




# The MESSage



Newsletter of the Middlebridge Enthusiasts Scimitar Set

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March 2025

## Mick's MESSage

Clearly, material is a little thin on the ground this time of year. Thus allowing me to briefly bore you with my new non Middlebridge project. As mentioned in my last MESSage I have a new toy that is really growing on me, it has allowed me to tinker and modify to suit my needs and desires and for the foreseeable future too. So, what is my new new toy? I purchased an all singing and dancing VW Transporter Camper T5.1 van that was professionally converted to a very high specification. It can sleep four and is short wheel base making it easy to use as a daily driver too.

I acquired it from, shall we say, a very well off Gentleman who purchased the van and oversaw the full professional conversion as his own personal COVID Project. He admitted that he went way over the top, specification wise, as every-time he visited the conversion company he was given a tour & shown their other customer conversion projects with items like huge infotainment systems, full bespoke leather interiors including captains seats, showers, night heaters, cookers 'n' sinks, two bed pop tops being fitted to other vans etc. Before he realised, he had requested all of the options for his build. Even more bizarre my van has never been slept in, the rear seats never sat on, indeed the rear carpet still had the new cover in place over a specialist floor.

I squarely blame George "yes you George" for this and for bankrupting me as being driven around in your van, your bragging about it all got me thinking..... my van is 2012 and for a very good reason, I no longer want the crazy intrusive features associated with new cars and their engines / electronics / data storage facilities etc, I personally don't like everything I do being recorded. Incredibly I paid more for my 2012 than some are asking for 2019 / 20 vans but I have the VW simplicity, low mileage, FSH and the well proven and sought after transmission I wanted, and was advised to go for by several very knowledgeable VW people. (Old School Cool me thinks).

If I wasn't daft enough to buy a camper van, in early Feb I took George to a Camper Mart event in Telford where I dug deep for lotsa goodies I couldn't live without, once again, thank you George!!

Another and an important reason for the van is that I no longer tinker with my Middlebridge and I believe she should stay exactly as she is now but with the obvious routine work as and when required.



## DVLA DRAMA

In my last MESSage I mentioned that in October 2024 I sold my Ford Ranger Raptor to a dealer as it was not an ideal daily, albeit an awesome tug vehicle for me. Anyway forward to December and I received a fine from Forecourt Eye for a fuel drive off from a Garage, it stated that I was driving the vehicle with no insurance and that I had been reported to the MIB (Motor Insurers Bureau).

It appears that my posted transfer to a dealer slip had gone missing at some point and being the registered keeper I had to prove to the DVLA, Forecourt Eye and the MIB that the vehicle was not in my possession at the time / date of the offences. I have to say the DVLA certainly pointed me in the right direction and gave me an email address called "being bothered" and asked me to send all I had to prove my case. I sent a copy of the bank transfer, I also sent a dated picture of the car for sale n the dealers forecourt the day after sale, my private plate change and a receipt from the DVLA. Stupidly they had the car for sale with my private plate still on and after the reg' change date. It took until mid- January but I have now been notified by the DVLA that the change of ownership has now been backdated on their records "PHEW"! I had built a rapport with Forecourt Eye after initially explaining my situation and they held my case while I worked with the DVLA. Needless to say both them and myself were delighted when I could finally prove my innocence, pass on the car dealer's details and prove my transfer date. They did say thank you and assured me they would be on it!!

Incidentally, Forecourt Eye are responsible for many of the cameras operating at fuel stations and when there's a drive off after a certain period all of the garages in the system block any fuel fill up for a particular vehicle registration.

I also forwarded the DVLA email to the MIB and they confirmed that their case would be shut down. In future I will transfer electronically or by registered / signed for post. This was actually very stressful and not something I would wish on anyone else hence this brief overview.

## MB 33

With No 33 tucked away for the first time in many years, I have done bi- monthly start-ups to temperature and a quick run up the drive way to keep everything free. My 1st event was on 16th February and needless to say I gave her a good going over and a good clean post hibernation. Her last decent run was the NEC in November but I did use her during December until the weather really changed for the worse and before the gritters made an appearance of course.

MB33 has long since become my favourite classic car, meaning way more to me than the more sought after classics I own. This is because she is and will be the last car that Matt (my Son) and I renovated and that was back in 2002 when I was younger and fitter and before Matt had kids. No 33 has also taken me on an incredible journey over the years and I have wonderful memories that I will treasure forever.



## Part 2, Ralf's Renovation of MB 63

Unfortunately, I haven't made as much progress with the car as I had planned. I didn't manage to put the body back on the frame before winter. That will probably not happen before spring. Since I don't have a heated garage, I won't be able to work much on the car over winter. Work on it is now on hold until spring 2025.

