




The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set

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MICK'S MESSAGE

May I start this epistle by wishing everyone a very Merry Xmas and best wishes for 2016, roll on the better weather.

I was posed a very interesting question while at the NEC a few weeks ago, the question was how do I store my own MB and why has my paint finish lasted for so long. (She was painted in 2002) The answer is not quite as simple as 'in a carcoon Sir' In the early years my car was used all year round and stored outside in all weathers as I did not have the luxury of a garage. During this time I did wax her twice annually with a quality product. About three years ago I managed to finally get Council permission to build a garage and since then I have just parked her up and left her with NO cover at all. I felt, after much pondering, that I would prefer she was very dusty but totally dry. I was concerned that any cover may trap some humidity both on the bodywork and within the car itself. May I stress that the above is purely my own opinions and I'm sure many people will have different views on the best storage practice for their pride & joy. In fact it would be great if anyone could share their own ideas on storage.

GEORGE'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2015

Crikey! Another year whizzes past and it is the time to reflect on that year from the Middlebridge point of view. Shows that 'The MESS' have attended have been well-supported by owners exhibiting a wide range of really nicely presented cars. A well-deserved pat-on-the-back is earned by everyone. There is no doubt that last year's Gatcombe Event and the related Silver Anniversary Celebrations have seen the vast majority of our Scimitars being restored to very high standards, and it is worthwhile as we have witnessed cars changing hands for 6-figure numbers.

For a variety of reasons we have tried different shows this year and have not attended others that usually have our support. In some ways we have been treading water, but in the background there have been stirrings. Next year will see some changes in the way The MESS is organised, and it must be emphasised that nothing sinister or nasty has occurred - quite the opposite in fact...

MICK'S MIDDLEBRIDGE

As per my last MESSage, I delivered my MB to Andy Luckman (Scimitar Specialist) in Gloucester. I'm glad to say that the rear axle bushes 'n' seals and brakes have now all been replaced or overhauled, the axle has also been prepped and then painted with POR-15 prior to being re-fitted to my car. At the time of writing this Andy is due to take delivery of the new custom built exhaust manifolds and I'm really looking forward to seeing them fitted to my car. I know several people have expressed interest in the headers and as soon as I can I will get pictures and pricing.



The Axle as Removed from Middlebridge 33



Refurbishment Under Way



Reassembled and Ready to Fit

MESSy "Things"

On reading this MESSage you will be aware that George has decided to take more of a back seat as he needs to focus on some of his many other projects. Whatever it is that George takes for his enthusiasm, I would certainly like some ;o). George will go into much more detail but suffice to say I'm delighted to say that he will attend events and will also continue to be responsible for the MESS purse strings. While pondering on George's decision I had a thought about linking the 'MESS' and George's new back bench role, this brought to mind a certain political group and I came up with "Lord Sampford" which hopefully will stick, I "owe" him this ;o). Personally I will miss George's banter, his ridiculing of my shorts & legs, him pulling me up on my "grammer", he also ribbed me about the blingy colour of my car, that was until he decided to paint his own car with GOLD highlights! The thing I won't miss are his "computa" skills.... Take that George and c ya soon!

We had discussed George's decision at the NEC and with a little bribery we are happy to announce that the new events co-ordinator will be Bruce Beauchamp (Owner of MB No 26 and a lovely GTC). Bruce has many years experience of event organisation and we hope that next year Bruce's experience will start to pay dividends for us and the marque in general and we wish him all the very best in his new role.

MY FUTURE PLANS

As has oft been published, I'm in the throes of converting my VW into a day van, which will also take my '59 Venom Clubman, whilst towing my larger caravan around the world. Added to that change in my lifestyle is the significant fact that Maggie and I are moving house – again! Still situated within the inglorious town of Rugby, it's yet another property that needs total restoration. It doesn't even have an electrical consumer unit, just a 1970's control switch box. It is a slightly larger house thus enabling me to have a study instead of working from boxes and piles of paper in the dining room, it also sports a larger, mature garden that will keep Maggie engrossed and I will have room for a mega-shed in which to store much of my 'stuff'.

