

**JANUARY
2019
EDITION**



Happy New Year 2019



The MG TC that helped save Britain from ruin

This Month:

- Committee reports**
- Upcoming events 2019**
- News snippets**
- How MG helped save Britain Pt 1**
- Letter from America**
- Club Christmas dinner photos**
- Traveller's tales**



ENJOY YOUR MG MORE WITH TVMGOC



Secretary's Report



Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year to all you lovely members of the TVMGOC. Didn't we all have a fabulous time at the Christmas Dinner Dance! The food was delicious, the service brilliant and as usual the music and dancing was excellent. Many thanks to Janis for doing such a good job of organising this event which was enjoyed by so many of us. If you were unable to attend in 2018, hopefully you will be able to join us at the 2019 event.

Well the start of a new year is very exciting and my 2019 diary is filling up already. The New Forest weekend away is booking up fast, so if you want to go, get your name down and your room booked ASAP.*

The Sunday lunch runs are booking up as well, so look at your events sheet or on the website to find out what is happening.

I know that I am starting early with National Drive it Day which is on the 28th of April, please make a note of the date. I will be asking if anyone would like a Drive it Day plaque, and I will let you know the price as soon as I can.

Neil & I had a trip to the Longleat Festival of Light which was amazing, lovely for any age from children to pensioners. We also had a drive around the safari park. I let Neil make the decision about going in to Monkey World as there were dire warnings at the entrance of monkeys wrecking cars. Neil decided to go in and looked a bit worried as the monkeys started jumping all over the (newly cleaned) car, chewing the washer nozzle and fiddling with the windscreen wipers. We exited Monkey World with all the bits on the car, but lots of little muddy footprints - very enjoyable. The car in front of us had to pull in to get the keeper to retrieve a bit of plastic that a monkey had removed from his vehicle, oh how we laughed. **

I hope you all have a brilliant 2019, with lots of sun, fun & laughter & many trips out in your MG's.

Best Wishes & Happy Driving

Pam

1 Buena Vista Close, Glenholt, Plymouth, PL6 7JH

**See Upcoming events for details*

*** The blighters once poked the rear parking sensors out of my car bumper. Our garage mechanic was very impressed by their skill and dexterity but it cost a small fortune to fix. Never again! Howard*



Notes from your Chairman



Hi everyone,

I am sitting at my computer on this fine dry Boxing Day after enjoying Christmas Day with all the family. The day was totally enhanced by having our granddaughters Emily (3 years) and Hazel (8 months) showing us what Christmas is all about.....being doted on by all the adults and getting lots of presents.

Alison pulled out all the stops and managed to create a wonderful Christmas Dinner. Of course it wouldn't have been possible without her having me helping behind the scenes and getting in her way!

Howard has been waiting for my report to be able to complete the newsletter but I wanted to actually have Christmas Day rather than use my imagination beforehand for the report.

Looking back to earlier in December, all the members and guests enjoyed a fantastic Christmas Dinner at the Moorland Garden Hotel. Thank you to all those who made the effort to attend and helped to make it such a superb event. An even bigger thanks must go to Janis for her organisational skills in getting this event off the ground.

We are so very close to the New Year and most importantly the opening of the January football transfer window. I just hope the Argyle manager gets a few new players in who can actually play the game. Struggling as we are at the foot of League 1 is not a pleasant place to be but is certainly character building. Yes I suppose I could support Arsenal or another premiership team but that would be too easy and a bit of a cop out.

Getting into the New Year we have the club meetings and Sunday Lunches to look forward to. These will help to keep the club active whilst we wait for the end of winter.

Alison and I have now chosen our venue for the March Sunday Lunch and hope you will be able to come along and join us.

We are taking you to the Moorland Hotel at Wotter and we think you will like it. Sunday 17th March is St. Patrick's Day, so an easy date to remember for your diaries.

The Moorland Hotel was the meeting place for Tamar Valley's monthly meetings when Alison and I joined the club approximately 11 years ago, so for us a trip down Memory Lane.

Alison and I would like to wish each and every one of you.....**'A happy New Year!'**

Safe MG motoring,
Alan



Event Secretary keeping it wheel



Dear all,

Alan is quite correct of course about saying that children bring all the magic to Christmas, and being grandparents gives you a second generation of childhood excitement. Over the New Year the Cambridge side of our family descended on us so we got to do Christmas all over again!

