

The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set



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October 2023



Mick's MESSage

Hi All, while writing this episode it has rained continually all day and the days are now getting shorter and of course colder as we reach the end of our show season. Lots happening this year and I will keep some of my comments short as these events are reported on later in the MESSage.

I was personally delighted that all of the cars attending the events performed flawlessly from start to finish. As usual the final event of the year will be the Lancaster Classic Car Show at the NEC, Birmingham, where we are looking to have a very special car on the stand this year.

MB 33

With No33's recent service and advisory free MOT behind her, she is running great. I have used her when the weather was dry and have done a few local events, one in particular kept me very busy 'Cars, Coffee & Gasoline' (Weedon



'Cars, Coffee & Gasoline'

Bec). We did have one good downpour which was a pain as the following weekend was the Curborough, Scimfest weekend. That meant some serious cleaning prior to leaving for the event and of course praying that it did not rain on route! As I have done for many years, I attended Scimfest on Sunday 20th August at Curborough Sprint Circuit. This event is the annual highlight 'must do' event for all Scimitar owners and enthusiasts and offers a wide range of activities over the three days. Unfortunately I could only do 1 day this year but will do my best to give a flavour of the event. The event offers the following- Camping, caravanning pitches, auto-tests, great banter in the marquee

while drinking the night away, the sprinting of course and usually with the Ferrari club joining in the fun, trade stands and Graham Walkers marquee, Autojumble and the annual concours event to boot. Approx. 4pm on the Sunday is the prize giving ceremony for all of the activities over the weekend. Both Bruce and myself entered our cars into the concours competition and both of us were successful, I took gold for best MB with Bruce taking silver position, I was also genuinely shocked but delighted to also win the concours d'elegance cup which was a real bonus.

I feel it only right that I say thank you to Keith and Richard as they essentially spend the whole of the Sunday preparing, Judging, scoring and finally handing out the awards at the prize giving ceremony. Without their dedication there would be no Scimfest concours, so here's a well deserved thank you to you both.



Scimfest Concours Line Up

I do have a few jobs on No 33 to do for next year (2024). Most importantly, I cannot stop the awful brake squeal from the Wilwood Greenstuff pads, the noise is awful and continuous while in slow traffic, I have all the anti-squeal retainers fitted, Copper eased etc but still no joy. Paul Turnbull has suggested I contact Wilwood and enquire about purchasing the Wilwood standard road pads. I would also like to remove my exhaust and get the boxes re-stuffed to quieten it down a little, I would also like to have a play with door seals if it's not too cold in the garage.

Ulva Watermill Sweden

Yet another update from Stephen (MB66) in Sweden; this event attracts a wide range of cars especially yanks. Stephen has once again represented the Middlebridge marque in Sweden, what an ambassador! (We must give

him brochures when we next see him). We do look forward to hope to meet up with Stephen again in 2024 when he hopes to drive from Sweden to our main anniversary event. I think we need to purchase the furthest travelled award now. :o) Please see the pictures below.



IOW Event

After missing this event last year through illness I was adamant I would be attending this one. I had heard so many stories of what I had missed and how fantastic the event was from those that went. I was looking forward to the 8th August when Matt and myself would travel down to a hotel meeting point just outside Portsmouth, we would then travel to the ferry in convoy and all board to ferry together. This went like clockwork and while on the ferry we all agreed to go straight to the hotel for a rest and meet up at 7pm for a meal and refreshments ;o). (need I say more).

Following morning and we met early in the hotel foyer and all drove the very short distance to park on the promenade as per the pictures, we then left the cars and returned to the hotel for breakfast and a nice leisurely wander back to our marque stand whilst taking in some of the 2,000+ classics on display in the glorious sun and in a beautiful location. What a day! On the Sunday we performed the same early morning routine to ensure we got our position and although the event was awesome again we did suffer from some rain to dampen things down a little. We

stayed in Ryde and I must say there was no shortage of restaurants of all varieties and no shortage of refreshment either. We all had a great time and just as importantly the ladies all enjoyed the 3 days as well. [Please see pictures]



Sywell 'Pistons & Props'

23/24 September

Goodness me, I can't believe it, we're already at our final outdoor show of the season! As usual we had a marque stand at Sywell Aerodrome in

Northamptonshire and this year was a great success on two fronts, we had good interest in the cars on the stand with many people reading our banners thus increasing the awareness of the marque. I personally handed out quite a few business cards to people over the weekend and look forward to any feedback in due course.



