BVAC News October 2026

Editor's Ramblings

I was away for a large part of September and managed to miss all the club events during the month, so I'm grateful to Philip Titley and Chris Biggs for the reports below, also to photographers who contribute to our Facebook page, some of whose work I've included here. I don't know if anyone got along to the show at Kielder – if you did and would like to contribute some words or pictures, I'll include them next month. My requests for articles of interest are obviously bearing fruit as there are contributions from Letitia Mace and Philip Kearney, much appreciated both! There's more in the pipeline too as William Mykura has promised an article on his trip to Portugal to import a rare 1970s Renault and Philip Kearney again on the Morris Minor event at Beamish. It's always good to have something to look forward to…

Talking of which, there's a programme of club events for the Autumn, including the all-important AGM on the 14th, and if you'll forgive me for mentioning the C-word this early in the year, Helen Grimes has the planning of our annual Christmas Dinner well underway. You'll find all the details below, so get the dates in your diary now.

Clear roads, David editor@bvac.org.uk

AGM

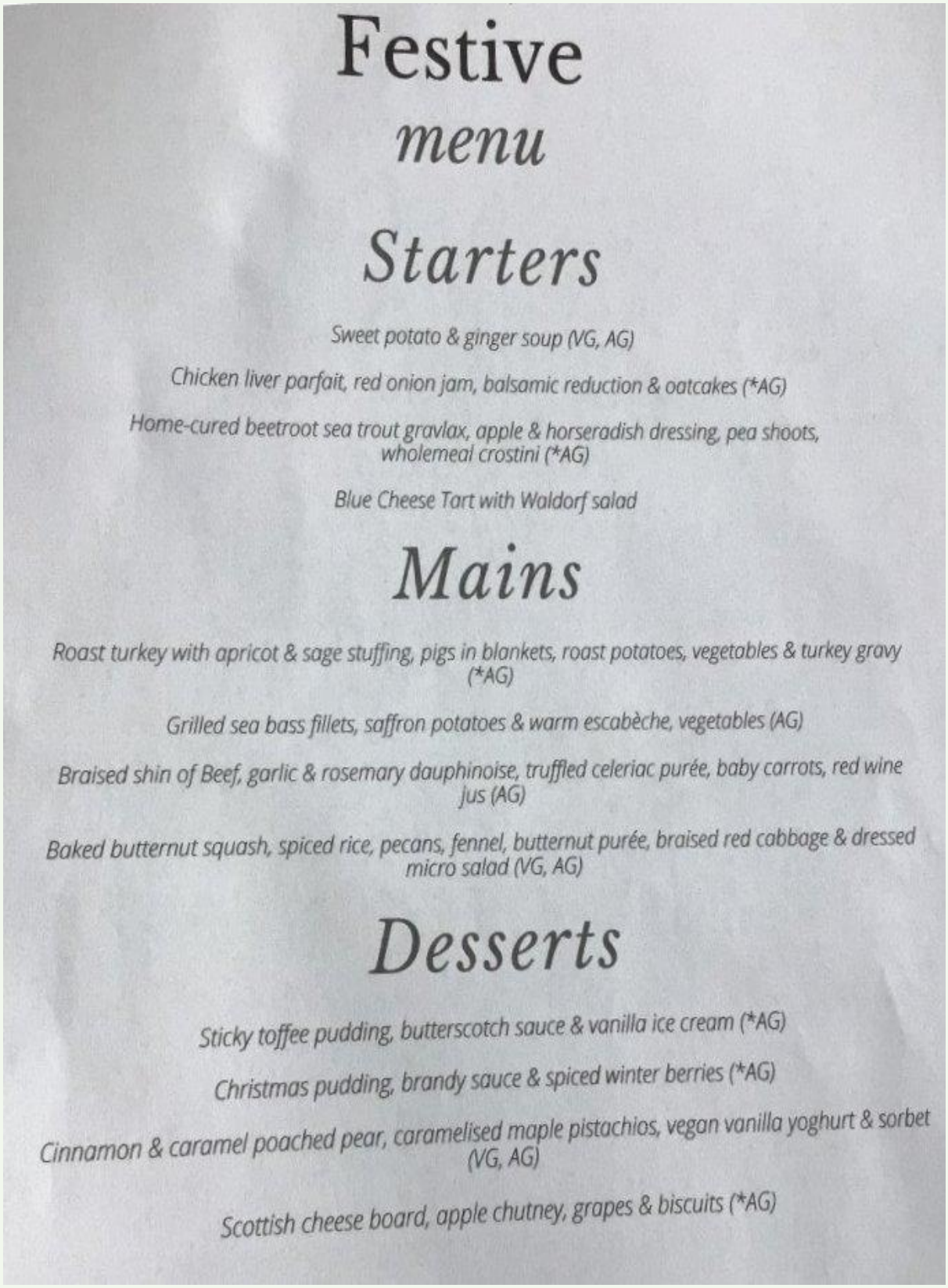
Just a reminder to all members that our AGM is on 14 October at 7pm in Earlston Church Hall. This is your chance to voice opinions about the running of the club and to elect the committee for the forthcoming year. Because of the formal element of the business, you'll need to prove you are a paid-up current member at the door. So please bring your membership card with you. If you can't find it, come anyway but bring some other id so we can cross-check against the club's membership list.

