



The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set



: middlebridge@live.co.uk



October 2021

Mick's MESSage

Unusually for me, there's not a lot to say, Work is extremely full on at the moment and I'm writing the whole MESSage in one hit as it's needed in a few hours. Now I know what hot off the press means. "Thank you George".

On the car front I'm still pondering on the Willwood front conversion and potentially the matching rear disc conversion at the same time for my Gold car, hopefully a winter project that will make the car somewhat safer especially if you have to brake hard ever. Quite a few Middlebridge owners have done the conversion and all rave about the difference in pedal feel and braking capability.

I have now owned my Middlebridge 20 years! That is at least 15 years longer than any other car I have owned and there have been many including 5 Middlebridges!



MB33 at Sywell Show

My Gold car No 33 will be taken on by Matt my Son so I'm effectively just its custodian for the moment and with that in mind I do tend to go over the top on the work I have done.

Recently, and as some of you know, I always wanted my car to be manual not auto. Quickly

going back 20 years the Middlebridge marque was an incredibly rare sight & virtually unknown but I wanted to move up to a full specification car, my car had every extra available but unfortunately that included the auto box.

No worries I thought that will be a fairly straight forward swap of Ford parts. Bizarrely however, I got used to the 4-speed auto slush box and just lived with it. Many years ago, I did purchase the complete Middlebridge manual set-up. gearbox, flywheel, clutch and prop but they sat gathering dust in my garage. A few months ago, I for some strange reason hankered after the manual box again, I wanted my used box to be overhauled and to be fitted with uprated gearing, the cost of this was £2,000 give or take a few quid but the specification was awesome.

I'm not fit enough anymore to do this type of work so priced up having the job done which came back at around 6k. No way can I justify spending that amount on a car I use sparingly. Many of the enthusiasts on the zoom meetings thought I was mad and that I should keep my car as Factory and one even said do the conversion and prey you don't get a hip issue.

I guess it looks like my car will remain auto which is a bonus for Matt as he prefers auto.

Middlebridge 69

Sadly, the respray on MB 69 has been put back but by how long I have no idea, the car needs to be ready before May, that's paint, MOT and in concours condition as it has already been event booked.

Our other money pits!

All, is quiet on our other project car front but at least one will make an appearance before the next MESSage and just in time to go into hibernation.

White-worm

Before you ask, NO it's not something to do with your cat or dog! I'm actually talking wheels and, in this instance, Middlebridge alloy wheels. Casting my mind back to 2001 ish and without digging out the receipts I sent my MB wheels to Renowheel to be refurbished as part of my car's renovation to hopefully compliment the new paint job. They stripped the wheels powder-coated the rear and the sides of the spokes in satin black and diamond cut the alloy faces and left them as bare alloy, as per my request. Now, 19 years on and in my opinion they were looking just a little jaded.



I made the decision early 2021 to get them renovated prior to any events. It was suggested to me that I go for a clear coat finish on the front facings of the wheels which would make them much easier to upkeep.

On collection the wheels looked awesome Hoorah, success and roll on Sywell. The following day I fitted them onto my car which was sat on my ramp awaiting the newly refurbished wheels. While fitting the wheels I noted a couple of tiny white marks that were clearly UNDER the clearcoat finish. Oh well I thought I can live with that if I just have to wash the wheels in future, well a week later I went to the garage to use my car and the white marks had now managed to appear on 4 of the 5 wheels and become a lot more visible.

Time to speak to the wheel restoration people. First, they said that 'white worm' is common problem when you put clearcoat on alloy wheels. Needless to say, my response was, why did you not say that when you suggested the clear coat to me. My wheels are visually much worse than when I delivered them to you. They agreed they would have them back but in October when

they were less busy. I agreed but waiting 4 months was well out of order in my opinion.

