



JUNE 2015

Here we go for another club year which began with the AGM on 16th April. Geoff opened with his address which gave the current situation of the club and mention of the previous year's activities. Membership is slightly down on last year with 25 paid up at that date. He reminded those present that the AGM is the usual marker where those who haven't paid the year's subs are deemed to have left the club.

Sheila's financial report was accepted with no questions asked. The committee, as stated in the last magazine stood down with, Richard, Derek and Christine standing for re-election. Mark and Mandy Rees were nominated and seconded by John and Sandra Barton. Mandy has taken on the Treasurer's job but as I write I don't know who has taken on the Secretary's job. Lloyd, Geoff, Sheila and Graham stood down.

The evening was rounded off with the usual pie & peas supper.

We wish the new committee a happy and successful time in office and look forward to another good year with lots of great times together.

So now it's fling back the hood, splash on the sun cream, pack up the picnic and off we go. But we've already been to:

Shildon Railway Museum

We hoped for a nice day and we had one. 22 March was the planned run to the Shildon Railway Museum. The run was a little fragmented with some of us finding it easier to go straight there rather than go to Yarm and then come back past our front doors again en route to Shildon.

In all I think ten cars arrived at the station. First two to arrive were Mark & Mandy in their 'F' and Sheila and me in our Magnette having gone in convoy. Next up were Ian

& Jackie in their 'B'. The rest, who came in Derek's convoy used the other car park to enjoy a sunny walk along the footpath to the museum building.



First stop, was the coffee shop for a sit and natter. It was lovely to have an impromptu visit from George & Anne Burrell, who, having heard we were going to be there, decided to come along to say hello. For those who might not remember them, they were lovely supportive members of the club until a few years ago when it became geographically more practical for them to attend the Durham Branch.

As ever, there was a wonderful display of machinery to be inspected. Highly polished engines and rolling stock. The royal carriages of Queen Vic are a glimpse of how the other half used to live (and still do). A stark contrast to the Third Class 'boxes' the ordinary people had to put up with. When tummies rumbled, there was some pretty good food to be tackled as lunch time came round. A stroll in the sunshine helped stretch the legs of those who fancied it and then it was a sunny ride home.

Another good day was had be all.

G.A.



Pictures by Owen.

We've also been to:

The Killhope Wheel

The week before had been quite good weather-wise and Monday in our back garden was red hot but on Sunday 19th April it was freezing. Seven cars met at Yarm station and we all braced ourselves against Arctic conditions as we waited to see if any latecomers would arrive. Upon realising we were 'it' at 10.20, Mark flexed his new-committee man muscles and led the way towards Weardale.



A few hundred yards up the road, the first tell-tale sign of the weather getting worse showed itself with a very light fret landing on the windscreens. After a few minutes it stopped but the rest of the journey was interspersed with the same, some heavier, some lighter. But we weren't downhearted, we plodded on regardless, although we wished that the beautiful countryside could be highlighted with a little – or preferably a lot – of sunshine.



A coffee stop at Stanhope was a welcome break with a little refreshment and a good

chat before setting off again for the last few miles to Killhope Mine. The A689 at that point is stunningly beautiful and as we approached the mine the sun peeped through the clouds as if to welcome us. Unfortunately it didn't last and did nothing at all to lift the temperature. We all parked up and made our way to the reception centre and paid for admittance. From there we were free to please ourselves to wander where we liked. So it was off to the café for more food and drink.

Most opted for the guided tour of the mine which was scheduled to start at 3.30 but others, me include, had done it before and considering the long journey home decided to take to the road again. I'm told that the mine experience was enjoyed by those who took part.

After about 2 miles down the road – the sun had decided to make frequent but brief appearances by then – I decided to be brave and put the hood down, so it was, reach for the scarf, gloves and cap, throw the hood back and do what MGs are made for. I got as far as Sedgefield before the sky turned fifty shades of grey darker and fifty degrees of temperature colder but I braved the last few miles anyway which made getting into a warm house with my tea on the table all the more welcome.

A good day out, with thanks to all who were instrumental in the planning and Mark for leading at short notice.

Pics by Owen.

G.A.



A Rose by any other Name

It seems that you can hardly ever open a motoring magazine nowadays without reading about what exactly is meant by "classic" cars. The discussions go on and on. To some they are anything old; to others they are only posh cars and to the rest it seems to be a vague idea of anything that didn't just come out of the showroom yesterday.