Bruce brought along the new MESS Gazebo for it's first outing, it was erected first thing Saturday morning, it was very soon filled with chairs and a long table donned with Tea 'n' Coffee facilities. Everyone brought along different foods and homemade goodies / cakes for all to share over the weekend. On-site food was expensive with burgers ranging from £9.50 to £12.50!

The weather on Saturday was lovely and the new gazebo was awesome and was well used throughout the day. Overnight, however there were very high winds that caused some of the

trade gazebo's to be damaged and or blown away! I'm delighted to say that our new gazebo and it's design were more than capable of withstanding the overnight conditions.



We were delighted to have newbies, David and Clair joined us in their beautiful Guards Red Middlebridge and we all look forward to seeing them again at future events. It was great to once again meet up with friends that we were with at the IOW only two weeks earlier. Paul and Kate joined us for the weekend in their unique Aubergine Middlebridge, Alan and Sandra also joined us for the weekend and it was awesome to meet up with them again, Alan Cavendish Tribe was with us for the whole weekend and was continually on the stand, also there were Matt, Nina, Michaela and Diesel (Surely the world's smallest chihuahua) ;o) George and Maggie also joined in with the proceedings and provided plenty of good hearted banter,

last but not least was Bruce and Ali. For those that don't already know, Bruce designs, manufactures and builds our Middlebridge stands and Sywell was no exception. The Sunday did see the weather get colder and with a little rain but, and I have to say the new gazebo really came into it's own. It enabled all of us to sit out of the cold, wind and rain and talk and generally have a good laugh and get to know each other even more over the weekend. I feel the best way to describe it is that the MESS is not a car club it's a group of likeminded friends that enjoy



getting together at events and of course to also promote the Middlebridge marque at the same time. We were also delighted to have Middlebridge owners join us over the weekend for a good chin-wag and to catch up, first was John & Irene Walker who own a beautiful concours sage green Middlebridge that we hope to see again in the future, Roy Thurman also

turned up for a good chat with us all, we hope to see his lovely Renault Electric Blue Middlebridge on the scene again soon.

I will let the pictures do the talking, should you wish to see all of the other attractions of the Sywell 'Pistons & Props' events please navigate to my Sywell event overviews on the Middlebridge website.

Wilwood Brakes

Chris Wilkinson, long time owner of MB12, was recently spotted on holiday in the Isle of Man. I was trying to get him to do a write up of that but he has kindly given me this piece on his Wilwood brake upgrade.



MB12 at Silverstone

"Having owned MB 12 for 21 years now, the car has covered 250000 miles 150000 in my ownership.

In that time in common with most owners, I have had to upgrade some parts of the car due to lack of parts availability or poor performance of the original equipment kit.

Last year the present Mrs W desired a touring caravan. Her wish (if you knows what's good for you!) being my command, a van was purchased. As an aside. I am in agreement with my late father on touring caravans. He said "I never hated a car that much to do that to it! (Pull a van)

Tow bars being short supply, one was fabricated and fitted but that's a story for another time.

The caravan is about the smallest and lightest you can buy at 700kg but really showed up the Scims brakes, particularly in the emergency stop mode. A check of the car's brakes showed yet another set of front discs had rotted on the inside, reducing the available contact area. The quality of the original style discs has become much worse over the years and this set came from Power stop but were the last they had 9 years ago.

The rust in my experience was much worse with performance pads such as Green Stuff etc.

With the pads rusting to the discs, leaving a pad shaped mark, that took ages to wear off with braking.

So, the discs were shot along with the dust covers on the rebuilt callipers from 9 year ago.

Having read the "Message" about the Willwood conversion a few owners had done; I had a chat with Mick G who had been suitably impressed with a test drive. A plain vented disc set with standard pads was ordered from Rally Design, this worked out cheaper than some of the Scimitar suppliers for the same kit.



Delivery was quick and they confirmed the original flexible hoses would not fit. New braided

original flexible hoses would not fit. New braided ones were ordered from them with the whole package of kit being very impressive. They offered grooved vented discs as an option but I declined, remembering the grooved clutch plate I fitted 10 years ago that juddered so much it had to come out (three times I had the gear box off finally putting the original plate back in with the new pressure plate and release bearing). I am still waiting for a refund from the "gentleman of reduced height" who flogged me this piece of kit. (You know who you are!!!)

The conversion is well within the scope of the good home mechanic who can change their own standard discs and pads. As a must do, the hub bearings should be changed using only the best branded quality you can get. Best avoid some of the stuff on the internet and go to a bearing supplier.

Check the fit of the inner bearing races too the stub axle as they often rotate wearing both items.

With the old discs off, hubs spacers shims are provided to go between the new disc and the hub.