Currently, I rent a 40 ft container and part of a barn that are some 20 plus miles away, and have done so for almost 8-years, that's quite apart from the garage and porch attached to my present home which is cluttered with more of my 'collectibles' and doubles-up as a workshop. You can see that I shall be somewhat busy then, with little time to enjoy my Scimitar or its tangents...

THE FUTURE MESS

So what does that mean to the MESS, you may ask. Will Anderson (RSSOC Middlebridge Registrar), will be taking over the compilation of The MESSage and you have seen what a super job he has done in putting it all together in a more readable and interesting fashion, including pictures. It can only improve the image of The MESS as a 'club'.

Bruce Beauchamp will be taking on the 'Events Coordinator' role and is the ideal man for this position as Bruce has years of experience in the Exhibition Industry. Once again, Bruce will help to raise our image beyond the norm.

Our illustrious Registrar, Mick, has asked me to keep control of the Finances which I have agreed to. The MESS funds are now standing at £583.40, thanks to another generous £53 received in the middle of last month. The donor has been thanked



Mick, George and MB63 (Pre Refurb.) at Beeston 2012

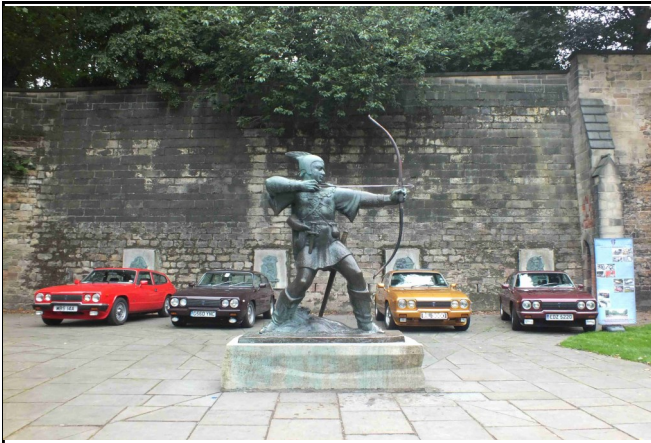
and remains anonymous. Any donation is gratefully received of course as there are still some considerable outgoings.

As you all know, just Mick and I have your contact details, which are not released to anyone else without your specific permission. With Will and Bruce now taking over my roles, they will need those details from me to continue contacting you. I shall assume that this is agreeable to you unless you ask me to delete you from my list.

If I still have my car I shall make it available for shows, however with so many other cars looking splendid (and with more to come that are nearing completion), there will be potential show-cars all around the country, consequently there could be a local(ish) show that you could attend that is not on our list, either on your own or with a fellow Middlebridge owner or two. Provided that you let us know beforehand you will have use of the MESS PLI for that show, don't forget.

I shall continue to control the security of the Grille Badge stock and orders for the hub caps and steering wheel badges.





MESS Display at Nottingham Castle 2013

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discussions have included whether or not to cease the current method of raising funds by appealing to the generosity of owners, or simply having a MESS fee. We are not alone in having the voluntary contribution idea, the Daimler SP250 OC do the same thing, but they have about 800 members yet rarely do they receive much in the way of income. If you have a view on this please let Mick or Will know.

For example... It has been noted that various engine-bay hoses are becoming scarce, so we are considering the costs of tooling for the top and bottom hoses, plus any other that is/are specific to our cars in silicon. I had donated my old hoses to 'Performance Silicon Hoses' in Leicester a few years back who did provide a price but as far as I know no-one had ordered any. Since that time PSH has been sold-on and I visited the new owner

last week to confirm that the bag of hoses he found were from my car.

He would expect to receive finance to cover the cost of the tooling which he would hold for our use. Hoses would only be available via The MESS. If The MESS were to use some of the funds for that purpose then, clearly, more needs to be done to swell those funds, otherwise there will be no 'spare' money for new display panels which are becoming a tad dated. As an aside these hoses come in two kinds of black, matt and shiny, plus a variety of lairy colours including orange! No prizes for guessing who'd fit them. I have asked PSH for tooling prices and for making 10 sets, plus prices per hose. I am also awaiting contact details from similar companies to obtain comparative prices etc.



