



The MESSage



Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set

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December 2016

MICK'S MESSage

My Car No 33

I have managed to reduce the to-do list a little, but don't want to strip too far as I'm looking forward to doing a new years day run. I'm looking to do the more involved bits from January onwards. That is provided I can deal with the cold in the garage.

Matt's Car No 66

Matt has purchased another MB and collected her on BLACK FRIDAY. 1st job is - fit a new battery followed by removing the auto box as it is clearly very poorly. Once this has been achieved I would say next on the list will be a very thorough inspection and service which no doubt will throw up a good to do list, more to come in future MESSages.

Middlebridge Scimitar Valuations

One of the subjects discussed by the MESS at the Sywell Classic Car Show was agreed valuations. Dan very kindly took on the project and has since been dealing with the staff at a Classic Car magazine and figures have been agreed. As mentioned later Dan met with the Editor on the Saturday morning at our NEC stand.

Russ confirmed that our valuations would be published shortly in Classic cars Magazine. After seeing the cars and learning about the sale of Jon's car helped him understand more of the MB marque. They have also confirmed with Dan that they want to run a feature on the Middlebridge (this was confirmed after the show on the phone.)

Many thanks to Dr Dan Mitchell for the time & effort that has already gone into this very important MB project and hopefully Dan will have further success in the year ahead. Fingers crossed!

Website

We have had lots of recent marque activity which has once again kept Martin busy in the background. Many thanks Martin. Still no cars for sale but our wanted section is ever growing ;o)

Events

The Middlebridge NEC event will be covered in depth by Will but I would personally like to thank everyone that helped make the event such a roaring success and of course the owners that turned up from both the UK, IOW and Germany. As for MESS events for 2017, this is on the menu for our next MESS meet at the Elms on the 5th December. I'm hoping that we can schedule some dates on the website early next year.

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.

**Lancaster Insurance
Classic Car Show
Birmingham NEC
11-13 November 2016**

Following our interim Message last month we thought a more in depth report on the NEC show was necessary, firstly to say a huge thank you to Bruce Beauchamp who was behind the creation of the Stand and put in an effort which was above and beyond any of the rest of us in making this such a success in promoting the marque.

However, behind every good man is a woman and thanks should also go to Bruce's wife, Alison, who for a number of weeks before the show became a "Middlebridge Widow" while Bruce created and refined the stand!

Thursday 10th saw us gather to construct the stand under Bruce's direction. After checking into my hotel I was walking to the halls past the car park when I was



Never irritate a man with a steel rule and Stanley knife!

hailed by Jon Smith who was trying to find somewhere to park his trailer as he had two vehicles at the show, not just MB28 but also a rather unique milk float!



Clearly a Reliant influence here somewhere?

Despite the threat of a £50 fee to park his trailer (a shock to a Scot, never mind a Yorkshireman!) we managed to find the free trailer park and John gave me a lift back to the hall where, outside, I was introduced to his friend, Andy, who, I can only assume in a fit of madness, had agreed to help us over the three days of the show.



So where does this bit go?

While Jon drove the milk float to its stand Andy took me and MB28 to meet up with Bruce, George, Matt and Mick at the Middlebridge stand.



Getting there!

I can't remember what time we finished but it seemed quite late with everyone except me, Jon and Andy having to travel back home afterwards.



And Breathe!

Friday saw us all back bright and early for the 9am opening with Dan joining the crew. Jon had tentatively put MB28 up "for sale" in an eBay advert prior to the show. This was more to generate interest in the marque than a true attempt at a sale but he was "hoist by his own petard" when not one but five people came to speak to him about it on the Friday, culminating in a sale close to his original thoughts on price.

This sale shows that for the right car in concours condition there are people who recognise the true cost of preparing and refurbishing a car to a high standard and who clearly value a Middlebridge Scimitar at a level similar to that which is achieved by many other more mainstream classics.

I have lost count of the number of times I have heard the phrase "Scimitars are undervalued" yet it seems there are plenty people still willing to criticise anyone who dares to offer a concours car at a price which fully reflects the time and effort in restoring it.

