



The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set



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March 2022



Mick's MESSage

Incredibly, we're now well into 2022 and I find myself pondering on the year ahead, my recent health issue has forced me to focus a little. I will look to reduce my fleet of classics, first up will be my lovely Sierra, I will attempt to get her registered for the March Auction at the NEC which is staged by Silverstone Auctions. Hopefully later in the year two more will follow.

As I further update this MESSage it's now the 1st March and I'm actually looking forward to getting down to my garage to run up and hopefully take my Middlebridge for a run, weather dependant at the moment of course. It would be great to get her to a couple of events soon.

Let's talk Pumps....

There seems to be a Ford 2.4 / 2.9 Water pump shortage with good availability of sub-standard



Early Photo of MB 33 at Bettystown Beach

replacements in the market place, these include pumps with both plastic and pressed steel impellers.

The high quality pumps have cast impellers and are generally manufactured to a higher standard which would of course increase the life of the unit. I very recently purchased the 'last one' available from Brands Hatch Performance for one of the many other projects that need to come to fruition.

MB 33

Very sadly, I have had to finally accept that Matt's 20 year paint warranty is now up on Middlebridge No 33. ;o(I find it incredible looking back, that not only has she now been painted and used for a full 20 years but also that I have kept a car for 20 + years. RIL 3000 was the last car that Matt and I renovated before work, family life, kids and life generally conspired to reduce our time together. 2022 will hopefully see my car showing off her 20 year old paint job at various events.

Addendum: I must be feeling better, I have already told everyone that on Saturday 12 March I WILL be spending time in my garage, I fully intend to run MB33 up to temp' and fingers crossed take her for a run as she has been left in the garage virtually unused since November.

The infamous Gearbox swap on MB33

MB33 is the only car that I have ever purchased as auto, the reason was quite simple, even 20+ years ago when the marque was relatively unknown finding a car with all the options was still very difficult and it took me two years to source the right car with every extra, but unfortunately, it included the ‘optional extra’ autobox. Over the 20 years the autobox has been fine albeit with a couple of external seal failures. The most notable being a “0.05p O ring at the base of the dipstick. Sadly, only discovered with the gearbox sat on the bench. I have actually got quite used to the box but always found myself hankering for a stick. (MB owners at our Zoom meetings and at the Brewers Fayre said I was mad, daft or crazy), I however decided to look into the feasibility of converting to manual as I have everything to do the conversion that I had purchased from another MB owner converting from manual to auto.

I made enquires about an upgrade to my type 9 gearbox and the data I received back was awesome. At the same time my enquiry on conversion costs were in my opinion too high to

justify me proceeding, Approx £8,000. This along with people saying it’s a waste of money and prey you don’t ever need to convert back & keep her original. All in it would have been a £10k + job with the gearbox upgrade, I guess that was the nail in the manual coffin.

I have attached the gearbox data based on my tyre size and hope you agree they are certainly some serious ratio changes in the box. Most if not all manual MB owners will know how short the standard 1st gear is and this would have certainly ironed out that issue. Hopefully this piece explains why the project never went ahead. 20 years ago I would have done the conversion myself but I have to face it, I’m not up to that type of work anymore. Should anyone want details of the gearbox specialist please just drop me a line, he has already solved the 1st gear issue for one other Middlebridge owner.

Gear Ratio, Speed and RPM Calculator

Gear set: Manually entered values

Gear	1	2	3	4	5	Final
Ratios:	2.750	1.698	1.225	1.000	0.815	3.310
RPM Limit:	6000					
Tyre Size:	205/65 x 15					
Tyre Diameter:	25.49 in					
Tyre Circumference:	80.08 in					

Gear	Mph per 1000 RPM	Mph @6000 RPM			

1	8.33	50			
2	13.49	81			
3	18.70	112			
4	22.91	137			
5	28.11	169			
Mph	RPM (in Gears)				

	1	2	3	4	5

5	600	371	267	218	178
10	1200	741	535	436	356
15	1801	1112	802	655	534
20	2401	1482	1069	873	711
25	3001	1853	1337	1091	889
30	3601	2223	1604	1309	1067
35	4201	2594	1871	1528	1245
40	4801	2965	2139	1746	1423
45	5402	3335	2406	1964	1601
50		3706	2673	2182	1779
55		4076	2941	2401	1957
60		4447	3208	2619	2134
65		4818	3476	2837	2312
70		5188	3743	3055	2490
75		5559	4010	3274	2668
80		5929	4278	3492	2846

