MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

SOUTHAMPTON & NEW FOREST MGOC

Welcome to our new look Newsletter this month.



<u>This months main features:</u>

- Vintage Tyre's Breakfast by Martin Charles
- MG Z Cars at 25 by Martin Charles
- March Mid Monthly - hosted by Keith & Chris Parkins is a lunch at The Pitt Stop followed by a visit to Sammy Miller Museum.

Issue No. 346

FROM THE EDITOR



Hello everyone,

Welcome to our new style Newsletter. With a little help from Fiona, I was able to play with some new software and publish this. Hope you enjoy the new format and would welcome feedback.

Photos below are from the Febuary mid monthly lunch at the White Hart which was well supported.

Let's hope March brings some better weather and we can get our cars out.

Don't forget to send in your articles for next month.

Yvonne





SAVE THE DATE

As announced at the last Club night, we have provisionally reserved the Marsham Court Hotel on ***Saturday December 5th*** *this year for our MG Christmas Dinner Dance. Further details should become available in the Spring.*

SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES



Certainly a great month for those who love the water! I have to admit that I have not yet got my car out of the garage this month. Shame on me but I am waiting for a dry day - can be dry and cold but has be be dry.

We had another successful mid monthly lunch meet thanks to Kim & Kevin for arranging that for us all

Club Night on 4th March we will welcome our nominated charity for the New Forest Run - Elsie's Rose.

My thanks to our Editor for putting together a really great new style for our Newsletter this month. I am sure there will be some tweaking required along the way but I have to say - it looks good. Please continue to send in your articles each month to publish.

Fiona

https://www.1009mg.org.uk

Don't forget to keep an eye on the website for updates on the New Forest Run and other events that we are going to be attending this year.

MARCH MID MONTHLY

The March Mid monthly meet is once again a lunch time meet arranged by Keith & Chris Parkins - for Wednesday 18th March - details are: a lunch meet-up followed by an optional visit to Sammy Miller's Motorcycle Museum at New Milton. This museum is home to around 500 rare and exotic motorcycles from all over the world, one of the biggest collections in the UK. We can reserve places for you at Sammy's Pit Stop, this is their on-site cafe. We should aim to arrive there around 12.30pm and be seated by 1.00pm. Please see the menu and order from in the recently sent out email to all members.

Any questions email - treasurer@1009mg.org.uk

FUTURE EVENTS

For all events, please see our website for more info: https://www.1009mg.org.uk/runs-events-2026/

Or email our events coordinator - events@1009mg.org.uk











26TH ANNUAL NEW FOREST RUN

Sunday 7th June 2026



This year the New Forest Run will be starting and finishing at The Exbury Club. Refreshments are available and need to be pre-ordered on your entry form. Afternoon tea and cakes will be available on your return in the Pavilion and will not require pre-ordering. Entry Fee is £27 per car.

There will be the usual pre Run Skittles match on Saturday 6th June at The Huntsman, Brockenhurst. First ball away at 7:30pm - open to all New Forest Run entrants.

Entry forms for the run can be downloaded from our website -

https://www.1009mg.org.uk/new-forset-run-2026/

Our nominated charity this year is Elsie's Rose. A local charity from New Milton, Hampshire who support bereaved parents. Details can be found on: https://elsiesrose.com/

Confirmed Sponsor
Acorn Industrial Services Ltd (Solent)
Southampton SO16 9JW
https://www.acorn-ind.co.uk/our-branches/solent/

WHATS HAPPENING IN MARCH ?



- Wednesday 4th March Club Night - our nominated charity for the New Fores Run will be coming along.
- Saturday March 14th - Breakfast meet at Vintage Tyre's Beaulieu
- Wednesday 18th March - mid monthly lunch at Sammy Millers
- Practical Classics: Classic Car & Restoration Show will take place at the NEC from March 20-22, 2026

Tickets can be purchased via: https://www.necrestorationshow.com/ticket-information



Club Regalia - from Caroline's T-Shirts
https://www.carolinestshirts.com/
Tel: 023 5058 3332



VINTAGE TYRE'S BREAKFAST ~ MARTIN CHARLES

Saturday 14th February was the first of this year's Breakfast Meets with Vintage Tyres at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu. To say it was a relief after the weeks of rainy days to be greeted with blue skies and bright sunshine would be something of an understatement. Despite the slight chill in the air, a Latte with a bacon and sausage roll started the morning off perfectly. Numbers attending were reasonable given the time of year, but maybe a tad disappointing given the glorious weather. There is a hard core of regulars that turn up now to these relaxing morning meets, where we can exchange gossip about what we've been doing lately and what we'd like to day in the coming year. But there are always a number of vehicles that are attending for the first time, so it never seems to get boring.





