




The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set

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November 2015

Mick's MESSage

"Sywell Pistons and Props 2015"

This event seems to have become a firm Middlebridge favourite, once again we were blessed with great weather for the whole weekend. As well as a myriad of different classic cars on display there were fantastic air displays especially on the Saturday when we were treated to a wonderful 'Battle of Britain' air display (see pictures). Other attractions included, hot rods, muscle cars, race cars, drag racing, group B rally cars, motor bikes with many of the above in action on the runways all over the weekend.

Bruce once again brought along and erected a wicked stand for our Sunday display which again saw us kept very busy for the whole day.

It was great to see the official programme advertised the Middlebridge marque's stand from the year before. Anyway enough of my ramblings, I think once again the pictures on the website will say it all.

My Car

Quite frankly, I do feel a little guilty ;o(. I have done very little work on my car for some years barring servicing her. She for her part has never let me down since restored in 2002. Paint wise I still think she is still in A1 condition. However, taking into account that post resto' she was used on long trips around Europe the last three years have seen her mainly used around the UK.

Although she is still in VGC mechanically I feel it is time to rectify the minor irritating issues that have been on my to do list for some time and also to thoroughly inspect her with a view to ensuring her continued reliability in the future . Many of these issues are common to most Middlebridge Scimitars and hopefully there will be some interesting MESSages over the winter months as hopefully my to-do list is reduced. As I write this I haven't started work on the car yet but I have started purchasing the items I know I want to replace. Take a look at these beauties that I managed to prize from Dan Mitchell and yes they are original Middlebridge items direct from the Lilac Grove stores.



Exhaust Manifolds

The 9th October was a lovely sunny day and the day and I had arranged to drive in the MB to Wellingborough for Fab-weld to assess my car and price up the freeflow manifolds as previously discussed. We also discussed pricing up a group purchase of 5 to 10 units. I have now received the one-off price and boy it is certainly higher than I expected and by nearly four hundred pounds! At the moment I am pondering on several factors with a view of justifying spending so much on a couple of headers 'no matter how good they are' I do keep thinking that it could certainly be the catalyst to start my to do list as mentioned above. After pondering for a few days and speaking with a few friends a company called Infinity Exhausts were recommended, I have now called them and they are making all of the right noises with regards to specification and price. They are located near Bristol which is a good distance from me however I have already booked a slot with them for Saturday 07.11.15. They want the car for a minimum of a week which just happens to include the NEC weekend. More on this project in the next MESSage or MESSages.



Above: - MB's 40, 33, 14, 13 & 63 Outside The Lilac Grove Premises in September 2013

Below: - Caption Competition!



NEC CLASSIC CAR & MOTORCYCLE SHOW

This is being written the day after the country celebrates the burning of religious nutters, who were determined to alter the religious status quo, I ask - has anything really changed in this country? Come back Guido – where are you now that we really need you in tackling the Government? As a born again heathen, I tend to look on life from a different perspective, however one thing that has remained a constant is the Classic Car Show at the inglorious NEC.



This year's even larger exhibition begins on Friday the 13th November and finishes on Sunday the 15th. Some of us will be having so much fun on Thursday setting-up the Middlebridge stand, where we have 4 super examples of the marque to excite the visitor.

The MESS is fortunate by not having a diverse or complicated amount of display material to erect, however this year's challenge has been created by 'The Organisers' who have decided to not pre-issue 'Build-up Wristbands'. Everyone will exchange a down-loaded, signed document for the wristband on the day. I can see our allocated build-up-time-slot of 10am not being adhered to as 000's of exhibitors try to exchange paper for plastic. We also have to wear 'high viz' vests during build-up and hard-hats if ladders are required! As one who belongs to the school of 'if ain't broke – don't fix it', why do we allow the H&S to continue to rule our lives?

Despite some concerns, it has been decided not to have an array of scantily-clad females flopping their bits all over the cars, instead we shall rely on our Scimitars to thrill the crowds, once more. Should you intend to visit us for a swift drool we are situated in the Pavilion, Stand P1-600. As with last year, we are contiguous with the RSSOC and the ROC.

It is my opinion that this show was already too big and this year's is rumoured to be bigger still. I'd say it's impossible to see it all in just one day especially with an expectedly larger visitor footfall. It's not cheap for Joe Public to get in and I can see this show going the same as others if they continue to hike the prices.

"SWIVELS, SUSPENDERS AND STOPPERS!"

TRUNNIONS

Maintenance issues aren't featured too often in these epistles, however Middlebridge owner Tim Dury has been phoning me recently with problems regarding his trunnions – a subject that has been discussed, written about, argued over, in RSSOC circles and *Slice* of course, ever since that Club was formed. Tim found that his trunnion bolt was seized and despite copious amounts of easing oil, application of a spanner sheared-off the bolt head, leaving the bolt still within the trunnion.