I have enclosed pictures of the further work since the last update. *(Ed. Fantastic progress!)*



The frame has been ready for some time now so that I could put the body back on. The last work before the start of winter concerned mainly the body. I largely cleared out the interior, removed the heater and removed all the electrics. I completely cleared out the engine compartment, had it sandblasted and painted (for now only the engine compartment, the rest will come later). Unfortunately, I forgot to take pictures of

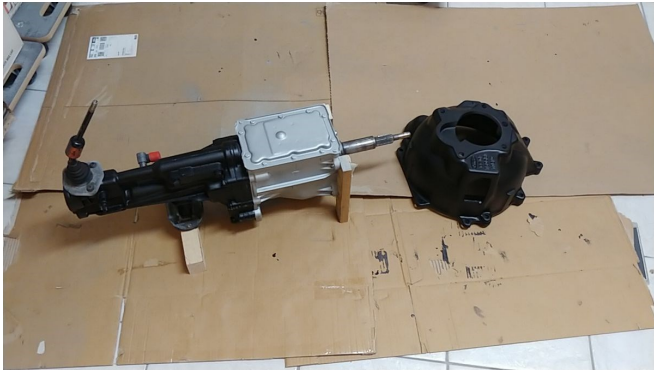
the painted engine compartment before I packed the body for the winter. The engine compartment is now painted white and the whole car will be white later. The bumpers are also already painted, in dark grey. I will send the pictures later in the year.



When the body is back on the frame, I will continue with the electrical wiring. But for now, it's winter break.

Mick Comments: "Ralf, the speed of your restoration is incredible; you are now very likely to be the 1st owner to complete a "full body off" restoration of a Middlebridge Scimitar and incredibly in Germany. I /we really do look forward to hearing your 3rd instalment and I totally agree about the cold garage, shudder, shudder..... "





## 2025 Events Calendar:

Please see our events calendar below, together with the relevant web links. If you are interested in any of these events, please do contact us expressing your interest. We would also consider turning some events into a Middlebridge touring weekend. (let's hear your thoughts)

### Diary Date:

After last year's fiasco, Please see below, we have been very pro-active on the events front hence already even having a confirmed (highlighted) date for our 2025 Xmas meal, this will give anyone plenty of time to book up the Premier Inn if needed and is adjacent to the Brewers Fayre.

### MESS Calendar 2025

(Please note events highlighted in blue already have MESS members attending)

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(Please note events highlighted in blue already have MESS members attending)

Start Date	End Date	Event
06.04.2025	06.04..2025	Three Counties Show Ground Classic Car <a href="https://classicshows.org/events/festival-of-transport-6-april-2025">https://classicshows.org/events/festival-of-transport-6-april-2025</a>
<b>27.04.2025</b>	<b>27.04.2025</b>	<b>Drive it day &amp; combined AGM (meet &amp; Bee keepers Pub, Beeston, for AGM 7 lunch + visit Lilac Grove, the home of Middlebridge)</b>
18.05.2025	18.05.2025	Oakham Classic Car Show Rutland <a href="https://www.carevents.com/uk/events/classic-wheels-oakham/">https://www.carevents.com/uk/events/classic-wheels-oakham/</a>
TBC	TBC	Dordogne Adventure (Phil McCauley Chateau)
15.06.2025	15.06.2025	Classic Car & Bike Show Brookhill Hall, Pinnxton Nott's
28.06.2025	29.06.2025	Bloxham Steam Country Fair, Nr Banbury, OX 15 4HD <a href="https://www.bloxhamrally.com/">https://www.bloxhamrally.com/</a>
TBC	TBC	Cotswold Run Morton in the Marsh, Glamping, B&B or Hotel
TBC	TBC	Crouches, Nottingham x Lilacs Grove, Re-Union etc
05.07.2025	06.07.2025	Hollowell Steam Rally <a href="https://www.hollowellsteam.com/">https://www.hollowellsteam.com/</a>
20.07.2025	20.07.2025	Sherborne Castle Classic and Supercar . (Somerset) <a href="https://classic-supercars.co.uk/">https://classic-supercars.co.uk/</a>
<b>14.08.2025</b>	<b>17.08.2025</b>	<b>Scimfest</b>
10.08.2025	10.08.2025	Retro & Classic Vehicle Show, Brookhill Hall Pinxton Nott's TBC <b>Wings &amp; Wheels Lincoln LN42QU</b>
<b>07.09.2025</b>	<b>07.09.2025</b>	<b><a href="mailto:info@internationalbcc.co.uk">info@internationalbcc.co.uk</a></b>
Various	Various	Caffine Machine
<b>06.11.2025</b>	<b>09.11.2025</b>	<b>Lancaster NEC Classic Car Show</b>
<b>29.11.2025</b>	<b>29.11.2025</b>	<b>Brewers Fayre, Xmas Dinner 2025</b>