Echoing the above comments about our club Christmas dinner, I'd also like to add a thank you to those who voted for Jan and me to win the Irene Williamson Memorial Trophy. We were up against strong competition from all the other members who organised supper or lunch runs last year, but our November 1939 Penguin Guide route won it. We did put in a lot of effort and also into our January I-Spy run. However, just because Jan and I are daft enough to go a bit OTT with the planning I'd hate to think this might put anyone else off organising a run. All that is really required is a pleasant route and somewhere nice to dine. Bells and whistles are fine if you've got the time etc. but it's not necessary. We just want to have an enjoyable day out in good company. Organise that and everyone will be very happy.

With the New Year, the newsletter gets a slight makeover, partly aimed at making it even easier to produce while still looking nice. It also contains the first of a three-part feature which I've saved up for the cold, wet months when there is not so much to report on.

I began researching *How MG and other British Sports Cars saved the nation* back last May whilst Jan and I were in Cambridge helping look after our daughter's family whilst her husband Tom was desperately ill in hospital.

(He's well again now, and thanks to all those who enquired after him – pneumonia and sepsis is a nasty combination!). While the children were out during the day I needed a distraction, and so started to look into the post-war period of MG production, not least because I wanted to learn more about the origins of the MGA. What I came across was fascinating and hopefully you will find it so too.

Happy MGing!

Howard

Send submissions to eventsecretarytvmgoc@gmail.com or mediatvmgoc@gmail.com



Upcoming events

The most up to date and detailed information on all 2019 events can be found and downloaded on the [Event Diary Page](#) and the [Entry Forms page](#). See: www.tvmgoc.org.uk

Events you can enter now

To register your participation, contact these event organisers via email please.

<u>20 Jan</u>	Club Sunday Lunch	To the Church House Inn, Rattery. Peter L & Jenny organising. lanninp@googlemail.com
17 Feb	Club Sunday Lunch	Sally & Keith organising to The Little Fox Hotel at Tregantle Sally-and-keiths-adventures@hotmail.co.uk
17 Mar	Club Sunday Lunch	Alan & Alison organising to The Moorland Hotel at Wotter chairmantvmgoc@gmail.com
26 May	Devon & Cornwall event	Moor 2 Sea Run (Exeter MGOC) Form available on our website
31 May to 3 June	TVMGOC weekend away (at the time of writing we have 9 couples taking part)	Southampton & New Forest MGOC New Forest Run Friday 31 st May - Travel Saturday 1 st June - club run TBA with a skittles competition in the evening 2 nd June - New Forest Run 3 rd June - return home The entry form has not yet been published but 12 places are reserved for the Sunday NF run and 12 rooms in the hotel. More can be added. See the December newsletter for full booking details. Please book soon and inform Event Sec. of your interest

Club & show dates to note

The majority of dates for various events in 2019 are now available in the Event diary our website which can be downloaded. So far only Moor 2 Sea has an entry form available, which is on our [Entry forms page](#).

28 April	Drive It Day	With the Treasure Hunt trophy organised by last year's winner Pam & Neil – inform them of your participation clubsecretarytvmgocplease@gmail.com
10 May	Club Friday evening run	Club Friday evening supper run (traditionally to The Cuddy Shack). Organiser TBA



A Year Of Auctions

The 25th edition of the Classic Car Auction Yearbook, the 'bible' of car collectors, which records sales around the world has recently been published and reveals some interesting statistics. America has two-thirds of all classic cars. The auction industry is now worth \$1.3 billion and is growing.

Originality is king at auction and the best prices are for 'perfect' cars with full provenance and history. Also adding value is the reputation of the restoration company. This year the top 226 cars (5.65% of those recorded) are more valuable than the remaining 94.35%. How many of those cars will be used out on the road for touring pleasure is anyone's guess, but in all likelihood the more rare and valuable the car, the more the owner is likely to be a collector who will keep it under wraps, perhaps occasionally trailering it to some concours show. Ho hum.

Photo Shop

If you play around with photos as much as I do, it won't be long searching Google Images before you come across posts by the photo agency alamy.com. They sell usage rights to copyrighted images so I never use them. They also plaster their logo as a watermark all over each picture and only when they receive payment do they release an un-doctored version. Imagine my surprise when I accidentally came across three photos of my own car, the rights to which are for sale! They were taken at the English Riviera Show last summer and each photo costs £11.99 to £179.99 depending on usage. Further clicking also revealed a photo of John's Magnette – same show, different year.

