

February 2024



ARDEN  CLUB

February Newsletter from New Editor—David Pitt and GV54HVX!



Not sure why but I offered to take over as editor at the January meeting and so this is all new to me. I am not good at creating newsletter works of art like my predecessors. I have been acknowledged as writing several articles over my working years for technical magazines but I only briefed expert wordsmiths and they created amazing pieces of work from little information!



I quite like photography and so you will see me around snapping pictures with my Nikon DSLR camera or just with an iPhone. I have been practising with Lightroom photo editing software and managed to turn Graham's Bumble into Kermit so beware the camera can be made to lie.....

This newsletter is a bit thin because originally there wasn't going to be a February version but it has been a good exercise in getting used to Microsoft Publisher software which I have not used much in the past.

As has been said the newsletter can only be as good as the contributions you send in so please send in any comments / stories of interest, photos etc. I will keep the same copy deadline as previously, the 10th of the Month. You can send it earlier!!

Please send to me at dpitt@btinternet.com

Caption Competition—photo care of Graham.

Send me your captions and the winner, to be chosen by Graham, will be mentioned in the next newsletter. No prizes though....

It appears to depict an MG owner about to have the business end of a Wickman 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " multi-spindle lathe dropped onto their roof-rack.



Chairman's Chatter

It's February already and with the recent warm spell, we have snowdrops and daffodils in bloom and with spring just around the corner, the eternal magic circle of life continues to revolve.

Indeed as we open our February Club Calendar, there was Norman reminding us of Valentine's Day and our love of one and other.

With the AGM just some 2 weeks away and the position of Newsletter Editor becoming vacant, David Pitt has thankfully volunteered to take on the role, with this Newsletter being his first edition. Its lateness is purely down to me being in too many places at once. Sincere thanks to you David in following Norman and Paul, whom set the bar so high. David is keen for content in the normal way at dlpitt@btinternet.com

MGOC Annual Newsletter Award - Our Monthly Club Newsletter - September 2023 Edition:

So high was the MGOC bar, that AMGC were runners up in the 2023 regional newsletter competition, beaten coincidentally by the Isle of Wight group. I believe this accolade is a first for the Club and should be acknowledged by us all. See page 8 Enjoying MG February edition.

March Madness 24 March:

Bookings have been brisk for a run starting and finishing at the Piston Club / Stag Pub at Redhill. For anyone interested please book with Jane and me - jg@oakwoodgreen.co.uk & mg@oakwoodgreen.co.uk and copy in Richard at rich.avery186@gmail.com

Drive It Day April 21:

John Burbeck, (another former Rally Driver in his younger days - Lotus Cortina etc!) has jumped in with both feet and volunteered to organise this event, which meanders around The Blossom Trail and David Pitt and others have kindly offered to support him . Richard will be sending out more details.

The Cheltenham Fryer:

Newsflash - Stephen Bailey has played an ace and on 28 September is organising the GWR Steam Railway "Cheltenham Fryer" Fish & Chip supper (& singalong?), with 40 places reserved - see post.

Looking ahead - Perhaps a "Noughty Party"

It's come to my attention that a number of members are celebrating life's events ending with zero - i.e. 50th, 60th, 70th and 80th birthdays, similarly wedding anniversaries, car ages, passing driving tests, or whatever. So what about a "Noughty" party sometime this year, perhaps with a game of Bingo?

The AGM:

We have the AGM on March 5 and I'm sure that you'll all be delighted that in no particular order, Roger, David, Richard, Helen & Mike will be offering themselves for re-election. Graham says he will continue to head up Humour and PR liaison with MGOC, whilst also flashing his camera from time to time - his new title - Head of Obscurity! Indeed having now sold 3 copies of his latest Christmas song, there are rumours he's having singing lessons too! David Pitt is already in post as our new Editor. In terms of the forthcoming vacancy for Chair, I'm naturally disappointed that there seem to be no contestants as yet. Basically I agreed to undertake the role for just one year and believe that I've done my bit, with input from Jane and thus that it's time to pass the baton. An interesting conversation was had at the February Natter, concluding that, with conditions, I might continue for a second and final year. That said, please remember why geese fly in a V formation and moreover, why they systematically rotate their leader, whom retires to the rear for an easier ride.