I used one on the nearside and none on the off side. These spacer shims centralize the disc to the new calliper and the variable build quality of our cars means some fettling is required.



The kit comes with new disc to hub bolts, these are Allen caps as opposed to hex bolts. These were a tighter fit in the hub threads than the originals but were too long. 5mm was removed from each with a disc cutter chamfering the cut end on a grinder (this is important so the cut ends do not pick up in the holes).

Also, on the side that had the disc to hub spacer fitted, the heads of these Allen cap head s fouled the retaining bolts on the suspension uprights requiring a thinner washer to be fitted behind the shortened bolts. With the hubs and discs now fitted on their stub axles the callipers and hoses were fitted.

The hoses leave the callipers at an angle that requires careful routing to avoid putting any twist on the braided hose, also missing the suspension on full steering lock. Now for the one odd thing of whole process, the new pads are very very thick and leave very little clearance between the disc and friction material with the calliper pistons fully retracted. The off-side assembly, without the aforementioned disc to hub spacer shim, positioned the disc 5mm off centre to the calliper. (Outer pad) The adjustment to centralize the disc was smaller than the shim provided in the kit. In short, with the shim fitted the inner pad was too tight and with it removed the outer was too tight.

This was only a problem on the off side. Machining 1mm off of the massive pad thickness on my miller solved the issue. Bleeding the callipers was no problem and we were good to go.

Once bedded in the performance of the kit is impressive. The braking is very progressive and smooth and excellent when needed most, with no sharpness what so ever. I can say this is the single best thing I have done to the old nail during my ownership.

Downsides and ups (always some)

Cost at £672.00 with the VAT is not cheap but if your original set up has had its chips and you would have to replace with OE anyway, the additional cost is not too bad. Compared to the heater upgrade that took a day to fit for limited benefit this is brilliant. (Short chap again)

The disc to hub spacers needed to come with thick and thin options.

The cap head disc bolts required shortening (do not reuse your original hex bolts as they are too short when the washers are fitted)

New calliper mounting bolts should be fitted and should come with the kit but do not.

Even with new hub bearings, pad knock off is worse than before. Particularly after low-speed steering e.g., pulling out of a parking bay. Once driving normally it's not noticeable.

The braided hoses need careful routing.

Finally in common with decent suspension units, this kit comes from the modified / competition car scene and thus is designed to be displayed and maintain accordingly. Great on a highly polished never sees a wet day track day tool. On a road car I wonder? The calliper pistons do not have dust covers in common with modern motor bikes and the bleed nipples are tiny vank ¼ items with no covers. What condition these items will be in after

a British salty winter is any one's guess.

We all have adjustable shocks fitted now, with sexy instant seizing damper adjuster knobs and rusting threaded spring adjusters. There was a reason all the OE stuff was painted black.

Lastly on trunnions; I found if you cut the cast on limit stop off (does nothing anyway) you can get an extra turn on the thread when screwing the leg in. This may be the reason mine have lasted 18 years (not so the bolt and bush kits that are just utter rubbish as a concept).

Crash Pad Refurbishment

Andrew Jackson has been carrying out a full (and I mean full!) refurbishment of MB25. I have seen photos of his progress and it is going to be a stunning car when he has it finished. Part of his work has been to retrim the interior and the trimming of the crash pad can cause some "issues" – Andrew takes up the tale:

"My Middlebridge dash top was in pretty good condition but was starting to curl, it was my intention to upholster it to match the rest of the interior bit I've noticed upholsterers

seem to struggle getting the leather around the raised centre part and getting it to stick into the internal bends.



To get round this and to look for longevity, I cut the raised centre section off the dash and bonded a piece of ply to the front edge of this. That was used to make a mould of the raised section and from this I made a new fibreglass raised centre section with some captive nuts to hold it down after it had been upholstered." An interesting and bespoke way of dealing with the difficulties of trimming.

MB14

Well, it's been a while since I gave an update on my own car. Having had some work on the suspension earlier this year it has languished in the garage while work, and life in general, got in the way.

However, on reading the last Slice, Jim's article on AA boxes reminded me that we had a couple of them in Moray and on a nice sunny Sunday I took the car out and visited both of them. It was about 110 miles round trip and reminded me why I had the car and how much I enjoy driving it. Not only is he good with his prompts for material for Slice, he also prompted me to get the car back out on the road so thanks for that Jim!



GEORGE'S JARGON

A RIGHT ROYAL TIME WAS HAD...

At 9am, Wednesday morning, Micky G was delivered to my house in Bilton, by his son Matt, to begin our last major adventure (we think), for the MESS.