Mph	RPM (in Gears)				
	1	2	3	4	5
85		4545	3710	3024	
90		4812	3928	3202	
95		5080	4147	3380	
100		5347	4365	3557	
105		5614	4583	3735	
110		5882	4801	3913	
115			5020	4091	
120			5238	4269	
125			5456	4447	
130			5674	4625	
135			5893	4802	
140				4980	
145				5158	
150				5336	
155				5514	
160				5692	
165				5870	
Gear Change RPM drop (change @6000)					
1 -> 2	-2295 (to 3705)				
2 -> 3	-1671 (to 4329)				
3 -> 4	-1102 (to 4898)				
4 -> 5	-1110 (to 4890)				

MB 69

Good news, MB 69 is now residing in Huddersfield and should be at the start of her return to concours condition. I can now confirm that MB69 is now fully stripped out, hand sanded and she is currently waiting her turn in the paint booth.

My Health

I had purposely steered clear of this subject, truthfully, I did not know what to say or was well enough to say it, Geo' my 'olde' friend has I believe kept people in the loop. Thank you, George.

Very briefly, I have had and still do have quite serious breathing difficulties; this means that speaking was very difficult at times. (I know some of you lot will find that hard to believe ;o). I have been rushed into hospital 5 times for a week or so at a time. The hospital diagnosis was 'chronic asthma', The hospital lead times are 20 weeks + so I have had a private CT scan and a call back from the specialist that simply said there was a lesion in my lung but no cancers. (What does this mean, I have never smoked.) There has been no discussion from the NHS on how to move forward and if I can move forward. I was getting pretty down at this

point as I could do nothing physically, (Please note that prior to this I have never had a day ill in my life and was working 50-60 hours a week) .

Out of the blue, I received a call from a Middlebridge owner who mentioned to me that he could ask his daughter Emma to look at the private CT scan data. I agreed and emailed the data and bullet points over. I have to say Emma studied the CT data and the bullet points I sent. I had a great phone call with Emma on her birthday (sorry Emma), her advice on how to deal with the problem was second to none, I'm already feeling somewhat better. However & based on recent events I should have been back in hospital but instead I'm looking forward to meeting with friends at the next Brewers Fayre meeting. "Fingers crossed"

Addendum: I'm delighted to confirm that we had a great meeting at the Brewers Fayre and it was my 1st drive out in 2022, however, in my daily not my Scimitar!

It is very early days, but as I write this, I feel incredibly thankful to Emma and her dad for both their time and advice, it also goes to

show it's not what you know it's who you know. "I never thought that owning a Middlebridge would be extremely beneficial to my health"!

Once again thank you both. Mick

Our other money pits!

If all goes to plan we are hoping to reduce the fleet down by putting one of our cars under the hammer at the Restoration Show NEC in March. Unfortunately, I'm now too late to register my car for the Silverstone Auction, it looks like I will have to go for option 2 which at least saves me the entry fee and the commission on the sale which is a large amount of money.



Spotted

Martin, our webmaster forwarded two Middlebridge's he came across on the net. Many thanks, Martin. Fredrick and Andrew, you have been spotted.



BROOKLANDS BASH.

It's not too late for people to join the seven cars currently registered for visit to Brooklands museum on their 'British Marques Day', 24th April 2022 (also UK Drive It Day); <https://www.brooklandsmuseum.com/whats-on>. Lots to see and it's arranged we shall put our cars on the famous Brooklands embankment for a photo-shoot. Contact:- as.timmis@tiscali.co.uk.

Cheers

Syd (AKA Alan)

George's Jargon

IOW CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Some of the US have followed the advice as previously published (also see below) and have had a challenging experience. It seems that we could have applied as a 'Club' rather than individually. Had that been known at the time it would have been much easier for the MESS to organise this show...ah well!

You will also need to send an SAE to Victor Gallucci, 2B Portland Road, (make sure it looks like a 'B', or it could be delivered to 28), Kingston -on-Thames, Surrey KT1 2SG.

The weekend costs £7 per car, £3.50 for one of the days. It is now only held in Ryde on both days. Last year Victor had mentioned that he would try to negotiate a better deal with the ferry company, that seems to have fallen by the wayside, however it's worth talking with your intended Hotel to see what they can offer as some have special deals.

I do apologise for any confusion, I'm as baffled as anyone else as to why the original advice has changed. Please note: You cannot just pitch-up on the day to show your car.

MICK'S HEALTH, or lack of it...