You might be surprised to learn that I didn't take umbrage at this, even though my permission had not been sought and I knew nothing about the pictures having been taken. Why? Well, shows are public events and people are free to wander around taking whatever photos they like. If they want to try and sell them afterwards there's nothing we can do about it. I was tempted to use one of their watermarked photos of my car here and dare them to sue me, but life's too short, so I used my own group photo instead.

Hang on...I'm missing a trick here! Two can play at that game!



Should any of you wish to reproduce the above without the watermarks I will happily sell you the right to do so and guarantee to undercut the car paparazzi at Alamy. Please form an orderly queue with your cash ready. I'm gonna be rich!!!!!! I'll be spending some of my new-found wealth at the January lunch run. See you there I hope.

Letter from America



Many will be aware that one of our members is based in America. Ian C. joined Tamar Valley MGOC even though he lives over three and a half thousand miles away in West Virginia. Club membership is a way to maintain his links with Devon and Cornwall. We asked Ian to tell us a bit about himself.



I served in the RN for twenty five years; my home port was Devonport so my family home was in Saltash. I was discharged in 1980. Regrettably my marriage ended in divorce a few years later. I relocated to Chester where I worked for EMI, Ladbrokes, Top Rank and finally Barratt Shoes, in the entertainment/hotels/security departments.

Back then my first "classic" was a Sunbeam Alpine MK VI, 366 NOB. Then followed a few years of bread and butter cars, namely Austin A40 Farina Mk 1, Vauxhall Victor, Rover 2000 SC, Rover P6B 3500S (my absolute favourite). Sports cars followed – an Austin Healey Sprite MK 1, which I rebuilt. Sadly the car and I then had an argument with a Cornish dry wall on my way to St Austell in which the wall won and the "Frog" was written off. That was followed by two MGB GT's.

As was common back in the 1980/1990's, people were made redundant from their jobs as companies reorganized, and so my position was axed on three occasions. Mid 90's I decided my talents were wasted in the UK and applied to the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS as opposed to today's ICE), was accepted and arrived in the USA in August 1995.

Initially I lived in Hampton, Virginia where my talents were recognized and accepted. I taught British Colonial history in Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestown which was the first permanent English speaking colony in America, founded in 1607. Williamsburg was the capital of the state of Virginia when it was founded in 1699. Yorktown of course was the site of the final surrender of British forces in the American quest for Independence. The college of William and Mary in Williamsburg is the second oldest college in America, and is where I taught many young people about the American quest for Independence and the struggle of early settlers to establish a colony based primarily on crops of tobacco and sassafras (*a plant used for culinary, medicinal and aromatic purposes, and as a material for building ships and furniture*).

As an aside to this, I was frequently amazed at the number of young people who did not know that America had once been a British colony. When I asked them "who do you think America gained independence from?" I was invariably met with blank stares or the suggestion of Mexico.

I loved teaching in Williamsburg but, as is usual in the teaching profession, the financial rewards were very low. Consequently I made the decision to sit the "real estate" exam and became a "Realtor". My brief career selling properties was way more successful than I ever imagined, so at the grand old age of 66 I retired.

During this time I set about finding a viable British car of any make as, apart from new Jaguars, the British car market seemed to be non-existent. I googled British car clubs and found a club in Charlestown, aptly named West Virginia British Car Club (WVBCC). Their website had a "Members cars for sale" section that featured a guy in Charleston who had two MGB's he wanted to sell. One was a very rusty 1970's GT, and the other a 1978 convertible. That car was painted in Woodlands green, had wire wheels and was in unusually rust free condition, so I purchased it. Since then we have lived together, not always amicably, but we have learned to get along. I did join the aforementioned WVBCC but it was most certainly NOT what I was looking for so after one year did not renew my membership.

Living conditions in Hampton had deteriorated sadly over the years with drive-by shootings, drugs and every sort of violence imaginable. The time had come to move on to a quieter location and life. Within the USA it is generally accepted that West Virginia is by far the poorest of all 50 states, and in many ways this is true. However, the people are extremely friendly, property prices are generally much lower than elsewhere, the climate is superb and is only climaxed by the wonderful scenery.

Would I live elsewhere? Sure. I am a beach person and miss the ocean. There are many aspects of the British way of life that I miss dearly. Would I ever consider returning to the UK? That is a leading question and at present would very much depend on BREXIT which to me at the moment is an unknown quantity.

