

The MESSage

Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set



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September 2022



Mick's MESSage

General Chit-Chat

I now find myself pondering on the petrol v's electric conundrum, this is because it's nearly time to trade in Wifey's daily as it's now 4 years old but with a mere 16k on the clock. The car only does short runs and we do have the facility to home charge if we go that route. There's lots to ponder on including the increased initial cost, the soaring cost of electricity, the shorter life span of an electric vehicle when compared to a petrol counterpart, I also have serious reservations re' the future mass disposal of scrapped electric vehicles and in particular their batteries. I have not looked into it & certainly not the local charging points locations but I do have a soft spot for a hydrogen powered car. Has anyone MB owner gone that route yet, if yes I would love some input.

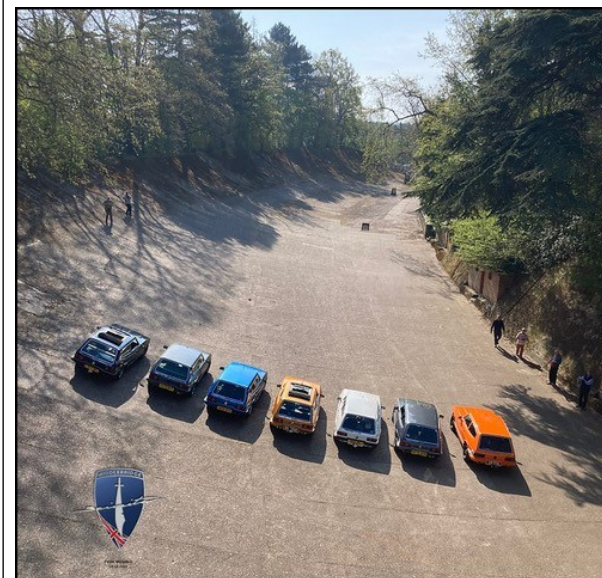


Brooklands Line Up on "Drive It Day"

MB 33

After languishing in my garage since November with a few run ups I finally took MB33 on a good 40 mile canter / run to free her up prior to the long motorway trip to Brooklands early morning on the 24th April. Meet up time was 08.00 so quite an early start for me that day. Approx' 6 weeks later We were booked to attend the Royal Sandringham

Event in Norfolk, way too far for a day trip and we all booked into the Premier Inn (Purple Palace) Kings Lynn, not sure if I'm just getting old and mean but I was stunned at how expensive a single night there is! Breakfast inclusive. £145.50.



The end of June saw 33 do her second prom run, many people admired her with only one person knowing what she was, that person

said I know and then assured his friends, it's a Jensen!



The, Somewhat Damp, Sandringham Line Up

With a week off work early July I decided to treat My MB. I cleaned and nourished all of the interior leather as I have not done this for some years now, it's better to do it before any cracking appears due to the natural drying out of the leather. Not an expensive job and took me 3 hours to do maybe anyone with a leather interior should consider cleaning and feeding the hide once in a while to preserve it.

Nuts! Another Gripe

With Scimfest fast approaching it was time to do my annual deep clean of RIL 3000 I use the event and notably the concours as the driver for me to do this annually. I try and put aside 1 hour per night and a bit more at the weekends, This time however I nearly got scuppered!

Some time ago I invested in 5 new tyres because mine were close to the 10 year time limit, I went to a reputable tyre chain and waited with everyone else in the waiting room. Job done & home I went I've done a few events including distance ones, however, when I tried to remove the wheel nuts I could not budge them 'none of them' next up was a breaker bar which is quite a large 0.5 inch jobbie, still no joy, I ended up sliding a jack handle onto the breaker bar to remove the nuts (note my car had 12 std nuts and 4 locking nuts) of the 12 standard nuts we got 10 off but 2 had been so damaged by the garage I had use specialist kit to remove them,



Worse was to come, they had done the same with the locking wheel nuts and on inspection the special socket was completely useless and I had to remove all 4 locking nuts with my special kit.