When I first got into the old car scene in 1972 with a 1935 Morris Eight, I believed I'd got myself a Vintage car. I was soon put in my place by the owners of true vintage cars and told that mine was merely POST Vintage. I was a little deflated I must admit. Post Vintage didn't seem half as grand as Vintage. I don't remember the term "Classic" being used in those days, although I might be mistaken.

When I decided to find out why my humble little Morris had to suffer the indignity of being only "Post" I found that there were clearly defined classes of old cars.

Veteran, sometimes called Edwardian = Anything built up to end of December 1919. (*Edward VII popped his royal clogs in 1910 but the class lasted till the end of WW1*)

Vintage = 1919 – 1930

Post Vintage = 1930 – 1945

Anything after that was merely "getting on a bit". And that's where things get a bit hazy.

I've heard people argue that "Classic" cars are anything out of the ordinary whether because of age or rarity. So should a 2014 limited edition Summatorother which is not likely to be seen in Tesco's car park be allowed onto a show field because you're not likely to see one anywhere else? Or should it have to wait till it's very old? I don't know the answer but I bet you have an opinion.

I must admit I get a little bit more dismayed every season when I see *modern* cars at "Classic" car shows. It has to be that way of course, time is marching on and the people who appreciated the likes of my pre-war Morris are a little thin on the ground today. In fact very thin on the ground. The viewing public, average age about 30 – 50 I guess, don't remember cars much before the 70s so naturally that is where their interest lies.

But that doesn't answer the question, "What is a Classic?" The word itself is misleading don't you think? Classic means posh doesn't it? Or is it exclusive? It's the same with music; anything that doesn't come under the banner of Pop or Popular is often called "Classical" but Classical music is really a term to cover a short period of style. Mozart was a classical composer but Tchaikovsky wasn't.

So is a classic car a posh car of any age or a rare car of any age or exclusively an old car. Then, there's another question; how old is an "Old" car??????????????



TWO WHEELED STAN



MEMORIES by Stan Davison

In 1960 I had a BSA Bantam 175, which I enjoyed riding for several years before moving onto a car.

In 2003 a very good friend of mine from our local M.G. club passed away. I purchased his 1966 BSA 250cc C15 in the same colour. Not only that, but my first son was born in that year, and we won the world cup (a very good year it seems).

The C15 is now an ongoing restoration project. I have got it in road-worthy condition, and enjoy riding it on a regular basis.

It's a pleasure to ride and brings back a lot of fond memories.

I joined the BSA owners club in 2004 and receive the STAR which I look forward to receiving every month. I rode my bike to a local show in Redcar, Cleveland and met up with more BSA enthusiasts and other makes.

As I rode into the show and parked up with other bikes to be shown, a friend of mine who I had not seen for twelve years parked right next to me with a

1962 B.S.A C15 in red which he had just re-built; we had a fab day, the final highlight of the day was after the event, riding away with about twenty classic motor bikes and a terrific sound.

80 Not Out

We've all done it; sat with dry mouth, jangling nerves, waiting for the stern looking man sitting next to us to sniff disapprovingly at the honest mistake we've just made. Heart pounding, we realise the next thing we're going to be asked to do could go disastrously wrong and the whole thing will have been a waste of time and money.

The driving test.

It's 80 years since it was introduced. Generations have had to go through it, some only once, some many more times. It was on June 1 1935 that it became compulsory but, in a bid to ease the load, a voluntary test was introduced in the previous March. Perhaps not surprisingly, there weren't many volunteers but history was made on

March 16 when a Mr. Beene (no, not that one!!) was the first Briton to sit the test. It cost him 7/6d, (37.5p) which doesn't sound much today but was a whole lot of money then.

Varying legislations had been sneaking into the system over the years since it became clear that the motor car was here to stay, so it's not surprising that a compulsory test would happen sooner or later. Existing motorists were exempt.

In 1934 Parliament passed a Road Traffic Act to try and address the spiralling number of motoring accidents which were blighting the lives of ordinary people. In that year, 7,000 people had died on the roads and nearly twice as many had been seriously injured. Belisha beacons were introduced on pedestrian crossings and the 30mph speed limit in built up areas which had been relaxed was re-introduced.