These days I only use my MGB on weekends or travelling to and from shows. My license plate is for an "antique vehicle" which means I can only use it on the roads as mentioned above. I am considering changing that status for regular use which means an annual inspection (MOT) which would be no big deal as the car as far as I know is in good roadworthy condition.....apart from the windscreen washer which, no matter what, will not work.

Having said all that however, in this small town of approx. 5500 people I am good friends of the local city police and they really could not care less if and when I take my car out on the road as long as I don't break any speed limits (as if!).

Regrettably in my experience to date the majority of car clubs have little or no interest in British cars. 1970's Chevys, model T's and all kind of "rat rods" with no end of Ford Mustangs, Chevy Corvettes and the so called "muscle cars" are the accepted show cars. Meetings and outings such as the TVMGOC participate in just don't seem to happen. I wish they did.

On a different note; I subscribe to the English Practical Classics magazine which I enjoy immensely and have been following the correspondence re MOT inspections for our cars. I have to agree that even though my car does not require an annual inspection for safety purposes, I do and will continue to have it inspected by a competent authority.

The question of ethanol seems to be raising its head in UK. In the USA generally speaking E10 is the norm and my MGB runs happily on that. The powers that be, probably the EPA, are advocating for E15. I don't think my MGB would care for that. As far as the anti-pollution laws go, my MGB has been de-smogged. In other words the catalytic converter has been removed totally.

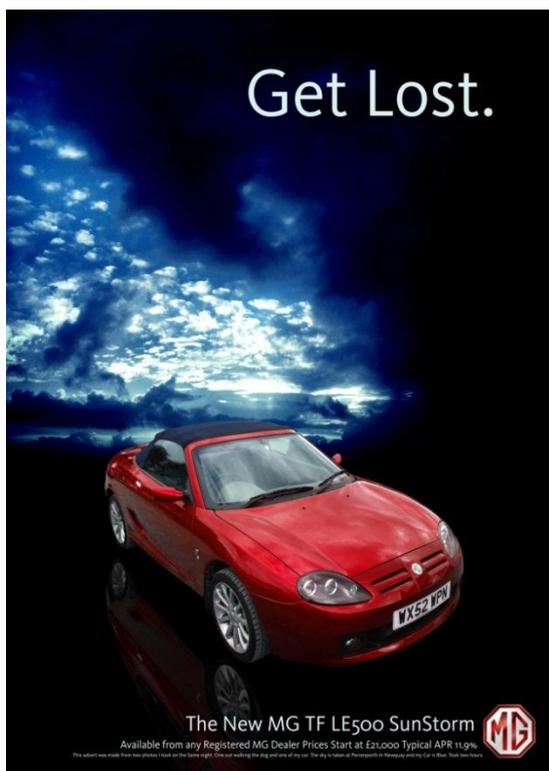
I have just met up with a guy who resurrected a 1979 MGB convertible, maybe I shall convince him to join our club.

Ian C.

Ian also sent us a few photos of the Moss Britfest show held last year held at Petersburg, Virginia. There were certainly a couple of MGs of interest. Whether the red car is/was an MG Midget or an Austin Healey Sprite seems irrelevant now after all those amazing mods!



Back on this side of the Atlantic and with half a page to fill here are a couple of ads for TFs. The German one translates as, 'Driving fun is too abstract for you? Then drive an MG. The legend of tomorrow. The new MG TF'



How MG and other British sports cars saved the nation



The title of this article is not an exaggeration, as we will discover. American author John Nikas published *Rule Britannia - When British Sports Cars Saved a Nation*. Rave reviews tempted me to buy the book, until I discovered it costs £70 or more.



The miser in me prompted me to do a spot of Googling instead, and I came across on You Tube a lecture Nikas had given where he outlined his thesis. It really is a fascinating examination of a portion of British history that many of us know a little about but are probably sketchy on details. For my part, I knew my 1962 MGA must be part of this story, and indeed it is, but the stars are the MG TC, TD and TF Midgets. So here begins a three-part précis of what Nikas has to say, which brings a fresh and well-researched oversight to the topic. I have augmented this with other research that fill in a few gaps in Nikas' talk and provide some figures and relevant images. This month sets the scene, next month is about the Government 'Export or Die' policy, and the final part called 'Mind the Gap!' is about developing the more modern MGA and quality control – or rather the lack of it!