I have not contacted the tyre people, they would just say that the wheels must have been off and we always torque our wheels.



They probably do have a torque wrench but it would click to say the wheels were tight after being done up with an air gun at maximum pressure.

What has happened to customer service and the training of tyre fitters! Had I encountered an issue on the road I would have been forced to call out the AA and to be honest could they deal with the above scenario at the road side.

I have already ordered 16 new nuts as they were really not fit for purpose.

MESSy Newbie

I am delighted to confirm that we have brought someone on board that shares the same vision and passion as Will and myself. I'm positive he will help us move the MB marque forward in the future, as many of you know Will & I are extremely busy on the work front which reduces the time we can spend on our hobbies.

May I introduce, Alan Cavendish-Tribe. Some of you will know Alan, his lovely highly original MB was on the NEC stand last year and Alan also organised the very Successful Sandringham event for the MESS. Alan has already taken on another marque project but I will let him speak about that in his future MESSage epistles.



Alan with Kohji and Dennis at NEC 2021

Brooklands visit on Drive it Day 24th April 2022

The MESS "Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set" organised a second trip to Brooklands this time to celebrate Drive it Day 2022 and get some piccies of us on the famous embankment. (We once again booked and got awesome weather) We had cars from Lincoln, Nott's, Derby's, Northants, B'ham, Wilts and Surrey drive there to celebrate the day and enjoy the Brookland's experience .

Needless to say a photo-shoot was arranged in advance and by 09.00 our cars were all lined up on the famous embankment. We were also chosen to do a short film by Brooklands TV, (which can be viewed on youtube) I'm sure you will agree, a 'drive it day' to remember.



Addendum: I can now confirm that the footage taken by Brooklands TV is indeed on YouTube. Search – Morgan and Middlebridge Scimitar Brooklands.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Elzp5gjWG4M>

Below is a picture taken by Classic Car Weekly of Bruce and Allison with their lovely Middlebridge at the event.



The car park pictures on our website show our mass meeting point prior to heading to Brookland's in convoy, some people stayed over and got a lay in while others had a nice early start. We had agreed to leave the car park at 08.30 sharp. Hope you like the

pictures, the wicked overhead shots are courtesy of Peter McLuskie, thank you, Peter.

We all owe Alan Timmis (Syd) and BIG thank you for organising the event and we look forward to his next event. ;o).

I'm delighted to say that 33 once again ran like a dream and earned a good wash and clean the following weekend in preparation for her next outing.



European Middlebridge Marque Awareness.

Once again, I'm delighted to say that Frederic Hermand has been out and about in Middlebridge No 29. His lovely car has been featured in the French magazine Autoretro. Thank you so much once again Frederic. (See picture—Left)

Royal Sandringham Pageant of Motoring 5th June 2022

Part of the official Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, the MESS were delighted to have 5 cars exhibit at the Royal Sandringham Pageant of Motoring on 5th June 2022. Certainly, a day to remember.



Our cars came from across the UK, all meeting up in Kings Lynn on the Saturday to enjoy a good meal and plenty of banter prior to heading off on the final leg to Sandringham in convoy the following morning. Cars from Derby's, Notts, Linc's, West

Mid's and Northant's attended the event which was a great success.

Unfortunately, it rained throughout the night before and until approx. 11.00am. However, once the rain stopped very large numbers of visitors suddenly flocked to this very special event.



There was a special car parking area for individual classic entries & boy that was a great success and a great walk. Once again I think the pictures tell the story better. Not sure how many cars attended the event 1,000 + but if you look closely at our cars you will clearly see the mud, this was nothing, when I got home I had mud right up to the windows and the length of the car.

May I take this opportunity to thank Alan Cavendish-Tribe for organising the event, we were all truly grateful to him, he does

however need to work on the weather element.
;o) Thank you Alan.