Any apologies for absence should be notified to Kenny Wilson secretary@bvac.org.uk.

Christmas Dinner

The annual club Christmas Dinner will be held at the Kingsknowes Hotel, Selkirk Road, Galashiels, TD1 3HY at 7pm for 7.30 on Saturday 5th December. The cost will be £38 for three courses with a two-course option for £32. Great food, great company and a fun evening, so

make sure to get your place booked. We can thank Helen Grimes for her organisation and efficiency in putting this event together. Overleaf you'll find the menu and a link to the form which you can complete and return to Helen with your menu choices and payment.



Festive menu

Starters

Sweet potato & ginger soup (VG, AG)

Chicken liver parfait, red onion jam, balsamic reduction & oatcakes (*AG)

Home-cured beetroot sea trout gravlax, apple & horseradish dressing, pea shoots, wholemeal crostini (*AG)

Blue Cheese Tart with Waldorf salad

Mains

Roast turkey with apricot & sage stuffing, pigs in blankets, roast potatoes, vegetables & turkey gravy (*AG)

Grilled sea bass fillets, saffron potatoes & warm escabèche, vegetables (AG)

Braised shin of Beef, garlic & rosemary dauphinoise, truffled celeriac purée, baby carrots, red wine jus (AG)

Baked butternut squash, spiced rice, pecans, fennel, butternut purée, braised red cabbage & dressed micro salad (VG, AG)

Desserts

Sticky toffee pudding, butterscotch sauce & vanilla ice cream (*AG)

Christmas pudding, brandy sauce & spiced winter berries (*AG)

Cinnamon & caramel poached pear, caramelised maple pistachios, vegan vanilla yoghurt & sorbet (VG, AG)

Scottish cheese board, apple chutney, grapes & biscuits (*AG)

*VG - Vegan, AG - Gluten Free, *AG - can be adapted to be Gluten Free.*

You can download the form to book your place and give your menu choices by clicking here.

Events Reports

Bo'ness Hillclimb 2026, Sunday 6th September from Philip Titley

Held over the full weekend, the club took a stand at the Sunday 6th September Classic Car Show that has now been reestablished as part of this historic hill climb event. Despite a wet start at the meeting point the weather cleared up for a dry but cool day allowing us to enjoy both the competition on the hill climb and the well-attended car show located in the top paddock field.

Mini's, Midget's, Austin 7's of all varieties, Lagonda, Porsche, Riley, Bentley, motorbike engined single seaters and full bore 5 litre V8 race car are but some of the cars sat in the paddock waiting for their class to be called forward for a sprint up the short but technically





challenging course. The Lagonda Rapier single seater belongs to club member Rob Armstrong who brought home some of the silverware from the competition and has been featured on the BVAC club Facebook page.

The club stand in the Classic Car Show had 5 cars with an MG B, Jaguar XJS, Jaguar XK, Citroen SM and Bitter SC all causing some interest with the many visitors. There was a wide and varied selection of both individual entries and other clubs' cars on show with a Mk1 Astra taking visitors car of the show and a Volvo 850 T5 estate taking





the entrant's vote.

With the weather holding out until late afternoon it was a great day for being able to watch 5 competitive runs on the course at this historic venue, and hopefully a few more members will join us when we return to the event next year.

Carhailes, Sunday 13th September from Philip Titley

Carhailes - the classic car show held at Newhailes House in Musselburgh has become a family event beyond being a classic car show which has now become just part of the attractions. This year the car show was definitely smaller than previous years due to restricted space allocation from the NTS, as there was a considerable number of attractions and activities





aimed at families which is where it appeared that the event has been heavily marketed given the visitors at the show.