In my opinion, we all owe the seller and the new owner our gratitude and support for raising the profile of the Scimitar and recognising the true value of a well presented car.

Although it could be considered a double edged sword, if values rise and it becomes more difficult to afford a car, we may also get to a point where more people are willing to spend money on good useable cars as they then stand at least a reasonable chance of getting most of that back if they ever come to sell.



MB28 with Jon and its New Owner

If Middlebridges go up in value it should have a knock on effect on other Scimitars resulting in more cars staying on the road in better condition - and that, surely, is what we are all about as enthusiasts?

Anyway, enough of that. Over the show we had a number of owners visit the stand and on Friday Stewart and Mary Frost, the owners of MB67, joined us and Stewart happily (maybe!) held the fort while some of the rest of us got a chance to see some of the other stands. Stewart is in the process of refurbishing MB67 with new paint, interior and having put in an electric Webasto sunroof as well. The car is all coming together and we look forward to seeing it next year at shows, maybe even the NEC!



The Cars as Covered During the Two Minute Silences

On both the Friday and Sunday on the 11th hour the exhibitors and visitors observed the two minute silences. As a mark of respect we covered the cars and it was quite poignant moment as the silence descended and the show came to a standstill.

John and Jill Unwin visited too. We included the comic value pictures posed

with Mick, George and John in the interim post NEC Message. John has been steadily getting to grips with MB65 having now got the engine running sweetly and finished rebuilding the front suspension.



Mick, John & George Having a Laugh (Pic by Dan Mitchell)

While Bruce, George and Dan travelled home again on the Friday night Matt, Mick and I enjoyed a pleasant, if somewhat slowly delivered, meal (we thought it might be breakfast at one point!) at the hotel where we were all staying. Sadly Mick and Matt's room was in one of the noisier parts of the Hotel and they suffered a bit of "sleep deprivation" as a result of a couple who decided to have a "domestic" under their window at intervals until about 3am!



George and Alison Judge, one of the Show Organisers
(Pic By Dan Mitchell)

Saturday dawned a bit damp weather-wise but our enthusiasm remained high with plenty still going on around the stand.

As mentioned in Mick's Message, Dan had been working with the Editor of a classic car magazine to get the Middlebridge listed in their valuations section and a visit to the stand to see the cars and discuss recent sales evidence has resulted in them confirming they will include the Middlebridge in their "February edition" due out in December? It has also sparked enough interest that we might get a follow up article with them.

We also had a visit from Stephanie Ward who extended an invitation from the Jockey Club to have a stand at the Gentleman's day on 14th July 2017 at the Newmarket July Festival where they are planning a British classic car and Bike display. Dan and Bruce are now following this up.

We had lots of positive comments about the stand and the cars but I felt really



Bruce Surveying his Handiwork

bad for Bruce who took his car out three days before the show to find that he had been a victim of the dreaded curse of microblisters which had appeared en-mass on just the bits of bodywork that appeared to catch the lights in the show halls. True to form his first reaction was to get quotes on getting it rectified and he plans to have this done over the winter with the car being back in concours order for Summer 2017.

It was also good to see some of the new



It all fits in here, just like Magic!

owners visiting the stand with Tom Lisney (MB36) and Richard Eeles (MB45). Both have been hard at work fettling their acquisitions with more work planned over the forthcoming months.

After an exhausting, but rewarding three days it took about an hour and a half to pack up the stand with Bruce's skills meaning the whole stand fitted into his car and a small trailer!

I think I should leave the last word to George who said that his throat stopped hurting on the Wednesday after the NEC - caused by so much laughing. A Great weekend.

That Would Be Handy

Mick's declaration that 35 Middlebridges have changed hands, since The MESS was established, has made me wonder if everyone is aware of what we made available to the owner in those early days. Amongst them are the Handbooks. These came in 2 styles – Personalised and Generic. The Personalised version had a picture of your car and its build number on the front cover. Not everyone ordered a copy, so it's quite possible that 'new' owners don't have a Personalised copy and might like one. At the time the books were sold at cost for £14 each which was a special price to me.

