

**DECEMBER  
2020  
EDITION**

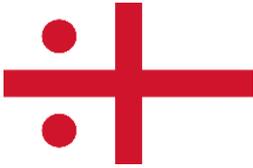


**This Month:**

**Committee reports  
News snippets –  
What's the future for  
classic motoring?  
Car insurance during lockdown  
An MG story from America  
Nigel's Midget Pt 1  
John and Vanessa:  
you really couldn't make this up**



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# Secretary's Report



Dear all,

With Christmas coming at us fast, lockdown has again reduced our ability to enjoy our MGs together, and with the whole of Devon now being put into tier 2, we will remain pretty restricted. Club activity is certainly out but it is better news for our Cornwall members with Tier 1 allowing more flexibility with visiting hostelrys. One can only feel for the Devon pub owners and hope that they are able to survive this dreadful time for them. This missive is being prepared on one of those crisp, sunny November days, and with an appointment at the opticians strangely not hit by lockdown, out came the MGR to put some fuel and air into the dormant 8 cylinders and give the 200 horses a run. Dartmoor was stunning as I routed via Princetown from Tavistock and the car went really well, with a proper shove in the back propelling me up Pork Hill and smiles all round – even from Charlie braving the cold as co-pilot. As I am sure we are all thinking, there is much to look forward to when we get going again as a club.

Turning to club business, this month we took Sonia's good news that we had about £100 remaining from the funds raised for Derriford and got back to the Intensive Care wards with another delivery. Howard and I picked up a selection of coffee, tea and snacks from Bookers and we met with a very grateful team of Nurses coping with the second wave.



Howard's MGA was hors de combat so the RV8 substituted and one young nurse excitedly showed us pictures of her father's MGBGT in mid-restoration. Sadly, he is not local, so our recruiting pitch was wasted!

Our Zoom meeting was really successful for those who took the plunge – and we will do it again for our December Wednesday meeting. Accepting the limitations of the online format, it was lovely to see people and to enjoy a chat. We will include a light-hearted quiz from Vanessa this time and for the future we have the potential for an online talk as part of it – so watch this space!

Keep safe and have a Wonderful Christmas  
*Simon*



Should you need to contact our club secretary, for example to send in club subscriptions, first call or email.  
01822 852843 [clubsecretarytvmgoc@gmail.com](mailto:clubsecretarytvmgoc@gmail.com)





## Notes from your Chairman



Hello everyone,

Usually by now we would be well into our club's monthly Sunday Lunch Runs. The last one held back in March is now just a distant memory. Little did we know then what was about to happen. How nice will it be once we can get back to normality?

The miserable weather we have recently been enduring doesn't really encourage oneself to go out and play with the MG in an unheated garage, although I expect some of you have got a heated garage, wall to wall carpeting and a fully functioning bar sorted. That would be my ultimate man-cave.

When the weather has allowed, Alison and I have managed to don our walking boots and have ventured out onto the moor for some good walks. I must admit that we both miss the added enjoyment of walking a dog since we lost our dear old boy Jack. Thoughts of a finding another dog have been firmly scuppered by the supply and demand during this pandemic.

Talking about the pandemic, we have enhanced restrictions moving forward due to the Southwest's increase in infection rates.

Even if we manage to start getting vaccinated soon, the talk is still of restrictions until next Easter. Don't forget to display your 'We have been vaccinated' sticker on your MG's windscreen once we are allowed to play again.

Since my last report I have gained another car. Our son's MGTF is now taking up space on our drive whilst he completes the purchase of a new house. All I have to do is keep it clean and the battery charged up into the New Year. If I want to use the MGB, I now have to move two cars beforehand which is a nuisance. Well..... OK! It would be if you could actually go out and drive for fun.

It seems unbelievable that Christmas is just a month away and the usual build up towards it will be a bit different this year. It just doesn't seem right that we have missed out on the club's Christmas Dinner this year. This event usually heralds in the lead up to Christmas quite nicely.

With Christmas in mind, Alison and I would like to wish you and all your families a safe and enjoyable Covid-19 free Christmas.

Safe MG motoring,

*Alan*





## Event Secretary keeping it wheel



Dear all,

Firstly, let me send everyone's best wishes to Libby who has had another fall, just as her shoulder injury was beginning to heal at long last. From what Nigel says she was cut up pretty badly. It never rains, eh.

Get well soon Libby, and I hope 2021 turns out better for you, and for us all. xxx



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I've been busy this month researching what the future might hold for classic cars. My report has made this newsletter slightly long, but I hope you find this item food for thought.

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My MGA is revolting. There can be no other explanation - revolting at being underused this year. 'Use it or lose it' is my classic car mantra, but this year I can only assume she feels neglected. Why else has she given me so much grief?