Despite the challenges of having mainly families in the grounds there was a great appreciation of the range of cars in the show even if the volume of cars was restricted. The BVAC had 13 members cars displayed as well as space for our gazebo and club trailer to be on display which attracted a lot of attention for Thirlestane 2027.





The biggest star of our stand was the American Chrysler Coupe of Albert & Christine, and two of our members took home rosettes with Brian Spears winning best 80's car with his Peugeot 309 GTI and Robert & Moira Stewart taking best in show with their well-known Alvis 12/70. Congratulations to both of them.





With the weather holding out again in our favour it was another great turnout for this show and many thanks to all those that went along.

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Yarrow and Ettrick Pastoral Society Show from Chris Biggs

On Saturday 12th September I attended the Yarrow and Ettrick Pastoral Society Show situated just on the edge of Selkirk. This is a small agricultural show rather like the Berwickshire Show at Duns.

In mild but cloudy weather the show ran from 9.30am through to 4.00pm and the sun shone warmly for about half the day. I was there following an announcement and invitation on the Club's Facebook page.



The organiser of the Classic Car section was from a local sponsoring garage and dealership and we were all made very welcome with complimentary bacon rolls and drinks during the day. It was a small but select gathering, there being a dozen Classic vehicles on show, but the standard was high in presentation. I was particularly taken by two immaculate Land Rovers and an early Discovery that looked almost perfect. I was a lone representative of BVAC amongst a significant group of Border Reivers who made me very welcome.



Much to my surprise, the judge for the day awarded my Morris Minor 1000 Traveller the first prize rosette and I received many complimentary remarks and warm congratulations. My delight was further bolstered when I received the news that a prize was to be awarded. The presentations happened at 4.05pm and mine was last as apparently it was a newly sponsored prize that was being awarded for the first time. A shiny trophy, a plaque, a shield - no, it was a plain white envelope containing a prize certificate and a letter explaining that I had won a Fuel Voucher for £100. You could have knocked me over with a feather duster!

Needless to say the journey home was brisk and joyful. My Traveller seemed to have an extra boost to its engine power and 60mph was achieved with ease as it sped over the top between Selkirk and St.Boswells. An enjoyable day out. The organisers would be glad of some more support from the Classic Car fraternity so we might add this one to our list of small and friendly local shows for next year - and it's on a Saturday.

Future Events from Philip Titley

Club Treasure Hunt - 3rd October

All booked up now, look out for a report next month

Brunton - 18th October

There is no club stand this year due to a lack of entries

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Club Talk - Sunday 15th November in Earlston Rugby Club 7pm for 7.30pm start.

"Clubs & Cars" by Letita Mace and Rob Jenner.

Tea & Coffee on arrival with Letitia's leading presentation on Xclusively Jaguar and why it was set up and its purpose in terms of what Letitia and Rob do and what help they can give to Jaguar members.

There will then be short break for tea & coffee which will be followed by Rob entertaining the company with stories of the cars he has owned since being a youngster in Coventry to those he has now and many of the ups and downs in between. Members are encouraged to turn up at Earlston Rugby Club on the night as there is no requirement to fill in an event form. We need as much support as possible for this club talk as we hope to encourage other members to host their stories on finding, owning, repairing, collecting, fixing their car or cars.

Garage Visit, The Car Cave, Bonnyrigg - Saturday 28th November 11am to 2pm



Allan Potts, the owner of the Car Cave has kindly agreed to host a garage visit for members to his business in Bonnyrigg. It is a fully working garage that specialises in classic cars particularly Fords and especially importing South African sourced cars which are amongst the many cars he has for sale, and which will be on view during the visit.

There is no catering on-site, but the National Mining Museum is just back out on the main road through Bonnyrigg and gives anyone the opportunity to get refreshments or food if they want to.

Please remember to fill in the form through the website event page here if you want to be there as space is limited.

And finally…

Don't forget our monthly breakfast gatherings at Milestone Garden Centre, Newtown St Boswells on the second Sunday of every month. No need to book, just turn up between 10 and 12. Dates for the rest of the year are October 11th, November 8th and December 13th.

MOT – Minors on Tour 2026 by Philip Kearney



Every year, the Morris Minor Owners Club have run Minors on Tour (MOT), a week long European trip for members. Starting in Fontainebleau in 1983, the trips have covered many parts of France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and even as far as Interlaken in Switzerland over the following 43 years.