I re-delivered the wheels on the agreed date and agreed to collect them in a week. On collection the wheels had been diamond cut and returned to their original specification. They looked nice and I would do the same twice yearly clean as before. Then she handed me the bill for the same price as the original work, I said "your bloody joking" I have the receipts and pictures and happy to go to trading standards with this. Her response "Goodbye" (Lesson learned).

The first outing for the new wheels will be the NEC in November which is around 3 weeks away at the time of writing this.



If you look carefully at the picture of my wheel you will see the white worm on all of the alloy surfaces. The other picture is of a MB wheel on an SE6, the picture was taken in the rain and the wheels were coated nearly 10 years ago by the company below.



The moral of this story, if you have your wheels refurbished go for a coloured finish. I spoke with many Scimitar owners and one company was highly recommended to me. I will use them next time. They even do chrome type finishes which appeals to me.

www.Aerocoat.co.uk

Sywell "Piston and Props" 25 & 26 September

Once again, The Sywell event would prove to be a winner. We booked awesome weather for the weekend as you will see from the photos. Personally, I thought we had a superb stand once again thanks to Bruce. It was great to finally meet up with some other owners that I have not seen for ever, many brought along their wives as it's a great event for all including kids.

Alan brought along his MB for the 1st time and he thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience, hope we see him there again next year. Once again, we had Classic Cars, Bikes, Hot Rods, Race cars drag racing and of course

an aerial display that included Spitfires and a Hurricane amongst many others.

I think the pictures will say it all but before I close I would like to thank everyone that attended and made it a great weekend. We are also sorry that two booked MB's could not attend at the last minute for personal reasons, Fingers crossed for next time.



NEC “Lancaster Classic Car Show” 12-14 November 2021.

We have been working on our 2021 stand. Hmm to be honest Bruce has, having seen the 3D picture of the stand it will look great as usual but also facilitate our safety. We will have a cordoned off stand and the usual hand gels etc on site.

Regalia

George is working on a project to source a new Middlebridge regalia supplier, I’m sure he will update us all in his MESSage epistle.

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.

Middlebridge Models (Frog)

I have been speaking with Rory of Middlebridge Frog model fame and he has mentioned that he currently has two Middlebridge orders to fulfil and if any owners or new owners would like a model in the colour and interior finish of their pride and joy now would be a good time as a minimum quantity is required to run the models. Rory can be contacted directly via rory@cullenconservation.org

For Sale / Wanted

We currently have two cars for sale and a 3rd sold virtually instantly.

Harm Kremer, a long time member and Middlebridge owner in the Netherlands made the difficult decision to put his car up for sale. I was not surprised that the LHD Middlebridge Sold instantly due to it's sheer rarity if for no other reason. We wish the new owner John all the very best with his new acquisition and I do look forward to hearing of her further exploits in Europe.



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 with the sale George.

George's Jargon

At last... Our first Classic Car Event of the year was thoroughly enjoyed at Sywell's 'Piston & Props' in beautiful Northamptonshire. Good company... lots of banter... kind weather...

Early Saturday morning we erected the new gazebo (financed by Mick), then decorated our stand with some of the explanatory banners. Six cars were on show on Saturday, ten were expected, but sadly Jill Unwin for one (attending her first MESS event), became ill and returned home instead. Best wishes are sent, Jill. Asbo Man (aka Peter Humphries) and Marie added to the throng on Sunday.

One of those not attending this year, fortunately, was Dr Dan Mitchell. This enabled every other MESS member attending to enjoy a slice or two of Sandra Timmis' delicious home-made tea cake. Dan, as has been seen in photos, is the MESS's self-appointed official 'cake-tester', not this time though matey.

Micky G supplied loads of biscuits, tea, milk, coffee, though others also brought along similar elements. Being a Peckham boy, I brought along my single-cup percolator and posh coffee, all fired up with my spare camping gas cooker.

As will be seen in the pictures, the gazebo has been customised to our requirements, but it fell well short of expectations. After the event I found the literature that came with the awning-part of the unit. It mentions not using it in windy

conditions, so not a particularly bright idea on an airfield then, I suggest. Ah well...

