes, sleeves, etc. then fitting nice new shiny poly bushes, plus

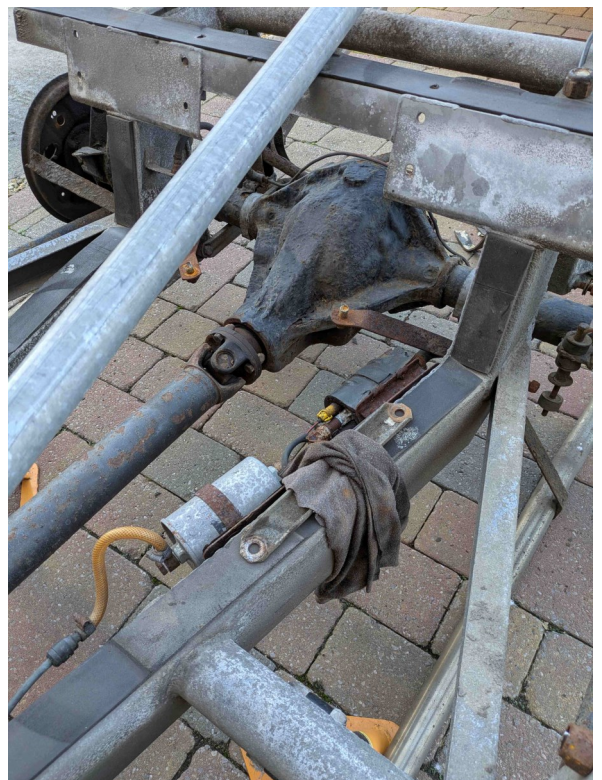
new securing bolts (thanks Nigel at QRG).

I now started to feel like real progress was being made, only to find out Prostate Cancer had decided to stop play. Why does old age come with all of its problems, when I was younger I was bullet proof!!!

(After much intervention from the wonderful NHS. Prostate gland gone, together so far, with the cancer. (Yeap, still have my fingers crossed). While I'm on this subject if you've not been checked for Prostate cancer go do it NOW.

MB6 has done many, many miles, so I thought it best to overhaul said rear axle, simply by taking the hubs off, replace bearings, seals etc. Simples!!!

How wrong can you be, the hubs feel like they are welded on but using a 10 tonne puller one was off but the other broke the puller, bu**er. As the axle was now free from the chassis lots of cleaning ensued (wonderful thing needle guns), only to find the bottom of the



swinging arm housings to be very religious, (extremely holy!). Hmmm, a plan B was called for. A phone call to the ever-helpful Nigel at QRG. resulted in rear axle heading for Kettering for Nigel and his team to work their magic, replacing swinging arm housings and overhauling the whole thing.



Old fuel tank eventually removed (again after much angle grinding), tank straps cleaned up, new insulation installed and the replacement stainless steel tank loose fitted to new chassis, awaiting return of overhauled back axle.



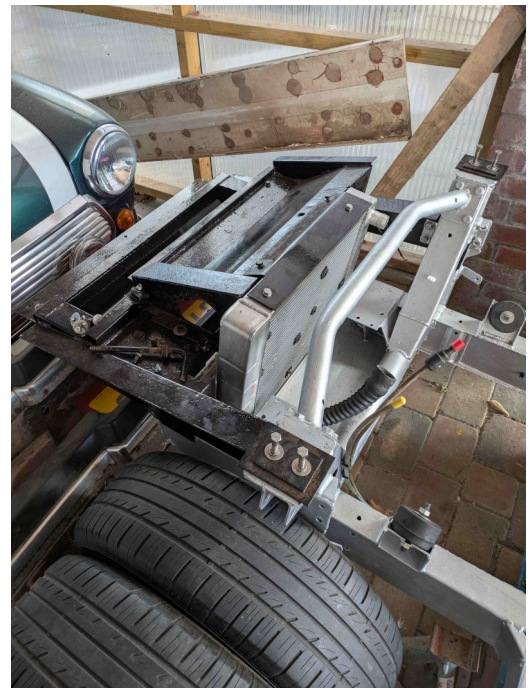
Right, what's next. Fuel pump, filter and fuel lines. Angle grinder out yet again, nuts cut off bobbins (sounds painful), plate with pump and filter removed. Much de-rusting (by electrolysis again), followed by cleaning and painting, new rubber bobbins and all is good and as it should be.

