



BVAC News

July 2020

Editor's Ramblings

Welcome to the fourth lockdown edition of BVAC News. I hope you're all keeping well and have been busy looking after your cars so they're ready for what's left of the season. The bad news is confirmation of car show cancellations for the rest of the season – see the item from Dennis Fortune below – but the good news is that at last there seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel. Limits on travel for recreation are easing and although large gatherings are still not permitted, there is the prospect of more restrictions being lifted if the current progress in dealing with the virus continues. With that in mind, I know Chris Biggs is considering options for small scale events as soon as these are allowed. Watch this space for future announcements.

Once again this month, I have been glad to receive several contributions of articles and pictures to publish. I'd no idea there were so many authors in the club. In fact, it's a bumper edition, thanks to detailed and thoroughly illustrated article from Keith Lumsdaine who went to great lengths to eliminate a squeak, more garage tales from Helen Kirkness and the story of Letitia Mace and Rob Jenner's experience of their rare Bitter, including a trip to Orkney (recounted by Letitia). Thanks to all of them, and if anyone has any material for next month's newsletter, please forward it to me at entries@bvac.org.uk.

It's always good to know the newsletter is appreciated, so I'd like publicly to pass on this to Helen from Sandra Littlewood: "Thank you for the newsletter...always enjoyable, especially this edition with Helen's Mini adventures! 50 years ago I owned a brand new Mini Clubman which within the first two weeks broke down half way through the Clyde Tunnel in the midst of the morning rush hour....many more events followed, and perhaps I should write up the frustrating 'adventures and challenges' I experienced over the years.." – please do, Sandra!

BVAC Club Displays at Other Shows from Dennis Fortune

No doubt you will all be aware that the majority of other club car shows have all been cancelled due to the ongoing Pandemic. Of the thirteen shows we had planned to attend this year, and until recently, only two had not cancelled but just in last few days the Linlithgow show due to take place at the end of August has now been confirmed as cancelled. That only leaves NMF Wheels & Wings but as Museums will have strict measures in place when they do



Paxton House Trust have launched an appeal to raise funds to help them survive and we know that the Paxton show is popular amongst many of our members so if you would like to donate to ensure the continued existence of this event then please follow this link:

<https://paxtonhouse.co.uk/supportpaxton/>



denfortune@hotmail.com

Meantime I hope everyone is keeping safe and well and busy in your garages!

[Illustrations are from previous shows at Duns, Paxton and Bo'ness]

open and any outdoor live events delayed even further it is unlikely that this event will take place this year.

It is also not surprising to note that cancellation of these shows has put considerable financial strain on some organisations and in particular Paxton House Trust and Biggar Albion Foundation Limited have both expressed concerns about their continued existence.



With respect to the Biggar show the Albion Foundation has had a difficult period over recent times following two years in which rally income was severely impacted by inclement weather, the realisation that there will be no income in 2020 means that it will be extremely difficult to finance the 2021 Rally without injection of funds. If you feel that you can assist with a donation, these will be gratefully received and you can donate via this website link; <https://www.albion-trust.org.uk/donate>

If there is anything else you can think of or need to discuss just let me know -

A Tale of a Squeak by Keith Lumsdaine

In May 2016 I bought a Toyota GT86 TRD from Lloyds in Carlisle with 31,000mls on the clock. The TRD bit refers to Toyota Racing Development. Some of you might know that SUBARU make the GT86. The SUBARU version is the BRD. This limited edition TRD model, as well as having the top of the range interior, has a full body kit, larger TRD wheels, and quad exhausts, all of which appealed to me enormously. Anne and I had previously decided on a GT86 with white pearlescent paint and automatic transmission [with flappy paddles]. This car ticked all the boxes and more. I had to have it.

I have now owned it for four years and enjoyed it on every outing. Fab driving position and instant response from the boxer engine along with a great sound from the quad exhausts. Having the system blip the throttle on paddle down changes is great.

However, on dry summer days, it had developed an annoying squeak in time with the wheels. In town with the window open it has become quite loud. Out of town it disappears. Strange, so what was causing it?

Probably a couple of years ago, I thought it might be brake dust build up in the drum handbrake. Perhaps the previous lady owner had not released the handbrake completely, which is part of the rear disc. It certainly seemed to be coming from the right rear wheel. So, I removed the disc on both sides, and cleaned out the drum and brake shoes. All was well for a couple of weeks, when it started to return, much to my dismay.