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The main aim of MOT is to have fun using Morris Minors whilst enjoying the company of other MMOC members on holiday somewhere in Europe.

The trip always aligns with the English half term holidays in late May. Having never been able to attend before, an offer to car share with an American club member meant I was committed and with it being a 'short' trip (each year alternates between short and long trips) based around the Normandy coast, a spot was booked. Although travelling from Scotland, I wouldn't quite be the furthest travelled car. One Minor came north from Andorra but the mileage prize would go to two Norwegians who undertook an 1800mile roundtrip.

As to what car to take on the trip, well it had to be a Morris Minor (although other classic cars are allowed) but which one? I was proposing to take my 1955 2 door, which has a fully rebuilt engine, front discs and uprated suspension and would handle the trip with ease but with subsequent collection of 3 passengers en route and being equipped only with trafficators, meant a change to an untried 1959 4 door in the relatively rare shade of Clipper Blue. A few weeks of recommissioning and servicing brought it back to life but its maiden voyage out of the garage was the day of departure when it headed south. A real baptism of fire!

Channel crossings at various locations were considered but an offer to collect and transport one of the organisers from Hampshire meant an outward ferry from Portsmouth was booked.

A route was planned to get to Portsmouth, avoiding motorways wherever possible, extending the journey slightly to a shade over 450 miles. The A68 was followed all the way south and then quiet roads mirroring the A1(M) and then original sections of the Great North Road before an overnight stop in Oxford to let me pay homage at Cowley and then a relatively short trip on the Friday to Portsmouth, Via Hook, for a 10.30pm sailing to Ouistreham in Normandy.





After a further 120 miles across Northern France on the Saturday morning took us to the base for the week at Chateau Lez Aux, a campsite on the Normandy coast where we met up with some of the 83 other cars that attending the event. Some cars started arriving early from the Wednesday onwards, with many turning up on the Saturday and into the Sunday, the constant sounds of parping Morris Minor exhausts as cars arrived had to be heard to be believed.

MoT organisers arrange a series of events throughout the week, day and night, all entirely optional, which people can attend and participate in. This starts with welcome drinks and a social gathering for all participants on the Saturday evening and progresses through a games night, Le Quiz, Le Meal and Le Auction (events during the week, including the auction, raise funds for a nominated charity. This year, £7,500 was raised for the Alzheimer's Society). Daytime events depend very much on the location of the trip. Events this year ranged from a boat trip around the Iles de Chaucey, a guided tour of Mont St Michel, visits to chateaux, cheese and cider farms (a lot of camembert and calvados was had that week), a bell foundry and a 50-mile run out with the local classic car club to Chateau fort du Pirou on the last day.



After a full week of activities, Friday quickly comes around and the final evening gathering for the raffle, presentation of awards and farewell drinks before many head for home on the Saturday. The return journey took a different route home, heading from Cherbourg to Poole on the Saturday evening. This allowed for a relaxed drive north up the Cotentin peninsula and a visit to Sainte-Mere'Eglise and the Airborne Museum, well worth a visit if you have an interest in World War Two (the whole Normandy area is well worth visiting if you have an interest that period of history) before joining about another 15 Minors on the ferry back to Poole, arriving at 11.00pm at night. Out of all the Minors disembarking, why was it only me who get pulled in for a full customs check, complete with sniffer dogs? I must have looked more suspicious than the others. Who'd have thought that smugglers would use Morris Minors?!

In contrast to the outward journey, I decided to complete the 425-mile homeward trip in one long overnight journey, taking advantage of the near deserted motorways in the wee small hours, meaning I could sit at a steady 55-60mph without problems. Leaving Poole Harbour at 11.30pm, I crossed the Carter Bar at 8.30am Sunday morning and arrived home at 9.00am.

So how did the car perform? Well after many years of inactivity and no time for pre testing, it coped admirably. Beyond checking and topping up oil and water and replacing a brake light bulb, the car covered 1500 miles in 9 days without issue. However, a range of spare parts (ignition components, fuel pump, water pump, fan belts, wheel bearing and things like cable ties, wire, fuses, bulbs and other consumables were all carried plus a good toolkit, in case any roadside repairs were required. European recovery is included as part of the MMOC insurance scheme anyway, so you would make it home even if a terminal breakdown occurred. Across the 83 cars attending, breakdowns were few with only one blown head gasket, a failed battery and a broken windscreen between them.

