

NORTH HAMPSHIRE *AUSTIN* ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
Founded 1973

Monthly Newsletter and Events Update

www.nhaeg.org.uk

DECEMBER 2008

Club nights at The New Inn, Heckfield, 8pm, 2nd Monday in every month

Christmas Club Night

We thought it would be a bit of fun at our December club night, when we always get in a festive mood, to play “Through The Keyhole” based on the television programme of that name.

What we would like is for members to bring along a photograph, taken anywhere in their house or garage, which will then be passed around the club members. The idea is to guess whose house or garage is in each photograph. There obviously needs to be a subtle clue in the photograph. If your house is well known to any other members then it would be best to take the picture in a room they would not have visited i.e. a bedroom or bathroom etc. It goes without saying that if you submit a photograph of your garage make sure your car is not in it!

Please bring the photographs, preferably 4 x 6 or 5 x 7, although other sizes will be accepted, in a sealed envelope with your name on the front. As the photographs will be passed around they may possibly get a little soiled so please do not bring one which is of any value.

There will be a prize for the member who correctly identifies the most photographs, so get your cameras out and start snapping.

Colin's Column

With the continuing bad weather that we seem to have had all this year, I have not been out in Arabella at all, although with all the preparations for the Nightjar there was not a lot of time to do so.

I did however find time, along with Don, to go to the VSCC Autumn Sprint meeting at Goodwood, which I mentioned at the last club night, although I have to admit we went in my modern. It was an excellent day out and for once it was dry, which at least meant we could have the hood down there and back, although it was a bit cold.

There were a huge variety of cars taking part in the event, ranging from various models of Austin 7 up to a number of giants with aero engines of huge capacities. Included in the latter was an Edwardian Austin with a 10-litre engine, which looked quite a handful to drive. (See the photograph below).



“With a 10 litre engine, I bet it goes faster than my Chummy!”

As well as watching the cars perform it was also interesting to walk round the paddock where we bumped into a number of people including Tony Westall.



It was very enjoyable and admission was free, what more can you want? I would certainly recommend a visit next year.

Our Auction at the November club night was very well attended with members bringing plenty of things to pass on to other members for a small fee. With his persuasive powers Don was able to find buyers for most of the items. Amongst these were quite a lot of car related items, including some interesting books. I managed to get a few of the books along with a couple of jig saws and a glue gun still in its original packaging.

As usual 10% of the proceeds went to club funds, which amounted to £18.75.

Many thanks to Don and also to Trevor who as usual had the unenviable task of keeping notes of all the deals and settling up with everyone at the end of the evening.

The Nightjar was again a great success and it was good to see six entries from NHAEG members, although unfortunately, one was unable to make it on the night. Three of them managed to pick up prizes. Dave Holland with his navigator Mark Coggle won a prize for the best performance by an Austin 7 and also the Valentine Breakspear Trophy for the highest marks by an NHAEG member. Andy and Do Ranson achieved an excellent score, especially considering they were competing for the first time and won the prize for the best performance by a novice. Andrew Barker, who was driving the Austin 7 belonging to his mother Jan, with his navigator John Chad won the prize for the youngest driver in a pre-war car. Well done to them all and also well done to everyone who took part.

From the comments received it would seem that everyone had a good time and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. If you have never entered the Nightjar why not consider having a go next year? I am sure you will have a lot of fun.

An event like the Nightjar obviously takes an awful lot of planning and work and involves a great many people. I would first of all like to thank all the Committee for their time and commitment in the months running up to the event and on the night itself. I would also thank the 12 marshals who were stationed at the various manned controls, including Rob (Trevor and Jean's son-in-law) who very kindly ran the Soup Kitchen for us. Thanks must also go to all the ladies at the Elizabeth Hall who ensured a very warm welcome to all the competitors when they returned. Without all your efforts the event just could not take place and I know that all the competitors are very grateful to you all.

Details of our December club night are elsewhere in this Newsletter. Please come along and join in the fun, and if you want too, why not wear something festive. Don't forget to bring along a photograph taken somewhere in your house or garage.

This is the last Newsletter of the year so I would like to wish every one of you and your families a very Happy Christmas.

See you at the Christmas Dinner.

Safe and happy motoring,

Colin.

Secretary's Scribblings

Committee Nominations for 2009

As many will realise the time is fast approaching when a new committee for 2009 has to be appointed.

Although the current (2008) Committee has indicated that it is willing to serve again in 2009 there is, separately, elsewhere in this Newsletter, a double form produced for the use of members wishing to nominate another, or others. Members are reminded that anyone may nominate anyone else, the three criteria being that the *nominated* individual must be a currently registered member of the NHAEG, that the *nominating* member has firstly obtained permission from the person he/she is nominating and that the nomination is seconded.