Part 1 – Men In Sheds

Post-war Britain had paid a heavy price for defeating Hitler - not only in lives lost, but economically too. The country was on its knees, facing financial disaster and burdened by continued rationing of food, fuel and consumer goods. We were overwhelmed with debt and relying on foreign assistance to meet basic needs. The incoming Labour government issued a mandate on industry to 'Export or Die', and earn the hard currency needed to revitalise the nation. Among those that rose to this challenge were automotive manufacturers such as MG, A.C., Aston Martin, Austin-Healey, Jaguar, Morgan and Triumph.



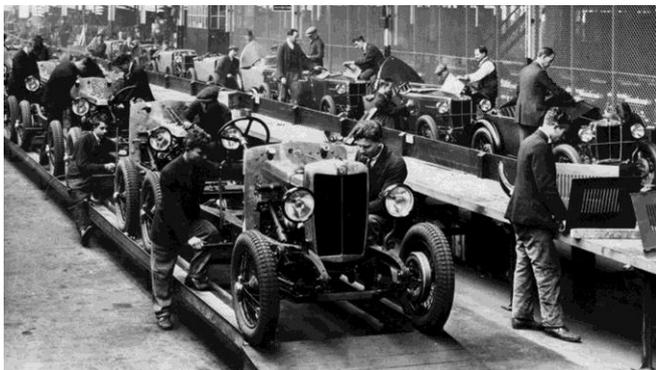
MGTC production line at Abingdon.
On the left a line for YA or YB saloons

The story of how British sports cars helped save the post-war nation begins pre-war. Motor manufacturing in the UK back then was very different from that in the USA and elsewhere in Europe. By the 1930s, other countries - Germany, Italy, the United States, France - all had *massive* car companies - think Ford, General Motors, Volkswagen, Renault, Citroen, Fiat. Britain built some wonderful cars, but by comparison with these foreign giants they were put together by men in sheds.

In Britain car companies were disparate, independent and small, generally making very high-end cars like Rolls-Royce or Bentley, or low-cost cars. Most had begun by making bikes or motorcycles. This includes William Morris, who moved on from bikes to building cars that would eventually spawn MG. When these companies began to build cars they were stymied by the British government, which was by far the least supportive of all the industrialized countries. For example, they imposed ill-informed and arcane horsepower tax that led to all the low-revving cars that we know and love in Britain. They decided to tax cylinder bore and leave stroke untaxed. So British car companies started making engines more suited to tractors than

sporty little numbers, with incredibly long strokes and very small bores, designed for torque. In Bella Italia, home of the prancing pony, it was the exact opposite. They taxed stroke not bore, so you got high revving, high horsepower Ferraris and suchlike. Germany taxed horsepower as a total, and of course the United States, home of the free, did not tax anything at all.

There were other differences too. General Motors and Ford – it was Henry who transformed global manufacturing industry by introducing assembly lines, and his son Edsel who imported the first MG into the States in 1932, an M-type Midget Sportsman's Coupe - were famous for hiring the smartest, best-educated people they could find. In contrast, for over 50 years, Nikas argues, the British car industry would not hire anyone with a college degree, thinking they would be uppity and not willing to get their hands dirty.



Abingdon MG production line

In Blighty the career pathway in car manufacturing was to start out as a tea boy, certainly not as a tea girl, and learn the hard way through graft inside an engine bay mentored by an oily sage. In the 1930s, the largest companies were Rootes, Austin and Morris, the latter two being bitter rivals which started from very humble beginnings. There was also a plethora of small companies: Healey, Triumph, MG, etc. which had managed to survive the depression. Jaguar was really making a push and MG was doing well with their T-series.

Then Adolf Hitler came on the scene.

The United States is called the Arsenal Democracy. Ford built B24 aircraft, General Motors built tanks. In fact the US auto industry created war material that was shipped all over the globe. In Britain the situation was somewhat different. Because the companies were tiny by comparison, their individual manufacturing capacity was small. As the late 1930s approached, it was clear that something was going to have to be done about Germany. Showing true Brit, our car makers started constructing shadow factories next to existing facilities to build aircraft engines using their skilled engineering labour.

Once the bombing started, outside of London the city that suffered the brunt of the Luftwaffe was Coventry. The Aston Martin factory was bombed, Jaguar's factory was bombed, Triumph's two factories were destroyed leaving the company in ruins. Donald Healey was then working at Rootes and when he wasn't building armoured cars he was trying to design a new Triumph for after the war. William Lyons stood fire watch every night over the Jaguar factory, and in the darkness sketched and designed an engine that would become the XK and continue in production up to the 1990s.

