



December 2015

Another year almost gone. I seem to be saying that so often nowadays as time flashes by. The summer passed without too much trauma weather wise as far as I can remember. There were events, club nights, the TV trail and the Alston weekend and now it's batten down the hatches, cover the cars up and wait for next year.

But before we do, let's enjoy Christmas!! Your club has lots in store for you. So much that you'll be dizzy with excitement by the time you open your prezzies on the Big Day. There's:

EVENING DINNER WITH DISCO at the Golf Club on 4th December at 7.30

CHRISTMAS LUNCH at the Village Inn Brompton. 11,00 am from Yarm Station or go straight there for 1pm

CHRISTMAS CLUB NIGHT WITH PIE & PEAS AND LIFE MUSIC TO SING-ALONG TO on Friday 18th December

BE THERE OR BE SQUARE

So there it is what more could you want?

Now, on with this scintillating package of fun. First some reminiscing from Derek:

My First Wheels

Leaving school at 15 my parents bought me my first new bicycle ready for my first job in the great wide world. After a very brief two weeks in the steel mills earning £8-0 per week I moved to an apprenticeship in joinery earning 30 shillings a week equal to £1-50. Enquiring how my first day had gone my reply was great until someone cut off their finger and the foreman said to me “Throw some saw dust over that blood” the reply from my mother on returning home was, that was my last day there. However a year or so later I was earning £5-0 per week and looking for a motor cycle. My dream came true one Saturday morning walking down Linthorpe Road I passed the motor cycle shop that was near the old Emporium. There outside the shop were six ex police motor cycles, Triumph Tiger Cubs. £5 down and £5 per month for six months and one was mine. My father’s comment when discussing it was “ were are you going to get that sort of money?” but I did and having my first wheels opened up a new way of life.



The recent visit on our week end away to Alston Museum brought the memories flooding back.

Derek



Some timely advice in the first of four pieces from David Begg:

WINTER TYRES

Encouraged by motor manufacturers and tyre suppliers some of you may start thinking of fitting winter tyres, especially as the colder air sweeps in. Not that I will be fitting them to our MGB which is tucked away! A recent article in the Jaguar Enthusiast magazine dealt with fitting winter tyres to a

Jaguar XF...a rear wheel drive car. My own experience with a BMW 5 Series rear wheel drive car fitted with winter tyres is that they offer VERY LIMITED advantages...you can't alter the laws of physics!! On the flat there are shorter braking distances and somewhat better stability, but the slightest slope presents a real challenge. We have a shallow slope to our drive and the BMW on packed snow just made it with a struggle. In contrast my wife's 4 WD Jaguar X-Type sailed up, even on normal tyres. Fitting Vriedstein Snotrac tyres transformed the X-Type's behaviour on snow and ice...just amazing and confidence inspiring.



Fitting winter tyres is an expensive option, especially if it often involves the additional cost of smaller wheels [in my experience the smaller diameter the better]. I really think fitting such tyres to a RWD car is not justified, even if BMW and others promote the fitting of them [well they would wouldn't they?]. For a FWD car there is an advantage over RWD, principally since most of the balance of weight is over the front wheels. As far as 4 WD is concerned winter tyres are entirely justified. In ALL cases winter tyres MUST be fitted to all 4 wheels, and I believe this is required for safety reasons. So what type of tyre? AutoExpress magazine regularly carries out winter tyre tests and good comparative data is available on their web site. My chosen tyres are Vreidstein or Nokian particularly for their superior performance on packed snow and ice. Do not be tempted to buy cheap tyres and do haggle for the best deal. Finally, one advantage of fitting winter tyre that I should also mention is resistance to aquaplaning. This probably applies to all cars. So, in conclusion, ask yourself the question... is the fitting of winter tyres really justified? Oh, just to conclude, our winters have been relatively mild over the last 2 years....but who knows.. the weather can be very fickle. The choice is yours.

David Begg

A chuckle from **Bob**

Two Indians and an Irishman were walking through the woods.
All of a sudden one of the Indians ran up a hill to the mouth of a small cave.
'Wooooo! Wooooo! Wooooo!' he called into the cave and listened closely until he heard an answering, 'Wooooo! Wooooo! Woooooo!
He then tore off his clothes and ran into the cave.
The Irishman was puzzled and asked the remaining Indian what it was all about. 'Was the other Indian crazy or what?'
The second Indian replied 'No, It is our custom during mating season when Indian men see cave, they holler 'Wooooo! Wooooo! Wooooo!' into the opening.