Oh, I've tried to keep her happy: two or three nice day runs out with friends, a 750 mile four-day trip to Wales, lockdown laps of our park and the occasional essential visit to the supermarket, but I hear her cry, "What happened to the tour of Ireland you promised me? Aren't we going to Spain this year? I suppose a return to the Scottish Highlands is out of the question? Huh!"

I've told her that the coronacoaster ride is screwing things up, but that cuts no ice; in retaliation her hissy fits this year include refusing to start - fixed after some expense - refusing to brake - fixed after more expense and a lot of effort - and the latest was that she refused to drink, in spite of a tank full of Tesco's best. No cheap stuff for my gal - she knows her champagne from prosecco; it's 99 octane or nothing!

When without warning the SU fuel pump stops working, thinks I, "Been here, done that. I can probably fix this myself." (*Oh yeah...the naive fool! Ed.*) Jack up the back, axle stands deployed, crawl under, remove pump, clean contacts, give it 12v on the bench, click-click-click and all is well. By now the sun is setting so I'll refit it in the morning.

Come the morrow, before refitting I thought I'd just check the pump once more. Red wire to earth, black to live and...clunk. Then nothing. Gone was the familiar click-click-click which had cheered me the evening before. The fool that I am! So pleased had I been that I'd finally fixed a problem all by myself I'd even played the satisfying sound down the phone to Alan. But now...I tried again and...nothing...not even a clunk.

There was only one thing to do. Call Neil, a man who, unlike me, knows an amp from an ant and a volt from a vole. Neil's our current specialist. He's very grounded and never abuses his power. It Hertz to say this but I'm shocked at his abilities. (*That's enough silly gigglewatts! Ed.*)

Examining the electronics, using equipment which for all I understand might as well have involved a dowsing rod and a Ouija board, Neil discovered a fault on the circuit board. At this moment Pam swore she saw a light bulb appear over his head. Mine is an old mechanical SU pump that at some time in the distant past had been converted to electronic. It had a dry joint or two that I must have dislodged with my fiddling.

Neil quickly fixed that and the car is up and running again and what's more, after a month or so of idleness STARTED FIRST TIME! (I'll never quite get used to that). Now all we need is somewhere to go...but I have plans...such plans! All we need is a vaccination or something to make us safe.



*Sometime later, after a short spin to Wembury...*

Hold on...hold on...I spoke too soon...now the bloomin' wipers don't work...think it's electrical...er, Nigel, "Why does the wiper motor have one live but two earth wires?"

It turned out to be both an electrical and mechanical problem. After five years of ownership, only now have I discovered that the car has self-parking wipers which have never worked. Consequently, I didn't know they were supposed to stop in the right place all by themselves. To quote that great philosopher Homer, "Doh!"

*PS. In the last couple of months I've had invaluable help from Alan, Neil & Roy. Although it may not seem like it, I actually don't like asking for favours, even though I love giving them myself when possible. But one of the great things about our club is that help is there if needed. Thanks again guys.*

♪ **A goody goody yum yum** ♪

As you know I find lots of items of interest on various MG Facebook groups, but I also seek light relief elsewhere. This photo of The Goodies was posted in the British Comedy UK group.



In another lifetime, back in the mid-70s, I used to work at BBC Pebble Mill in the film cutting rooms. After an evening in the BBC club, myself and two workmates from the sound department were on our way out as we passed the props department, where leaning against a wall was the actual Goodies 3-seater bike. Well...what would *you* do in the circumstances?

Let's just say it's tricky to ride a bike like that indoors along narrow corridors when you've had a drink or two...

And to quote a Boris headline that for once hasn't been thrown back in his face, "Tis the season to be jolly careful."

Happy MGing!  
*Howard*

Send submissions to  
[eventsecretaryvmgoc@gmail.com](mailto:eventsecretaryvmgoc@gmail.com) or  
[mediatvmgoc@gmail.com](mailto:mediatvmgoc@gmail.com)

The Goodies first brush with the law lol 🤣🤣





## Upcoming events

The most up to date and detailed information on all 2021 events can be found and downloaded on the [Event Diary Page](#) and the [Entry Forms page](#).

See: [www.tvmgoc.org.uk](http://www.tvmgoc.org.uk)

**Numerous run and show dates for 2021 are being firmed up.**  
**See the Event Diary on our website for the latest news.**

### **Something to look forward to**

Giving you something to hope for is the best Christmas present your Event Secretary can do in the current circumstances. Due to his age Father Christmas has been socially isolating this year with Amazon taking over some of his duties. His wife, Mary Christmas, has been doing her best to improve Santa's low elf-esteem and she has made sure their private elf care package is up to date. She's been feeding him up with Frosted Flakes. (*That's e'nuf of that! Ed.*) Sorry folks, but I can't help having this two-way internal dialogue inside my head. (*Well I do wish it would shut up! Ed.*)

Anyway...at this time of year I like to imagine you settled in your favourite chair, next to a roaring log fire, with a glass of something nice, and your diary to hand as you plan your MG year ahead.