Mick's been in and out of hospital and has spent about 5 days at work since Christmas. In some respects he has worked, but from home in a very limited capacity. An MRI scan was deemed essential, however a 20 weeks' wait for that via the NHS wasn't acceptable, so the Private route seemed the answer. Sure enough, problems were found with his lungs, however Northampton Hospital will not comment on the scan, nor will the GP, because it is from a Private source. What a state this country is in!

Wouldn't you think they would have been pleased to save money and time by Mick's initiative? Especially as that particular company has an excellent reputation in the medical world.

Mick phoned me yesterday and spoke for just over 40 minutes without coughing and spluttering! Quite an achievement for him, I can assure you. He sounded much happier and is determined to get back to better health. More exercise is strongly recommended, so being a caring sort of chap, I've suggested he replaces his aged Jack Russell with a greyhound and takes on a 30 years' old nymphomaniac...if you know of either seeking a new home, do tell.

What was the miracle that has helped him? Well it certainly wasn't the advice from his

doctor or the hospital because neither gave any help or advice in any shape or form whatsoever, what an absolute disgrace... No dear reader, that help and advice came much closer to home from a MESS member's relation who knows about such things. I hope my own experience has also helped in a small way as my first wife had a diseased lung removed when she was just 19 years old, the other lung was also damaged but we had to learn to live with that and how to cope with it.

MESSEMBly

In person. The monthly MESS meeting has resumed and be held on the first Monday of each month at 7pm in The Brewers Fayre, Central Park, CV23 0WE. Every enthusiast is welcome to join us, owner or not. Banter expected and encouraged.

Virtual MESSEMBlies will continue with the invitations sent to members by email.

HRH PRINCESS ANNE'S CAR

I have been in touch with the Industrial Museum in Nottingham, which may be the new home for Princess Anne's Middlebridge, if negotiations come to fruition. The museum is still trying to find a new home for a horse-drawn carriage which is where her Scimitar would be placed. We hope it will be

physically possible to occasionally use the Royal car for prestigious events, however we have yet to see exactly where it will be exhibited, or even if it has easy access.

Such uncertainty at the moment makes it difficult to confirm the use of that car for current shows. The IOW show having its own problems. Such as, at the end of Saturday's show all cars must be removed from the site, there is no overnight parking. All cars then reassemble for Sunday's show. That's going to be a challenge anyway without having to also deliver a car on a trailer with around 2000 cars jockeying for the best positions again. Then there's the finding of some overnight security...

BIRTHDAY MONEY

The last MESSage mentioned the birthday of The MESS, 6th February, which some members thought an excellent time to send a donation to The MESS funds. Ten members sent contributions amounting to £615.00 giving us a balance of £1,866.41. I have emailed a sincere 'thankyou' to everyone who have helped swell the funds. Thankyou all, once again.

It has been said before, and it's worth mentioning again, this money will enable us to finance the essential PLI, web-site costs, and to replace the tatty carpets used at major indoor shows, plus the possible use of Princess Anne's car which must be trailered.

Whilst that last bit's in your mind, does anyone have a trailer that the MESS could borrow for such occasions? It would save the cost of hiring one, obviously.

We would like to buy a quality gazebo, but we haven't sufficient funds for that - yet. It would be an excellent time to get one now, especially for the IOW show methinks (if there's room), so if you are thinking of adding to the funds, or have simply forgotten to do so, now would be a good time so we can get ready for the next season of shows and for those beyond.

MESSMART

The on-line shop design has spluttered to a halt currently but will be attended to shortly. As the amount of interest in the umbrellas hasn't increased enough to earn the discount, they will be put on-hold until I have sufficient numbers. Just to remind you, at the moment all I need to know is: who intends to buy one or two personalised gamps at some time, you're not buying anything now.

REBIRTHDAY

I started writing this missive on my unofficial 30th birthday...!

It was 30 years ago that I was involved in a serious RTA in Coventry City and declared dead at the scene. Seven cars were involved, 11 people taken to hospital, though it was just me and my bride of 19 weeks who were kept in. It was the paramedic motorcyclist who removed the blanket covering me, restarted my heart and got me breathing again, thankfully. It wasn't thought my new wife had long to live either, as she was scalped and had lost a lot of blood – that looked a lot worse than it actually was.