Please use this form and ensure it reaches me at 55, The Brambles, Crowthorne. Berkshire RG45 6EF, soonest or by Friday 9th January 2009 at the very latest to be included in the Ballot Form.

Christmas Dinner 2008

Following the call last month for 'last orders' for the Christmas Dinner we now have a total of 30 members who will be sitting down to dine on Monday 1st December at the Downshire Golf Complex, which is situated just off the B 3430 (Nine Mile Ride) between Bracknell and Crowthorne,

For those who may not know the exact location here are some directions which should help you find your way there.

The actual postal address, which is given as Easthampstead Park, Wokingham, is a little misleading since it is much closer to both Bracknell and Crowthorne. The best approach is along the B3430 (Nine Mile Ride). There are two possible entry points to the complex. One is directly off the B3430 using (oddly) the entrance to the Easthampstead Crematorium, which is clearly signed.

The second option is, taking the Old Wokingham Road out of Crowthorne and reaching the Pinewood roundabout, proceed straight ahead (2nd exit) for about ¾ mile then take a sharp right turn into a drive signed 'The Hideout' Thai Restaurant. Take care since this turn is immediately before a turn left to Wokingham and traffic is often waiting to turn out of the road onto the road you are on.

For those fortunate enough to have Satnav the Post Code is RG40 3DH

For those with an OS Landranger Map No 176 the map reference of the Golf Complex building is 846 666.

Finally, if you get lost the telephone number of the Downshire is 01344 302030 and my mobile number is 07518 043663. However, please feel free to call me on 01344 775012 beforehand for verbal directions if this might help.

In any event, please remember timing is **7:30pm for 8:00.**

'Sponsor a Veteran'

Many will have been following, with interest, Karen (Witton's) account of the Normandy trip in June when a number of us went over the Channel, in our ancient vehicles, to join in the D-Day Celebrations. In particular she has given mention to the fact that she and Dave have come up against one of the veterans of that momentous episode in our country's history and have struck up a rapport with him. Undoubtedly she'll be continuing her story in this and subsequent Newsletters.

2009 marks the 65th Anniversary of the D-Day landings when so many countless deeds of bravery and selfless acts were performed by those, in all three services, taking part. Many of the survivors of that campaign make the trip over every year to participate in the numerous celebrations taking place and to visit the sites where poignant memories are resurrected annually.

Sadly, however, there are some who, though dearly wishing they could make the trip are, through reduced circumstances, prevented from doing so purely for financial reasons.

Learning this and prompted, no doubt, by her experience talking to this particular veteran, known to us at this time only as '*Billy*', she recently put forward the idea of our club 'sponsoring' one such individual to make the trip next year, for the four days or so over which the celebrations and services are held. Next year, being the 65th Anniversary, is going to be a big occasion when, it is rumoured, a member of the Royal Family will also be in attendance. Learning about the plight of those who served this country so well and at such cost in those dark days of 1944 but who are now unable to take part in something in which they, more than anyone else, deserve to share makes Karen's proposal something which we, as a Club, could really do something about and perhaps should consider seriously.

Therefore, the proposal was put forward at our November committee meeting, to ask Karen to research the issue using various appropriate agencies to hopefully identify a suitably *deserving* individual and also to determine an estimate of what costs might be involved were we to bear or at least subsidise the likely costs, associated with sending a veteran over to Normandy in June 2009. This, she has agreed to do and we await her initial findings, at this time, with interest.

Once some details are known the notion will be put to the wider Club membership to seek its support in proceeding with the proposal and in making a donation from Club funds in order to get it off to a good start. The general plan from thereon will be to focus on this particular 'good cause' as our 'charity' of choice for 2008/2009 with the holding of events and activities such as a 'Bring and Buy' Sale (February Club Night) and others. Indeed, any suggestions from Members towards this end would be especially welcome.

This whole idea of 'Sponsoring a Veteran' is only just emerging but it's felt that it's one which will attract widespread appeal and support since the concept is one with which we, even a club as modest as ours, could make a significant difference to one (or perhaps even more than one!) life.

Therefore please give the subject some thought and consideration over the next few weeks and be prepared for discussion on the issue at the AGM in January.

Many thanks!

MSA Club Development Fund

Very early this year a number of the Committee attended a seminar held at the Holiday Inn, Basingstoke. The seminar was given by the MSA (Motor Sports Association), with which we are affiliated, and covered a variety of topics some of which were of interest to a club such as ours (though some were less so).

However one subject which we were made aware of is the existence of a so-called Club Development Fund within the MSA. The fund exists to offer grants to member clubs in order to subsidise the purchase of equipment and even assist with larger projects.