Fuel pipes taken off and cleaned up. New pipe clips fitted to new chassis (after many holes in new chassis cleaned up), then existing pipes refitted after steps.

Time to sort the radiator as a nice one was purchased and installed before the dreaded MOT failure. As all the rusty nuts and bolts had already been resolved this job didn't take too much time, (oh yes it did [2](#)). The new rad. would not fit in properly due to the "wing" bits on the nose frame forcing the rad backwards, plus the old plate that used to hold the cooling fan fouled the new fans on the rad. Out with the angle grinder, cut off excess metal on the nose cone frame, (I don't understand why it was there in the first place) and rad located, lovely-jubley.

After all of this, I've decided to attack the old chassis with a vengeance. Much work has been done getting the engine and gearbox ready to be lifted out of the way, plus much undoing of nuts and bolts holding the front suspension on. Once the old chassis has everything removed, then it's up for grabs if anyone wants it. It does have some useful repair bits on it. A small donation to the Middlebridge club funds would be appreciated.

That's all for MB6 restore for now, wish me luck for the next steps.



GEORGE'S JARGON

MAKING A MESSy EXHIBITION...

Given very short notice, one of the new shows that we attended this year was held at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire. My initial, naïve, tentative enquiries eventually revealed that this is not your average event by any stretch of the imagination. It is called Salon Prive, it is an 'Invite Only' event and is an exceedingly prestigious show. I received a long phone call from one of the organising team who was very interested in the Middlebridge story, etc. He was advised to look at our website to see evidence of our exhibition standards and cars.



Cars, whose value is often north of £250k, are the sort of vehicle you can expect to see here. Some ran into many millions even! Crikey! We were given solemn and firm advice on what kind of car we must show by one chap who often exhibits his cars there. Importantly, they should be as close as possible to how they were supplied by the factory. Salon Prive also suggested a dress code which we had already

discussed anyway. It was vitally important to have a smart presentation so, blazer and flannels, suits, Panama hats were essential attire – certainly no shorts or lairy shirts this time...

One car that did fit the bill perfectly was 1420H. Yes, Princess Anne's Scimitar which now lives in the GBCJ museum in Ambergate, Derbyshire. Salon Prive were absolutely delighted that we have access to this particular car, and it could be at their show.

After much head-scratching and research it was decided to transport 1420H to Blenheim ourselves, as the cost of hiring someone to transport it was far too much for the MESS to afford such a luxury.

The show being on Sunday would mean collecting it on Saturday, leaving it outside my home, covered over to avert prying eyes, rising at 3.30am Sunday, uncovering it, then driving to Sturdys Castle (a pub on the A4260), meeting with Micky G before 6am, then trundle down to Blenheim about 15 minutes away, as we were advised that trailered cars had to be there between 6 – 6.30am. Whew!

Sounds simple enough, but 'sod's law' added yet another dimension. Arriving at GBCJ at 2pm on Saturday



to meet Alan C-T, 1420H had been driven into an outside garage the day before, for a straight run onto Alan's trailer, now transferred onto my VW van. It refused to start! Alan tried all the usual stuff and confirmed that we had fuel and sparks, eventually one of the museum's mechanics also tried to sort it – and it wasn't until he finally changed the (recently serviced) plugs that it fired up properly! By then it was 5pm and I didn't get home until 6.30, in the rain, so it wasn't covered, but the number plates were taped-over to make them illegible.

We could have taken it there Saturday after 7pm, where it would have been left under a cover in a field overnight, albeit with maximum security, nevertheless we were concerned that the various mascots and especially the unique horse on the bonnet, gifted to HRH from the late Queen, would still be highly vulnerable...