With that in mind, I have been trawling through next year's club Event Diary to see what, if anything, is planned regarding various runs and shows. There are quite a few dates worth noting, even with no firm guarantee they can go ahead or in what form.

In the New Year I/we/someone should give some thought to a possible club weekend away. Any ideas?

### **Drive It Day – yesterday's vehicles supporting today's children**

Although it's five months away, the one event that seems almost certain to go ahead, in one way or another, is **Drive It Day on Sunday April 25**. This national event is organised by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) and in 2021 will be raising money for the NSPCC's Childline service.

As you will know, the aim is to show the nation's transport off to the public, and so owners of all kinds of vintage and classic vehicles are encouraged to go out and about on this day to let them be seen. Our club, in line with most others, usually organises a run and we hope we will be able to do so again, but it's possible that you-know-what might scupper a group outing. It may be that we can only go on a drive in twos or threes, just as individuals or merely park our MGs on the driveway, but whatever circumstances allow then, please note the date and assume you will be doing something with your car on that day.

### **Sign of the times**

The London Classic Car Show has moved from Olympia to become an outdoor event at Syon Park, Brentford. It takes place from 16 to 18 April. Is this the new norm for what were indoor car shows?

### **South West 500**

You may remember that back in 2019 Roy & Sonia and Jan & I journeyed to Scotland to drive the famous scenic North Coast 500. It was fabulous. Now Scenic Car Tours have produced a new tour, this time in our region, entitled the South West 500 "A wonderful 9-day Tour of the South West 500 through two of England's most popular counties, Devon & Cornwall." I doubt that many TVMGOC members would consider this, especially as the trip costs £900 per person and it's unlikely to get to anywhere we are not familiar with, but good luck to them.



### THE FUTURE FOR HISTORIC VEHICLES

The recent publication of a survey by the FBHVC has prompted a lot of speculation about what the future has in store for historic vehicles powered by internal combustion engines (ICE). Following the Government's pledge to ban the sales of ICE vehicles from 2030 and hybrids from 2035, here is a precis of some of the things that have been said. It is relevant to all TVMGOC members.

#### Massive classic

The classic car movement is worth £7.2 billion to the UK economy. Research by the FBHVC covers a survey of over 15,000 classic owners in 2019.

The headlines are that the historic vehicle movement:

- pumps £7.2bn into UK coffers
- supports 34,113 jobs in 4,000 businesses
- comprises 1.5m vehicles in Britain
- has jumped by £1bn since the previous survey of four years ago

In addition it is revealed that 51% of historic vehicles are worth less than £10k, the average annual mileage is 1200, and more than £1b of foreign income comes from enthusiasts abroad buying cars and parts.

Mike Brewer, he of *Wheeler Dealers* fame, has commented on the FBHVC survey saying, "It looks like the classic car world is on the ascent, and for those worried about what will happen with classic cars in the future, I think that power by numbers in this survey is certainly going to have the halls ringing at Westminster because this industry provides so much to the economy of this country."

#### Why electric cars are relevant to classic car owners

Assumptions about our way of life have been turned upside down during the last dreadful year and many changes lie before us as Brexit, public health and climate change issues conspire to throw oil onto our road to the future.

In particular, how might climate change affect classic car owners? Are we dinosaurs in wanting to keep our cherished motors going? Should every drive in our fossil fuelled cars be a guilt trip? Will we become social pariahs?

#### There's no need to feel bad about driving our classics – the APPHVG say the future's safe

Who they? The All Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicle Group of course. Chaired by Sir Greg Knight MP, the group have vowed that classics should continue to be used on the nation's roads long after sales of internal combustion engined vehicles are outlawed from 2030. Sir Greg says. "...the contribution of historic vehicles to pollution is so small as to be almost immeasurable." He's an MP so it must be true.

*(Irony alert! Ed.)*



*Jensen enthusiast Sir Greg Knight*

Our knighted Knight continues: "The total use of all private motor cars accounts for less than 14% of all global fossil fuel emissions and is likely to fall as more electric vehicles come into use. Within that figure, classic cars are barely a blip on the scale. There are no proposals currently before Parliament to restrict the future use of historic vehicles, nor should there be. Those vehicles currently account for 0.6% of the total number of cars on the roads and are part of our heritage, which should continue to be seen and used."

Mike Brewer, also a member of APPHVG, spoke on this issue: "I can assure you that classic cars are not dinosaurs and they will always have a place on our roads. For one, the industry creates billions in revenue

for our garages, restorers etc. As we move toward electrification, we may see that classic cars will be treated more as a luxury item, and we'll have to pay for our hobby with increasing fuel costs. But the cars will always be there."

However future guilt-free classic motoring is not a given. It could come at a price, and not just in the cost of petrol. The FBHVC has reiterated their view that more needs to be done to make the use of classic cars carbon neutral, perhaps by carbon offset schemes, and that ICEs should no longer be used as of right, without consequences.