If they get an answer back, it means there's a beautiful squaw in there waiting for us.

Just then they came upon another cave. The second Indian ran up to the cave, stopped, and hollered, 'Wooooo! Wooooo! Wooooo!' Immediately, there was the answer, 'Wooooo! Wooooo! Wooooo!' from deep inside. He also tore off his clothes and ran into the opening.

The Irishman wandered around in the woods alone for a while, and then spied a third large cave. As he looked in amazement at the size of the huge opening, he was thinking, 'Hoo, man! Look at the size of this cave! It is bigger than those the Indians found. There must be some really big, fine women in this cave!'

He stood in front of the opening and hollered with all his might 'Wooooo! Wooooo! Wooooo!'

Like the others, he then heard an answering call,

'WOOOOOOO, WOOOOOOO, WOOOOOOO!'

With a gleam in his eye and a smile on his face, he raced into the cave, tearing off his clothes as he ran.

The following day, the headline of the local newspaper read.....

You'll like this

NAKED IRISHMAN RUN OVER BY TRAIN!!!



We invited North Air Ambulance to club night in September and asked Reg and Babs to present the cheque for £500 unfortunately they couldn't make it but Mandy stepped in and presented it to Debbie who in turn gave a little chat saying they have three Air Ambulances now in the North East. Debbie went on to say they rely totally on donations like ours for support as they don't receive any government support. Most of their support comes from outlying areas rather than big companies as one imagines. Mike accompanied Debbie and they both enjoyed Lloyd,s quiz . So although its a great thing lets hope nobody has to use it.

Roll on next year and lets see if we can make the same amount again or even more because there are so many worthwhile charities out there. Lastly it wont happen unless someone comes forward and volunteers to run it, so if you fancy running it maybe with a little help from the committee then just get in touch with any committee member.

Derek

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I Think It's Called Sod's Law

For many years now I've had the luxury of running two 'classic' cars. It was always nice to think that if something happened to put one of them off the road, I would have another one to fall back on. Well for many years nothing did happen so whenever we went on a run or to a static the one left at home was in a fit and healthy state and just having a day off. Then it happened.

This year, after thinking long and hard, we decided to part with the 'B'. It wasn't getting much use as we both preferred the comfort and comparative luxury of the dear old Magnette. (After a flirtation with open air motoring, the newness began to wear off – Sheila said she always looked like she'd arrived everywhere as if she'd come on a motor bike – I didn't argue!!). Anyway, as we both prefer *really* old cars, and the Magnette isn't *really* old enough for my taste (modern traffic won't let me go back any further in time), we decided the 'B' might as well go.

So that left us with one car. Nice to think I was responsible for only one to work on over the winter. Then it happened! We had a lovely day out at the Hunton Steam Fair, 'Maggy' – as the grandchildren call the Magnette was going nicely, we approached Morton on Swale, enjoying the ride when an awful sound came from under the bonnet. At first it sounded like the fan hitting the radiator, a rapid loud clicking sound. Pull up quick, I said to myself. A look under the bonnet soon told me that the fan was sound and the radiator was unharmed. Tentatively, I climbed back into the cab and jabbed the starter button. On tick-over, it was more like a tap-tap-tapping sound. Too light for a big end, I thought. 'Maybe a little-end', suggested a friend who'd stopped to help.

Whatever it was, a call to the AA was needed. But more importantly than that was the need to find a loo (I'm not as young as I was!!!). A very nice lady in a cottage obliged and also brought us cups of tea and a lovely slice of home-made cake.

Experts who have looked at it since, (that's the car, not the cake!) have identified either a collapsed clutch assembly or a forward-motion or lay shaft failure – or the bearing of one or the other. Either way, I'm not willing or able to tackle the job myself. A mechanic friend who is getting over an eye operation has promised to take it to his workshop when he's back in harness and do it. Luckily, it was almost at the end of the season but I'm left asking myself would it have happened if I'd still had a back-up vehicle or has Professor Sod been at work again? I suppose it would have been done but the irony of it hasn't escaped me.

It's the first breakdown we've had in eight years of Magnette ownership so I'm not complaining. In fact it's one of only a very few real problems we've had in 43 years of old car motoring. Hope I'm not tempting fate. Oh, forget I said that!!!!

G.A.



Alston Weekend

Hi Graham I am sure you will have lots of feedback from the weekend.