After many years of behind-the-scene discussions, Princess Anne was persuaded to sell her treasured Middlebridge Scimitar (reluctantly), to a fellow enthusiast who wishes to remain anonymous. The original brief from HRH was simply to find a new home for it and HRH would retain ownership. That brief changed this year. The logistics of the whole exercise were quite involved, pleasingly enough we got it about right.



Part of the sale agreement was that the car should be cosmetically restored to retain its originality, but no resprays, retrims etc, just sympathetic attention where required. This task was entrusted to Paul Turnbull up in the wilds of Huddersfield, Yorkshire. All liquids were also replaced during a full service and a new MOT issued by Obsessive Car Care in Northampton before its trip to Yorkshire.

Mick and I met with Alan Cavendish-Tribe at Tamworth Service Station where the A5 and the M42 cross. Alan was to lend us the use of his

trailer to collect the Royal car and rather than me trying to find his house (near Brum) to hitch it to my lwb VW, this place was deemed ideal for that. A hitchlock lock was also supplied enabling the outfit to be secure, along with chains and padlocks if necessary. I had already fitted my van with its new magnetic panels declaring 'Middlebridge Task Force', and good it looked.

Having set the sat nav we entered the M42 and almost immediately we discovered that we were heading in the wrong direction, yes, you've guessed it, I'd keyed in the wrong Post Code! NN instead of NG, no less. We turned around at the next junction and headed for Nottingham where we had been invited to celebrate John McCauley's 90th birthday lunch at a Greek Restaurant. Wasn't that a nice gesture by John's family and purely coincidental that it occurred on that particular day!



Here we encountered the next problem, where to park this very long outfit in the Arnold district of Nottingham. It wouldn't fit within a normal parking spot, obviously, so we rode around the area searching for somewhere suitable. We found a road where there were no parking restrictions but the long outfit covered access to someone's drive, curses! Eventually we found a spot that was just the right length and legged it to the restaurant. John was in good form and Mick and I enjoyed the excellent food, company and hospitality that ensued. We presented John with a 90th Birthday Card, signed by those present at the last MESSEMBLY and on behalf of all the MESS membership.

This detour added a bit of time to our journey to the Travelodge in Huddersfield where we shared a room. We had requested separate beds,



which was granted, thankfully! (Shades of Morecambe and Wise! Ed.) The outfit was parked behind the Hotel and took up about 6 parking places, which the Hotel sanctioned and is where they often park coaches, plus it is also covered by security cameras. I was very happy that the hitchlock lock was secured with a key. It was amongst the many concerns raised during our



discussions – who is responsible should it be stolen? Ditto in an accident? Ditto with the car aboard? Ditto damage sustained to the car during the journey?



Up bright and early for the last day in August, the sat nav was set for Paul's place a few miles away. My Micky-shaped navigator failed to read my full-address written instructions, nor could he quite remember what the place looked like, so a few circuits of the area eventually found the unit we were looking for, always more fun when towing in an unknown area of narrow roads, parked cars, etc!

We followed a large lorry into the yard where he needed fork-lift truck access to both sides of his curtain-sider, which meant we had to park a distance away! This wasn't

looking good.... With a bit of effort and the previously mentioned lorry being shunted around, we loaded 1420H and set off for Brookhill Hall Farm, Pinxton, for a pre-arranged photo shoot. On the way Mick added some petrol to the Scimitar as a few journalists were wanting to test drive it in the GBCJ Museum grounds. That would have been a tad embarrassing if the tank had been empty...



Bruce was already there, as were the team from 'Classic & Sports Car' magazine, to position the car for 'The MESSage' and the magazine's photographs. Bonhams had suggested a suitable place was required for pictures to help assess the car's value. They had also suggested that its value would be six-figures (because of its provenance), indeed such an offer has already been made and refused. The new owner has no intention of selling the car – it has been bought to save it for posterity. There could be a change of heart though, if it should make seven-figures...! This valuation can only enhance the

value of all Middlebridge Scimitars, surely?



Also there was Anna from the Museum, Matt was now in Mick's Scimitar, Richard Usher CEO of the GBCJ soon arrived too. The intention to have a reasonably quiet, organised, photo-shoot, now took a back seat. Though we arrived later than planned by the previously mentioned delays, there was still time to achieve the photographic goals.

Brookhill Hall was suggested by Richard Usher, and was amongst the many 'stately type' houses we considered, including Wollaton Hall. Mick, Bruce, Matt, Alan and I had visited the site earlier in the year to assess its potential. We thought it ideal – see pics. The young, new owner of the place is keen to have regular Classic Car meetings there and his first show this year was met with much surprising enthusiasm.