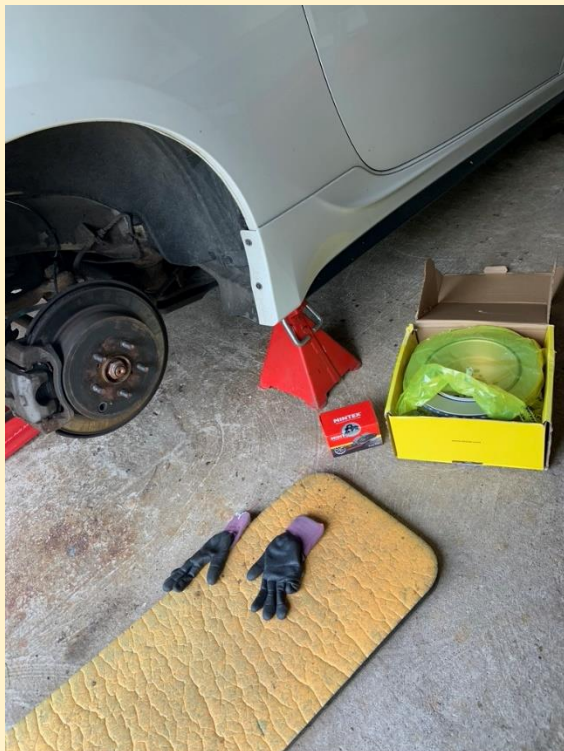
I know some of you will be more familiar than others with the ins and outs of working brakes. So, I have included lots of pictures [each is apparently worth a thousand words].

I resolved to check out everything on that wheel with great care. With lockdown, isn't it time to attend all these 'too difficult' jobs? Note, the body-kit requires low rise ramps to allow the jack in. Toyota recommend jacking on the differential casing, Unlike Jaguar.

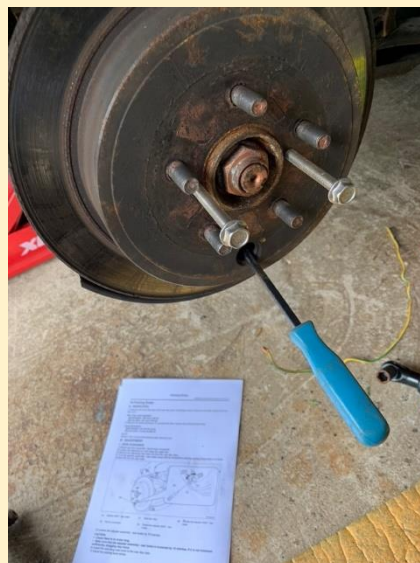


After removing the wheel, I checked the 'run out' of the brake disc, which uncovered the source of my squeak! By use of a gauge [known as a clock gauge] a slight buckle over just 3" was detected on the disc. Using imperial, as us old yins do, the buckle was 8 thou [0.0080"]. Max allowed is 2 thou.

So, I bought a new pair of discs and a new set of brake pads too. I always try and buy 'coated' discs which, in effect are painted with a special coating, which helps minimise corrosion issues. The coating is left on. Much easier than the previous method of them coming with oil to prevent rusting in storage, which had to be carefully removed to avoid contaminating the brake pads.



With the brake callipers and carriers removed, and the brake shoes adjusted away from the drum, the disc can be removed. Toyota have thoughtfully provided two tapped holes, to make removal simple.



With the disc removed the handbrake shoes can be seen.

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Time to check the new discs are the correct size [yes, I have had problems in the past].



After cleaning up the mating surface of the hub [light rusting to remove] I coated it in a light coating of copper grease. Then I installed the new disc and checked it for run out. The specified maximum by Toyota is 2 thou. It measured 1.2 thou. Not great for a new disc.

After cleaning the mating surfaces and reinstalling the disc, I tried again. This time 0.3 thou. Much more satisfactory. Certainly not the 8 thou of the faulty one. Hopefully the end of the squeak.



Next to clean up the pad carriers which had some rust. This made the brake pads tight in position [noticed when I removed the old pads]. The cleaned-up surfaces were lightly coated with ceramic grease to avoid further rusting.





Reinstalling the brake pad carrier with, of course, locking compound on the screw threads.



The business end of the calliper piston, again a light clean-up. In each case, after removing rust, I coat them with ceramic grease [high temperature rated]. To make room for the new pads and discs, the piston was carefully pushed back into its cylinder. The drum brake was then adjusted.

As they often say in instructions, reassembling was continued in the reverse order. The same was completed on the other side of the car too with new discs and pads. Most importantly, and before driving, the brake pedal required a couple of pumps till the pedal became firm. before starting the engine. This is to move the pistons into contact with the pads.