As it was our first weekend away with our mg, we had a great time good company and the hotel was super the staff couldn't do enough for us. the runs had some wonderful views, some very narrow and bendy roads with steep banks and dips as you can imagine still all the cars coped very well.

We finished the weekend in Alston and the small museum and railway there were impressive, the weather was really good all weekend.

Lloyd and Marjorie must have spent a long time organising this and they did a superb job. Many thanks

Derek & Pat



Derek

THE VOLKSWAGEN SAGA

Much has been made of the VW "cheating" story whipping up a media frenzy turned public bashing exercise which shows no sign of going away. In addition to VW's potential direct costs, the more ominous cloud of massive fines and litigation costs looms large, especially in the US. However, in no way do I condone VW's actions and certainly many executives within the company have acted in the most unethical manner thereby shattering the image of a great car manufacturer.

I have never owned a Volkswagen but am a great admirer of their range of truly superb cars and, if the need and opportunity arose, would not hesitate to buy a VW! Trying to draw a balanced view is difficult but the first thing to remember is that no direct safety issue is involved. In sharp contrast other companies, including motor manufacturers, have "cheated" resulting in dire safety consequences for consumers. Secondly, the very real possibility of Volkswagen going out of business would be a disaster for the whole automotive industry world wide.

The saga centres around the emission of so called NOX [Oxides of Nitrogen]. Oxides of Nitrogen emitted by all types of road vehicles are the direct result of combustion in the presence of Oxygen and Nitrogen from the air we breathe. Whilst they are present in the exhaust of any internal combustion engine, their concentrations are significantly higher in diesel engines due to the high temperatures and pressures generated in a diesel combustion process. These oxides are a varying mixture of Nitrogen Dioxide [N₂O], Nitric Oxide [NO] and Nitrous Oxide [N₂O]. These are acidic gases that can contribute to smog formation and acid rain. The Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] of the US regulate the concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide and Nitric Oxide in cars and the VW scandal first broke in the US. It has been claimed by some experts that NOX emissions from cars have been directly responsible for an increase in deaths. Nevertheless, the real scientific evidence for this is difficult to find. As stated earlier, it is difficult to gain a balanced view.

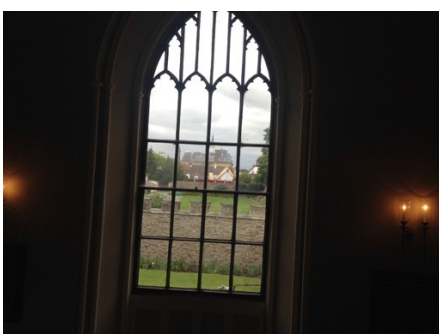
Meanwhile the saga continues to unfold. What do you think? *David Begg*



Auckland Castle Bound



On Sunday Sept 20th 8 cars set off from Yarm bound for Auckland Castle. Mark and Mandy lead the way on a very pleasant route via side roads to Croft and then heading North. As is usual now we



met several cyclists, some singular and some in groups. (What do you call a group of cyclists , A Chain or a Cable I'm not sure but on narrow roads they can be A Pain). That said I don't think the ones we passed caused us any problems. No horses for a change and if my memory serves me right only a couple of Tractors, although there were several areas where they had left their mark (Mud and s---- Sorry Manure)



Despite the many junctions and cross traffic we only dropped one car prior to pulling into the car park for the castle, and that was LLoyd, well he is used to taking different routes . But he was only a few minutes behind, and two of our friends from Durham MG turned up and joined us.

We meandered down to the castle on what was turning out to be a very pleasant day weather wise, a bit cloudy but warm and very little wind.

Some of the group made straight for the tea room while others took an early tour of the castle, Well its not really what you would call a castle, I mean there is no Keep or dungeons or Ramparts to speak of, and its not what you would expect of a Palace for the Bishops, Its a sort of in between. The tea rooms are in the library and the home made cakes and scones were delicious and in the ante room was the most spectacular dresser I have ever seen. Fantastic .



Great architecture and the workmanship in St Peters Chapel ceiling is spectacular. This was originally the great banqueting hall but is now the largest private chapel in Europe and is still used by the Bishop of Durham today.

The throne room with paintings of Bishops of Durham past and present and a wonderful wood floor with invisible joints which would put craftsmen today to shame

In the Long dining room hang the Zurbaran Paintings of Jacob and his sons, which were saved for the castle by a Mr Ruffer a northern businessman.