Would I do it all again? Yes. Would I recommend a European trip in a classic car to others ? Yes. Prepare your car, dig out your passport, road atlas and some spare parts and go for it. For anyone interested, details of MOT 2027 will be released very soon. More information at https://mot27.mmoc.org.uk

St Agnes Lifeboat Presentation by Letitia Mace

We think it is very sad that the RNLI are currently receiving a lot of bad press, especially as it follows a recent visit by us to Cornwall.

To put this into perspective;

BVAC Vice Chairman, Rob Jenner was Chairman of the Jaguar Enthusiast's Club (JEC) from May 2013 to November 2015.

The JEC Prize Draw cars for 2014 and 2015 were both XK (X150) Jaguars.

The presentations at St Agnes Lifeboat Station took place in January 2015 and January 2016.

Back in the days when the JEC sold raffle tickets for the chance to win a Jaguar on an annual basis each incoming Chairman was given the privilege of choosing a charity to which the proceeds went at the end of the year.

When Rob Jenner became Chairman of the JEC in 2013 he chose the RNLI as the charity he wished to support because he had spent many years living in Shetland and he knew how important this vital emergency service was and he had seen how dedicated and committed the volunteers were and how many lives they saved on a regular basis.

Over the two years of Rob's chairmanship two XK (X150) Jaguars were raffled in order to raise £44,000 to buy a new D-class lifeboat. This was the first and only time that the club supported the same charity for two years and it meant that two cheques were presented to the RNLI – one in January 2015 and the final one in January 2016.



The club did not choose which Lifeboat Station to support – this is the responsibility of the RNLI HQ who allocated the boat to the next lifeboat station needing a replacement lifeboat which happened to be St Agnes in Cornwall.

The children's TV programme, Blue Peter, had supplied 4 lifeboats to St Agnes from 1968 until 2015, when the JEC lifeboat succeeded them.

In 2015 and 2016 Gerald Simmons was Chairman and Station Operational Manager of St Agnes Lifeboat Station – he sadly passed away in 2019 so we were unable to renew our acquaintance with him during our recent visit. Gerald was a former crew member who had supported the RNLI from 1968 until retiring in 2017 due to illness and there is a plaque dedicated to him at St Agnes Lifeboat Station.

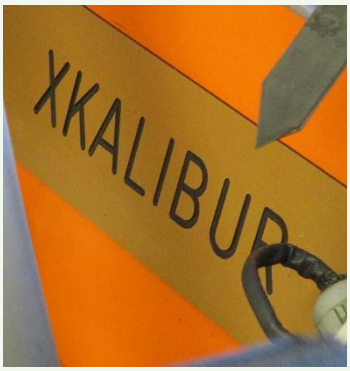


The late Gerald Simmons accepted the first cheque for £19,000 from the JEC on 14th January 2015.

In 2015 we travelled from our home near Edinburgh all the way down to St Agnes in our Jaguar X358. Gearbox problems became apparent along the way and we shuddered at the thought of a breakdown as we negotiated the final stretches of the A30 on a cold, dark winter's night in January. Rob coaxed the X358 on until it made it to the carpark of the B&B when it refused to engage further, so recovery was initiated and following the presentation we travelled back to Edinburgh in a hired car.

The presentation of the cheques on both occasions was such an immense privilege. We were given a VIP reception at St Agnes Lifeboat Station with many of the volunteers in attendance. The table was generously laid out with savouries and cakes, accompanied by

tea and coffee, and after Rob had presented the cheque to Gerald and his crew we were given a tour of the lifeboat premises.



On our visit in 2016 the lifeboat was officially named XKALIBUR, thus spelt as a nod to the two XK's that financed it! On this trip the same Jaguar X358 failed to proceed further than the JEC Racing Dinner in Stratford-upon-Avon and the same scenario ensued but coming home we were hit from behind by a BMW, ended up in hospital and eventually made it back home to Edinburgh.

Earlier this year we were invited to attend the last launch ceremony before XKALIBUR was taken out of service. This was to take place on 15th August and we wondered if this time we would make it there and back without incident. Well, this time we did it! The Jaguar X358 has long gone and this was the proving trip for a 5.0 XK Coupe which made the journey there and back without issue – rather appropriate really, since XKALIBUR was funded by two prize draws featuring XK (X150) Jaguars!