### Going green

Environmentalists have calculated that a car consumes more energy and has a greater environmental impact during manufacture than in its lifetime of use – a green car is one that's well maintained and kept on the road rather than being replaced regularly with new. The best example of this are Series Land Rovers and Defenders. It's often said that around 70% of the 7 million made are still on the road. The average life span of a modern car is around 13 years.

OK, but even with the above in mind, continuing to run old ICEs is not going to improve air quality or help reduce global warming. We could help that with carbon offset schemes. Consequently, classic vehicle owners may need to think of going electric, if not by converting ageing ICEs to electric - very expensive and not very practical for longer journeys - then when buying a new vehicle making sure it's electric. But that throws up yet more questions.

*Top Gear* magazine columnist and TV show presenter Chris Harris met up with a spokesman from the National Grid, Graeme Cooper, to ask what many of us have wondered about. If we are supposed to eventually migrate to electric vehicles, where is all the extra electricity going to come from?

Cooper had turned up in a Lotus Elise, which Harris took as a good sign that his guest wasn't going to be a born again eco-evangelist. Cooper is one of us, in that he wants to be able to run a classic car far into the future, but for everyday transport he says we need EVs, and the extra generating capacity will come "through renewables." The vast offshore windfarms being built will save the day, apparently. Being a big island gives Britain a huge advantage over many other countries in this respect.

Then Harris asked how all that wind energy will actually get to the end of EV charging leads, given that the National Grid isn't interested in building many, many thousands of charging points.



Cooper's answer isn't given, but Harris speculates that as this part of the supply chain isn't under state control, it will have to be the giant petrochemical companies who must reinvent themselves and become green electric energy suppliers. If they can't or won't do this job, then new players must emerge into the market.

EVs are on the ascendancy. In 2019, there were 2.3 million new cars registered in Britain, but only 37,850 were battery powered - or 1.6%. Demand has increased over the last year, but electric cars still only made up around 7% of new vehicles bought in the UK last month, shown in figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

There are currently 20,197 public charging points in the UK, in 12,724 locations, according to ZapMap, and the number is increasing rapidly. A growing proportion are high-powered rapid or ultra-rapid chargers. However, there is no doubt many more will be needed if millions of petrol and diesel cars are to be replaced by battery models each year.

In an accelerated push towards greater electrification Prime Minister Johnson announced a "green industrial revolution" to tackle climate change and create jobs in industries such as nuclear energy. The

government has promised £4bn but has not said in detail exactly how this will be spent. Business Secretary Alok Sharma said the £4bn was part of a broader £12bn package of public investment. It includes:

- £1.3bn to accelerate the rollout of charge points for electric vehicles in homes, streets and on motorways across England
- £582m in grants for those buying zero or ultra-low emission vehicles to make them cheaper to buy and incentivise more people to make the transition
- Nearly £500m to be spent in the next four years for the development and mass-scale production of electric vehicle batteries.

Critics say the £4bn allocated to implement the 10-point plan is far too small for the scale of the challenge. The total amount of new money announced in the package is a fraction of the projected £100bn cost of high-speed rail, HS2.

So, it seems that to keep our British MGs rolling along long-term, sooner or later we need to think EV for our daily drivers. However (there's always a caveat) the Daily Mail recently ran with this headline:

*CHILDREN PAYING THE PRICE FOR ECO-CAR SMUGGERY: As Boris Johnson aims for new cars to be electric by 2030, Congolese miners as young as 11 risk their lives for cobalt that green-tech\* relies on, for £1.50 a day. Are our cleaner roads worth their suffering?*

It is the plutocrats, businesses and foreign dealers who have massively benefited from the trade in cobalt but ending production will just worsen the miners' poverty and make families struggle even more. In all likelihood children and adults would starve to death. Such mining should be done safely by properly paid workers and the attendant cost reflected in the price of much-needed cobalt.

So, to enable us to continue to use our classic cars for the foreseeable future our wider behaviour must change. There are many ways we can offset our personal carbon emissions and the sooner we grasp this issue the better.

*\*In lithium-ion battery production Cobalt is used for boosting battery energy density and life. Large Lithium deposits found in Cornwall have been described as "globally significant".*



**A comparison chart published in Classic Car Weekly**  
According to DoT figures, in 2019, the average petrol car in the UK drove 7,400 miles—down 20% from 9,200 miles in 2002.

The RAC say diesel cars cover an average of 12,496 miles in each of their first three years. Pure battery electric cars are driven an average of 9,435 miles per year.

### Pay-per-mile

Just this week, there have been rumours that the Treasury is considering if a pay-per-mile charging system should be introduced. This notion has caused outrage in some quarters, though most classic vehicles do relatively small annual mileages. The aforementioned Sir Greg Knight has not ruled out the possibility of a pay-per-mile scheme, saying, "This change means that road pricing might be introduced in the longer term but no policy decision has been made or announced and it is just speculation for now. "Clearly, the Chancellor will, over time, see a sharp drop in revenue from fuel and will need to raise the money elsewhere."