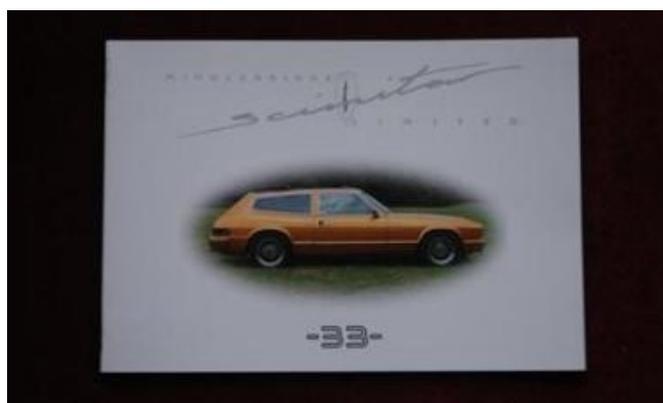
I have been in touch with the original Printers and since they have moved to another part of Northamptonshire and employ a different team of operatives, no-one knows about the books. I have yet to visit them to actually show them my printed copy, which may jog a memory, however, before I get involved in trying to find my original files (from my appalling storage system), I would like to know just how much interest there is from the current ownership in producing more Personalised

Handbooks. It's quite possible that I'll have to find another Printer to produce the same high-quality book, as before, but this is a chicken-and-egg situation – only once I know of possible numbers can I find a price per copy.

I do have a few of the Generic copies left at £25 each – they were dearer as they were printed later and just a few produced at that.

As a matter of interest, I typeset the whole book from the scraps of photo copies that were given to all owners when they bought their cars new. As with all such books there were pictures to take, line drawings to amend, copy to write declaring the differences between the 6B and the Middlebridge Scimitar, ditto the information locating additional fuses (for instance), etc. In total it was about 11,000 words. By comparison the EU directive on cabbages runs to 29,000 words, almost three times as long! The EU directive on cucumbers runs to 18 pages! ('don't know the word-count). For every pound of fish on your plate, 14lbs is thrown back into the sea because of EU directives. Can someone please tell me why the Referendum was so close?

George Sampford



ASBO Wants to Go Quietly!

Rather surprisingly for such a “loud” car Peter H is intent on quieting MB27 down—don’t get too worried though, it is cabin sound deadening he is looking at.

Peter has asked for ideas from other owners who have investigated this and is looking for feedback from anyone who has used sound proofing materials internally Including under carpet, under bonnet etc and headlining but also if they have been used externally in the Gearbox/tunnel area.

Any thoughts on the modification of the exhaust system, choice of tyres or any other ideas would be welcome. If you respond to any of us we will pass on the information to Peter.

One comment from me about tyres, I use Vredestein Sportrac 5, which I like but they are noticeably noisier than the Bridgestones they replaced. Over to you!

On the subject of ASBO going quietly, it recently stopped going at all as a result of a failed fuel pump. Peter rang his usual supplier from the roadside and organised a new pump. Apparently, he



did utter a few comments when told the price. It was a Bosch and cost £208 delivered.

He then did a bit of research (after speaking to Peter Freeman and visiting his local Fittapart) and established that the same Bosch pump could be bought from eBay, Fittapart or Graham Walker from between £100 and £110. Sytec pattern pumps are available on eBay for £59.95 free delivery or a Lemark pump at £64 from Fittapart. He took this up with his usual supplier who told him that he buys the pumps in at £139 plus VAT. He agreed to have it back and give him a full refund.

Peter commented “Dick Turpin used to wear a mask so you at least knew you were being robbed at the time.”

Ethanol Again?

George spotted this letter in the Vintage Motor Cycle Club newsletter relating to the use of additives to protect against Ethanol deterioration in components. Being the festive period, and with the focus on things alcohol related, he asked the contributor Jeffery Hurst if we could reproduce it here: -



MB27 at Gatcombe

I was very interested in the comprehensive editorial on the above subject. Having worked in the motor industry and the chemical industry for many years since I left school in 1961 there are some comments that I would like to make on some of the issues made by him.