Later Garage Experiences with MGs - Some good and some not so good by Helen Kirkness

When I first bought the MGB GT in 1983, I booked it into a local garage for the big service where all the fluids get changed, so I was starting with a clean sheet as it were. It cost £80 - which was a lot of money to me then. When I got it back and had a look under the bonnet, there was a scuff in the paint dust (the car had just been resprayed) on the rocker cover but the dust on the air filter boxes was untouched. Getting a bit suspicious by this time I had a

closer inspection - if they'd greased the kingpins, they'd managed to do so without disturbing the dirt on the grease nipples, they hadn't changed the air filters or the plugs and I could stick



a finger into the gearbox and not feel any oil.

When I complained, they said that the car had a seized caliper piston and it had taken longer than expected to free off, so they hadn't got round to the rest. What bit of 'Phone the customer and tell her the car's going to take longer due to a seized caliper'

is so difficult to grasp? Yes, I'd've been cheesed off, but it wasn't their fault there was a seized piston was it? I'd sooner everything had been done, than it being passed off as done when it hadn't.

I then decided I couldn't do worse and completed the work myself, using the pit at the school which made changing gearbox and rear axle oil a lot easier. I'd read the Haynes manual carefully but this was a first 'solo attempt'. I undid the plate on the O/D and the Book of Words said 'clean the filter' - what filter? I peeled off the top bit and dipped it into some cleaning fluid - 'Oh, that filter' as all the swarf washed off and revealed the mesh. Next instruction 'clean the magnets' - what magnets? There were two areas of darker grey metal and I prodded one and my finger disappeared up to the end of my fingernail in swarf. After cleaning, the magnets were revealed. The GT was 6 years old then and I think that this was the first time it'd had its gearbox oil changed and O/D filter cleaned!

The amusing follow up to this was when I bought the V8, I decided to change its gearbox oil and clean the O/D filter. But because I'd done it on the GT, I knew all about it and didn't read the V8 workshop manual. So when I drained the gearbox and smelt the oil, I thought 'That's not engine oil' and had to phone a friend, who told me V8 gearboxes used EP 90 - 'You didn't think it was engine oil did you?' Well yes I did - but not a problem as there was a motor factor round the corner, so I nipped round and got EP 90. But that's why it's important to read instructions for that particular model BEFORE you bash on!

When the GT needed a new clutch way back in 1984, I asked a friend, who owned a garage, what it would cost. '3 hours to take it out, 3 hours to put it back - about £60.' You can see how long ago that was - £10 an hour! I then asked if I could take the engine out with supervision if I paid the hourly rate. Their young mechanic was given the supervision job and sat with his coffee and told me what to, yelled at me before I did something stupid and helped with the seized bolts. The engine (we left the gearbox behind) was out in just over 3 hours

and back in in 4, with the young lad aligning the clutch and wiggling the engine and gearbox back together. A great way to learn.

Onto the V8. I'd bought her in April 1985 and by October, she needed a new clutch and a head gasket - so it was the same arrangement at my friend's garage and a serious learning curve for me - to help remove the engine and gearbox and decoke the heads. Great to learn while working on your own car, under supervision, secure in the knowledge that you could ask any stupid question you needed and that a



professional would take over if you got 'stuck'. However, can you imagine that happening now what with Health & Safety and insurance and stuff?

A couple of years after that, the V8's rear oil seal went and I took the engine and box out in my lock-up, the young mechanic changed the oil seal and the main bearings and I started to clean up the engine bay. The mechanic had negotiated £500 off the purchase price of the V8 due her worn gearbox (noisy, slipping out of third on the over-run and jumping out of reverse) so now was the time to get it sorted. I left the gearbox with an MG garage and it was rebuilt. Once I'd put the engine and gearbox back into my pristine engine bay, third gear was 'sneaky' and then, on the Newcastle by-pass while pulling away from a roundabout, there was no second gear and no third either!! No worry, it's a V8 - so first, fourth & overdrive were enough to get home.

Handed the V8 back to the garage and they took the engine and box out, rebuilt the gearbox again (I was told the endfloat was wrong so the thrusts had disintegrated, allowing second and third to go for a 'wander') They put the engine and box back in the car, without damaging my pristine engine bay. They also repainted the bonnet as the radiator was refitted just a fraction high and had 'dinged' it.

So I was seriously impressed with the customer service from this garage - they went well beyond what they needed to - after all, originally I'd just handed in the gearbox, so they could have insisted I take the engine and box out myself, but they didn't. So yes, a monumental mistake but dealt with superbly.