Other technological developments could also affect the road use of historical ICE vehicles, such as changes to road systems that could be introduced for autonomous (self-driving) vehicles. In response, CCW has produced a 6-point plan, reproduced here:

**WHAT CLASSIC CAR WEEKLY IS CALLING FOR**

**CLASSICS TO BE TAXED FAIRLY IN YEARS TO COME**  
Historic vehicle owners run the risk of being taxed twice to keep their cars on the road, should proposals for pay-per-mile road pricing be made policy. Maintaining fuel duty would see motorists billed for a second time. A separate, fair tariff for cars aged 30 years and older would fit the bill – retaining VED exemption and proportional taxation on fuel, synthetic or otherwise, would maintain a level playing field.

**FAIR ACCESS TO THE UK ROAD NETWORK, REGARDLESS OF TECHNOLOGY**  
Autonomous driving initiatives on motorways and dual carriageways could make life difficult for classic car owners without exemptions because their vehicles could no longer meet contemporary standards. The Department for Transport (DfT) said that, when preparing for the use of autonomous vehicles in the UK, the needs of historic vehicles were considered in earlier calls for evidence, the FBHVC being a key stakeholder (CCW, 11 November).

**EXEMPTION FROM CITY CENTRE EMISSIONS ZONES FOR HISTORIC VEHICLES**  
Emissions zones remain a contentious issue across the UK, further split by the differing methods employed by devolved governments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in which to enforce them. Currently, London's Ultra Low Emissions Zone, which moves to the

North and South Circulars next year, maintains exemptions for historic vehicles – but not those defined by the FBHVC/FIVA 30-year cut-off. The FBHVC maintains that access to city-based clean air zones will have to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. COVID has seen the postponement of many clean air zones; CCW calls for local authorities not to target historic in revived proposals in a bid to recoup lost funds.

**SMART MOTORWAYS TO HAVE EMERGENCY ESCAPE AREAS FOR ALL VEHICLES**  
The construction of smart motorways was halted by safety reviews earlier in the year after people in broken down vehicles were killed in live lines. March's strategic roads update, published by the DfT, decided that 'refuge' or 'escape' areas were to be built in all smart motorways currently under construction – and that these areas, which take cars out of the flow of traffic, were to be built no more than three quarters of a mile apart. A report from the RAC recently suggested that 138 miles of smart motorway were to be built with refuge areas between 1.04 and 1.39 miles apart; given the vulnerability of historic, many of which lack hazard warning lights, this distance is unacceptable. CCW called upon Highways England to stop converting existing hard shoulders into smart motorway lanes back in February; we would like this to be maintained and, at the very least, for refuge areas where this isn't possible to be an absolute maximum of three-quarters of a mile apart, as previously laid out by the DfT.

**FAIRLY PRICED FUEL**  
Concerns remain as to the number of petrol stations that will still be available after 2030 and the type of fuel that will be available. The FBHVC has advocated the use of low-ethanol, high-octane E5 as the most readily compatible with historic fuel systems although oil companies and car manufacturers (most recently Porsche) have been engaged with the development of synthetic fuel technology. CCW wants E5 to be available at all remaining forecourts after 2030 and for it not to be taxed disproportionately in comparison to the electricity used to re-charge the batteries of electric vehicles or the hydrogen employed to replenish cars' fuel cells.

**HISTORIC VEHICLES TO BE EXEMPTED FROM SCRAPPAGE SCHEMES**  
Despite pressure from the motor industry, the government has not backed a second Scrappage Scheme after the 2009 initiative ended. A petition by *Classic Car Weekly's* sister title, *Practical Classics*, launched in 2017, attracted more than 14,000 signatures. Preservation is the name of the game here – power is restored to clubs and enthusiasts by making cars aged 30 and older ineligible for trade-ins under scrappage schemes backed by either manufacturers or the government. We'd also ask for greater liaison between dealerships and clubs where cars on the cusp of classic status might get traded in – saving as many modern classics in waiting from the crusher as possible where even parts trading is strictly prohibited.

As mentioned before, this is all food for thought for us classic car owners.

### Lockdown drives

If you have classic car insurance you can drive your car during lockdown. Scaremongering on social media, picked up by some news organisations best worth avoiding, has suggested that insurers wouldn't pay out for non-essential drives in the event of an accident. The Association of British Insurers recently assured Classic Car Weekly that owners who use their cars for non-essential trips would not have their insurance voided. ABI are quoted as saying, "The Government has advised against all but essential travel. Motor Insurers continue to cover those using their car for commuting to work or for volunteering...but if you use your car for non-essential travel, you will *not* risk invalidating your car insurance." (*Ed's italics*)

### Brake fluid

A letter in *Enjoying MG* is from an RV8 owner, who after climbing Italy's Stelvio Pass, had brake failure on the way down. This was due to overheating old brake fluid, and MGOC's technical guru Roger Parker reminds everyone that for a variety of reasons brake fluid should be changed every two years.