Accordingly, some two months ago I submitted an application, on behalf of the NHAEG, for a grant towards the purchase of some items which, the Committee felt, would benefit us in staging certain activities, for example, the 'Nightjar' Navigation Scatter Rally, (just held).

In due course we received notification that our application had been approved and we have been granted the sum of £250.00 towards the purchase of the items we specified. These included the following:

- 8 Flashing Amber Lamps (magnetic base) for use by Nightjar Marshals.
- 1 Measuring Wheel for use when setting up Nightjar control points.
- 1 Large Face Rally Clock (Nightjar use)
- 1 Club Banner, with stand, for use at outdoor functions and to advertise the Club's presence.
- 1 Small Portable PA system, for use at Club nights when necessary, especially for the use of visiting speakers.

A condition of the grant is that we bear approximately 50% of the cost of such items. Action is currently being taken to secure the purchase of these items which, it is felt, will be of considerable benefit to the Club. When received they will be displayed for inspection by Club members.

*That's about it for 2008 although you've got to put up with me for the next 3 Newsletters whilst our esteemed Newsletter Editor, Maureen, goes, with Don, on her annual walk-about in the Antipodes!
So, all that remains is for me to echo Colin's words and wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and (dare I say it?) a Prosperous New Year!*

Trevor

Don's Doodlings

WHY I CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH FLY TIPPERS!

Monday morning was bright and sunny when I arrived at the council tip to dispose of the Nightjar catering waste.

As I drove in there was a man standing in the gateway, obviously a council employee and without doubt, he had been on a very extensive safety course. He was following this right to the letter as he was wearing a pair of safety boots, Day Glo trousers, Day Glo jacket, protective gloves, a safety helmet with fixed ear defenders. To cap it all he was wearing a pair of safety goggles. I think there could have been a nuclear explosion and he would have been the only one within a 25 mile radius to survive.

On winding down the truck window, I pulled alongside this gentleman and he said "good morning, can I see your certificate?" This is how the conversation continued (all very civilly I might add):-

Me: Good morning, certificate for what?

Him: Your certificate to dispose of commercial waste.

Me: No, this is not commercial waste, it is domestic waste from a party and consists of old fish and chips, sausage and chips etc. polystyrene containers etc.

Him: No, it is classified as commercial waste as it is on the back of a commercial vehicle.

Me: So what you are saying is, that if I go home and put all these smelly bags into my car and return I can dispose of them here?

Him: Yes.

Me: I really don't believe this. (I am still smiling).

Him: Why don't you fill in the form for a certificate to dispose of commercial waste. It is completely free and I have one here.

Me: OK, that sounds good. When I have filled the form in, can I unload?

Him: No, you have to send the form to the council offices, the address is on the back.

Me: How long will it be before I receive the certificate?

Him: If approved, three to four weeks.

Me: I don't think I can leave it that long, I will have to put it out for our bin men. Anyway, here is the form filled in for the certificate.

Him: Thankyou. OH WAIT, this is no good your postcode is RG and that is Reading.

Me: I know, I live in Finchampstead which after all is only just over the border isn't it? (Hoping to appeal to his better nature).

Him: No, as you come under Reading you cannot dispose of the waste here, it costs us over a million pounds a year to dispose of our own waste.

Me: Yes, I can see what you are saying, I do live in the Reading area but the waste on my truck is from Hook which is in Hampshire.

Him: Whereabouts in Hook?

Me: The Elizabeth Hall, it is from a party, as I told you.

Him: (A lot of mumbling whilst he looked in the back of the truck).
Was the party a private family do?
Me: Well no, it was the end of a vintage car night rally where all the competitors came back for supper and this is the catering waste.
Him: Well, OK unload it in skip number 4.
Me: Thanks very much.
Him: Hold on, did you say the “do” in Hook was a private “do” or did they pay?
Me: Why yes, they paid to go on the rally, it’s a yearly event which has ended up in Hook for years.
Him: Well, if your party is paying it makes it commercial waste and you have no certificate so the best thing you can do sir, is to drive away, as there is a large queue behind you.
Me: (Still smiling). Thankyou very much and I drove away.

(I would add, I did NOT fly tip the waste!)

I hope you all have a good Christmas and New Year. I will see you at the March Club Night!

Don

Attention all budding "Ronnie O'Sullivans!"

A non-member has a serviceable snooker table to dispose of. It is a 6ft x 3ft model and comes with a full set of snooker, billiard and pool balls, two cues, snooker frame and score board. He isn't offering it for sale; it is free although he has mentioned that, if anyone would like it and is able to collect it (from the Crowthorne area), he would be very happy if some donation to Club funds were to be made.