We have already discussed with him the possibility of 'The MESS' attending next year with the probability of 1420H being the 'Star Attraction', especially as it's only about 20 minutes from the GBCJ.

Pics all taken, the car was replaced onto the trailer and taken to its new 'home' in



Ambergate where some Middlebridge owners with their Scimitars were waiting to see its arrival. Alan C-T from Brum, Alan and Sandra Timmis from Lincolnshire, Pete and Marie from Mansfield, Matt and Nina from Northampton, Bruce and Alison from Derbyshire. Khoji, Dennis Nursey, and our great friend, Richard English were also present. I think it was about 4pm, I managed to get a biscuit for my breakfast... what a day!

Unloading the car for the last time was accompanied by rain but that failed to dampen our spirits and Mick reversed the car into the museum and officially handed over the car for safe keeping, on behalf of the new owner, after journalists had whizzed around the car park firstly.

East Midlands BBC TV News showed one of their reporters driving the car, all excellent publicity for the Middlebridge Brand and the GBCJ, too.

It will usually be on permanent static display with a full-size photo of Princess Anne standing beside the car. HRH thought the picture idea was



highly amusing, so the MESS are having a waterproof duplicate made for our own events. The new owner is keen for the car to be seen so it will also be on display at specific events elsewhere, such as the NEC Classic Car show in November.

After all that, I followed Alan to his home to drop off the trailer (his Middlebridge hasn't a towbar). Thanks for lending The MESS the trailer Alan, very much appreciated. With detailed instructions from Alan suggesting how to join the A5, seemingly 'Gertie Garmin' agreed for a while, however 'Gertie' was determined that I should go via the motorway, which I wanted to avoid. After much faffing about I eventually found the A5 at Atherstone and arrived home at 7.30pm in torrential rain, where our cat Monty was waiting patiently for his dinner... What a day indeed!

AFTERTHOUGHTS – THE LUXURY OF HINDSIGHT (perhaps)

It was only after I received an email questioning why wasn't the car offered to Gaydon that I thought more about where the new owner might actually want the car to be exhibited! Oops!

It was years ago that I first approached Gaydon whose initial reaction was very warm and encouraging. I was given a name to contact to

make it more official but it never got to any negotiating stage as 'they' were adamant that they were not interested after all.

The current owner is delighted that it's not at Gaydon where it would have been amongst a myriad of other 'special' cars all vying for the No. 1 spot. Richard Usher is keen to enthusiastically promote this particular Royal car and it will be a 'Main Attraction' rather than amongst a load of others. A win, win, it seems for everyone, especially 'The MESS'.

For me, Gaydon would have been better as it's nearer to my home, much easier for me to collect and deliver 1420H to appropriate venues. The NEC is about 30 miles from Gaydon, the GBCJ is about 55 miles to the NEC. For me, it's worth the extra hassle to collect the car from the really enthusiastic owner of this particular museum. I very much doubt that Gaydon would have promoted this car as Richard will, if at all...plus Gaydon



expects the owner to pay for the insurance, whereas GBCJ insure all cars on show in the museum without cost to the owner.

It should be added that other Museums were approached particularly in Nottinghamshire over the many years of research. The Industrial Museum was a case in point, Wollaton Hall, The Castle Museum, all had to get rid of an existing exhibit or two to make way for Princess Anne's car. Despite constant updates from our museum friends (such as Richard English) in the County, no-one was able to offer us an accessible home. On reflection, we did ok then...

VALUES

It seems an owner of a Reliant Scimitar has spent tens of thousands restoring their car to a very high standard but the agreed valuation with his insurer is limited to £13k! I've witnessed this situation many times in the vintage and classic motorcycle world for some years. It costs about the same sort of money to paint, rechrome, restore a BSA Bantam (say) as it does a Vincent (say). The Bantam might sell for £6k, if lucky. The Vincent £60k, so why would you bother doing up a Bantam? Brough Superiors make about £250k, one made £2.5m a few years ago, so what price would a genuine petrol cap demand for a

Brough? We all know that a Middlebridge commands a higher price than a Reliant Scimitar - no matter how much you spend on restoration it would seem.