However, a garage is only as good as its worst employee and this garage's workshop manager wasn't the best. The GT had gone for its MOT and my usual tester had said everything's absolutely fine but I'd really need to get those sills done. So, I booked the car into the MG garage for sills, castle sections and a bottom half rear wing - I couldn't afford a whole wing. I

told them to put the GT through an MOT once the sills were done as everything else was A OK and it'd save me the hassle. A huge mistake in hindsight.

Now this is where things went pear shaped. I'd supplied tins of the pure dead brilliant black the car had been painted with and left instructions to use them so's they'd match. But they didn't, they painted the sills and the back wing in a charcoal black, which didn't match - quite noticeably in fact,

Then it got worse, the bill was £300 more than the estimate - and I didn't have the money. I asked the workshop manager why it was so far over -

Him 'It needed kingpins'

Me 'The kingpins were fine, my MOT tester said so'

Him 'Well, ours thought they were worn'

Me 'They can't be, they were new BL units, fitted three years and 30,000 miles ago and have been greased twice a year since. And why didn't you phone me before you went ahead and spent £300 on un-necessary work?'

Him 'I couldn't get through to you - I kept getting a bloke in Loanhead.'

Me 'What number were you trying?'

Him '440 2642'

Me 'My number is 440 2462'

So, the dofus had written my number down wrong, hadn't thought to try Directory Enquiries and then changed the kingpins without my consent. The clincher was my MOT tester's comment when I took the GT to him for his opinion - 'Helen, these are crappy recon units with far more play than the new ones that were on your car. They've ripped you off!' I think it was stupidity rather than dishonesty and I eventually paid the bill (when I had the money) but I'm afraid I never went back.

There's a lot of good garages out there but there are some not so good!

Helen Kirkness

Best Bitter for a Beer Salesman by Letitia Mace

[Editor's note – this article came profusely illustrated. As this month's news is already longer than normal, I've included a couple of pictures as a taster and will publish a full set of illustrations next month]

Bitter? Not me!!

I never thought that I would own a Bitter Coupe. I've always loved unusual cars and back in the early 80's I delighted in the blank expressions on the faces of my college friends when I announced that I wanted a Jensen Interceptor.

All the guys wanted a Ford Escort Mexico or Ferrari Dino None of them had any idea why – these were just the cars to aspire to at the time.

All the girls were impressed by this.... except me!

I knew exactly what cars I wanted, and why!

I remember seeing the Lynx Eventer advertised in Horse & Hound - a practical XJ-S with no buttresses - this was on my list too!

I cannot remember where I saw the Bitter Coupe, advertised brand new back in the 1980's, but I knew I really wanted one!

Stunning and rare - it ticked all the right boxes for me!

I never dreamt that years later I would meet a beer salesman who shared my same love of Jaguars and unusual cars – he too had always wanted a Bitter, but not the usual craft beer that he had become associated with!

We were attending the 2019 Restoration Show assisting on the Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club stand. Rob is a former Chairman of the club and our primary interest is in Jaguar cars, which is how we initially met.

Together we have attended every Restoration Show for the last few years, as well as the Classic Motor Show in November, assisting on the JEC stand. We've always taken a look around the auction while we were there, but we've developed a bad habit of bidding as well!

Two 3.6 Jaguar XJ40's have come from "Classic Car Auction" sales, as well as a rare manual 228, Maserati being another weakness of ours!

Being seasoned CCA clients we were on the catalogue mailing list and we would always look through it, each pick our 'dream car' and see if we both chose the same one. Usually we did – the black manual Maserati 228 being one of them!

From the 2019 Restoration Show CCA Spring Auction catalogue we both homed in on the Bitter SC finished in "Champagner" but it wasn't until we actually saw it at the show and inspected it that we really began to fall in love with it and hope that everything would go in our favour and allow us to become its next custodians.



With the advantages of modern technology, Rob was able to do some online research, despite being at the Restoration Show from Thursday's set-up onwards. The Bitter was fortunately one of the final lots, which not only went in our favour for bidding, but also gave us time to

do our research. Being such a rare car, it was not long before Rob had tracked down the Bitter Owners Club officials. They knew who had worked on the car and the owner. We were now in a position to bid confidently, rather than hoping the car was what it appeared to be.

Our friends on the JEC stand were watching and listening as bidding commenced - they had become accustomed to our Restoration Show auction purchases and were not surprised by the outcome, so having paid our deposit and arranged insurance, short-term storage and delivery, all we had to do now was assist in packing up the club stand and be on our way home!

We had her delivered to David Marks Garages in Nottingham for rectification of a couple of minor issues and a general health check before being delivered to us in Scotland.