## Face masks



Even with the prospect of a vaccine on the horizon we'll all be wearing face masks for some time to come. Dragonfly who produce rally plaques (I see they are still using our P&P plaque as an example design) are diversifying into high quality face masks with embroidered club or marque logos. The minimum order is 10 but they haven't yet got back to me with a price yet.



If there is enough interest, I can order a some with an MG logo. Please get back to me if you'd like one. See: <https://www.dragonflyrally.co.uk/branded-face-masks/>



## An MG owner's heartfelt observation

*As hundreds of Trump supporters demonstrate their anger at his election defeat on the streets of Washington and clash with Biden supporters who plastered signs reading "Loser" and "Failure" on fences around the White House, this was posted in the MGA Fan Club Facebook group by a Californian resident Evan Ray. It is worth sharing, not just because it so eloquently encapsulates one of the many pleasures of classic car ownership, but also read it with the current bitter political divisions in American society in mind. Evan writes:*

I know - don't mix politics with MGA's but hear me out. Anyone who has owned one of these wonderful cars for more than 6 months knows exactly what I'm talking about. I know with 97.6% certainty that just because I own this car, people who have a completely different political viewpoint from me will actually share the fondest memories and have the friendliest conversations with me. MGA's, and I'm guessing many other classic cars, create a natural conversation where one didn't exist before. I've said to my wife that if we could give everyone an MGA and a dog, there would be no more fighting between the tribes.

I love how politics don't matter when I'm talking about my red car. I love how it makes people smile and often brings back these deep-felt memories. I often drive my car as a daily driver (weather permitting, and it permits a lot in San Diego). Today I drove to three different stores to get groceries and was stopped five different times by people who felt compelled to have a conversation about my red car. Some conversations were less than two minutes, while some were as long as fifteen.

A young man of about 25 asked if he could take a photo of the car and I said sure. Then I asked if he would like to sit in it and get a picture. He said, "Are you serious?! I'm going to send this picture to my dad and tell him I just bought it." We both laughed and he thanked me over and over.

And it was all thanks to a 60-year-old little red car. Some people like to identify as whatever their tribe is. I like to identify as the steward of a 1960 MGA.



### Another red MG to cheer us up

A father in India built a miniature vintage car for his six-year-old daughter.

Javed Sheikh and grandfather Hasan built the tiny MG for daughter Angelina and her younger sibling to take for a spin.

Javed is a mechanic by trade and built the tiny vehicle from used car parts over a four-month period.



### Brief news from down under

I received a response to a Facebook post from former club members Julie and Mike Wright in Australia. They are well and have just emerged from a 112-day lockdown so can't wait to be able to travel again.

### The astonishing story of the Jerrycan

If you fancy something to read, what better than the history of the Jerrycan? No, seriously! Hagerty, they of insurance fame, have produced a surprisingly interesting article on the topic. Read how Hitler made mastery of fuel transportation a priority, why the Jerrycan was so much better than the British 'flimsy', and how the Nazi design was copied the world over and became "the gold standard of liquid transport." See:

[https://www.hagerty.co.uk/articles/the-astonishing-story-of-the-jerrycan/?utm\\_source=SFMC&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=20\\_November\\_14\\_UKNews\\_Weekend+-+20201112\\_095839](https://www.hagerty.co.uk/articles/the-astonishing-story-of-the-jerrycan/?utm_source=SFMC&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20_November_14_UKNews_Weekend+-+20201112_095839)



## The story of my MG Midget 1500 Pt 1

New member Nigel S. was asked at our club Zoom meeting to write about his car. It's a very impressive and detailed tale, presented in two parts.

After reading this account we look forward to seeing it in the flesh.

The story begins for me back in June 2001, when I travelled down to Truro from Plymouth to view, purchase and collect my MG Midget. Having always been a keen admirer of old classic cars and enjoyed working on the electrical and mechanical side to fix them, a faithful Haynes Manual kept me on the straight&narrow, and gave me the confidence to tackle jobs that would otherwise have seemed far too daunting! I had previously owned an F-reg. Morris Minor 1000 saloon in smoke-grey-blue and a B-reg. '1984 Jaguar Sovereign 4.2 litre Auto but had never owned an open 'rag-top' sports car. A friend of mine introduced me to a friend of his who owned a chrome-bumpered Midget, and I was taken-out in it one day. I must admit I was smitten, and after that I kept an eye out in the local motoring publications and soon saw a few prospective purchases. This one appeared to be in reasonable condition and one of the best out of the ones on offer. I contacted a friend, who travelled down with me so he could drive my car back, and took a tow rope just in case!