Watching those TV programmes which follow ambulance and police crews round the roads it's easy to think that things have never been so bad as they are now as we see complete idiots doing completely idiotic things, but in the early 30s there was about one million cars on British roads and in 1934, as mentioned above, there were 7,000 fatalities; but in 2013, there were 1,200 fatalities with ten times the number of cars. Still 1,200 too many of course but you get the picture. Modern developments in road, lighting and car technology have done a lot to make things better. What we need now is some way of curbing the joy-riding youth in the super-powered car he cannot control and things will be a lot better.

Just imagine how things must have been in those days. Candle powered headlights, inefficient brakes. (some cars then only had rear brakes as standard – how did they manage emergency stops?). One windscreen wiper – often hand operated, and no effective demisting. More often than not, only poor gas lighting on the streets, or none at all.

A film issued in 1935 for would-be test candidates gives some useful advice such as "Don't flick your cigarette ash out of the window, it might be confused for a hand signal." and "It's pure selfishness to drive down the crown of the road." and for the Turn in the Road. "Stick to the road rather than the pavement. It looks funny I know but instructors don't appreciate such humour."

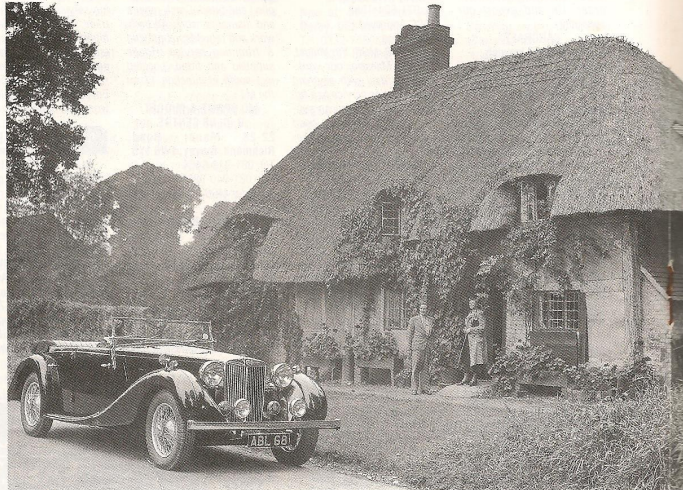
Wonder what they will be driving in another eighty years?

Over the page are some pre-war ads showing beautiful early MGs in some lovely settings. Wonder how the places look today.

PRE-WAR PUBLICITY



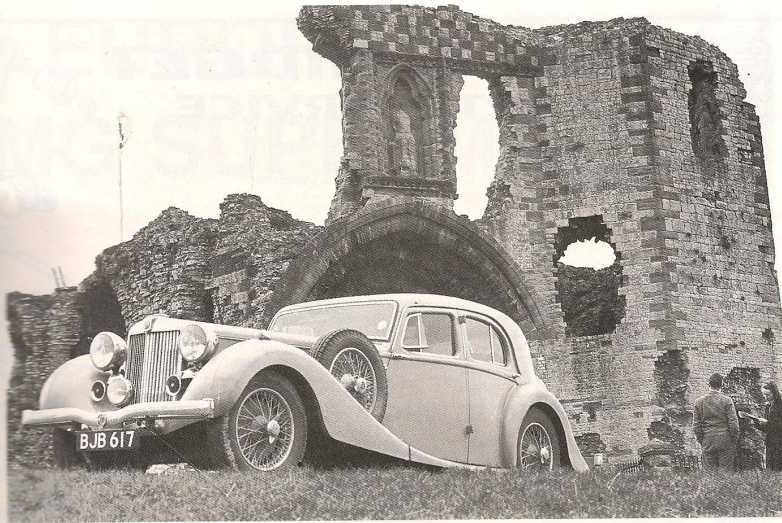
The MG advertising department did not have far to go in their search for a near perfect location in which to display their latest product. Here a VA saloon is set against the thatched Barley Mow Inn – does anyone know the village? Note the ideal composition achieved by balancing the subject in mid picture by use of the model in the foreground. Also note the war-time headlamp cover on the nearside.



Clifton Hampden by the side of the Thames is the setting for the publicity photograph of the SA Tourer on a Charlesworth special body. Again much use is made of the thatched cottage while models in the doorway lend a family atmosphere to the scene.