Was it a success?

The general opinion, gleaned from our MESsembly the following Tuesday, was that it was a huge success in many ways, despite the £50 entry fee! (It was £55 for a Day Ticket just to see the show held over a 4 days period.) Having seen photos of Mick's Gold car on our website, plus my chat with the Organiser who had phoned me a few days before the event, Mick was invited/coerced into putting his car into the Concours section. As the lead car he did a super jobby talking to the Compere and driving around the ring! See the photos, you may make out the 100's watching, and clapping! I didn't see it personally as I was kept busy all day with folk talking about 1420H to an interested audience, which was parked beside the other three Middlebridges.

The real test of its success and importance though will become more apparent in the near future. Considering that only 79 cars were made it's quite astonishing that the MESS website had almost 4000 visitors the week ending 10th August 2025. Those attending Blenheim are clearly from the very wealthier parts of Britain. Will they find Middlebridges of interest too? Will we be seen gracing the pages of the more upmarket magazines as a result?



ALTERNATIVELY...

The downside to all this is in the logistics of actually using the 'Royal' car. It's a 90 minutes journey to the museum from my home in Rugby. Approximately the same time to Blenheim Palace, so I spent about 9hrs driving nearly 350 miles! The early start also seemed unnecessary as we arrived on time as requested, but it was over an hour later that we were admitted into the Great Court. We had been promised help to manoeuvre the car off the trailer, as I'm still recovering from surgery, that didn't happen either!

There was a lot of fun, laughter with many of the exceedingly rich folk looking at our cars, one story is worth retelling. Sitting inside 1420H, keeping out of the rain, a couple approached the car just as I got out, "...pleased to meet you Ma'am", he said, "you are right, but I'm in disguise today, good one innit, does it work?", I replied. They laughed and agreed that it did. It must be added that during our chat they revealed that it was their Jaguar XJS that had been smashed into by a rare Estate-car version of the XJS. It seems the lady driving that hit the loud pedal, whilst in reverse, and just froze...the condition of the stone-chipped court yard showed evidence of the tyre digging into the stones. Both cars back ends were a mess. Ouch!

Also in the Jaguar display was a 'Monaco', which seemed to be fibreglass panels added to the basic XJS. From a distance it looked quite nice, I thought, others didn't like it though! Close inspection however, showed lots of microblisters, the bonnet-to-wing shut line was about 3mm on the driver's side, about 10mm on the passenger side – and all for a mere £26k!

MESSy MISS

The intention of showing our cars in other parts of the Kingdom is somewhat restricted by those who are willing to attend such events. From the tales that appear in 'The MESSage' it is apparent that many of us living in the middle of England travel over to the IOM and down to the IOW and even further away, though mostly it is the more 'local' events that we regularly support – time, fuel, accommodation, dictates it is so.

Despite appeals for the membership to suggest other events that we might attend, there has been very little response – we can only assume that you're all quite happy with that situation continuing?

One of the shows I looked at this year was the upmarket 'Traditional Boat Festival' held on the



River Thames at Henley. The Organisers also have a Classic Car show at this event and they were delighted that we made enquiries about this year's rally, unfortunately the offer they made to us didn't allow sufficient time to organise anything. I let them know that we couldn't attend this year at such short notice, but it would be added to next year's MESS events.

It being a 3-days July event, the usual suspects would need to find affordable accommodation, something of a challenge near that part of London, I reckon! Would they even support this show? I could tow my caravan to the riverside campsite, but not if I was also towing 1420H on a trailer!

This then, brings me neatly to the next question, if you live within reasonable striking distance of Henley, between 17th – 19th July 2026, would you attend in your Middlebridge? We're not seeking a confirmed commitment right now, simply a possible 'Yes' would do. Such a response would also determine whether we continue to attend shows further afield or keep it to the status quo. It is up to you, dear owner, to provide such support...