Firstly if we look at the historical situation. The Model T Ford (the daddy of our side-valves) would run on pure alcohol , indeed Old Henry thought alcohol was the fuel of the future. Many companies in the early 20th century marketed ethanol/ gasoline mixed unleaded fuels as many thought that the probability of with lead poisoning of the population posed by using tetra ethyl lead (TEL) as an anti knock additive were too great to be acceptable.

In 1928 Shell Oil and National Distillers introduced a fuel in the UK called 'Cleveland Discol' .The alcohol content of this varied over time from 15-30%. This was marketed from 1928 to 1939, and from the early 1950's (after Pool Petrol finished) until 1968 when it was dropped in favour of TEL petrol.

This of course was when our glorious side-valves were in their heyday. Indeed I remember my dad filling up with Discol before driving his Prefect to London to head office in the 50's. No problems there! Can anyone remember any issues?

I would like now to comment on specific issues raised in the article. The issue of rubbers in the fuel system is first

Early in my working life in the 60's I was employed as a reception engineer by a local VW dealer who also had a Discol pump many VW Beetle owners filled up with the Discol. Now anyone who knows Beetles knows that they use a large proportion of artificial rubbers and plastic in their construction because the Germans, having no source of natural rubber in WW2, were at forefront of developing artificial rubbers such as Buna. Indeed my abiding memory of the Beetle is the smell of residual solvents and polymers in the car. Now in my job I would been the first person to be presented with any problems with degeneration of rubber or artificial rubber seals due to alcohol in the fuel, there were none.

Later in my working life I became responsible for specifying the construction of tanks pumps and hoses to handle thousands of tons of 100% ethanol and 100, 99 and 95 octane gasoline. Any engineering compatibility chart that I could find showed ethanol to be better tolerated by metals plastic and rubbers than gasoline (petrol). Indeed when cleaning out the 2500 ton storage tanks after use there was far more residual rust (and highly toxic) sludge in the TEL gasoline tanks than the alcohol ones. Aluminium and alloy fittings were used on all the hoses and tankers. No degeneration due to alcohol attack was ever noted.

Indeed some beers which are up to 5% ethanol are supplied in aluminium casks and whisky and gin which in the UK is a

solution of 40% ethanol in water is sold in aluminium cans. Has anyone out there actually experienced any of these material degeneration problems or is it all a bit of a 'scare story' myth

My personal feeling having had years of experience with the oil industry is that the issue of damage to these materials is a marketing ploy put about by the manufacturers of all these additive who are intent on selling the product and nothing else.

Now to the issue of water and ethanol. Ethanol does not grab water molecules out of the air. It is hydrophilic which means it hold water. For Regular non ethanol petrol (E0) and 10% alcohol petrol (E10) the primary cause of water collecting in tanks is condensation on tank walls. But unlike E0 which can absorb no moisture, E10 can hold up to one half of one per cent of water by volume, (so the alcohol in 10 litres of petrol in your tank will absorb 50 ml of water) and the water molecules will dissolve in the fuel. This water will then be in solution like salt in sea water and will not separate out but will burn harmlessly in the engine. It is a fact that at 5% alcohol will form a stable mix with petrol down to about -28 degrees Celsius. I would suggest that temperatures that low in the UK are unlikely. Unlike diesel fuel there are no waxes in petrol to separate out and cause problems in low temperatures.

Now with regard to the vaporisation issue. The article is right when it says that the cause is more likely to be

mechanical than fuel. The initial boiling point of petrol is circa 35 degree Celsius, depending on the blend. That of 100% ethanol is 78 degrees Celsius. adding 5 or 10% alcohol to the blend is likely to have no effect on vaporisation whatsoever.

Once again I would ask if anyone out there has experience any sign of any of these issues highlighted which can definitely be laid at the door of ethanol. The editor has my E mail should anyone wish to respond direct (copy to the editor of course.

I hope this has helped to address some of your concerns. Remember the purpose of additive makers is to sell additive! Some of them are like go faster stripes, they look good but do nowt! Jeff Hurst

I expect that there are many alternate views on this matter so please feel free to put pen to paper (or send an email) if you disagree.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

And All the Best for 2017

Mick, George, Bruce, Will, Dan & Matt