MB 69

MB 69 is still with Paul Turnbull, (GT Evolution) her concours paint job well under way. I have received some great progress pictures from Paul, I have just had the refurbished wheels c/w new tyres, NOS wheel centres & new number plates couriered to Paul to finish the car off.

As many of you will know No 69 was previously a very well-known concours de-elegance winning car that won many trophies in the hands of John Cassingham. I'm hoping that John will be shocked and very pleased to see his old steed returned to the condition that he used to keep her in.

If everything pans out we should have a very interesting concours event next year, MB 33 v MB 69 or me verses Matt. He has been bragging for months about beating me and teaching me how to prep' a car. I said to him, put your money where your mouth is!

I guess one of us will be eating humble pie in the a future instalment of the MESSage.

Middlebridge Cylinder Heads

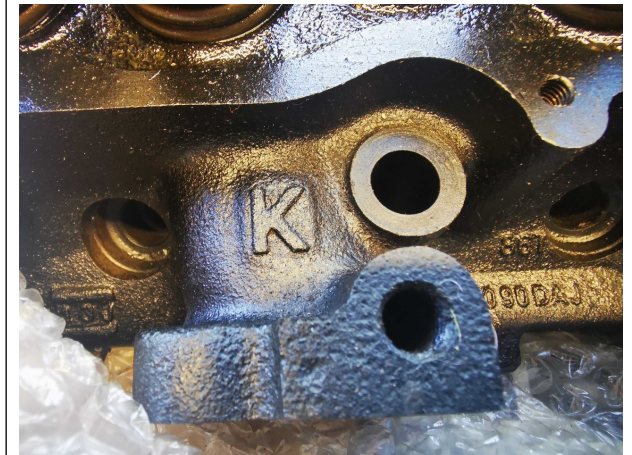
I met up with Andrew Sait at the Sandringham Classic Car Show and while talking engines, he mentioned that there were two different cylinder heads for the 2.9 Cologne engine as fitted to our cars.

I was taken aback by this, why because I had spent an outrageous amount of time removing cast iron from a set of heads that I purchased on eBay years ago to fit to my car at a future date. Andrew very kindly sent me the following along with the pictures. 'thank god all was okay' but not after a little sweating, I might add.



The non-catalyst heads have "F" cast in to the head on the top of the left-hand exhaust port; the catalyst heads have a "K" cast in to them in the same location (catalyst in German is "Katalysator", hence the "K").

Just to confirm, our Standard Middlebridges have F cast onto the heads, should you ever need any.



Well, what an awesome tip from Andy It certainly helped me Andrew and by uploading to the site will hopefully help others in the future.

Our other money pits!

Finally, I have a plan that has already been agreed with Silverstone Auctions. My 1st car will go to Auction at the Silverstone Classic, unfortunately no MESS or RSSOC presence this year due to the date being one week from Scimfest.

Matt and I will make the most of the FOC passes over the weekend and fingers crossed our Moonstone blue Cossie (now consigned) will fetch a good price.

The second auction date is November and at the NEC event, we will be there with the MESS but will also have our other Cossie 3 door consigned and fingers crossed it too will make a good price as well.

Fingers crossed I will have 4 less cars by then.

Light Hearted Banter

I thought I would in future finish off my epistle with either a look back to better times or something a little light hearted. Hope you like the pictures.

A Shell service station attendant helping a confused motorist to understand the new fuel pricing on Decimal Day, 15th February 1971.

Image credit Getty Images.



BREAKING: Car faints after seeing the price of fuel



George's Jargon

FINANCES

On the financial front there have been no further donations. Expenditure came to £167.40 to cover the new Jubilee panels. Balance on 13/7/2022 stands at £1649.01.

The PLI is due early September and at the last MESSembly we discussed the new carpet required for the NEC. To keep our stand looking 'fresh' a different colour scheme is probable, we're also seeking different cars to put on show. Nothing wrong with what's been shown in the past, all very commendable as you know, but it would be nice to show some other Middlebridges for a change, though we are somewhat restricted by their rarity. Do please let us know if you're up for it.