Having said all that, it was a struggle to find many folk to attend the 'Wings & Wheels' in Lincoln... It would seem that all car clubs are having similar problems, there is so much to whet your appetite these days, to tempt you to do other things, never mind the costs involved, allied to the fact that you can always find answers to your cars' problems on-line, so why bother meeting fellow enthusiasts when it's so easy to do something else... I no longer have a Scimitar of any kind, but I do enjoy the 'social' side of our unique club. A warm welcome then to new owners Alan, Ian and Chris.

As an aside, Maggie and I did attend this lovely show some years ago when we were aboard my Edwardian-style Inspection-Launch narrowboat, 'Boudicca', boating down the Grand Union Canal and onto the Thames. We didn't actually get to Henley by boat as the Thames was in flood that year, consequently movements became restricted for safety reasons. Some of the steamers didn't arrive at Henley either as they were unable to pass beneath bridges because the water was so high.

MESS Calendar 2025

(Please note events highlighted in blue already have MESS members attending)

Start Date	End Date	Event
06.04.2025	06.04..2025	Three Counties Show Ground Classic Car https://classicshows.org/events/festival-of-transport-6-april-2025
27.04.2025	27.04.2025	Drive it day & combined AGM (meet & Bee keepers Pub, Beeston, for AGM 7 lunch + visit Lilac Grove, the home of Middlebridge) Oakham Classic Car Show Rutland https://www.carevents.com/uk/events/classic-wheels-oakham/
18.05.2025	18.05.2025	Classic Car & Bike Show Brookhill Hall, Pinnxton Nott's Bloxxham Steam Country Fair, Nr Banbury, OX 15 4HD https://www.bloxhamrally.com/
15.06.2025	15.06.2025	Cotswold Run Morton in the Marsh, Glamping, B&B or Hotel
28.06.2025	29.06.2025	Crouches, Nottingham x Lilacs Grove, Re-Union etc Hollowell Steam Rally https://www.hollowellsteam.com/
TBC	TBC	Sherborne Castle Classic and Supercar . (Somerset) https://classic-supercars.co.uk/
05.07.2025	06.07.2025	10.08.2025 10.08.2025 Salon Prive, Blenheim Palace.
20.07.2025	20.07.2025	14.08.2025 17.08.2025 Scimfest
10.08.2025	10.08.2025	07.09.2025 07.09.2025 Wings & Wheels Lincoln LN42QU info@internationalbcc.co.uk
14.08.2025	17.08.2025	12.10.2025 12.10.2025 Stoneleigh, Bangers n Cash
07.09.2025	07.09.2025	06.11.2025 09.11.2025 Lancaster NEC Classic Car Show
12.10.2025	12.10.2025	29.11.2025 29.11.2025 Brewers Fayre, Xmas Dinner 2025
06.11.2025	09.11.2025	
29.11.2025	29.11.2025	

WOUND UP?

There have been discussions on various MESS sites regarding sourcing electrical components that need replacing or repairing. Our well-known suppliers have some items, but not all it seems. In Rugby there was a workshop called 'Autolec' who specialised in vehicle electrical problems, spares and repairs, they also had some really good stores.

When the owner retired one of the staff bought the machinery and materials to carry on repairing obsolete alternators, starters etc, for vintage and classic car enthusiasts here in Britain, Europe and the USA – where-ever they may lurk. Paul Baker is the name and he has a large workshop in his garden where he does the business. He only repairs the faulty units on-site, he doesn't work on complete vehicles anymore.

Paul found the fault with the aftermarket starter motor/alternator that I had fitted to my Velocette motorcycle. He doesn't advertise as he has enough work as it is. Having said that...

I recently spoke with Paul regarding the problems that some owners are having, such as wiper motors... so send him your faulty item, he will suss the problem and give you a bespoke price to repair it, if it's possible.

Mick and I discussed whether we should have some common items kept in stock on behalf of the MESS membership. This raised a number of questions: who would act as store keeper? Who would be responsible should it develop a fault? What if it had been in store for (say) 2 years and found to be faulty after fitting? That idea became a no-no then!