Top: VA Saloon. Look closely and you'll see a wartime headlamp cowl fitted to the nearside headlamp.

Bottom: SA Charlesworth special.



A new 2.6 litre WA selling for £450 was taken to Denburgh Castle for this powerful photograph that demonstrated the 'grace, space and pace' lines of the car.



Readers will no doubt correct us if we are wrong as the scene will no doubt look much different today, but nevertheless shows an SA Tickford Drophead Coupé at, possibly, Banbury Cross. Note the local means of transport in the background.

June 1991 33

Top: 2.6 WA Saloon in a rather majestic setting.

Bottom: Tickford bodied SA at Banbury Cross. (Can't see a fine lady on a white horse though!).

The Drip

I was a little disappointed to find that when I pressed the Magnette into service ready for the run to Shildon Railway Museum, it decided to reward my faith in it by presenting me with an incontinent radiator. I noticed the ominous drip from the front end when it stood on the drive and decided to investigate. It wasn't a bad drip, so I thought a dose of Radweld should do the trick, so it was off to Halford's to get some. I followed the instructions to the letter and confidently closed the bonnet.

Next day, I use the car for a short run and as I parked up on the drive once again, the same ominous drip caught my eye. Radweld doesn't always work! I remembered a spare radiator which had been lurking in my loft for years and decided to inspect it. Taking it out of the cattle feed bag it had been stored in, my heart sank when I realised just how grotty it looked. It wasn't bent or twisted or anything like that but it must have come off some pretty rough car at some time. However, undaunted, I decided to take it to be pressure tested to see just how many places it would leak from. Imagine my surprise when it passed as sound. The man at Motorcool was surprised too and told me I should buy a lottery ticket as my luck seemed to be in. So it goes to show you can't judge a book.....as they say. It's now on the car, and so far is giving good service although with elderly cars, it never pays to get too cocky. The leaky one will be put in the cattle feed bag and put into the loft and at some time in the future I'll get it repaired as a standby. Except I probably won't and if the current one ever fails I'll be caught out.



MG Among the Best

A feather in the cap for MG! Auto Express magazine's Driver Power Survey has revealed that the MG3 is the tenth best new car to own in the UK according to an article I recently read. While the MG6 is hailed as one of the best handling cars on the market.

Nice to know that MG still has what it takes but sad to remember that it isn't made on these shores any more.

Turn over for Stan's Archive offering of Ken Smith's run from a few years ago as written by Roger.

~~MAY 2015~~ Ken Smith's Mystery run.



The weather forecast was for rain later so I decided to take the GT although the roadster was now taxed, serviced and polished after its long winter S.O.R.N sojourn.

Although some members set off from Yarm Station, most people opted to assemble in Stokesley car park. So when the others arrived, led by Gywn in his sparkling new red Midget, we set off from there, led by Ken and Barbara who'd organised the whole day.

We travelled a short distance down the A19 before disappearing off into the undergrowth near Over Silton. and from there we headed vaguely south along some very narrow and windy lanes. We drove through some lovely villages and though hedgerows alive with red campion, stitchwort and masses of other spring flowers, and then, suddenly, we came across a flock of peacocks!

There must have been half a dozen of them – a magnificent sight.

Next came our coffee stop. We emerged from one of the many side roads into Stillington village and parked at "Pond Cottage Antiques" where Ken had



organised complimentary coffee and bickies. In the doorway sat a superb pale blue "Bugatti" which on closer examination displayed a curiously distinctive MGB parentage. We browsed through the bric-a-brac and also the owner's superb collection of motoring memorabilia sipping hot coffee and deciding what to buy.

There's not much spare space in an MG

especially when it's full of picnic goodies but everybody seemed to have bought something and managed to stow it away.

After tearing Stan away from Naomi Campbell resplendent in her AA uniform we set off again.

Next stop – destination. Now this really was a special surprise. We arrived in Gilling East and stopped at the Old Schoolhouse - now the headquarters of the local model engineering society. Not only did they allow us to picnic in their grassy car park but also they'd put on a display of miniature steam trains for us.



Mixed-gauge railway lines ran all round our picnic site and, as we ate, we could watch the small steam locomotives pulling little passenger-carrying trains to and fro. Absolute heaven!