## For Sale / Wanted

The Pre-Production Middlebridge and the LHD MB76 are still for sale but we also have MB19 which appeared originally on Facebook around Christmas time. It is a low mileage car which, from what we know, was bought in by Graham Walker around 2008 and sat awaiting refurbishment which took place around 2015 before the car was sold through Graham Walker in 2016.

It has had light use since then and has been well maintained by Queensberry Road Scimitar. The car is in good condition and comes with a good history and many receipts for work done. It is showing 63,000 miles and drives very well with good paint and interior condition. The full advert is on the Middlebridge website.

## Light hearted banter

I thought I would once again finish off my epistle with either a look back to better times or something a little light hearted. Hope you like the two pictures.



Wife: "The car is not starting. Dashboard shows the sign of a person sitting on toilet."  
Husband: "What...??  
Send me a picture."



## MESSy Meets

MESS meetings are held on the **FIRST** Tuesday of the month at 5pm in The Brewers Fayre Pub, Rugby CV23 0WE. All enthusiast's welcome to join us, owner or not. Banter expected and very much encouraged. [PLEASE NOTE WE HAVE CHANGED TO THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH].

## ZOOM Meeting

We hope to, in due course, re-establish our zoom meetings as they proved to be extremely successful with many owners and enthusiasts taking part that simply live too far away to attend The Brewers Fayre monthly meet. Indeed, we have people from Europe & Scandinavia joining us during the evening, The zoom invites are emailed out by Will our host.

## GEORGE'S JARGON

Hi Fellow MESSers. Long time – No write!

No, I haven't fallen off my perch...just yet.

Constant reminders (to self and from others) to compose something have been thwarted by so many delays and interruptions. 'Minging Manor' renovations being the major culprit, as you can imagine.

Having finally uncovered my garaged Velocette Venom last November, I've put the battery on an 'in-line' charge! Still not ridden it yet though...time, weather, all the above!

**THIS YEAR...**

Welcome then - to this year's slightly different programme of events...which are (deliberately) quite fluid at the moment. These suggestions are such that we hope it will inspire more owners to show their cars alongside the usual suspects. There are a number of reasons for this – the obvious one is to show the public that there are more than 6 cars left!

I have no problem with meeting up with the core membership, nevertheless it would be advantageous to encourage other owners to join us, to help promote the Middlebridge marque to a much larger audience. The big problem is (I believe) that there are only about 11 cars that are actually registered for road use, the rest being sorned, understandable at this time of the year, but that figure was for last 'summer time'.

With many cars having changed hands over time, are we seeing the more current owner not actually driving the car but just buying it merely for the sake of owning a rare piece of motoring history? If that is so, I think it's a real shame. The main reason I sold my Middlebridge was that it ceased to be my 'daily driver', a role it performed perfectly but was decaying from lack of regular use.

I can fully appreciate that others prefer to use theirs for special purposes, nevertheless to have one slowly degrading in a garage isn't the best of ideas and can be hellishly expensive\* and timely to bring back into full use again.

Taxing your Middlebridge for even 6 months is not cheap, one way to make it a little cheaper is to (say) sorn it after just a couple of months of use! You'll get back some tax money...

\*Lying on a bench in a local cc repair workshop was a ventilated disc taken from a Porsche, despite being on stands and in dry storage for about 20 years, the vents had rusted away leaving two plates. You can imagine what the rest of the car was like, sadly...

Please have a look at the programme and consider if you can attend what's been suggested, perhaps you know of a show that you think is worthy of our support? This is an idea that we've regularly aired but has never been adopted, surely there must be other events? There's little point us attending shows miles away (and all the costs involved) from where the main suspects live, if those who live closer fail to support us, I suggest.

One of the most important things that Mick and I strove for, from the very beginning, was to insist on 'The MESS' not being 'clicky', it's a very difficult objective to maintain when there is just a few folk willing to be active, but we do try, and everyone is more than welcome to join us and at any event.

## LAST YEAR

A bit late, I know! Fortunately others filled the MESSage with a variety of interesting material, the 'Lincoln Lecher's (aka Syd, Alan T) articles were highly entertaining and amusing, which proves the point that we welcome everyone, despite their defects.