EVENTS

There have been a couple of Events that the MESS have supported. One clashed with my caravan holiday in Northumbria. In the middle of that time, enjoying a most beautiful part of England, I visited the Classic Car meeting at Seaburn. Micky G had shown his

Middlebridge there some years ago, saying how lovely it was, overlooking the sea, well supported, etc, sentiments echoed by Bruce. Peter Freeman usually goes to support Jim Pace's RSSOC Noggin which is what Micky did. The large RSSOC display then had taken up the back row of the site.

How times have changed. No Scimitars at all. No Clubs. Just a small collection of nice everyday classics. One that really stood out was a gorgeous 1300 Vanden Plas Princess. The site was about half full and a slow stroll took about 30 minutes to see everything.

The irony is that I was the only one wearing an identifiable Club outfit – MESS Cap, Jacket, Shirt, Jumper (crikey, it was cold!), however my Middlebridge was still at home in Bilton, so I had nothing to show! As many know, my caravan is too heavy for the Middlebridge to tow, so my

LWB 4WD VW T5 converted to a campervan has that delegated task.

I suspect the eye-watering fuel costs are preventing folk from visiting many such shows, plus entry fees have also rocketed, in too many places, along with other outrageous charges - I refuse to pay £15 for fish 'n' chips, for example. I was going to visit a nearby steam rally recently, which also boasted Classics. Entry had gone up to £10 per person. With fuel at £9 a gallon (the VW does 29 mpg at best), it was going to cost at least £40, without any guarantee that there would be much to see - if Seaburn is any sort of yardstick, and I believe it is. The final nail was that it hardly stopped raining the whole weekend.

How different that was from spending Father's Day on Marshalling duties for the VMCC Banbury Run – *the* best Vintage Motorcycle Event in the world. It was nearly a disaster though as Derry

(fellow Marshall) and I couldn't find our spot to set up the timing equipment.

We were given 'northings' and 'eastings' for our location which got transposed. It was fortunate that we were only about a mile from the right place, so all was well. We quickly set up the table, timing gear, notices showing what we were, etc, and waited for about 20 minutes before our first bike arrived to clock on. It's not a timed race, simply that a rider should cover a particular route in a specific time to earn a gold, silver, whatever. "Cor, that looks just like my old sidecar outfit...", as one untimed rider thumped past, "crikey, it is". Sure enough my 1930 500cc BSA Sloper and polished alloy, boat-shaped sidecar was completing the course once again. How lovely.



HOLIDAYS

Our caravan holiday in Northumbria was a delight despite the cold and very windy weather, understandably awnings were not allowed on the steep cliff-edge site. For the first time we saw dolphins and watched seals basking on Lindisfarne and St Mary's Island. Absolutely delightful.

Maggie and I are off to Modbury soon, a holiday that was booked before the recent crises, plus to the IOW in early September for the CC show. Both will cost very much more than was budgeted for, nevertheless, we intend to enjoy ourselves as best we can, so there.

What with Covid and its recent resurrection plus the price of fuel we have completely abandoned our intention of touring countries afar. At 79 years old, time is not on my side, will I ever go abroad again, I wonder?

None of us could have envisaged this set of circumstances that we are dealing with, nevertheless all that time, effort and money spent on converting the VW seems so wasted now. Ah well... at least this country also has some wonderful places to visit, and we will, whilst we can.

MORE LECKY CAR STUFF

I recently saw a video about how 'Green' these cars really are. It showed a huge digging machine that removed soil which was eventually turned into the necessary batteries required for one car. It took some 24hrs to dig sufficient material, in that time the machine used 1,500+ litres of fuel, I think it was (or was it 15,000 litres?). I may have some of that info wrong, however it does underline the complete con regarding costs, saving the planet, green issues, etc.