I won't bore you with more detail, however it is worth mentioning that this particular Achilles heel does require regular attention. When my Scimitar was used as my 'everyday' car, I used to grease the trunnions religiously, once a month, the bolts were turned to ensure that they were free to rotate (such action probably spread the grease, too), the trunnions had been modified by the previous owner(s) by having additional grease nipples fitted. Many years ago, I owned a GTC, my (then) partner drove my 6A. I used a thick oil in the GTC's trunnions (as Triumph TR6 owners are advised), the 6A had grease applied. The idea was that a comparison could be made, having discussed it with ace Scimitar guru, Chris Lloyd. It all came to nothing, sadly, as my partner and I went our separate ways and the GTC was sold. Micky G has been discussing a trunnion-less set-up that some TR6 owners have fitted, but there is no feed-back yet.



An Innocent Looking Part, But

SUSPENDERS (again)

Of all the modifications that should have been made to our cars the front and rear suspension set-up was screaming for attention. It was on the Middlebridge cards that Jaguar axles were going to be fitted, with disc-brakes all round, however that would have required full Type-Approval and Middlebridge simply couldn't afford it. Sad wasn't it? Added to that though, is that you or I could modify our car's axle arrangement accordingly (providing your Insurance Co is advised and agree to continue Insurance), without such approval by Gov't Officials!

BRAKES

Peter Humphries has fitted after-market Willwood vented disc brakes, which he demonstrated to Micky G at Curbog. Mick was very, very impressed by the set-up - after having scraped himself off the windscreen. I am concerned on 2 counts here. It is clear that Peter's car stops much better and sooner, however does such action (over)load any other part of the current suspension system, which is an incredibly crude design of some 50-60 or more years old? Secondly, having improved the front end braking it has probably disturbed the braking bias which I am informed should be 60% at the front end, 40% at the rear.



My first concern would merely require regular inspection to ensure that nothing was failing/fracturing due to additional stress. The second concern could be overcome by replacing the rear drum-brakes with disc-brakes. I recall one of the after-market suppliers offering an adjustable balance bar to the brake pedal system which may solve the imbalance, but probably requires considerable surgery in the footwell to accommodate the installation. Surely fitting better discs all round is the answer.

I thought I saw all-round disc-brakes fitted to a chassis at Graham Walker's place some years ago, if so it might be possible to readily modify our cars with all-round better braking. It's just reminded me that there was a chap who had an article published in *Slice*, or was it on the *Scimweb* thingy? a few years ago, that showed how he'd fitted discs at the rear axle using parts from a Volvo (I think). Perhaps you clever compooter buffs can delve into that one for an answer.

Whilst I'm all for making improvements to any vehicle, hence the experimental multi-spring set-up I tried with AVO, it is essential to ensure that there is no adverse effect to another part of the machine through that modification...

As an aside, in my early motorcycle days I rode a BSA Bantam which had been race-prepared and tuned, to this day there is still a Bantam Racing Class. That noisy bike sported a huge front brake, consequently the spokes were very short, but the braking was superb. I sold it to a chap who worked at the same garage as my Dad. He dismantled the bike to repaint it etc, only to find that beneath the petrol tank the hidden top tube of the frame was fractured near the head stock. It was thought that the fracture was caused by that amazing brake applying too much force to the top tube – it was never confirmed, but the strong suspicion was there...



MB 14, 47 & 15 (l-r) At Stirling District Car Show 2012

CHRISSY MEAL

After the Saturday show finishes we intend to go for a meal at the Weatherspoon Pub, lurking within the Airport next door to the NEC, if you fancy it you are most welcome to join us. The choice of eateries at this major airport is abysmal, nevertheless it's about the best we can do for a sort-of Chrissy bash, at the moment, with Will A and others living so far away. I did recce the area attempting to find an alternative pukka eatery, however the logistics of getting there and back to the NEC became quite complicated. It is possible, however, that we will also have another, later gathering at The Elms, Lutterworth for the 'localish' owner. More of that closer to time.

FUNDS

I recently received a very nice cheque for £100 pounds to swell the MESS funds. The donor has been contacted and thanked for his generosity. Any amount of donation is gratefully welcomed at any time – sent to my home address please, and made out to The MESS, thankyou once again.

See you all at the NEC.

George

A Final Word From Mick on Future MESSages

I am delighted to announce that the MESSage as you know it, will soon evolve, become more comprehensive & professional in appearance it should contain even more material.

For some time our MESSages have been a last minute hotch potch of material screwed together by George and myself. We genuinely knew this area needed to be improved and after a recent long conference call between Will, George and myself it was agreed that I continue to do my part of the MESSage, George will continue with the events and Will would now add his own material to the MESSage and also use any material as required for inclusion in his Slice reports. I am personally delighted as I see this as a great step forward for the MESS.