The car had been purchased by a father for his daughter and had been given two replacement door skins and a rather amateur 'flash-over' re-spray in British Racing Green on top of the existing lighter, more lime green colour. (The paint has since badly crazed and blistered on the bonnet and boot in particular and could do with a total 'bare metal' re-spray, preferably in 2 pack paint).

It was in the grounds of a small farm-holding and had clearly not been used for some time. The car started, and my friend followed closely behind me. A few miles down the road the engine started spluttering and

there was an over-powering smell of petrol! I pulled over, lifted the bonnet and discovered the floats must have seized on the carbs., resulting in them completely flooding, as you could see the petrol had been pouring from the top of the float chambers. There was nothing else for it but to get the tow rope out!

My local garage freed the floats and replaced the jets, but when I was able to take the car out on a longer journey the engine over-heated to such a degree that I had to stop and get it trailered home. I flushed out the cooling system, but the over-heating persisted. Then I removed the cylinder head and had it pressure tested, re-skimmed and converted to hard valve seats for unleaded petrol. I was still plagued with over-heating problems and replaced the cylinder head gasket three times before deciding to change the washers on the head bolts, and that did the trick! They had obviously not been of the 'anti-compression' variety, meaning the head didn't seal properly.



*Before*



*After*

After that I concentrated on the scruffy interior, managing to find a local classic car upholsterer. I bought a complete trim, door card and seat cover set in light brown 'Autumn Leaf' to match the existing, and a new carpet set in black. I got the upholsterer to strip and renew the foam cushioning and seat covers. The driver's seat frame was broken and required welding to fix. I also stripped out the dashboard, totally removing all the instrument dials & switches, then rubbing it down, back to bare metal, before re-priming and re-spraying with black 'crinkle paint' for an original effect. The results transformed the interior, and I also took the 'surface rusty' floor pans on either side back to bare metal and re-painted in Hammerite 'dark green' (a close match to the exterior) whilst I still had the seats out. I then replaced all four wheel cylinders, brake pads and shoes, and put replacement rubber seals into the leaking clutch master cylinder.

I ran the car for a while at weekends, but there was a problem with the reverse gear. I first took the cheaper option and bought a second-hand gearbox. Rigging up a scaffold pole with block & tackle across my mother's garage, I removed the engine and gearbox out of the car together. I separated them and replaced the clutch and thrust bearing at the same time as the gearbox. I had seen and purchased a spare engine from the upholsterer which had come out of a Triumph Spitfire. It was an identical Triumph 1500 engine, the only difference being the two Spitfire engine mounts and thermostat cover, all of which could be replaced and were designed to be inter-changeable for both models.



As my existing engine left unwelcome oil patches on the garage floor, I decided to completely strip the donor engine and replace the seals and gaskets to ensure an oil-tight unit. After spending some time dressing the exterior of the engine and re-painting it, both engine and gearbox were re-united using new nuts, bolts and washers. Then I turned my attention to the open engine bay, removing years of gunge, oil and rust and finally re-painting (by brush for convenience) the areas I could reach. I would like to have re-sprayed for a better finish, but compromises have to be made with the extra cost and effort that would have involved. I also had the radiator 're-cored' by a local engineering company due to a slight leak.



The engine bay was transformed and looked fantastic. I had also gone to the trouble of removing rust, re-painting and lacquering (where appropriate) the rocker cover and air filter box, heater box, wiper motor and various clips, covers and copper brake pipes, and replacing worn decals. Sadly, the second-hand gearbox (which admittedly only cost me £50) had a very noisy first gear, sounding like a can of nails being rotated! There was only one other option: a reconditioned gearbox. I duly ordered one and replaced it when it arrived.

I also started rubbing the original Rostyle wheels back to bare metal and re-spraying in their original silver and black, priming, then using Hammerite. I also had the entire exhaust system replaced with stainless steel, apart from the original exhaust cast iron manifold. The fuel tank also required replacing, which I had done by a local classic car garage, then I cleaned and re-painted the underside of the car, finishing off with black 'stone chip.'

*Nigel S.*

**In Part 2 next month, we find out what happens after Nigel consigns the Midget into storage for ten years.**

**Tales of everyday country folk  
John and Vanessa:  
you really couldn't make this up.**

A week or so ago, my daughter Vanessa asked me if she could borrow my Jump Leads. "Of course daughter dear," I replied. "Would you like some help?" So, the pair of us set off on the two drizzly mile drive up the road to Doddycross in order to revive the beleaguered vehicle.

It turned out to be her partner Joe's Fiat Scudo van. I recommended that she should put her newly acquired Freelander bumper to bumper with the Scudo, whilst I attempted to find the van's internal bonnet lock, to no avail. This is a good start I thought.

"Any ideas?" I asked her. "Of course not, Daddy, I'm a girl, and I'm blonde, but I do have this!" She brandished her Smartphone. With a few deft strokes and rapid taps she had the answer, and the bonnet popped.