During the weekend many faults came to light and were experienced, including the roof section which came adrift and could possibly have blown away. What if it had come completely loose and damaged someone's car? Quite worrying really.

All the problems could be overcome by a lot of tedious work, such as sewing loops to the awning side's base so that steel pegs could be hammered into the ground for added security. That's fine for grass, but it would still be a problem on concrete as we were at Silverstone. That part of the gazebo's awning is 12 metres long, say a loop every 30cm comes to about 40 loops. The roof's drop-panel could/should be Velcro'd to the awning side... That would require some 18 metres of 50mm Velcro. Strangely enough, the 2 front panels (which zipped in), did have loops already sewn to the bottom edge, but nowhere else...

Apart from the cost of materials, who was going to physically do the alterations? Tailor Made, perhaps? Mmmm...

It was also unfortunate that Tailor Made allowed a number of errors to slip past, the worse being

the Middlebridge Shields not being added to the side panels in an upright position. They had also failed to correct all the faults that were noticed at the previous trial erection of the gazebo, despite being given a full written list and a verbal brief from Bruce.

TM say that they can remove the current twisted shields and attach new shields in the correct position, we shall see how that comes out.

The strong general opinion is that the gazebo is a 'Good Idea' and was enhanced by having the convenient facility to brew up, or cook, when it suited, it's also handy for stashing away chairs, tables, etc overnight. It's not only the price (though £10 for fish 'n' chips was a tad expensive), it's more that you didn't have to join a long queue to buy a suspect tea or coffee also at similarly inflated prices.

The upshot is that Mick and I looked at some of the commercial gazebos as used by the seasoned Stall Holders - 'chalk and cheese' immediately came to mind. I spent a day searching Google looking for a quality gazebo manufacturer and have visited 'The Gazeboshop' in Banbury, about 25 miles from

my home. They are not cheap (about £2k plus vat), but are very sturdy, well made, tough, and would last a lifetime. It can be printed all over for not a lot of money.

They do have a variety of gazebos including a blow-up 'dome' which would be lighter and doesn't require the sturdy frame, so it's possibly easier to store, manhandle and erect. They are also cheaper. For what it's worth, I'd say the full gazebo looks more 'up-market' to me. Further investigations are in the pipeline to determine which would be the best type for The MESS.

It was discussed at the last MESSEMBLY and you, the MESS membership, should consider if using the MESS funds to buy such a gazebo is generally acceptable. Your opinion is sought and will be vitally important to making the correct decision. Should the majority think that it is ok, I suggest that anyone who is also interested should visit the enormous warehouse the next time that we all visit Banbury (by appointment), that's if Mick can escape from his chains at work.

We have established both the 'Middlebridge Scimitar' and 'The MESS' as respected, quality concepts, to the benefit of all owners and the marque. The current gazebo could easily ruin

that. I should add that I thought the Middlebridge Stand stood head and shoulders above other Clubs' efforts – and there was more that we could have done to raise the bar even higher.

REGALIA

I fear that we must change our Regalia supplier, sadly. Alan Cavendish-tribe was let down by not having his jacket ready in time for Sywell. I had agreed to collect it from TM on the preceding Thursday, however as it still hadn't arrived at TM, I agreed to collect it on Friday instead when I would return my part-printed gamp to have its build numbers applied - whilst I waited. Despite phoning them at 9am and at 2pm, TM didn't phone me back as promised, and when I phoned them yet again, they had all gone home! I learnt later that Alan's jacket had arrived at TM on the Friday, so no excuses. Not impressed!

Paul Crocker has tried 3 times to order stuff but no-one has phoned him back to discuss. There is a complete lack of communication, which I find really annoying and very frustrating.

As a consequence I have been in discussions with another Regalia company (fortunately, about a mile or so from me!), who assure me of a better

Customer Service. Thus far they have communicated with me almost immediately, with regular updates, and have responded every time. I have some of their prices for the Regalia that I took to them for their appraisal, but I need to add more items - including the elusive umbrellas.