XKALIBUR is trailered down to the beach to be launched for the last time

We were once again given the same VIP reception by all of the volunteers who greeted us as returning friends. It was good to see the coastline in glorious sunshine rather than the gloom of winter. For this presentation we were joined by JEC member Patch Jobson from Ilfracombe in North Devon. This time it was Cornish Pasties that were appropriately the order of the day, along with teas, coffees and cakes, before following XKALIBUR down to the beach for its final launch. This was a ceremonial launch which was accompanied by a commentary on the story of how this boat was donated and the reason for its name, not forgetting the very important list of statistics on how many lives XKALIBUR had saved in its 10 years of service.



XKALIBUR and her crew on the beach at St Agnes

Following the launch the volunteer lifeboat crew lined up for final photographs of XKALIBUR with her crew and supporters while Rob Jenner gave an acceptance speech as he was presented with one of the used propellers from XKALIBUR as a memento of the St Agnes Lifeboat story.



Rob is presented with one of the used propellers from XKALIBUR which, after an encounter with the rocky coastline, needed replacing!

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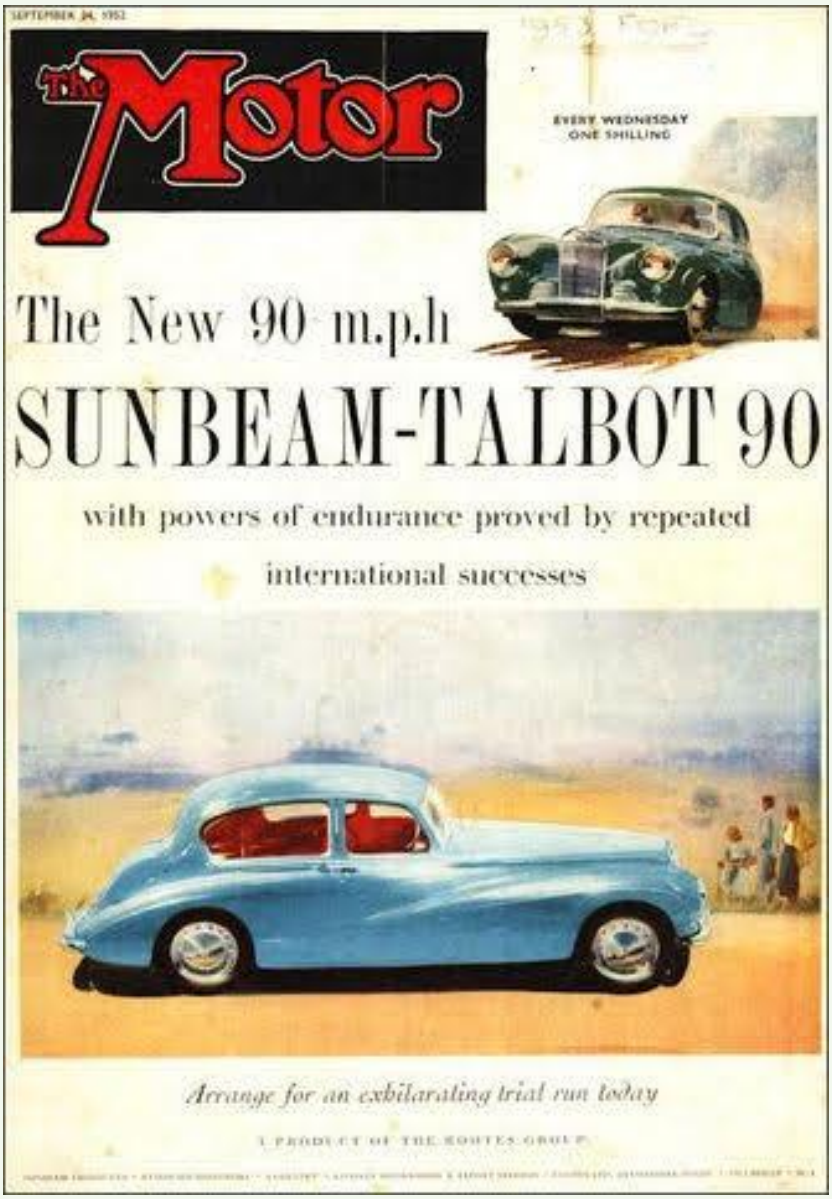
Iain Needs a Lift

Or at least his MG does! Iain Davidson's MG TA has a leaking core plug and he can only get to it by taking out the engine.
Can anyone lend him an engine lift for a few days? It doesn't have to be immediately, just sometime over the winter period.

Contact Iain if you can help at gingers16@hotmail.com.

Nostalgia Corner

Just one classic advert from Fred Magill's collection this month, from when you could buy a magazine for a shilling!



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