We were travelling into Coventry to have her car mot'd, early Sunday morning, over the other side of a canal bridge were emergency traffic lights on 'red' where she executed an excellent emergency stop. The following speeding car didn't stop and ploughed into the back of us with such a force that the impact crushed the rear seat into the front seat. The driver had been up all night at a well-known Coventry drugs den. We bounced off the cars in front of us and then spun into the oncoming traffic, 3 times we were hit and the full petrol tank split open on impact. The city was closed for about 5 hours.

The injuries I sustained (including a broken bone in my spine), still have an impact of my life today, but they are now irritating rather than being a major problem, you learn to live with them. What was harder was the wrecking of my career, loss of status, loss of earnings amounting to about £.5m, plus our new marriage was destroyed as we both became very different personalities as a result.

Luckily, I am still here to tell the tale and can celebrate both my official and unofficial birthdays...it could have been so very, very different!

Middlebridge 41



This car was an auction car which was not registered until 1995. It bears the newest registration of a Middlebridge "N" as, despite being registered much later MB77 was given

an age related plate. It eluded the registrars for a number of years, although it was known to be in the Birmingham area and even having a note put under the wiper at one time to try and make contact with the owner.

This is what I hope will be a series of articles about its restoration. Those of you on Scimitarweb can catch up with the detail of Dave's trials and tribulations over ECU's and fuel pumps but I will let Dave tell you about it in his own words.

"I have the classic car bug, my first love is for vintage cars, as they are generally unique, characterful, robust, and simple, they are however not so practical for regular reliable if you live in Cumbria, summer or winter so they are for high days! Clearly a supplementary car is needed so I bought a Sunbeam Tiger which has a fairly effective soft top, a great car but once you get into maintaining one, they should not be exposed to salt as they are fundamentally designed to rot.

During a visit to the NEC classic car show in 2017 looking for bits for the Sunbeam I stumbled onto the Middlebridge stand and was blown away by the cars on the stand, I was not aware of the Middlebridge story and that also grabbed my imagination. I researched the marque and the seed of an idea formed to have a Scimitar as an everyday runner, galvanised chassis, fiberglass

body, simple mechanicals. Before I had chance to mull over the practicalities MB 41 came up for sale on eBay, I went to see it and a deal was done, she ran for 5 minutes then stopped not to run again, had not been used for a number of years and very little before that, is in original condition albeit well -worn but all there, an untested project.

I had a few other projects on the go at the time (and still have), so much of my first year of ownership was establishing general condition and researching what opportunities there are to make her more efficient, faster, and reliable I considered replacing engine with a Cosworth BOB, Jaguar independent rear suspension etc. Sat outside for a year was not kind to the paintwork, and she developed a good rash of micro blistering, my attempt to get her running was thwarted by electrical issues and ultimately a bust high-pressure hose on the power steering, I conceded and put her into storage until more time could be made available.

Coming up to date I decided that as a minimum I had to get her running and usable, with much help of a good friend Graham Millar we have set to with the aim to get her sorted from a mechanical point of view, repair any fibreglass damage but generally ignore the cosmetics. We have been on the job for a few weeks now and encountered the good bad and the ugly.

- First job high pressure hose, fitted with the rack in position easy?
- Established why she would not fire up; no power to the fuel pump, trace the wiring through via the inertia switch, fuel relay, fuse, new relay and the pump ran which then exposed leaking return fuel lines.
- New pipe fitted, fuel pump running controlled via the ECU but no fuel being delivered, no power to the injectors, diagnosed that there was no 5 volt feed from the ECU to the mass air flow meters, idle solenoid or throttle position sensor, replacement ECU sourced and fitted and she ran albeit with a flat spot whilst coming off idle.
- Ran for 30 minutes off and on as we tried to get the fan running, the fan thermostat switch and wiring was a botch form and earlier fix, and then stopped again, no fuel.
- Diagnosed as a faulty fuel pump, we have now fitted a new pump, pipe with pre and post pump filters, it is a stainless-steel tank but the various fittings coming off the tank are heavily corroded, we will drop the tank and service the whole fuel system so that we are working from a known safe condition.
- A new cooling fan thermostat switch with two temperature settings has been fitted as per the original fitment. We (Graham) have

deduced that the two-speed fan function is at high temperature it runs at high speed, that relay being fed from the ignition circuit works as the engine is running and when the ignition is turned off the lower temperature setting and fan speed will be maintained as it runs directly from the battery and will reduce engine bay temperature build up.

- We have tried adjusting the mass air flow meters and have improved the flat spot from idle but are struggling to achieve the prescribed settings, we either need to get them refurbished or obtain lower mileage replacements.
- Rear hatch back lock is broken, attempted to remove but will wait until we drop the tank to gain access.
- Front and rear bumpers were removed whilst the rain held off, the front needs extensive rebuilding, the rear has some localised repair.