ON THE RACK again!

I seem to recall almost every Scimitar that I have owned has required a renovated steering rack at some time during my custody. I can't remember if this is the 3rd or 4th time on the Middlebridge, no matter, they've all been an absolute pain to do. This time was no different either, until a phone call to Kiley Clinton solved the problem and the answer is bleedin' obvious mate, innit!



Rack with pipes attached

In the photos you may be able to see that one of the transfer pipes clouts the chassis, whichever way I tried to fit it. The answer is to remove the offending pipe that's shown in the pic, it will then be easy to slide out but more importantly a doddle to fit back in. Once roughly in place, you then refit the pipe, ensuring that everything is scrupulously clean of course.

In my defence, I had wrongly thought that these pipes were also Loctited in, but they're not. They are not under any extreme pressure, so Loctite isn't needed. It's quite easy to re-attach these pipes and tighten them. Lesson learned. Peter Humphries' crude remarks that I'd never make a gynaecologist are quite unnecessary, don't you think.



The Offending Pipe Removed Makes Fitting Easier

As an aside, I owned the later version of the pretty little 2-seater Reliant Sabre, that too soon needed a rack. I think it came from a small Vauxhall? (Corsa?), but with those wide wheels

fitted as standard, the rack just wasn't man enough to do the job, clearly. Talking with the new owner, a few months after selling it to him, he remarked that he'd had to replace the rack that I'd had fitted which was less than a year old... Lovely looking little car, I thought. Fast, excellent acceleration, economical, superb roadholding and very uncomfortable, guaranteeing a numb left leg on a longish journey, plus a numb right heel most times, to accompany both unsupported and aching thighs. Another car Reliant nearly got right...

POWERFUL ATTRACTION

On my return journey from the delightful Stoney Stratford Classic Vehicle Show, where I had been Marshalling and whilst also showing the Middlebridge, a hub cap fell off. This had been held in place for umpteen years using short lengths of foam pipe-insulation (as used on household copper pipes to protect them from freezing). These had been glued to the inside of the plastic hub cap and slid over the wheel nuts gripping the nuts tightly, clearly that grip has ceased to be anymore. Mind you, I've probably removed my wheels more than most, to play with the experimental multi-rated spring set up, which then probably weakened that grip.

Alan Cavendish-Tribe kindly sent me an old spare cap to try another route. In the pictures you should see some magnets which readily attach to the stub axle. I removed the hub-cap badge, drilled a small hole to take a self-tapping screw that was part of another magnet. I ground down the screw's thread flush with the cap and replaced the self-adhesive badge to cover the evidence.



Magnet on Stub Axle



Magnet on Centre Cap

I showed the set-up to fellow owners at Sywell, and as I offered the cap to the hub it magnetically snatched it from my hands. Good eh! I have a collection of varied magnets left over from numerous past projects, however what I need to obtain are some more of the non-rusting kind that I used so effectively on my narrowboat. Next time I would glue them to the inside of the cap using Araldite, rather than self tappers. More on this when I purchase the better magnets.

THE BROLLEY'S Ups and Downs

The saga continues and has been dribbling on since November last year, would you believe! All that's academic now because at the recent Zoom meeting Bruce showed more of his designs for the umbrella and one was voted for. The original red, white and blue gamp is now going to be just blue and white (see pic), with the shield and personal number printed onto any, or all white panels...that is up to you. I'm now in possession of the delayed, original brolley that I finally collected from TM, and that will be a one-off.

What I need answering NOW is, if you are interested in an umbrella or two, please let me know so that I can order the required amount which will incur just the one carrier charge and



Original Proposed Design



Final Proposed Design

sent to our new regalia suppliers. The first order can be for any amount though 25 or more would give us a good discount.