This brings me neatly to the value of the Pre-Production-Prototype (PPP) being sold by Dan Mitchell. It is registered as a 1986 Reliant, however it is 'The Middlebridge PPP'. This is true, but would you pay the asking price of £22k for a Reliant or is the value in its history? It is also the only Reliant that wears the Middlebridge Grill badge, which I issue with a coding engraved on the back to guarantee authenticity. We all pondered over this anomaly at the time but decided that it should be issued to this particular Reliant Scimitar as it would have been so adorned (as the PPP vehicle), during its conception. I hope the price is achieved as it will add another dimension to the 'Brand Middlebridge' kudos. It's worthy of an in-depth discussion, I suggest.

(An example of the difference between agreed value and agreed market value and one which I can help with through the RSSOC as valuations officer. Ed.)

ISLE OF ALL-WIGHT THEN, INNIT!

A couple of weeks before this smashing show, I had emailed Victor Gallucci (the Organiser),

seeking permission to add my van to the MESS display – suitably adorned with the 'Middlebridge Task Force' panel. This suggestion had been approved at a MESSEmbley after discussions. I had tried to phone him previously and emailed him a 2nd time, all with no response - which is not like him at all.

I was shocked and saddened to discover that Victor had sadly died in May this year. This didn't deter the IOW Team from continuing with the Extravaganza, indeed it was in respect of Victor that it went ahead, and plans and dates are already in place for next year's event. During that weekend there was a church service memorial, an impromptu drive was organised, and a wooden bench seat has been made, all in memory of a Classic Car stalwart who has done much for the cause. RIP Victor and Thanks, it was great dealing with you.



Elsewhere in this MESSive will be found contributions about the weekend, so I'll leave it to others to tell their tales. As I recall, there didn't seem to be any Middlebridge-related disasters this year, we even remembered our caravan keys this time! Pete's car started ok, too. Such 'entertainment' this time came via the Marcos owner who shared our pitch - he had locked his car keys in the boot! I'm hoping Paul Crocker will write about this as it was his chum, Colin, who was responsible...



Not all cars made it though. Bruce's Middlebridge steering rack became incontinent a short time before the event. We thought he might use his lovely Reliant GTC instead, but that too is experiencing problems – dizzy ones this time. It never rains...

It also seemed an appropriate time to have a MESSsembly, so we adjourned to The Captains Table Café opposite our plot. Much was

discussed, future events for this year, next year – that also being the 35th Anniversary of the Middlebridge Scimitar. All will be revealed in future MESSages for your consideration and involvement we hope. It was also agreed that 'The MESS' funds should pay for the expenses in collecting Princess Anne's car. Mick and I will pay for our own food and drink. The Travelodge and diesel will be reimbursed to us on this occasion.



Once again our cars were of much interest and admired, an occasional admiration of my van's magnetic mural was also heard. We didn't win 'Best Car Club' this year, as Sarah Crabtree espied the 'Lincoln Lecher' and made a swift escape after he accosted her and before he caused any further embarrassment. Quite a few folk were interested in what I had done to my van's interior, doors were opened, tailgate lifted, for further investigation. All in all a lovely time despite the horrible weather on Sunday.

Huge thanks must go to Alan C-T who organised

this delightful event this time. Well done Alan and thanks to everyone else who made this another great weekend.

SYWELLDONE

My concerns that this could be a disaster were totally unfounded. Despite conflicting information on the downloaded paperwork, entry was easy and swift, however no-one seemed to have (or to wear) a wristband. I wonder where they were, or even if they were issued? Once again, dogs were seen wandering about, surely an accident waiting to happen with cars and bikes Drag-Racing on the runway? That aside...

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.



It was a much better event than last year with more cars on show, probably due to the better weather. More stalls with 'vehicle-related' products were for sale. Food prices were still eye-wateringly high, consequently my old camping gas stove was in use all weekend with copious amounts of tea or coffee consumed by all. Like Topsy the catering seems to have grown over the years, there were Strawberries, Pork Pies, Olives, Sausage Rolls, Cheeses, Biscuits, home-made Mince Pies, Fruit Cake, etc.



It was nice to see John and Irene Walker and Ray Thurman too, amongst the many folk who visited us. I counted 14 people in the gazebo at one time, 'probably more on other occasions. As is the way of things, there was much laughter and banter throughout the whole weekend. Some of us were considering not supporting Sywell in the future, after last year's disappointing event, it could have earned a reprieve this year - we shall see.

CHRISTMESS TIME

Last year we had our AGM at lunchtime and then our ChristMESS Dinner in the evening. That seemed to work quite well. What wasn't so good was the meal itself, consequently our MESSEmbley venue, The Brewer's Fayre, won't be enjoying our patronage this Christmas. Where to instead then? A few of us did visit another pub-chain in Rugby, but they were unable to accommodate us (as a group) around one table. This is next to a Travelodge. Other places, though seemingly ideal, were very expensive.