MG ZS saloon and facelift MG ZR 5 door hatchback

The number of MG's present was certainly down on previous meets, but those in attendance were certainly cherished examples.





MG C GT, 3 litre straight six engine under the bonnet, hence the large bonnet bulge and a 1965 MG "Farina" Magnette, the least sporting of any of the MG saloons from across all eras.

Causing a great deal of interest were two Alvis models dating from the mid 1920's to mid1930's. The first is an Alvis Speed 25, this had a straight six engine of 4.3 litres producing 138bhp driving through a 4-speed all synchromesh gearbox to the rear axle. The nearest MG model of the time is the MG SA Tickford Drop-Head Coupe, pictured in blue. This had a straight six engine of 2.3 litres producing 78.5bhp driving through a 4-speed gearbox, with synchromesh on only on third and top gears to the rear axle. This had a folding roof which could be winded all the way back, or the front portion could be folded back for a smart Coupe-de-Ville look, the model favoured at the time by "Goldie" Gardener, the man who holds the record for the most number speed records in MG's. The second Alvis is, I think, is the Alvis 12/50 Super Sports circa 1925.









My ZT 160+ parked next to a very nice Rover 800 saloon.

The 800 was the first car to be fitted with the Rover designed KV6 four over-head camshaft, 24 valve engine with a bhp of between 160bhp and 190bhp. Rover had to develop this engine for two reasons, first The Rover 800 originally had a Honda 2.7 litre V6 engine, but Rover had to place an order every 6 months for the number engines required, Honda then manufactured and shipped them, but at premium price. The second was Rover needed a much more efficient engine that complied with stricter emissions legislation for the Rover 75, which would replace the 800.





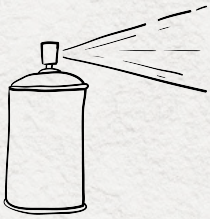
On the left Lotus Elite made between 1958-1963 and Lotus Elan 1962-1973.

The next meet is on Saturday 14th March, 08:30 to 11:30. So I hope to see you there.

REGGIE'S BACK !!



Hey, its good to be back - Eric sent me something to add this month !!





MG Z Cars at 25 ~ Martin Charles



It seems hard to believe that it is 25 years this year that MG Rover announced the launch of their new range of sporting MG Saloon cars. To start with I'd like to write about the history that led up to the launch of these important models in the long history of MG cars.

In 1993 British Aerospace, then owner of Rover Group, put it up for sale, the industry expected that Honda, who had a 12-year alliance with Rover, would come in and increase its stake in the business to become a 50% shareholder. However, whilst Honda was doing its due diligence, an unexpected bid came in from BMW. BMW's chief executive, Bernd Pischetsrieder was a known Anglophile and was a nephew of Mini designer Alec Issigonis, so he had seen in Rover Group a great opportunity to broaden BMW's appeal. At that time BMW had a model line-up of three saloons, all similar in profile but different in size and a couple of oddball sports models. It would also give BMW world class engineering expertise in the realms of front wheel drive and chassis dynamics technologies. In addition, BMW would also gain access to four-wheel-drive technology from Land-Rover and a presence in the small car and supermini markets.

BMW took control of the Rover Group in 1994 and following a product review that would eventually lead to the Rover 600 and 800 ranges being phased out. The Rover Metro was refreshed to become the Rover 100, then the introduction of the new Rover 200 and 400 ranges. Then launched the hugely successful MG F in 1995, that had been developed on a very tight budget. However, by 1997, the honeymoon was well over, the BMW board had started to seriously question the Rover finances and demanded a turnaround that was never to materialise. By the launch of the Rover 75 in 1998 at which Pischetsrieder took the unprecedented step of firing a shot across the British Governments bows, stating that without government support Rover will not survive. It was the beginning of two years of wrangling that would see the Rover Group slowly get broken up as BMW tried to relieve itself, of what they'd started to call it the, "English Patient".

Whilst the history of the period between 1998 and the sale of what was left of the Rover Group to what became the infamous 'Phoenix Four' for the nominal sum of £10 and a £500 million payment from BMW, for redundancies and company restructuring on the 8th May 2000, I won't bore you with the details, though it is fascinating.8

The task ahead for what had become ‘Phoenix Venture Holdings Limited’ looked difficult at best, first was an entirely new management structure that formed MG Rover Group Limited. Suddenly, as never before, the company’s design, engineering, manufacturing and marketing departments worked eagerly, knitting closely together to work with new enthusiasm to turn around the outlook for the Longbridge factory. Although their budget constraints were tight, in fact probably even tighter than before, they embarked on a programme to bring new models to market. Chief among these was something BMW had wilfully obstructed throughout its tenure of Rover Group. That was to bring a range of performance saloons based on the existing model range and wearing the iconic octagon of MG…..enter Z cars.