Buy one now then whilst your motoring costs are increasing alarmingly and the blinkered Govt. entices you to buy electric. At some stage in the future you will then be savagely hammered by either a massive Road Tax or hefty additional charges on your electric meter. The motorist is THE main source in raising taxes which are dwindling as more electric cars are bought... It ain't gonna last!

MESSEMBLY CHANGES

Please note that the MESSEMBLY has changed from the 1st Monday of the month to the 2nd Tuesday this will avoid clashing with Bank Holidays.

A revised information panel has been produced by Bruce which now hangs back in the bar at the Brewers Fayre. It lives in a picture frame stuck to

the wall with Velcro. Prising it off the wall a large piece of plaster came with it, oops! My suggestion to staff that a dollop of their gravy or custard would render a suitably sticky repair was met with a blank stare.

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.

SYWELL SUPPORT

Bruce has been negotiating with Sywell Piston & Props. It's a lovely laid-back event that the MESS have supported since its inception. This year it's the 24th and 25th September and we have room for a dozen cars.

There is a problem though, which we might get around. No one is likely to know until a few weeks before the event exactly what is actually happening regulation wise. I can see a potential disaster looming here. Ideas are

being discussed, but for now please let us know if you are intend to attend NOW, just to give us some idea of numbers. It's possible that a swift phone call from us to you may require your immediate action. Paul and Kate Crocker from the wilds of Kent have booked their accommodation already...

George

ScimFest- Curborough and the Longevity of our Cars

I understand there were a few Middlebridges at Curborough and Dr Dan Mitchell writes:

“I took my Middlebridge Prototype to Curborough on the Sunday morning which created a lot of Middlebridge interest. It has again gone through its MOT with no advisories! This was exactly 33 years since I first took it to Curborough! See comparison photos from Dan and the MB website. When the Triumph left Tony and Jacki Heath's magnificent green Sabre was parked next to my car.”

(Pictures Dan Mitchell and Middlebridge Website)



My own car, MB14, has also just gone through its MOT with no advisories. After a period of difficulty with older garages shutting down in the area due to retirements, I have finally found a good mechanic less than five miles from me who understands older vehicles and whose work I am very impressed with. He did a bit of work on the front suspension for the MOT (thanks to QRG for the bits) but gave the car a clean bill of health and

was complementary about the condition of the car for its age and mileage.

As you will read below, we all have little niggles with older cars but they seldom fail to get us back home. I was discussing this with Dan and in 33 years of ownership his car has never failed to get him home and in 10 years of ownership mine has only let me down once with a burst hose in the first year of ownership. Any other time it has been possible to maintain the car and keep it going. Something we seem to have a selective memory about with the relative reliability of modern vehicles is how regular maintenance was on cars 30 – 50 years ago! On the subject of mileage MB14 is now just about 450 miles short of 200,000 so I will no doubt mark that milestone in a future issue.

Isle of Wight Charity Classic Car Extravaganza

Bruce & Alison Beuchamp, George & Maggie Sampford, Pete & Marie Humphries, Alan & Sandra Timmis, Paul & Kate Crocker and Alan Cavendish-Tribe ventured overseas to the Isle of Wight to participate in Classic Car Extravaganza on 3rd & 4th September.

This was the 21st annual event supporting two Island-based charities this year – the Isle of Wight Round Table and Mountbatten Hospice.

As featured in the islands County Press, the event brings together an eclectic range of classic vehicles (1000+) from all over the UK and Europe, be it vintage, custom, retro and rare cars such as the Middlebridge Scimitar.

<https://www.countypress.co.uk/news/20862471.isle-wight-classic-car-event-ryde-today-tomorrow/>



The MESS thoroughly enjoyed the weekend in Ryde, during which we viewed hundreds of interesting cars, most maintained to a high standard and also made some new car enthusiast friends. As often with such trips they don't go off without a hitch.