MESS outside the "Middlebridge Local" Beekeeper Pub 2013

Middlebridge Specifications and Changes

Terry Bradshaw has gone through the website and some other data we have to try to summarise facts and figures on engine, transmission colour and trim on the cars. While he admits it is not 100% accurate, because the info is not available for all cars, it is just the sort of data analysis that interests me so if you ever wondered how many manual vs. auto cars were produced or how many cars had factory leather or metallic paint then read on!

Manual Transmission from factory	45	Colour change from original	5
Automatic Transmission from factory	33	Metallic paint from factory	57
Manual to Auto conversion	3	Solid paint from factory	21
Auto to Manual conversion	2	Recaro Front Seats from factory	3
Velour Trim from factory	46	RHD	76
Leather Trim from factory	31	LHD	2
Velour to Leather trim change	4	Non standard engine	3
Complete respray/retrim	3	Non standard gearbox	1

Coming and Going

In recent months we have seen MB22 sold and it has returned north of the border to Scotland, which makes 9 cars up here now. Alan Harwood has sold MB60 which, as expected, did not hang around long. George Sampford's MB63 is still available and has been joined by Mike Holland's MB39. This is a three owner car and has been well looked after and maintained. Originally bought by a lady from Derbyshire she specifically ordered the car with the earlier type rubber bumpers. Mike has known the car for nineteen years and owned it for the past nine years but it is now time to pass it on to another custodian. MB29 is now for sale. The owner of "the Swiss Middlebridge", Luis Guigoz, has decided to sell as his health means he is now not able to drive the car.

Restoration and Repair

There are a number of cars undergoing restoration and repair at the moment, including No's 8, 37, 40 and 67. It seems that many of the Middlebridge owners are keen to carry out high quality restorations to their own unique specifications. I know of one owner who would like to do this but has a bit of a dilemma as his car is probably one of the most original and low mileage Middlebridges left. As such, he is reluctant to do anything to it that is not reversible, to keep it in original condition. While he does not really want to sell, if anyone is tempted by the thought of a concours low mileage original car contact me and I will put you in touch.

On the subject of restorations, some of you may have seen Graeme Conway's posts on Facebook about his body off restoration of MB37. One of the points that came out of the dismantling of the car for the respray was that despite the chassis being galvanised much of the other steelwork attached to it was not, including the roll over hoop. It would appear that the Middlebridge can suffer exactly the same issues as other models in this area so worthwhile having a look and checking on its condition.



MB 37 Roll Bar



Ben Helping Dismantle MB37!

Register Requests

We are always on the look out for more information on the history of individual cars and the Flickr user "[Davethegear UK](#)" has some really good period photos of Middlebridges at shows around 1989. This includes a white car with the registration G280 SCU. We can't match this registration to any of the cars on the register. It is likely that this Middlebridge was subject to a plate change at some point and is now on a different registration mark. We have asked before but if you can shed any light on this We would be pleased to hear from you.



What's Yours Called?

Back in my first article for Slice I included a table which showed the range of names that the Middlebridge cars were registered under with DVLA. So far as I can find out forty eight of the cars have Middlebridge in at least part of the manufacturer's name field. These names range from Middlebridge through Middlebridge GTE to Middlebridge Scimita and Middlebridgescimitar.

There are at least three cars listed with the manufacturer name as Scimitar and another three Reliants. Even with the ones we know are abroad or unregistered that leaves about seventeen cars that have a manufacturer name that we can't match.

Okay, you are now asking where I am going with this and why does it matter. DVLA have recently contacted a small number of owners of historic vehicles, primarily Bugatti, querying their status. This is a specific situation and it seems to link to the issuing of age related registrations for rebuilt cars.

If recent announcements are correct then this is not likely to be expanded to query other classic car status but it does tend to focus the mind on making sure your vehicle is registered correctly. I would be grateful if owners could check what their car is registered as and let me know any of the other permutations or spellings used for the manufacturer on the V5c form.

We will help owners as much as possible if they need assistance in getting DVLA to accept a change but there is always the possibility of opening a can of worms if they are not approached carefully. This is the voice of experience with my own car.



MB28 without the NEC lighting—looking even better!



"Mystery" Middlebridge



MB14 at the Dallachy Strike Wing Memorial



MB13 outside Lilac Grove