Maggie and I arrived on the Friday for the IOW Extravaganza show, and having parked our caravan, I then drove my VW T5 to the area at Newport (for a recce), where the cars would be shown on Saturday. With the 'Middlebridge Task Force' signs adorning the van's sides, who should I encounter was Paddy who has taken over the



Organising since the death of Victor Gallucci. Paddy advised that we 'The MESS' should be on site at 8.30am on Saturday for Prime Position. This I relayed to our mob, who decided that was too early and I think it was about 10am when we all finally got together, and was far too late for the Prime Position that we would have had! Curses!

As I was leading our convoy, I was asked to drive out of the area that was heaving with both cars and visitors, go around the block, come back in again, where we would be allocated a different spot, which wasn't ideal, also not fun in an area that you are not that familiar with, nevertheless...we did get something out of it, by the very fact that we had to go all the way through the mingling crowds who were watching our very slow progress with curious interest. This was enhanced by an 'oh blimey' moment when, coming towards us, and giving it some, was a uniformed brass band, both of us taking up all the narrow road, somehow we managed to squeeze pass each other and yes I did laugh!

We've decided not to do the IOW again, for a while anyway. The Organisers have reverted to its previous format of having the 2-day event at two different locations. It was felt that it interfered with what worked better for the past few years when it was held only in Ryde. Then it was easy to



drive the cars early to our 'spot', park up, go back to the Hotel for breakfast, then return for the actual show later. Having the show at two places made that impossible. The Organisers will be notified of our decision and the reason why...

Once again this year's NEC show was hectic, yet somehow it was lacking something and I cannot think what. For me the highlight came when former owner and generous funder, Andrew Sait, visited our stand. Living near the London exclusion zone, Andrew found it impossible to use his Middlebridge as he wanted to, so he reluctantly sold it, sad eh! *(Ed. It certainly wasn't lacking footfall, we all had difficulty getting time off the stand and it got to some of us more than others!!! (See pic right!))*

Andrew always contributed to the Zoom meetings...perhaps they should be resurrected this year as a means of increasing fellow enthusiasts' interests in The MESS?

We've been supporting the Sywell show since its inception, after last year's disaster (weatherwise) that too is not to be this year. The entry fee for Joe Public is unbelievably expensive, with food and drink prices to match, leading to much lower visitor numbers. It's the well-known cycle of a self-inflicted problem, which I've witnessed since the 1980's. Will they never learn?

Nothing can be done about the weather, obviously – but the hailstones and high winds on Saturday led to all of us hanging onto the awnings rails for fear of it becoming airborne and wrecked! This included the surprise ballast in the shape of Will and Jane, blown down from the wilds of Scotland. Saturday evening I received an email from the Organisers stating that the Sunday show had been cancelled, understandably so. A few of us had to return though – to dismantle the awning and retrieve chairs, tables etc. Sywell have confirmed that this year's entry fee will be reduced as compensation for Sunday's cancellation, however it's an offer we can refuse.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS?

There has been discussions in the Classic world, bikes or cars, about the values of vehicles crashing, indeed my Velo is valued at £10k for insurance purposes – it's a price I could have easily sold it for a year ago, today I'd struggle to get £5k. There's always the exception, of course, for something special – such as 1420H.

It is thought to be due to the lack of interest by the 'younger' member of society who do not possess the same passions that we did in our younger days. Where are tomorrow's engineers, mechanics and the like coming from? There seems no encouragement to be 'practical' anymore. Ordinary everyday vehicles of yesterday seemed to have something more appealing than what's available today, especially when a computer is needed to diagnose any fault, nevermind the (im) possibility of a diy repair. Why would you want to tinker or modify something that's so difficult to do?

How to rectify this situation then, how to show others what they're missing, and possibly derive much pleasure from?

I don't claim to have the answers, but I do have a suggestion which I aired at a motorcycle Club AGM – when I had finished an enthusiastic and spontaneous round of applause was heard.





We need to show our vehicles to the younger person, perhaps at a School's Open Day, perhaps a College Open Day, perhaps with a notice saying 'you can drive/ride this'. We put on shows at established, specialised events, consequently we are simply preaching to the converted, whereas we need to be seen at more general places, such as a steam rally, a local beauty spot such as (say) the Cotswolds, a shopping centre, a marina... You get the gist and will have ideas of your own, no doubt. The point is we are in great danger of losing our skills, heritage, history, by letting it slip away through being idle, blinkered even lackadaisical.

I should add that despite the round of applause mentioned, nothing further has been done...