Chairman's Chatter

The 2024 Activity Program - Sharing ideas on March 5:

Prior to the AGM formalities, I would like us to discuss a 2024 activity program and share thoughts on how the year might generally pan out and moreover whom might indicatively wish to champion the respective activities. I'll bring the MG Club calendar along ready to pencil in our ideas.

I'm hopeful that in the process we might compile a "Register of some earlier Runs," such that they might be re-run with relative ease. Similarly, perhaps we could suggest new start and finish destinations - not easy, but as we all meander around the region somewhere new might just appeal. Perhaps a nice Cricket Club or whatever, for an early evening summer run?

I believe if we can schedule a range of 2024 Club activities at this early stage, the teamwork involved will be most rewarding for all concerned and in the process widen and strengthen relationships.

We're off to a great start with David Pitt jumping in as Editor, John Burbeck for Drive It Day and "Steam Train" Stephen Bailey with the Cheltenham Fryer - Ladies please don't be too shy, multi-tasking comes so naturally to you.

February Club Night - Patrick Fitzgerald and an Unsung Hero:

Well what an entertaining night that was! Patrick gave us a talk a few years ago about his career as a pilot in the RAF and in particular, I recall, the Hercules aircraft. This time it was about an amazing uneducated Irishman, Tom Clean, who was a key member of Antarctica Exploration Teams many decades ago. By his can do, but modest, nature, he was regarded as the "Unsung Hero" and a book has been written about his exploits, which we have now bought. See Graham's report.

The April Natter:

I've had discussions with Julia Grice to speak about her world of Art - watch this space!

MG's MGs:

Jeff the F hasn't really been on duty for a while, but will soon have its fixed top on ready to weather the spring storms.

Ted the Zed is back at Trophy Cars for some bits and bobs following its post acquisition shakedown - back soonish apparently!

Ed the Zed has thus assumed a full time role and following the muddy Chilly Willy run has in no particular order, had a recent run to Southampton and along the South Downs to Eastbourne, following a route by Jaguar man Peter Simpson in his book "Classic Driving Days". He's had some exercise too exploring a March Madness route and also been on school pick up duty and stands out in the crowd somewhat, to the amusement of our grandchildren. As he approaches 40k mileage, he's having a nose job with the front bumper off for paint again (this time to hopefully match the rest of the car).

So Jeff the F is back in demand, on parade and ready to put some rubber on the road.

Whilst we were not MG powered, en route to a recent trip to Port Isaac, (for a Memorial Lunch at Rick Stein's Padstow Restaurant for 2 dear friends - one a former fellow TF160 owner), we met up with a friend of some 60 years in Exeter. He is the proud owner of a new MGBGT V8 made by specialists in Hull - it's just amazing, (Mazda gearbox, Frontline suspension etc) the best I've ever seen and that awesome sound. We also met up at Blenheim in 2012, when he had an RV8 and we had just bought Fred's V8 and when I was also reunited with my works V8 after some 30 years! See next page.

Chairman's Chatter





Chairman's Chatter

Jon's amazing new V8" and Ted, not Ed, on tour and resting in Eastbourne - just another 162 miles home to complete his daily 300 mile plus shakedown



Chairman's Chatter

Reflections on my year as Chair:

With the Cross being closed in January 2023 and Paul being away in February, the AGM was postponed until March, where I was unopposed as the new Chair and at 71, probably the oldest to take on the role!

My year started in a flurry and in with both feet. In April Mick and Margy Walker gave us a Q&A presentation on Mick's Rallying days and more latterly his /their life on the roads of Europe and indeed beyond, concluding that he had covered well in excess of one million miles behind the wheel - quite a few of which on "opposite lock".

At the same time and with around £500 of surplus Club funds and knowing how many of our Ladies had endured breast cancer, I promoted that they should choose a suitable Charity for our £500 donation, which they suggested to be Breast Cancer Now. With them being such key members of our Club, this was an opportunity to have their say. Indeed Denise Bailey organised a Ladies Cream Tea later in the year to maintain momentum and more "girl power" - well done Ladies!