Pauls details will be added to the website for future reference, however, if you want to make a note now, it's:

Paul Baker, 72 Kilsby Road, Barby, Northamptonshire CV23 8TU. Moby 07747 830444. Phone him firstly to discuss your lecky problem.

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.

MESSEMBly

In person. The monthly MESS meeting has resumed and be held on the First Tuesday of each month at 5pm 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.

QUOTES

My motorcycle insurance was due for renewal, and as the current insurer's offer seemed a tad expensive this year, a bit of research was therefore required. I literally spent a whole day trawling through eight companies that advertise in OBM (Old Bike Mart). Quite frankly, at the end of it all, I felt totally drained by the exercise, but I did save some money – not much, but £30 is in my pocket and not theirs. Comparing like-with-like is the first challenge, but the different prices ranged from £176.88 up to £469.26 for exactly the same thing, the same motorcycle, etc. Why? How?

MONEY MOVEMENTS

The MESS Lloyds Bank Account now incurs a Service Charge of £5.17 a month, sometimes £5.25 - it used to be free! On the plus side we can now have a Debit Card as well as the cheque book. I'll still use a cheque book where necessary, but the card will enable a better way of being more direct with spending. If (say) Bruce has designed an item that then needs production, such as a print, Bruce pays for it from his own pocket, he then gives me the invoice, I then issue him with a cheque to reimburse him, which is then justified in the accounts with a short explanation. With a card I should be able to transfer funds directly to that specific supplier, so avoiding the above ritual.

In an attempt to find another free form of banking, I visited the various banks and building societies in Rugby, plus the Post Office to see what was on offer. The PO wasn't any good at all. Santander had nothing to offer. HSBC had a Service Charge of £8 per month plus additional charges for every transaction, in or out. NatWest seemed possible, but it was all on-line, nothing was actually done in the bank, even setting it up was on-line, too. Being a techno numpty, I don't do on-line! We just don't get on... I did ask Barclays, out of interest, fortunately they had nothing, as I bank there it wasn't going to happen anyway, but I had to ask.

Of the building societies, 'Hinckley & Rugby' seemed to have an answer, with reservations. Mick and I visited them on Tuesday 29th July with the intention of setting up an account there. They insist on 2 signatures on any cheque issued (mine and Micks) plus other security restrictions. I wouldn't have a cheque book, a cheque would be raised by H & R at my/our request, then needing both our signatures. Forms (requesting a cheque) would have to be pre-signed by Mick and countersigned by me in person at the H & R office – as you can see, it is very complicated and somewhat unwieldy, nor does it have the flexibility of a Debit Card. Curses!

FUNDATION...

The response to our appeal for funds was met with some really generous donations, I sincerely hope everyone has received their 'Thank you' from me or Will, possibly both... The GDPR restrictions does mean that I no longer have everyone's contact details, so Will is asked to send 'thanks' on my behalf.

As far as I know, Will is the only one with that info, personally I believe Mick Gaughran should also have all those details too, he is the MESS Registrar after all... It will also save pestering Will who is very busy workwise and cannot always respond immediately to an urgent request to contact the membership.

The balance at the 21st July was £1457.37, to deduct from this amount will be new mats to replace the worn out and scruffy article in current use, some new promotional 'sails', PLI, carpet for the NEC, website fees, plus any other anticipated costs.

NEC - suggestions

The cost of going to this show as a visitor is not cheap, buying your tickets using the MESS code does reduce your ticket price by £4 per ticket, PLUS it does credit us (The MESS) in the eyes of the Organisers. Bruce always receives a heavy-duty moan from them for 'The MESS' not selling enough tickets via our code which is **CCCN0V5787** this year. **PLEEEEEEASE** use it!

Some visitors will stay over, particularly those travelling vast distances, and accommodation near to the NEC is not only difficult to find but can be very expensive too.