Phoenix already had plans for developing the Rover 25, 45 and 75 into the sporting saloon range of MG ZR, ZS and ZT. In fact the Rover Group engineering team had already done much of the work to develop chassis revisions in secret whilst under BMW ownership. So, the formula for sharpening up the cars handling dynamics was already known. Phoenix then brought in two key people to fully develop the new MG’s. Rob Oldaker, a former Rover engineer himself, as head of engineering and Peter Stevens as director of design. Stevens was responsible for the design of the McLaren F1 and Lotus Esprit, so brought with him some pedigree as well. This team, in less than a year, had the cars made in the metal ready to show the motoring world, the ZR, ZS and ZT made their debuts at the 2001 Geneva Show.



AThe MG ZR, available as either a 3-door or 5-door hatchback model, it had four power trains 1.4, 1.8 and 1.8 VVC all four cylinder K series engines and 2.0 turbo The completely revised suspension comprised of, Front – MacPherson strut with coil springs, telescopic dampers and anti-roll bar, Rear – H frame with coil springs, telescopic dampers and anti-roll bar. Steering - power assisted rack and pinion steering rack. Brakes – Front – disc brakes, Rear – drum brakes. The interiors were nicely appointed, sports front seats with back and leg bolsters to keep front seat occupants in place during spirited motoring.

In many ways the ZR was the easiest to bring to production, this is because Rover Group had already designed a body kit and suspension mods for the Rover 25 GTi VVC under BMW ownership. So, whilst there was little Peter Stevens could do to influence the styling, Rob Oldaker did more tweaks to the steering and suspension. At launch it had the four engine options, 1.4 litre producing 103 bhp which was a far greater output than many rival manufacturers 1.4 litre models. Next was the 1.8 litre producing 118 bhp, followed by the 1.8 VVC (variable valve timing) producing a healthy 160 bhp. Finally, there was the 2.0 litre turbo diesel producing 101 bhp for those wanting some frugal fun motoring. However, thanks to low gearing and a healthy torque output, under acceleration between 30 – 50 mph and 50 – 70 mph in forth gear it outpaced the ZR 160.
It was launched into the market with one main aim in mind, to attract younger drivers to MG marque, with this in mind the marketing team came up with a stroke of genius. A bargain base basement 1.4 – 103 bhp model for £9995 on the road. For drivers aged between 17 and 25 there were enhanced insurance schemes and affordable monthly payments. This meant these new motorists could have a brand-new sporty car for not much more a month in payments than they would pay for monthly insurance payments alone on a clapped-out Ford Fiesta! Within a year of launching this scheme the little ZR had gained something of cult following with young motorists. In fact the ZR would go on to be the highest volume selling car from within the entire MG/Rover portfolio.



AThe MG ZS, available as either a 4 door saloon or 5 door hatchback model, it had 2 power trains the 1.8 K series four cylinder and 2.5 KV6. Power was delivered via a 5 wheels. The suspension comprised of, Front – Independent double wish-bone with coil springs, telescopic dampers and anti-roll bar, Rear – Independent Multi-link rear with coil springs, telescopic dampers and anti-roll bar. Steering - power assisted rack and pinion steering rack. Brakes – Front – disc brakes, Rear – drum brakes. The interiors were, like the ZR, nicely appointed, sports front seats and folding rear seats on both saloon and hatchback to increase luggage space.

AThe ZS was seen as the least appealing model of the range being derived from the Rover 45. The Rover 45 was introduced in 2000 and was based on the 1994 Rover 200, which was based on the 1991 Honda Domani, so was basically 10 years old in terms of engineering. But it did have one saving grace, which Rob Oldaker praised highly at the launch, it had a fully independent suspension set up, which engineering fully developed further for the ZS to have best in class handling. At launch the motoring press was full of praise at the way the car handled, Autocar magazine said it was “the finest-handling front wheel drive car on the market right now”. It was powered by the 1.8 litre K series producing 118 bhp and the 2.5 litre V6 producing 177 bhp, the 1.8 had very neutral, safe handling and could be pushed really hard into corners. Whilst the 2.5 suffered very slightly with understeer if pushed too hard on entry to a corner, due to the much heavier weight over the front suspension. None the less Tiff Needell in the BBC Top Gear track test of the of 2.5 V6 had this to say, “To get a car that’s this quick, this much fun and that handles so well anywhere else will cost you a lot more money…..it really is that good”. Despite all this adulation it couldn’t hide the fact the car was woefully outdated. It may have looked pretty cool, but the hard plasticky cabin with bad ergonomics, nasty aftermarket radio/CD player and lack of cabin storage was highlighted in contemporary road tests. But for the MG enthusiast of sporting saloons, it quickly became the pick of the range.