MG had different problems. Cecil Kimber, who created and ran the company, was fired early on in the war by the owner William Morris (later Lord Nuffield). Kimber was not satisfied with the manufacturing contracts that MG received from the War Department, so he went out on his own and signed contracts to build the fuselage of the Albemarle bomber and repair tanks to keep his employees busy and earning a wage. Morris was so upset with this that he had Kimber fired.

Looking towards peacetime, the MG company realised that if they were going to survive they had to come up with a car to sell immediately when peace arrived. That car would be the TC, which was basically the same car they built in 1939 - a slightly widened TB.

The problem was that there was nothing left to build them with.

Next time...Export or Die

Howard



Fifty MG TCs on their way to be shipped to America in 1948.

The August 2018 edition of Enjoying MG carries a detailed account of how Abingdon did its part for the war effort and is well worth a read. It may even further enhance your pride in driving an MG. For even more detail the MGCC has for sale copies of 'MG War Time Activities' by George Propert, former General Manager at MG.



A great time was had by all at the Moorland Garden Hotel



Winners of the club Enthusiasts of the Year Jan & Peter



Winners of the Irene Williamson Memorial Trophy for the best club run of the year Jan & Howard





Received entries	From
<i>"Santa, this serves you right for replacing your safe old sleigh with a flashy new Jag!"</i>	Howard
<i>"Santa, you should have stuck to deer power and not gone over to horse power"</i>	Howard
<i>I told you these Jags are too dear!</i>	John I.
<i>Rudolf, when I said we wanted to land on the roof top I didn't mean this!</i>	** John I.**
<i>Oh dear Santa has been Slayed!</i>	John I.
<i>Molly – "there's a reindeer Fred."</i>	Janis
<i>Fred - "at least it might melt the bloody snow!"</i>	
<i>The driver hadn't anticipated this when he said he was thinking of having a bit of a stag do.</i>	Alan
<i>Santa's daily driver handles better upside down, all he needs to do now is figure out how to attach Rudolf and his chums.</i>	Alan
<i>The deer says, 'I'm glad this jaguar is upside down or he'd be after me for his dinner</i>	Roger
<i>This is not the one that brings the food.</i>	Margaret C.
<i>We went to all that trouble to deliver those toys and look what he has done. Just thrown the toy car out of the pram.</i>	Richard M.
<i>That's a very strange looking sled, I wonder where Santa sits?</i>	Margaret C.
<i>What an odd way to park!</i>	Richard M.
<i>'Think yourself lucky mate, I'm not even an elk!'</i>	Keith A.
<i>'I can see why we never allow cats on the team'</i>	Sally A.
<i>Rudolf says, "I told you Santa to be careful what you wish for. As a replacement sleigh, a Jaguar just won't cut it!"</i>	John H.
<i>Santa! Get out and sober up. We have deliveries to make.</i>	Pam
<i>I knew Mr. Claus's new-fangled sleigh wouldn't work on snow</i>	Noel
<i>" He should have used reindeer power instead of horsepower "</i>	Noel
<i>OOOOPHs Sorry.</i>	John N.

And the winner of last month's competition chosen by Jan P. is ****John I ** Well done!**

In a new arrangement to involve members more, the caption competition winner each month gets the job of choosing the next month's winner. However, that person will not be able to enter themselves until the month after. So, January's winner John I. will choose the winner for February but cannot enter himself again until March.

Keeping with the winter snow theme, here's next month's photo requiring a caption.

Your entries by email to:
mediatvmgoc@gmail.com





And finally...



After our Christmas excesses let's all make a New Year resolution to start a weekly workout!

Doctor Jan P. (retired) says we should all start an exercise programme and she has devised the following:

MONDAY

Run through the Brexit stories in the morning papers; beat around the bush; jump to conclusions; climb the walls.

TUESDAY

Drag your heels; push your luck; make mountains out of molehills; hit the nail on the head.

WEDNESDAY

Bend over backwards; jump on the bandwagon; run around in circles; exercise your right to eat more chips.

THURSDAY

Blow your own trumpet; pull out all the stops; open your mouth and put your foot in it.

FRIDAY

Open a can of worms; throw fuel on the fire; start the ball rolling; go over the top.

SATURDAY

Squeeze a 4th and 5th meal into your day; pick up the pieces; have a belly laugh; purge your system but never take a laxative and a sleeping pill on the same night.

SUNDAY

When you walk into a room and can't remember why, hug the nearest person and they'll never know.

And finally a heartfelt wish - may all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions.

THE ASCENT OF MAN