True to form bless her, Margy concerned about us men and Prostate Cancer, suggested that an equivalent donation of £500 be made to Prostate UK. What followed in August was Team MGB (Margy's Girls and Boys) organising a Charity Picnic, the outcome of which has been well documented.

Earlier in June, David Curtis gave us a first hand account of the great Sheffield flood in 2007 and his official command of operations, including the scrambling a Tornado.

July saw our loved ones scrubbed up for our Annual Show Night - dare I say it's possibly overdue that there's been no recognition lately for cars that get some real use and abuse - David Witham perhaps, whose whitish B has ventured to Le Mans on occasions rain or shine - watch this space....

Although Jane and I have been Club members for some 15 years, I was intrigued to learn from the "Elders" about the actual origin of the Club.

Fred and Paul got together and in August Paul gave us a presentation of the Club's history, some 35 years earlier in October 1988. By chance at the June Natter, David Rayner introduced me to Roger Vardy-Smith, the instigator of the Club, when he was the Landlord of the Cross. By then I had thought that the October Natter should take the form of a "35th Party" and I invited Roger along, which he accepted with genuine enthusiasm, despite not enjoying the best of health.

Roger delivered a fairly precise account of the Club from his records, but concluding that the Club started 34 years ago!

Sadly we were all devastated to learn that Roger died some 36 hours after entertaining us. Many of us attended Roger's funeral and David organised an MG cortège with many a farewell drink enjoyed at the Cross.

Earlier at the September meeting, former member Hazel Carter spoke most bravely to us, about the sad and cruel death of her husband Alan from Motor Neurone Disease - MND. Hazel had had written a book - "Life's Good, it's the disease that kills you" relating the entire experience, which had just been published and members bought copies with the entire proceeds gifted to MND.

The November meeting saw a factual and amusing talk on "The Great Train Robbery in 1963", by railway enthusiast Ian Boskett and a further £50 donation was made to Prostate UK.

Later in November saw our £500 cheque presentation to Sarcoma UK, most fittingly at Studley Castle - a former "BMC / BL" training centre and now a Warners destination hotel. Norman had planned the event with military precision and it has been well documented. Most surprisingly and with extreme sadness, his cancer cruelly took his life a few days after the presentation.

Chairman's Chatter

Many of us attended Norman's funeral and Paul organised a cortège, fittingly led by Norman's son Paul, in FAV.

Soon after David Rayner organised a similar £500 cheque presentation to Shakespeare Hospice to complete our donations for the year totalling £2550!

The December meeting incorporated the Christmas Meal and Bash, which saw us having a good time and at 67 attendees, gave us the effective sole use of the Cross.

In January we had an open discussion on Club matters and short talks by Martin Pleasance and David Harrison on interesting times with some of their cars.

My year in tenure has thus had its extreme highs and lows. Our real friendships have helped pull us all through the difficult times - thank you.

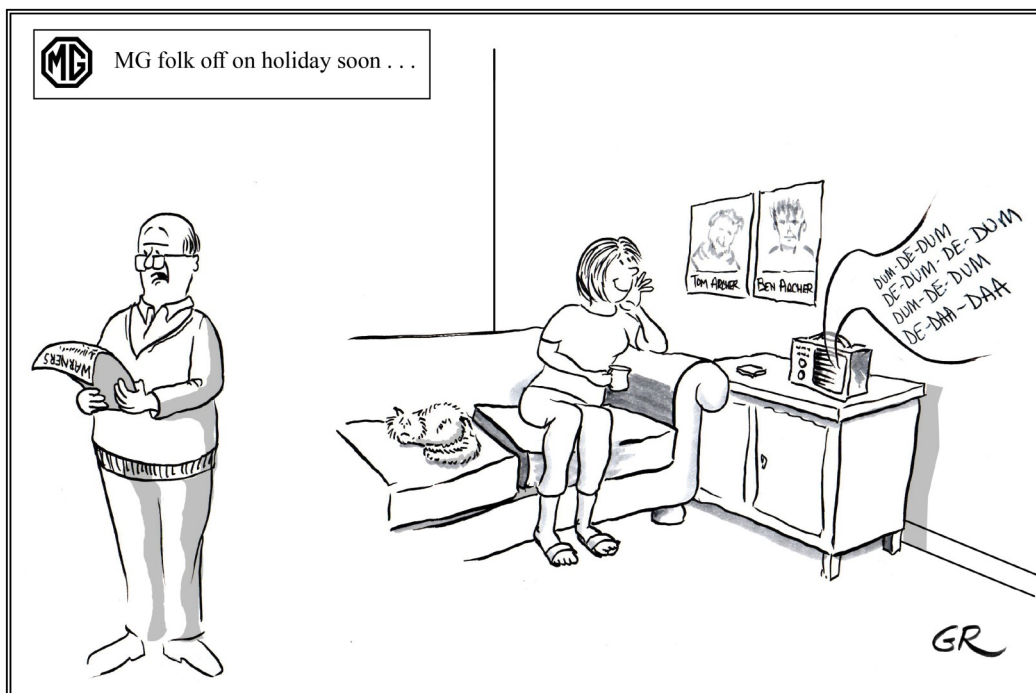
I sense we're off to a fine start for 2024, so please bring your ideas to the AGM, to maintain momentum and perhaps some new style activities.