- Removing the rear bumper was not a pleasant job necessitating removal of the inner trim panels, all but one of the fixings had to be cut off. The fact that the rear section of the front bumper was missing helped with access for a grinder, it still took 8 or so hours.



Going forward I have the bumpers to repair, the front is a challenge as much of the front scoop edge will have to be cut away and replaced to get remove the stress cracks, and the rear section modelled and probably a mould made. The rear has a couple of areas that need grinding out but nowhere near as much effort required.



I am compiling a shopping list for the NEC restoration show, hope to see some of you there, cheers

Dave Myers"

Coming and Going

We currently have three Oh, now all of a sudden, four cars for sale on the Middlebridge website.

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

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

Middlebridge 78 This is a beautiful car finished in blue and recently resprayed. It is also numerically the last Scimitar ever made. Please go to the website for more details.

Middlebridge 74 LHD This Car has just today been re-uploaded to the site and is a very Rare Left hand drive car, She is been offered for sale by Scimitar Specialist Erik Hofman Classic Automate. Please refer to link below or the Middlebridge website for full details.

http://www.middlebridge-scimitar.co.uk/sale_full_details.php?id=57

Sandringham Pageant of Motoring

Sunday 5 June 2022

The MESS will be attending the Pageant in support of the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations at Sandringham. The application has been approved for an anticipated 6 Middlebridge display. Further details of the event are available at

<https://www.sandringhammotoringpageant.co.uk/clubs/>.



Please could all those interested in participating contact Alan (alan.cavendish.tribe@gmail.com) who will organise the event on behalf of the MESS. It is a one-day event that will cost £10 per car, which also includes 2 entry tickets.

Bicester Heritage

Spring Scramble

TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE FOR OUR NEW SCRAMBLE DAY: APRIL 23RD

Join us from 9am until 4pm, as we open the doors to Bicester Heritage, and explore the best-preserved WW2 RAF Bomber Station in the country. Our April Scramble promises you the chance to experience historic motoring at its best, through a curated display of classic cars, open workshop doors and lots of surprises for the family along the way.

Family and dog friendly, the Scramble is a wonderful way to while away the weekend hours in the company of some spectacular machines, in a COVID-compliant setting.



Don't forget, our ever-popular Autojumble will be back in the Hangar too, offering a range of automotive memorabilia and delights.

INTERESTED IN ATTENDING AND DISPLAYING YOUR VEHICLE?

Apply to display [here](#).

TICKETS NOW LIVE FOR BICESTER HERITAGE'S OCTOBER SCRAMBLE OPEN DAY EVENT

Bicester Heritage will once again be opening its doors for historic motoring enthusiasts to join the October Scramble event, on the 10th of October, with the release of 5000 tickets.

From 9am until 2pm, attendees will be able to live, breathe and experience historic motoring at its best, offering the chance for enthusiasts to bring their pre-1990 classic car, join the display and experience a behind the scenes glimpse of the hub for historic motoring enterprise at the best-preserved WW2 RAF Bomber Station in the country.

The 45 industry-leading Specialists based at Bicester Heritage will open the doors to their freshly restored 1920s and '30s buildings, allowing behind the scenes access to their showrooms and workshops (specialising in upholstery, vintage Bentley engineering, specialist storage, vintage, classic and racing car and bike sales, plus much more) on a site that is normally accessible by appointment only. Guests will also be able to enjoy refreshments from on-site beverage producers Wiggly Monkey Brewery and Sky Wave Gin, alongside guest traders and a classic motoring 'Auto Jumble' held in Hangar 113.

The October event provides an excellent opportunity to celebrate Bicester Heritage's ongoing partnership with classic vehicle insurer Hagerty, one of the world's largest automotive lifestyle brands, and the successful launch of

Scramblers in June 2021, a new membership club born from the success of the Scramble events.

Scramblers and the Scramble events exist to celebrate the historic motoring sector and the magic in the driving and preservation of classic cars, while making these experiences accessible for future generations and families. Dan Geoghegan, CEO, Bicester Heritage adds: "We are thrilled to be able to throw open our doors to welcome classic car enthusiasts, seasoned petrol heads and junior drivers along to what promises to be a special Scramble event. Our Heritage quarter lends itself beautifully, providing a magical backdrop for curated displays and a few surprises along the way."

MIDDLEBRIDGE ACCOUNT

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