AThe MG ZT, only available as a 4 door saloon, the ZT-T (Estate) wouldn’t be launched until September 2001, 6 months after the launch of the range. It had two power trains, both the 2.5 KV6. Power was delivered via a 5 speed gearbox driving the front wheels. The suspension comprised of Front – MacPherson strut, coil springs and anti-rollbar, Rear – Z-axle, coil springs, telescopic dampers and anti-rollbar. Brakes – Front and rear disc brakes. The interior had been completely redesigned from the Rover 75’s gentleman’s club appearance of wood veneers and leather. In came bright “Matrix” sports seats, metallic-finish dash trims, a chunky leather clad steering wheel, colour coded carpets and quality branded audio systems.



The ZT was the newest of the three models in terms of design and engineering, launched in 1998 whilst Rover was still under BMW ownership. Despite that fact, it still presented a number of challenges in converting it from a retired bank managers car of choice to a sporting saloon for young families. It was also the most difficult model of the three to bring to the market. Whereas the ZR and ZS offered performance motoring on a budget, the ZT was up against much more expensive models from rival manufactures, BMW 3 Series, Audi A3 and VW Passat. Stevens and Oldaker did a remarkable job, it was the model that Peter Stevens spent the most personal time to give it more presence in the way looked, particularly at the front. He was quoted as saying, “The ZT has what I call Outside Lane Credibility, when you look in the rear-view mirror and see that front end bearing down on you”. In the meantime, Rod Odaker and his team went to great lengths to change the way the car felt from the driver’s seat. Compliant but firm suspension which on a fast-flowing A-roads came alive, with great mid-range acceleration, an agile chassis that manged to combine impressive handling with a level of comfort not normally found on a high-performance saloon.

All this meant the ZT had a premium image, that meant unlike the ZR and ZS, it was only offered with one trim level with two V6 petrol engines. The most powerful was the ZT 190, using the 2.5 litre KV6 engine from the Rover 75 177bhp, uprated to 190 bhp using different camshafts, wider throttle body and bigger air intake. This was sufficient to give it a 0-60 mph of 7.7 seconds and a top speed of 140 mph, but it was the in-gear acceleration that was most impressive thanks to the low-down torque and responsiveness of the quad cam KV6. The lesser model ZT 160 was by no means any slouch either, using the 2.5 litre KV6 from the ZS 180, detuning it by modifying the ECU software to give 160 bhp that gave a 0-60 mph time of 8.8 seconds and a top speed of 127 mph. It wasn’t long however before many new owners had the ECU re-mapped to bring it back up to 177 bhp of the ZS 180.

Whilst this write up only describes the model range as at the launch in 2001, over subsequent years before MG/Rover’s demise, the range of each model was expanded. Further engine options, special editions, etc.. Whilst it safe to say the Z’d cars and the launch of the MG TF in 2002 turned the fortune of MG/Rover around. By the end of the groups first year of trading, it had launched six all-new cars, Rover 75 Tourer, MG ZR, ZS, ZT, ZT Tourer and TF. It had also surpassed its target of manufacturing 250,000 by 10,000 and set out to find external investment on the back of these milestones. However, the cracks in the business model had started to appear before the end of 2001, with “Project Drive”. A programme to reduce production costs by removing equipment from current models, simplifying specifications and trim differentiation between models.

The 3 cars pictured are MG ZR of member Carolyn Guest, the ZS and ZT mine.