George & Maggie were having an extended camping break after the event arrived to find the caravan that they had securely locked for the journey was very secure, as the keys were left at home, resulting in the need for a locksmith.



MB27 affectionately known as ASBO, decided that following the journey on the high sea (crossing the Solent) the immobiliser would prevent the car starting. (Sea Sickness? Ed.) This caused great embarrassment as the car was in pole position to disembark upon arrival at the Isle of Wight. The car decided to finally start as the tow truck arrived only 2 minutes before the ship was due to return to Portsmouth.

Saturday on the Ryde Esplanade went well, the drivers took the Middlebridges to the show area at 7am to secure a good location and retired to hotel for breakfast. Returning to the cars at 10am it was an amazing sight to see the huge collection that had formed around us. The day concluded with an excellent Indian dinner followed by the Ryde Carnival going past our hotel.



Sunday started with drama in the car park. MB27 was blocked in by a Land Rover. After failing to manoeuvre it so to extract it we were then challenged by MB67 that decided not to start due to a failed earth. Eventually we managed to get four cars to the show, later followed by MB27 'ASBO'.



MB67's electrical issue was addressed during the day too giving us a full turn out. As on Saturday the car display was amazing and Sarah Crabtree, TV Personality from Bangers & Cash and now a director and brand ambassador of Evoke Classics, was viewing the cars with the Isle of Wight

Mayor. Sarah was judging all the car displays and chose the MESS for the Best Display, awarding us with a can of Duckhams 20/50 engine oil.



In summary, the amount of interest that the Middlebridges have generated and the really friendly venue, we are all of an opinion that the MESS should include the IoW in the 2023 Programme.

(Report by Alan Cavendish-Tribe and Pictures by Alan and Peter Humphries)

Under Pressure

John Unwin contacted me as the Oil Pressure Sender on MB65 had developed a leak and wondered if there was a known replacement.

The only info I had was that the original part, VDO 360 081 029 030, is now obsolete and that replacements were available from Demon Tweeks as a VDO 360-081-029-020C pressure sender 10 bar (earth return) 1/4 - 18 NPTF M4 knurled nut.

However, John said that these had a parallel thread whereas the MB is tapered. After a goodly amount of Googling John located the correct oil pressure sender. It was listed in the 2014 VDO Catalogue, part no. 360-811, 0-100 psi, 1/8-27 NPT, 240-33 ohm. Unfortunately, the only supplier he could find was in America. Cost \$40.63 plus \$11.99 +\$37.56 a total of \$90.18, £72.51 in real money.

It has now been fitted and works a treat. A big thanks to John for the hard work on this as it will be useful info for other owners.

Coming and Going

We have had a couple of cars move and indications of others for sale.

Middlebridge 42



I had come to the conclusion that I was not going to get the time to deal with the refurbishment of MB42 and had tentatively agreed a sale to Dave Speed way back in February. The main issue was both of us being busy and unable to sort out the transport so the car languished in its barn resting place until I was on holiday in July.



At that time, I decided the best thing to do was to take it down myself so hired a trailer and did the round trip in one day – something I had previously said I would never do again but I never learn! It was great to finally meet Dave, who is a thoroughly nice bloke, and I am looking forward to seeing what he does with MB42.

We welcome Andrew Taylor to Middlebridge ownership as he has acquired MB21 from Paul Wade. Andrew is based not far away from me in North Scotland and has been in touch regarding some refurbishment work he intends to carry out on the car. He has a stable of other classics and is looking forward to Scimitar ownership.



MB21 at Gatcombe 2014

Eric Plane has also been in touch as he is intending to part with MB28, a car he bought at the NEC in

2016 after it had undergone a full refurbishment, as he is not getting as much use out of it as he had planned. The car has just had a service, brake pads, waxoyl and MOT and will be advertised soon for what he paid for the car but if anyone is interested let me know and I will put you in touch. I have seen the quality of the work back in 2016 and it was stunning.



MIDDLEBRIDGE ACCOUNT

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