To reorder, after the initial amount, a minimum of 10 is demanded by the manufacturer and wouldn't enjoy the same discount, hence the need to order a large amount NOW to make that financial sense. It's difficult to say what the final

price may be but it should be around £30 - £40 which also depends on how many shields you want to appear on your personalised brolley. Text message to 07816 448494, email is: peckhampoppy@hotmail.co.uk

We are getting close to setting up a new on-line shop, when it's ready, a further email will be sent to all MESS members to announce the shop's Opening Day and in time for you all to get your new kit as the ultimate in Chrissy pressis.

MUG SHOTS

I'd forgotten that there were 3 occasions where commemorative mugs were made available. If anyone fancies designing the next version please forward ideas to Mick or Will or Bruce.



CHRISTMESS MESSEMBLY

Notice has already been given about a meal and the stopover facilities at The Brewer's Fayre, Central Park, Rugby for our Christmas Meal on 11th December. There is a Festive Menu or the 'everyday' menu which is also available. Asbo Man is reportedly organising this one, but I suspect that's just another front for Marie anyway...

Depending on numbers attending and interest of course, I may do one of my world-famous 'Fun Runs' that's reasonably local. I have in mind a drive to a cider brewery, where the food on offer is locally sourced. Just along the village lane there's also a canal-side pub, 'The Folly Pie Pub' at Napton. No prizes for guessing their speciality, but there are other choices, too. It's a lovely part of the world and you would be very welcome to join the usual crowd – even if you can't attend Saturday night's dinner. Previous 'Runs' have been on the Sunday morning, but not too early.

Prototype Passes MOT

Dan Mitchell's one owner since new in 1989 Middlebridge Prototype B63 TRW has just gone through its MOT with NO ADVISORIES and it is now 32 years old !

It lives in the brick built garage in front of the car which is one of the 4 brick built garages which he designed and built 40 years ago. They are all fully insulated.



Brooklands Anyone?

Alan is still trying to herd cats with this one but has been discussing with Brooklands that so long as we pay the minimum fee for a 10 car event (£220)

they would be willing to consider allowing us to park on the banking for photographs.

Brooklands cannot give specific dates yet as they are still finalising their 2022 calendar but a Sunday in May is the current plan. Thanks to those who have expressed an interest and anyone else who wishes to attend do let us know.

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.

NEC 2021

Bruce has asked me to Include the Club Discount code for anyone wishing to book tickets for the NEC in November.

The details are in the image and the club code is 'CCM370'.

The code gives members a £4 discount on adult tickets for Friday, Saturday and Sunday when booked before midnight on Thursday 11 November 2021 at www.necclassicmotorshow.com.

This code can be passed on to friends and family but the organisers have asked that we do not publish it on public web pages or social media!

NECCCLASSICMOTORSHOW.COM

THE UK'S BIGGEST & BEST

CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW

12-14 NOVEMBER 2021 | NEC BIRMINGHAM

BOOK YOUR TICKETS ONLINE
Scan the QR code with your phone camera



3000 CLASSIC CARS | **THE UK'S LARGEST INDOOR AUTO JUMBLE** | **LANCASTER INSURANCE CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW THE NEC BIRMINGHAM 2021** | **260+ CLASSIC VEHICLE CLUBS** | **DEALER HALL & SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS**

With Discovery

GET YOUR TICKETS @ 2019 PRICES | CLUB MEMBERS GET £4 DISCOUNT ON ADULT TICKETS WITH CODE: **CCM370**



PLUS DRIVING EXPERIENCES, CELEBRITIES, COMPETITION DISPLAYS & MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Headline Sponsor
LANCASTER INSURANCE

Official Show Partners
Discovery | **SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS** | **Meguiar's** | **ERA** | **PGM**

*Exclusive discount code is for club members use only. Applicable to advanced adult tickets booked before midnight on Thursday 11 November 2021. After that, limited full price tickets will be available at the show. Full ticket information: www.necclassicmotorshow.com/tickets.