## MY MIDDLEBRIDGE

Ralf Lang's experience with my car is a warning to us all. Despite being looked at (and after) by my MOT mechanic and the chap who services my VW, some faults discovered could only be detected by removal of those items covering such problems, such as rust in the chassis where the shock absorbers fit. Oil that had leaked onto the chassis didn't reach there either. What's your chassis like, then?

Some electrical parts had stopped working properly, probably through lack of everyday use, so how are your switches, relays, motors? More worrying is the steering rack which had been renovated and hardly used – again is this the outcome of not using the car regularly?

I must add that Ralf was offered the opportunity to see the car in-the-flesh before buying it, I had an arrangement for the car to be seen on a ramp, etc, at any time when he visited. He decided not to journey from Germany and relied on photos and the mechanics reports. Buyer beware!

Germany's road users do not enjoy the 'freedoms' that we have in Britain. The after-market Avo springs and shocks\* I was experimenting with are just not allowed. There are no deviations from what was original equipment. Even something such as wing mirrors must be exactly as approved. Should you drive your brand-spanking-new BMW from the Salesroom and get a puncture, both tyres on that axle must be changed. A bit extreme I reckon...

\*I wonder if Ralf could return the Avo's to Britain for someone else to carry on the research? Any takers?

## MERCHANDISE WORLD

This was a show that I visited in nearby Coventry to see if there were any companies producing items of use to the MESS. 'Storm' were there, they made the chrome effect 'Scimitar' dome badges that fitted over the original steering wheel badge and the hubcap badges too. (Other designs are/were available). Storm cannot get the same chrome effect material, there is something close to it, but it's not as shiny. They are continuing their search and experimenting with alternatives, but nothing yet has come up to standard – indeed one looked the part, but dissolved in soapy water!

The MESS could do with renewing the current mat we use at shows – it's the shield with the word 'Scimitar' across it, I found a company that makes mats in all sorts of better materials which would be sharper, brighter, crisper, but we're not in a financial situation to afford one yet!

In the past Mick or I would finance such things, eventually we might achieve some financial return, perhaps even covering the initial costs, then donating the remaining items so swelling the MESS funds, sadly neither of us can do that anymore.

## BADGES

Grill Badges. Reminder! You cannot buy one as a spare. There are sufficient badges (just) for those cars without one. There will be no more made as the manufacturer (who I recently visited at his home), retired some years ago, sold the business as a going concern, the new owner hasn't a clue where our patterns/moulds are, consequently to remanufacture the tooling would cost an eye-watering £10k.

As all current Badge owners know there is an engraved, personalised, code on the back of each badge, should it become damaged and need replacing, you **MUST** return it to me before I can issue such a replacement.

This is one way of confirming that your Scimitar is a genuine Middlebridge and not a rogue modified Reliant.

Newer Middlebridge Scimitar owners, who haven't a pukka grill badge, can still buy one at £70.00. Steering wheel badge is £3.00. Hubcap badges £1.50 each. The quality of the latter is not as good due to age, however I will send double the amount ordered. As mentioned elsewhere in this epistle, I am trying to source the same original quality which will be much dearer, but for now...

Postal Charges as of early 2025 are:

First Class Packet £4.99.

Second Class Packet £3.95.

First Class recorded (signed for) £6.39.

Second Class recorded (signed for) £5.35.

Special Delivery (next day, before 1pm, tracked) except Saturday £9.35.

Postal Box and packing £1.

Please make all cheques payable to 'The MESS' and send your order to: 14 Overslade Manor Drive, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 6EB.

## FINALLY – FINANCES

After the appeal for donations in February we have managed to increase the funds by £1,000. A massive thanks to the following people who contributed to that: -

Steve Coulson, David Egginson, Peter Freeman, Andy Goss, Peter Humphries, Dr John Lloyd, Peter McLuskie, Steve Robinson, David Scarle, Alan Timmis, Mick Gaughran, George Sampford, Will Anderson.

This is the fantastic support we get from owners so if you are able to add to that we would be grateful.

Stay safe.

George DB



## **MESSEMBLY**

In person. The monthly MESS meeting has resumed and be held on the First Tuesday of each month at 5pm in The Brewers Fayre, Central Park, CV23 0WE. Every enthusiast is welcome to join us, owner or not. Banter expected and encouraged.

Virtual MESSEMBLIES will continue with the invitations sent to members by email.

## **MIDDLEBRIDGE ACCOUNT**

Lloyds Bank, Lewisham (309089)  
120 Lewisham High Street, Lewisham  
London SE13 6JG .

Sort Code: 30-90-89.

Account No: 49350668.

BIC: LOYDGB21256.

IBAN: GB79 LOYD 3090 8949 3506 68.



MB31 Photographed by Flickr User Neil Potter