Anagrams ~ Linda Taylor

British Cities:

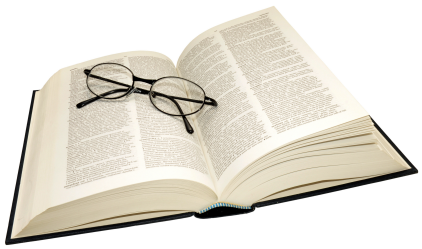
1.Giant Month	6. Euro Perth Bog
2. Test Kenn Rout	7. UN Retry ABC
3.Glum Bored Dish	8. BA Slants
4.Never Sins	9. Mutant Hoops
5. Plant, Hover, Mow	10. Dalek Wife

Famous British Football Teams: Answer does not include Acronym FC

1. Ghetto informants	6. Instrumented ache
2. Now nerd bloaters	7. Dreamier hot hunt
3. Wet dense lunatic	8. To the posh tantrum
4. Torrents hen pond	9. Karl nov scrubber
5. Constantly a cringe	10. I am two-inch slobber

Famous British Landmarks:

1. Lash law nadir	6. Halftone get horn
2. Directives fowl Hoff	7. Amicable gap chunk
3. Albert cook plow	8. Brod fighter
4. Adults preach salt	9. Acts Guinea ways
5. Corn jet deep	10 Newton Rodolfo



Answers on page xx

Brooklands, VSCC Driving Tests – 08th Feb
~ Martin Charles

Once again Last of Summer Wine fogies set off to Brooklands for the annual VSCC driving tests. This year was a dry day, if a little fresh, but we had a great day out. Members of the VSCC are very friendly gang, with lots of youngsters and lady drivers competing against the old die-hard male members!





On the left is a 1940's TC Midget and right is a 1930's MG Magnette K2, MG's make up the baulk of entries, along with1920's/30's Austin 7 variants.





On the left is an Austin 7 Chummy and right a 1930's Fraser-Nash Super Sports which was being driven with some enthusiasm by the young lady behind the wheel.

The event is a series of tests, comprising 8 separate coned courses to negotiate across the day. Each is a set coned route to follow which can include slaloms, boxes where they have to stop astride a set of cones before moving off again and reversing in and out of garages. Finally, they have to climb the famous Brooklands test hill, from a flat start up gradient which steadily rises from 1in8 to 1in4 at the top. We had a very entertaining day and we saw two cars fail to make it up the test hill. One of them was the above pictured MG Magnette K2, the driver gave it lots of beans off the start line and then changed into second gear. Which meant by two thirds of the way up, it suddenly just gave up, basically a school boy error.

Experienced competitors know it is tackled in first gear only and using steady throttle control, even the little Austin 7's and MG Midgets crawl serenely over the crest, usually to applause from the spectators.





On the left a very nice 1932 MG 12/70 Magna and on the right, one of the most intriguing cars of the day for me. Try as I might I can't find any history for this 2-cylinder, air cooled Peugeot, with cable brakes operating on only the back wheels. Peugeot started manufacturing petrol powered cars in 1890, having previously made steam powered vehicles. I'm guessing it was produced sometime in the early part of the 20th century. It was driven by a lady who wasn't sparing the horse's and who got the largest cheer for making it up the test hill. A fantastic day, just watching some incredible machinery, many of them you can clearly see things like open flywheels, suspensions working hard and wheels flip flopping about through the slalom sections. We love it!

The SWVA Winter Classic & Performance Auction – 29th Jan

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to accompany Compo and Clegg for our regular trip to SWVA in Poole where only 60 lots were going under the hammer, but that number is not unusual for the time of year. Of those 60 lots there were only 3 MG's and the boys tell me all 3 presented very well. The first was a 1969 MG B Roadster in Primrose yellow with steel wheels. Estimate of £3,500 to £4,500 it sold for £4,700. The second was a 1981 MG B GT LE, from the final batch of MG B Roadsters and GTs made at Abingdon before the factory closed. In Pewter Grey, correct alloy wheels and deck chair trim seats. Estimate of £4,000 to £5,000 it sold for nearly double the estimate at £9,400. Finally was a 1979 MG B Roadster, in Pagent Blue with painted Rostyle wheels. Estimate £4,000 to £5000, it sold for £6,500, which shows prices for really nice rubber bumper cars are catching up with chrome bumper cars now.

Next sale is on Thursday 30th April, when I'm looking forward to going again.



Answers !

British Cities

1.Nottingham	6. Petterborough
2.Stoke on Trent	7. Canterbury
3. Middlesbrough	8. St Albans
4. Inverness	9. Southampton
5. Wolverhampton	10. Wakefield

Football Clubs

1. Nottingham Forest	6. Manchester United
2. Bolton Wanderers	7. Rotherham United
3. Newcastle United	8. Tottenham Hotspur
4. Preston North End	9. Blackburn Rovers
5. Accrington Stanley	10 west Bromwich Albion

British Landmarks

1. Hadrian's Wall	6. Angel of the North
2. White Cliffs of Dover	7. Buckingham Palace
3. Blackpool Tower	8. Forth Bridge
4. St. Pauls Cathedral	9. Giants Causeway
5. Eden Project	10. Tower of London



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