Presented in immaculate condition, she was ready for the 2019 show season with no extra cleaning from us. Her tyres were a bit tired, so she had a new set of boots before we ventured anywhere. Despite being sold with a cherished registration number, we felt it was only right that she should be returned to her birth registration – C606TLT.

She is one of only five Bitter SC's, worldwide, factory painted in "Champagner" - and the only right hand drive example, so I christened her "Bubbles!"

Her first outing was to a Breakfast Club Meeting in The Scottish Borders, where she caused quite a stir and a lot of speculation as to what she might be! Despite clearly being badged "BITTER" so few people know of this brand that they don't know what they are looking at even when the badge is there in front of them! The few who do know what she is get very excited!

We took her to a few local shows then, in August 2019 we drove her to Orkney for the Classic Car Show. Orkney was interesting as we originally planned to take the Maserati 228, but at the last minute Rob wanted to take the Bitter, because with its basic mechanics it was less likely to break down! As it happened, disembarking from the boat in Orkney she failed to proceed, making quite a spectacle of herself on the pier! Despite the doubting onlookers, Rob

and our son-in-law, Carl, were able to sort the problem and restart her, with the applause of all those waiting to board the boat for the next trip away!



She limped to a friend's garage in Orkney with a mis-fire and we swapped her for a van while our friend, Eddie, sourced and fitted 6 new spark plugs. The ones he removed were shocking – the worst I have ever seen. That done, she behaved impeccably for the remaining

time in Orkney, including the show and the long trip back home to the Scottish Borders. Our eldest grandson, who was 5 at the time, has already decided that a Bitter is his dream car!

We were then invited by The Bitter Car Club to display her on their stand at the NEC in November. Admittedly they don't have many cars to choose from, but in Bubbles favour, of the three Bitter's that were displayed on the stand, she was the only one that wasn't trailered there, having driven down from Scotland the day previous, under her own steam as it were! The club officials pointed out that her vibrant gold coachwork drew more onlookers than the Silver SC and the Dark Blue CD alongside her!

One of the biggest drawbacks in driving the Bitter on the public road is the reaction it causes from other drivers, trying to work out what it is, and driving dangerously in so doing!

Not knowing what to expect performance wise, we were quite taken aback by her lack of performance which compared, on paper, to an early XJ40, but in reality was shockingly retarded.

Overall she drove very well, with everything working as it should, except for the automatic transmission – there was clearly a problem going into top. Research into this suggested that the 3 speed automatic was not a particularly desirable 'box and many had been swapped for manuals. We didn't want to go this route as it would compromise the cars' originality.

We changed the transmission fluid to begin with, then the vacuum modulator, but to no avail. It seemed that a gearbox overhaul was unavoidable, so back she went to David Marks in Nottingham, and I am pleased to say that all is now well and the work was well worth doing as she drives as we would have expected.

Bubbles was effectively a one owner car until purchased by us. As was customary for Bitter cars, she was initially purchased from the factory and imported into the UK by Bitter Dealer "Lendrum and Hartman" and used as a demonstrator in their Hammersmith showroom. When they went into receivership she was sold to a private owner who kept her for 33 years and for most of that time he used her as his daily car in London. In that time she had several major overhauls to keep her in good road-going condition, but it seems that he was caught out by the last workshop who were entrusted with her care, causing a few issues that have since been rectified under our ownership.

Recently he retired to Spain, purchased a modern LHD car and, not wanting to deal with selling an old friend, she was consigned to auction.

Many thanks to Werner Meynaerts for all of his help with her history and specification details – Werner keeps a register of every Bitter.

Many thanks also to Paul Keefe and Brian Dodd of The Bitter Owners Club for your help and support.

Words by Letitia Mace

Pictures by Esta-jane Middling, Letitia Mace and Rob Jenner

For Sale

Fred Magill's motor home is for sale, details below. Contact him at 07812 024 862 for more details. He also knows something about a Talbot saloon that's for sale. I don't have any details, but worth phoning Fred if you might be interested.

Mercedes 208 Auto-Trail 2 berth.

9 months MOT March 2021, Mileage 96600, 5-speed manual, Diesel locking cap
Ormister awning, Cycle rack, Under-seat storage/over cab storage
2 Gas bottles, Extension cable plus Euro adapters. Cassette Toilet
Radio /CD player, TV/DVD, Reversing mirror and camera supplied but not fitted (new)
Freshwater tank/grey water tank, Fridge, microwave, 4 hob gas cooker, grill
Gas space heater, Hot water heater 13 amp power points, Fire extinguisher

Ready to go for your summer tours £9,200



Well, that's all for this month – first time we've run to 15 pages! Please don't expect that to be the 'new normal',

David