After a typical TVMGOC gourmet picnic lunch we all managed to have a ride on the trains although, when faced with hauling 3 or 4 well-fed club members, at least one of the little locos retired hurt and out of steam!



We enjoyed each other's company, the weather remained hot – I should have christened the roadster- and we had a really memorable day out.

Very well done Ken and Barbara thanks for super day.

Rog

Police Officer to motorist: "May I have your name , sir?"

Motorist: "Certainly, Officer, it's Digby de Vere Beaumaris Pilkington-Smythe Carruthers-ffoulkes".

Officer (closing notebook): "I see, sir. Dón't let me catch you speeding again, now".



Bobby Shaftoe 2015



It had been a while since we had done a Durham Club run, and having just had to cancel a long holiday in Italy the car was certainly ready for an outing, so we decided to give it a go.

The start was bright and early from Beamish Hall, so it meant an early start. Stan and Anne called at about a quarter to eight and we set off in convoy. All main roads to get there, A19, A1 etc and we arrived in good time. There were about 50 cars altogether, mostly MG's but a smattering of other makes (including a Reliant Robin!). After signing in and sampling the coffee and biscuits we mingled and came across some friendly faces – Stewart Keeys, George and Anne Burrell and Brian and Jill Rainford. The club was well represented with Lloyd and Marjorie, John and Carol Mitchel, Ian and Jackie Fraser, and Bob and Karen (apologies if I have left anyone out).

The first half of the run took us up Weardale and then over the top and down into Teesdale. This is a really spectacular road and well worth another visit. The halfway halt was in Middleton in Teesdale. Parking was limited but we managed to find a slot conveniently near to a picnic table. The return took us down Teesdale to Staindrop and then back up the A68 to Beamish.

The weather was kind to us all day and we were back in time to see prizes given out (Bob and Karen got a trophy for best modern MG). Durham club hospitality was great as usual and we had an uneventful drive home. It was surprise to see us on the front cover of Durham's magazine (picture above) but then we realised that the shot covers three ages of MG from the 30's to the 90's.

Certainly one to put in the calendar for next year.

John & Sandra

As They Were.

These days we jump into our car, turn the key and expect it to start. It usually does and we take it for granted. I've just read a book about life at about the turn of the 19th century. Most of it isn't of interest to a motoring magazine but a couple of pieces

caught my eye.

Mrs. Koosens, a lady wealthy enough to own a car in 1895 kept a diary and the following is an extract:

- Nov 23** Took train to Lee and tried to make our motor work; couldn't. Came home at five.
- Nov 24** Awfully cold; played with our motor – no result.
- Nov 25** After lunch saw our motor, but didn't get it out of shed.
- Nov 26** Drove to Lee and took Smith and Penning (engineers). Penning spent the day on his back without results.
- Nov 30** Motor went with benzoline for first time. Awfully pleased.
- Dec 2** Waiting for new oil
- Dec 9** Drove to Lee at ten. Motor sparked at once and went well. After lunch started for home in motorcar; came round by Fareham; had lovely drive; police spotted us; awful crowd followed us at Cosham; had to beat them off with umbrella.
- Dec 10** Policeman called at 10.30, took our names re driving through Fareham without red flag ahead.
- Dec 27** Frightened an unattended horse attached to a milk cart which bolted and sent milk cans flying in all directions
- Jan 4** Lost nut off air valve. Pushed home.

With all that going on, you'd think it was easier to use pedal power. But not if you were a lady! The following appeared in the ladies' magazine *Home Companion* in 1885 warning the readers of the moral danger they were exposing themselves to:

"The mere act of riding a bicycle is not in itself sinful and if it is the only way of reaching church on a Sunday it may be excusable. On the other hand, if walking or riding in the usual way is discarded for the sake of the exercise or exhilaration bicycle riding affords, it is clearly wrong."

So there you are, Take your life in your hands by driving a dodgy, smelly car in the 1890s or risk your mortal soul by pedalling to anywhere but church in the 1880s. Wonder what they would say if they could see us now?