There was a exhibition featuring Bishop Auckland AFC memorabilia of the 1950's and earlier. They were simply the best amateur team in the country and probably the world at that time.

Outside work is on going to restore the walled gardens to their original design

We wondered around part of the grounds to the deer enclosure, a small castle like structure with the cloisters on the outside, but for deer very salubrious.

All in all a very enjoyable day out. Thanks M&M

Reg and Babs

MGB...MODERN ALTERNATIVES

Those of you owning MGB's, especially convertibles, must have had evil thoughts like "I am going to sell it and get something modern". Why such thoughts? Well there are times, particularly when it rains and you try put the arcane MGB hood up that you wish for a simple device. The B is bad enough with a folding hood but the previous type is like putting a tent up! Other things like the very rudimentary "air conditioning", lack of power steering, the gale at the back of your neck, the bumpy ride and so called windscreen wipers. But, hey, wait a minute this is heresay!...or am I just getting old? All is forgiven and forgotten on a fine day and some special magic takes over; a combination of noise and other sensations which only an MGB provides, and you look at it lovingly...what a lovely car. Besides which it is HER car and and being told in no uncertain terms; "you are not selling it" is quite salutary!



However, let us be completely objective...well, just for a minute or two. What exactly are the modern alternatives? To start with a really good [and I mean REALLY GOOD, but not concours] chrome bumper MGB convertible is worth anywhere between £8,000 and £12,000 these days and starting to slowly appreciate. So that sort of money gives a very wide choice. What is on offer? MGF obviously, and £10K would almost buy a new one! Even, with great care, £2,000 buys an acceptable MGF. Perhaps a Mazda MX 5 complete with electric "tin top", air con, power steering, cruise control, wind stop and lots of other goodies for between £6K and £9K; very, very tempting indeed. Or how about a Porsche Boxster for £7K? Surely the very epitome of a very real sports car and superbly engineered. The BMW Z4, definitely NOT the Z3, also comes into the frame. Even versions of the current model, again superbly built and handsome with it, can be found for less than £9K. There are also 1996 to 2006 Jaguar XK8's [now increasing in value] or Mercedes SLK's to consider within this price range, albeit expensive to run and maintain, especially the Jag. However, with all these cars, unlike the MGB, DIY is not for the faint hearted. But at the end of the day you are not going to give up your beloved MGB for one of these modern upstarts are you? Besides, the 'B' is still good to drive, comfortable, even today keeps up with modern cars, is really cheap to run, maintain, insure and... what, no road tax? Case proven m' lord! So, just keep on dreaming.

David Begg



Get your thinking caps on now and have a go at Pat Gordon's quiz. Answers on last page.

Here's a short quiz for the news letter

Each word links the end of one word and the beginning of the next.

All five letters

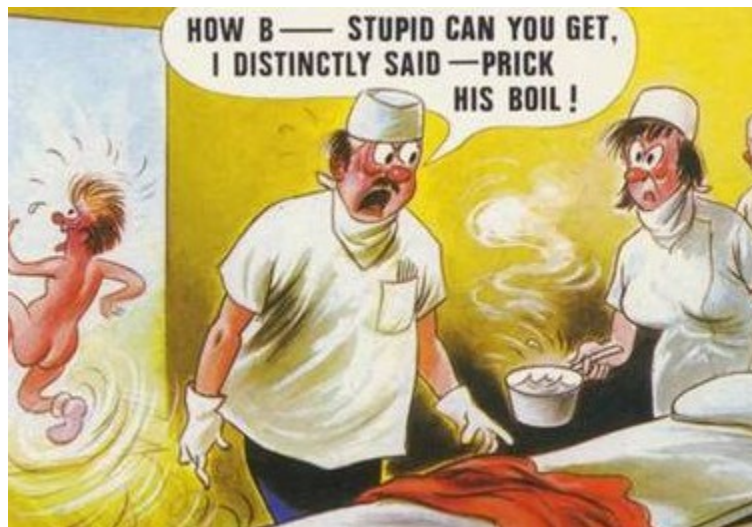
Scrubbing _____ strokes

Park _____ press

Talent _____ hut

Drum _____ General

Harvest _____ mat



I Never Thought I'd Say It But.....

.....I have to confess that, apart from using a classic for rallies, my first choice of transport these days is.....the modern car!!! I always said that when I started wanting comfort rather than the fun of driving an old car, it would be time to hang up my keys and sit back and admit I'd grown old.