The many and various Car Runs, Events, British Motor Museum gatherings etc, will be reported at the AGM.

Again, my sincere thanks again to David for this Newsletter and my apologies for the delay in getting my Chatter to him.

Finally, if anyone wishes to make contact with me before the AGM - 07542 990690 is the best way".

Graham's Cartoon Time!!



I'm not relishing the disappointment. I keep telling her it's Bembridge we're going to - not Ambridge . . .

Club Night Report 6th February

We had a big turnout for the meeting, and certainly a draw was the talk to be given by Pat Fitzgerald – a friend of Paul Dunster from the BMM – with the intriguing title “The Unsung Hero”.

We knew the talk involved the Frozen South (Antarctica, not Kent), so it was no surprise that Paul and Caroline weren't there, as they were in the Caribbean and the temperature change would have been too much of a shock. Pat got us interested straight away – he's not daft, he managed to work in having owned an MGB.

The talk was really interesting; the highlighted Tom Crean who is one of several unsung heroes of the extraordinary expeditions around the turn of the last century to reach the South Pole.

Inevitably, the gremlins got in and there was a brief interlude as the slide screen decided to join in the concept of going south, too. Eventually, after a time with Steve Entwistle

Saving the Day and holding the screen up, salvation came in the form of a bit of sticky tape or an old chip or something from the staff and the screen returned to its former glory. Our thanks went to Pat and we very happily provided a whip-round for the Parkinson's Society for whom he is a regular fund-raiser with his talks—we raised just over £100!

Graham



Club Events—What's on 2024

Club Nights:

Tuesday 5th March 2024 - our AGM at the Golden Cross—see Chairman's Chatter.

Tuesday 5th March 2024

Tuesday 2nd April 2024

Tuesday 7th May 2024

Tuesday 4th June 2024

Breakfast Meetings at BMM, Gaydon:

All meetings at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon, on the third Tuesday of the Month. The Museum opens at 10am and we aim to sit down, usually on the Gallery, otherwise in the Junction 12 Cafe. If you have not got a 12 month ticket be sure to tick the box to convert your booking to an Annual Membership. It is lower cost and quicker at the entrance if you pre-book online.

Tuesday 19th March 2024

Tuesday 16th April 2024

Tuesday 21st May 2024

Tuesday 18th June

Other Events:

Sunday 24th March—March Madness Run.

More details in Page 2.

Sunday 21st April—Drive-it-Day

This is the annual FBHVC Run Day. More details will be sent by Richard via email.

Saturday 28th September—Cheltenham Fryer.

GWR Steam Railway with fish & chips supper.

More details in Page 2.

What's On—Elsewhere

Z Register Meeting:

Sunday 3rd March 2024

The Piston Club, Red Hill, Stratford-upon-Avon

Classics at the Spa:

Sunday 16th June 2024

Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa.

See <https://carsatthespa.co.uk/>

Cotswold Caper:

Sunday 7th July 2024

Scenic Run starting in Chalford, Glos.

See <http://glosmgoc.co.uk/cotswold-caper/>