It has been suggested that such a meal is attached to the NEC CC show in November, probably Saturday evening. Forget trying somewhere in the NEC's vicinity as it's always packed and noisy.

Some folk who staff our stand stay in a B&B in

Balsall Common, this is reasonably near to the NEC and has an Italian Restaurant and two Indian Restaurants. Within a few miles radius there are, apparently, 300 eateries. No, I'm not doing any other research!

What and where do we fit in the AGM then? It is in our Constitution that we have one.

Those of you who are interested in either the NEC and/or the AGM are asked for your opinions on the above. Or...

We could still have the AGM separately at The Brewers, on another day from the NEC event, we just don't have the Christmas meal there. There is a good Thai Restaurant in Rugby Town, taxis could be hired to ferry us to and from the Premier Inn (next to The Brewers), or the Travelodge. Then again, if we're not using The Brewers, shall we consider somewhere else completely?

Rugby is used because it is easy to access for most of those folk who run The MESS. Should there be greater interest in any other part of the Country, we could migrate there - food for thought and stomachs folks.

Last (Lost?) Thoughts

SatNav's are rubbish! Twice adrift on the way to Portsmouth and on return leg it took half hour to escape the conurbation. Going round in circles whilst doing my best not to disappear up my own exhaust pipe took a bit of effort I can tell you.

Be warned! Portsmouth signage indicates the main roads to ferries are tainted with ULEZ (not yet active but don't say you weren't warned for the future). A masterful commercial decision by the town administration which, when fully implemented, will do wonders for the ferry trade I imagine..... driving punters away from Pompey to find alternative routes.

The IoW gig was terrific. Good company, the only downside being ASBO's insistence on loud shirts. Three people were treated for temporary blindness by St John's ambulance brigade on the sea front and the local fuzz is considering action for offence against public order likely to result in riot. I did come across a guy wearing a rather shouty blouse and offered to buy it off him just to upset ASBO. He was sort of inclined towards a deal but then his wife got involved and put a stop to the fun. Not all seemed lost though. He claimed to have a better/worse(?) shirt back in

the hotel and promised to bring it to me the next day. My new best friend didn't materialise on the morrow (wifey issue I imagine).

Mick seemed to think the loud shirts ought be a theme for Sywell and challenged ASBO to do his worst. ASBO accepted the challenge and upped the ante to include underwear. I make note to take dark glasses (and headache tablets).

Found Sarah (she of TV's Bangers & Cash) who was toting her stuff along the promenade looking for me (as I did propose marriage to her last year and received a gallon of Duckham's finest in consideration). This year no Duckham's was on offer so I told her the society wedding of the year is off. Just three meals over the weekend so how come I put on 4 lbs?

SatNav to Sywell? Piece o' cake! Only one diversion. Heading south on A43 when instructed to turn round at the next available and head North. How did that happen? Ever noticed how different the same piece of road looks when travelling in the opposite direction?

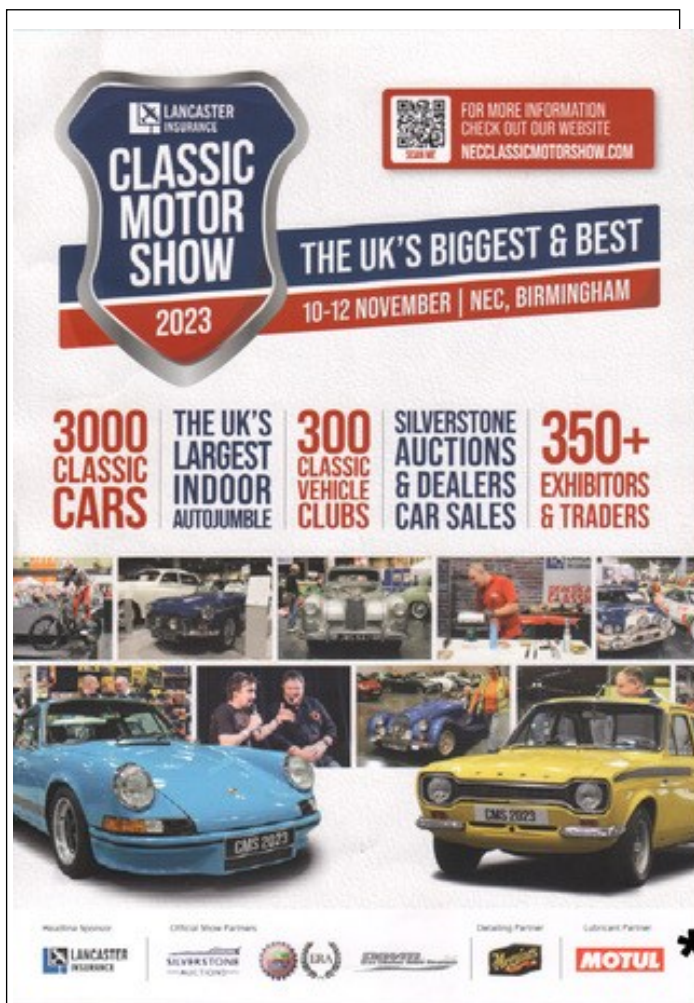
Sywell last year was, for me, best forgotten. This year much better weather, and a "yurt" big new igloo to socialise in. Ladies were brilliant on the catering front to the extent we were picking up no end of waifs and strays who thought it was the