It's not that I've lost the pioneering spirit or that I want a cushy life. I admit I am a bit sick of being harassed by young kids behind the wheel of ton-up buzz bombs. I've mentioned before that I feel aggrieved by the fact that modern roads are just too fast for ancient cars to be enjoyed like they were but that's not really my point. The old Midget gives me about 30 MPG but I've just come back from a leisurely run to Helmsley and back and the modern Skoda Octavia has returned 64.5 MPG. That's quite a saving whichever way you look at it.

OK it was comfortable. And quiet - And fast, when needed - And had a radio - And one of those Bluetooth thingumyjigs - And seat belts - And air bags - And is tax exempt. But that's not everything is it??? OK well yes it is. But I have to admit it was fun and ECONOMICAL.

As mentioned in another piece, the Mag is in the sick bay at the moment but it will rise from the ashes and we will enjoy it when we use it for the right purpose; to take us to those lovely summer rallies a few weekends in the year. As they say "Less is more".

Skoda of course is part of the VW group and as such is probably due for a recall to have the emission tested in the New Year. The Government say that they won't increase the road tax on cars already rated by their stated emissions. I do hope they are telling the truth!!!!

G.A.

Mainsgill Farm Shop run

Hi Graham

We hope you are feeling ok now,how's Sheila and the family? We had a run today to Mainsgill farm shop just past scotch corner and I said I would write a few words.--

It was a cloudy damp morning and the later time of 11-0 am was ideal as the sky began to brighten and the weather was dry for the run to Mainsgill Farm Shop just off the A66. Seven cars arrived and set off via North Cowton and through Middleton Tyas onto Scotch Corner. With it been a short run some had lunch, some just had a snack then a look around the shop. Upstairs had their Christmas display, it will soon

be time to hang up our stockings frightening how quick the time passes. After a while everyone had plans to finish off the day in various ways, we turned left out of the car park then first left down a delightful road ideal for mg,s on into Richmond and a visit to the Green Howard's Museum.

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Cheers **Derek and Pat.**

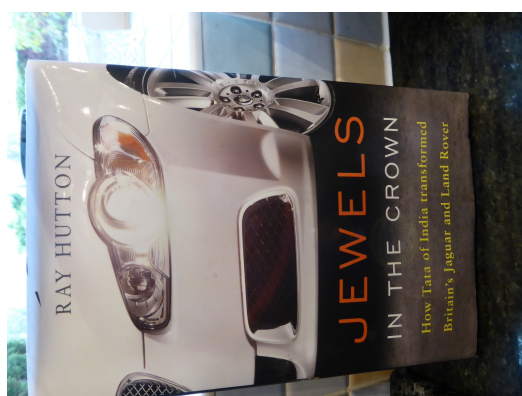


BOOK REVIEW - *JEWELS IN THE CROWN*

This book by the well known motoring author, Ray Hutton, is a really superb book for anyone interested in the motor industry, especially when it concerns Jaguar Land Rover.

It deals brilliantly with all the recent ups and downs of the company in coping with the various changes of ownership until taken over from Ford by Tata Motors in 2008.

There is a fascinating insight into the various financial machinations, management styles and the effect of the market. The Author illustrates how JLT under Tata's ownership dealt with the downturn and yet came out in recent times with a changed company making substantial profits and with a very confident looking future. A must read!



David Begg

Another chuckle from Bob:

Dave Smith is on his death bed and knows the end is near. His nurse, his wife, his daughter and 2 sons are with him at his home in London. He asks for 2 independent witnesses to be present and a camcorder be in place to record his last wishes.

When all is ready he begins to speak: "My son, Bernie, I want you to take the Mayfair houses."

"My daughter, Sybil, you take the apartments over in the East end."

"My son, Jamie, I want you to take the offices over in the City."

"Sarah, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings on the banks of the Thames ."

The nurse and witnesses are blown away. They did not realize the extent of his holdings. As Dave slips away, the nurse says to his wife,

"Mrs. Smith, my deepest condolences.

Your husband must have been such a hard-working and wonderful man to have accumulated all this property.....

"Property?", Sarah Smith replies. "The Bugger had a window cleaning round."

Answers to Pat's quiz:

Scrubbing	BRUSH	Strokes
Park	BENCH	Press
Talent	SCOUT	Hut
Drum	MAJOR	General
Harvest	MOUSE	Mat

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MGB, Midgets
For Tees Valley Club Members

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