Try as we might we could not find anything in the engine bay that vaguely resembled a battery. Once again she consulted her Smartphone 'genie'. 'Under the pedals', came the reply, plus a mini video for the illiterate. Sure enough, there it was. Marvellous. By now the rain had gone up a couple of gears, so we upped our game a bit. "Suggest you pop the bonnet on the Freelander, I think the leads will just reach".

"Daddy, I have only had this car four days and again, I have no idea where the catch is".

By this time Vanessa was multi-tasking, which she is good at, and Google came up trumps yet again, although by this time it was working under water and probably getting fed up with a couple of idiots.

Once I lifted the Land Rover bonnet, the engine appeared to be housed under a sea of black cardboard. Vanessa's finger was already poised, when I suddenly noticed a hairline crack in the cardboard underneath the wiper assembly. I levered it up with a screwdriver and Bingo! One gleaming battery.

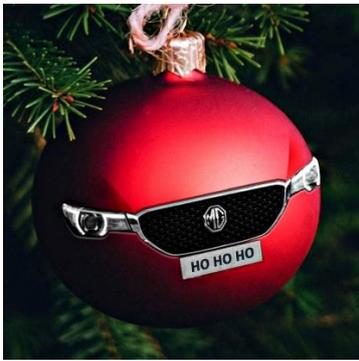
We managed the next evolution unaided, and the van started easily. Both of us took a long time to dry out, but the gin and tonic helped!

*John H.*



Received entries	From
<i>When Fred said he was buying a new four-seater for the lounge this was not what his wife expected.</i>	John I.
<i>When Bill converted the garage into a lounge he forgot something.</i>	John I.
<i>The Classic look in the lounge was not what the wife expected.</i>	John I.
<i>For when you can't be bothered to get up and walk to the kitchen for a snack.</i>	Howard
<i>For when there's nothing on the telly</i>	Howard
<i>It's amazing what they can get into a mini Kinder egg these days!</i>	Howard
<i>Sitting room only!</i>	Richard M.
<i>I am not sure that is what the Government had in mind when it said that "Over 50's should be shielding at home".</i>	Gavin
<i>"John, you did well to finish this flat packed Classic Mini during lock down. Have you given any thought to getting it out of my living room?"</i>	John H.
<i>Is it a mini bar?</i>	Roger
<i>Whilst the table and chairs were being French polished in the garage, there was no other option but to bring their pride and joy inside.</i>	Alan C.
<i>This arrangement worked well, up until the new carpet arrived. Then he was no longer allowed to drive across it.</i>	Alan C.
<i>Q: How many minis can you get in the living room? A: One until SWMBO* returns. (* She Who Must Be Obeyed – I had to look that up – Ed!)</i>	Richard M.
<i>Housebuilders report that as buyers fall out of love with the ubiquitous kitchen/diner there is a new trend emerging, that of the lounge/garage. This arrangement is set to grow in popularity as more and more homeowners take delivery of electric cars that need to be kept permanently plugged in at the wall.</i>	Tim P.
<i>"Yes Mildred, I agree it's mess, but Bill's turning it into a coffee table at the weekend."</i>	Douglas
<i>"Damned kids, never put their toys away."</i>	Douglas
<i>"I told Bill I wanted a mini for Christmas. I meant a skirt, not this".</i>	Douglas
<i>"The trainee tooth fairy got it wrong again."</i>	Douglas
<i>Watching Minnie Driver on the TV</i>	Jan P.
<i>"Bill, I know you said you consider her another member of the family, but this is taking things too far!"</i>	Nigel S.
<i>Prospective house purchaser to Estate Agent; "When you said off-street parking and that you'd arranged it 'in house,' I wasn't expecting this!!"</i>	Nigel S.
<i>After a minor indiscretion, the Mini had to sit in the corner as it couldn't get on the naughty step.</i>	Ade
<i>The old adage- not in my back yard- does not apply to the timeless mini.</i>	Keat
<i>I told you that you should move the car out of the garage before they started work on the extension.</i>	John N.
<i>As Andrew was last month's winner his submissions are not eligible but here they are, commended by the Editor: Howard was supposed to produce "60 Minute Makeover", not "60s Mini Makeover". New TV prototype brings Motoring realism to front room. She wanted a Mini bar for the lounge.</i>	

**And the winner of last month's cliff-hanger chosen by Andrew is John I.  
Well done (he's a bit too good at this!) John will choose next month's winner**



Here's next month's photo that requires a caption (no, not the MG bauble!). Your entries by email to: [mediatvmgoc@gmail.com](mailto:mediatvmgoc@gmail.com)



 **And finally... car maintenance** 



PRO TIP:  
To drain all the oil, squeeze the car real good.



"Well, the car's computer says it's YOU who won't start, runs rough, and back fires on acceleration."



How to top up wiper fluid.