Club run to Tanfield Railway on Sunday 17th May

On a bright but cold Sunday morning 8 cars and their drivers/passengers met at Yarm Station for the usual 10am start. Leaving the station we turned left and followed the well driven B1264 turning right on to the A67 eventually joining the A167 at the Darlington Blackwell roundabout; we kept on this road passing by Newton Aycliffe, Rushyford, Spennymoor and the outskirts of Durham until we took the A691 to Lanchester. Here we took the right junction on to the A6076 through Annfield Plain and Stanley until we reached Tanfield Railway at 11.45am having covered 50 miles.

The main thing that struck me was how the countryside of County Durham has really changed from one of pits and pit villages to lovely landscaped countryside, if you didn't know you could easily be in the Dales or a similar area, it is so beautiful.



The Tanfield Railway is a straight up and down run which follows a beautiful walkway through the woods, valleys and fields at a nice leisurely pace, if you want you can get on and off along the route all day taking in the countryside. Some of us decided to have lunch on arrival whilst others joined the train; Oily Hands announced he was taking over my job of lowering the tone but he did look professional armed with his tripod and video.

Happy motoring
Geoff & Kath

Memories of an Older Driver

Writing about the anniversary of the compulsory driving test made me think of the older people I have known who pre-dated the time and never had to go through one. One such person was my Uncle Charlie. Born in 1894 he held a licence many years before the idea of a driving test was even considered. He was riding motor bikes from about 1920. It was 1956 when he bought his first car, a lovely blue Austin A30.

Applying his knowledge of 2 wheeled transport to that of 4 wheeled must have been something of a challenge, at least at first. I must say though he had many happy carefree years motoring before things began to be a problem –for him and everyone else on the road.

My earliest memories of being in a car with him was a little later – about 1959 when by now the little A30 had been replaced by a brand new A35 the previous year. The roads were relatively quiet in 1959 which was just as well. Parking was something which never fazed him. Just get somewhere near the kerb and get out! Red lights too were no problem. Pull up if they say so but no need to wait for the green to show if the road was empty! Actually I'm being a little unfair, he was nearer to 80 when he adopted this method. He complained bitterly about people undertaking him on the left. It was only when he was spied driving down the crown of the road that we began to realise why they did it.

Uncle Charlie lived in a little terraced house in Middlesbrough and, being a very careful car owner wouldn't consider leaving the little Austin out overnight so had the back yard wall knocked down and a garage built. The only problem was that a little garage squeezed into a little back yard accessible only by making a one hundred point back 'n' forth shunt to turn the car 90 degrees from the narrow back alley into the garage played havoc with the clutch, not to mention the lovely gleaming chrome of the bumpers as they met with the brick walls of the back yards opposite several times as he got older.

When Uncle Charlie died peacefully at home in 1976, I bought the much loved little Austin from my Auntie. Heart in mouth I tackled the hundred point back 'n' forth shunt to extricate it from its garage into the back alley and eventually onto the road. I was expecting it to sound sweet as my Uncle was a fastidious owner who changed points and plugs regularly, far more regularly than would ever be necessary. And at the slightest sign of a rattle it was taken to the garage to be checked over.

Pulling away, the sound of the tight little A series engine was music to my ears. The car just felt 'right' as Uncle Charlie would expect it to. But on the open road, I couldn't get any more than 30mph out of it. Something seriously wrong I suspected and began to think of a dose of Red-Ex at the least and maybe a head off for a proper decoke and even new valves. However, Once home, I did what any owner of a second hand car does. I set about cleaning the inside. About three layers of carpet were removed. Sound deadening I presumed. Then I saw it!! A piece of wood about 9"x4"x1" with a cotton bobbin screwed to it placed under the accelerator pedal. It was *Uncle Charlie's home made remedy, guaranteed never to fail*, to paraphrase the George Formby song. Apparently my Auntie and Uncle had devised a plan. He had a heart condition and wanted to minimise the problems should something nasty happen in the road.

If he were to take ill, his foot could not drop heavily onto the accelerator pedal and

zoom them off into oblivion. (30 mph would be maintained). Auntie would reach over and turn the ignition key off and steer the car to the kerb safely. Thankfully they never had to test this theory but it's a plan which couldn't be put into practice in a modern car with all the controls away from the passenger.

Both Auntie and Uncle are no longer with us now. They were much loved and sadly missed. Unfortunately modern motoring and safety consciousness take away the chance for eccentricities to prevail nowadays but it's a joy to recall the antics of those from a quieter time. G.A.

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