Those who are regularly 'on duty' on our Stand and for the duration, such as Will (from Scotland), stay at a B&B (Anora House) which I discovered a few years ago. It's close to a railway station and is two stops from the NEC. A few other 'exhibitors' are doing the same thing – it saves time, money and the aggravation of driving into the show, never mind trying to get out again!

If this idea appeals to you, I suggest you investigate pubs, hotels and B&B's, starting with those that are close to the nearest station to the NEC and working your way back along the track. You'll be very lucky to find one that is that close, for the above reason, so it may be worthwhile looking at Coventry, which has a considerable amount of hotels to choose from, with the added benefit of varied restaurants catering for all tastes.

Now, before you all get the wrong idea that I'm actually recommending this dreadful City – I once wrote an article about Coventry saying that it was the ugliest, and user un-friendliest City in the Queendom, with matching people...! No-one ever challenged or disputed that claim.

Thrilled to announce our club has a stand at the www.necclassicmotorshow.com

Get the dates in your diary and book your tickets in advance so you can celebrate your love for classics with us at the ultimate season finale!

Quote our club code CCCNOV5787 to save £4 off single-day adult tickets or £2 off family, child or multi-day tickets. Book by 16 Oct and you'll help us earn additional benefits.

Full ticket information at: www.necclassicmotorshow.com/ticket-information



Stand 3-475 Hall 3A
THE UK'S PREMIER
CLASSIC MOTOR EVENT



USE OUR CLUB CODE TO SAVE £4 ON ADULT TICKETS

7-9 NOVEMBER | NEC, BIRMINGHAM

Coventry does have a superb car Museum nevertheless (see it now before it's turned into 300 homes), with two of the fastest cars in the world. It was also the birthplace of the British car industry. Something like 150 car makers began production there over the lifetime of that particular industry. At one time 125 different makes were all in full production there. Coventry, however, seems to have turned its back on its rich motoring heritage, and little evidence remains, sadly!

Looking at old photos you will see that it once was a beautiful City (some old buildings do still remain), however as it became a target for Adolf Hitler's bombers much of it was ruined. It should have been rebuilt just as parts of medieval Germany were, as Allied Airforces had returned the gesture, but the 1960's planners decided otherwise and wrecked the place forever instead.

For those of you who live closer to the NEC and drive there, you may consider my choice. I drive to Hampton-in-Arden train station, where there is a free car park (with security cameras), it's then one stop to the NEC, about a 10 minutes walk undercover to the Exhibition Halls. No hassles, no aggro, no queues...

SHOWY STONELEIGH

This is a new one that's already been adopted by the usual suspects. It's on Sunday 12th October and is tied up with the 'Bangers & Cash' tv show. It's called the 'Restoration Show and Spares Market', it's at Stoneleigh in wonderful Warwickshire CV8 2LG, but if using a 'sat nav' the code changes to CV8 2LH. Phone number is 0247 669 0123. Quote from their site says 'learn more and secure your tickets today on' www.restoration-show.co.uk, however, I've been dealing directly with Lisa at Live Promotions who suggests that I shall be the point of contact for The MESS.

It's supposed to be free, but I am a tad concerned that it may change nearer the time. Lisa has a bit of a track record for getting it ever-so-slightly wrong... So far we have 6 positive attendees in Middlebridges, 1 possible, 2 who'll not have their cars but are going anyway, and I'll be taking my VW van suitably adorned. Please let ME know if you're going and I'll add you to list that Lisa has already received, twice now. As it's just a one-day event, it's been decided to have a minimalistic display, rather than the gazebo, posters etc.

Peter H and Alan Timmis are staying at a pub called the Cocked Hat, Binley, CV3 2AY. 0247 663 6767. They are staying both Saturday and Sunday, where they will be dining too. If anyone would like to join them around 6.30pm on either day, Peter has suggested you add your name to the 'Peter Humphries table' and book your meal, or just pitch up for a drink. I don't believe Peter's offered to pay for your meal, despite his vast wealth, but it's worth pestering him anyway, always!