event food bank and hospitality suite. Lovely atmosphere.

Not all one way traffic though. I found a hospitable guy in the next cattle pen (Triumph lads) who insisted I share a bottle of white with him and his wife. We were working our way down it nicely then the memsahib discovered what I was up to. Ooops!

Saturday we overnight at Premier Inn with Bruce and Allison. I leave car park and turn left to Sywell, Bruce next out but turns right. Clearly he is not as experienced as I with SatNav operation. I fear he will get lost and possibly not make it to Sywell at all. How come then he is on his second cup of tea when I arrive?

What of the loud shirts? ASBO, realising he would be facing stiff competition simply wimped-out. Didn't turn up!. Boo! Drum him out the brigade! Pity because I had a couple of blinders to flaunt. One, a truly obnoxious beast (which is now saved for future event) and the other, a more sober jobbie was still sufficient enough to get a female "singster" in the music tent really excited. As they say "got it flaunt it". (Alan Timmis MB50)



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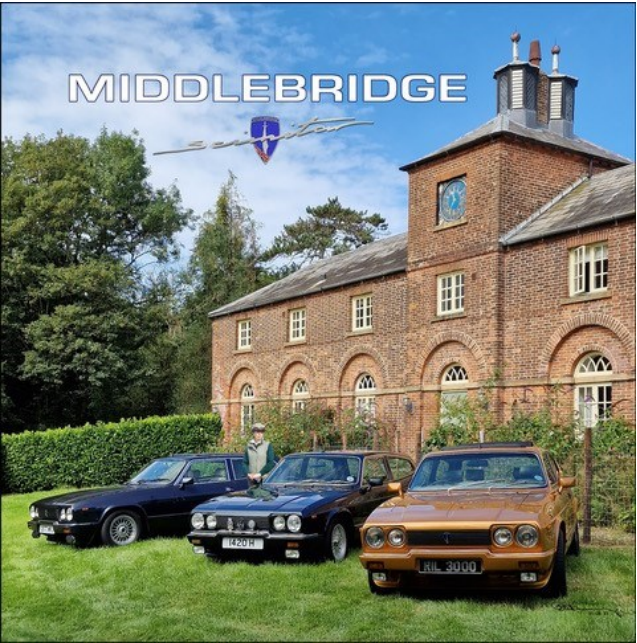


MESSEMBly

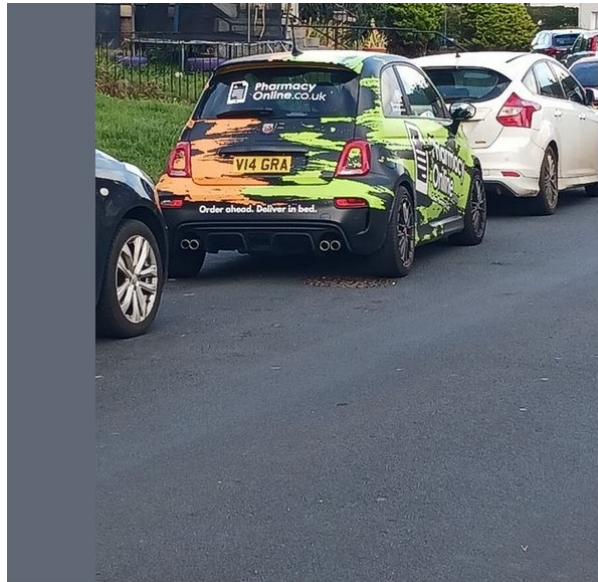
In person. The monthly MESS meeting has resumed and be held on the Second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in The Brewers Fayre, Central Park, CV23 0WE. Every enthusiast is welcome to join us, owner or not. Banter expected and encouraged.

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

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Funny Bits



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