Anyone interested should contact Trevor in the first instance (01344 775012 or trevor_c.edwards@btinternet.com)

I shall say this only once – Part 3

One of the most interesting and moving places to visit is Pegasus Bridge. This crosses the Orne and is where the first airborne forces of the Ox and Bucks landed in the early hours of the 6th June under the command of Major John Howard. It was imperative that Major Howard and his men captured the bridge in order to deny the enemy the supply route to the coastal defences and protect the invasion bridgehead.

We visited this place twice, once during the day to explore the area, visit the excellent museum, see the original bridge from all those years ago and then later at midnight to participate in the special midnight ceremony which is timed to coincide with and commemorate the landings of the gliders that fateful night. It seems incredible now that the French government was prepared to send the original bridge for scrap and was only saved by veterans who wanted to preserve it for history.

We arrived during the day on the 5th and it was absolutely packed with the veterans and their companions. The Pegasus Bridge café – owned by the daughter of M and Mme Gondree who owned it during the war – is the place where most veterans sit with coffee and watch the bridge traffic. The museum is on the other side. Molly led our merry band across the bridge and then we all skilfully parked opposite the café – watched of course by all the old timers!! We managed to hold up the traffic quite spectacularly – but the French certainly do not mind and in case anyone did, our tail end Charlie – Pete Barlow – ensured that nobody infiltrated the convoy!! I know that Molly is little but it still took me a couple of goes to ensure she was skilfully parked so that our merry band of ten could all fit in by the old tank opposite the cafe – something which just had to be done. It is very pleasant eating lunch outside and made more so by the camaraderie of all whom we meet – they all have interesting stories to tell. It was during this little sojourn last year, as I was surveying the scene that Pauline Barlow rushed over and said that she had met a lovely chap – Billy Ness – who was a veteran of Pegasus. She dared me to go over and say”Hello Grandad”. Now how could I refuse!! I duly crossed, nay skipped, across the road and put my arms around him as I said “Hello Grandad”. Everyone laughed and we all talked for ages and so we met Billy Ness and his supporters.

Billy’s story is just another fascinating read. He parachuted in on 6th and saw action until wounded 2 weeks later. He was shot and therefore needed treatment. That day he was packed off for treatment. The evening after he was wounded, his battalion entered a fierce battle at Escoville. Only 5 of his battalion survived. Billy is convinced that had he not been wounded he would not be here today! Once Billy had recovered he returned and fought his way through the war. Another veteran with amazing and moving stories to tell and despite the trauma of those experiences and despite the fact that he gets nothing now except his state pension, he remains cheerful.

The museum at Pegasus is spectacular. It houses a fabulous array of memorabilia, also the remains of one of the Horsa gliders as well as the original bridge. It is extremely moving to read about the extraordinary feats which took place. There is information on Major John Howard who led the Ox and Bucks that historic night. He was just an ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances. Also read about Capt. Den Brotheridge – he was the first casualty of the assault on the bridge – shot whilst

crossing the bridge within 10 mins of the glider landings. He is buried in the churchyard at Ranville next to the commonwealth war grave cemetery just up the road from Pegasus. The actual Bridge now preserved within the museum has the indentation where the Germans dropped a bomb hoping to blow up the captured bridge. Unfortunately – for them and lucky for us – it failed to explode, simply making a dent which you can see today. We also visited Ranville where we participated in a moving ceremony. After that we were treated to a display by a Police Band who had travelled to France for a few days. When we were talking to them, we discovered that the trip is entirely self funded by the individual police officers who had to take leave to undertake the trip – now that is dedication indeed. We all sat on the grass and listened to a scintillating display. Even George and Ruth got all the way down - mind you I did help George up again and sure I heard a bit of creaking.....

After a full day it was nice to once again sample the delights of the restaurant. The hotel was very accommodating as they organised for us to eat relatively early so that those who wanted to could be ready to set off for the midnight ceremony at Pegasus. Seven cars and well wrapped up owners set off on a clear night. I have to say that there is something quite special sitting in an open top car travelling at night. We arrive and it is so crowded but we manage to find a few little spaces – the joy of driving our little Austins! There is a special ceremony on the spot where the gliders actually landed – when we listen to Major John Howard’s daughter and also a recording from the man himself. After this there is the ceremony of the piper as he walks across the bridge – it sends shivers down my spine. Finally there is a speech by Madame Grondee at the Café. The Café is a fascinating story – it was the first place to be liberated and the owners Monsieur and Madame Grondee were an invaluable source of information. Unbeknownst to the Germans, Madame Grondee spoke German and she kept this a secret throughout the war years. She would listen to the German soldier conversations and then relay this to her husband who spoke English. He would feed the information to the British. This way the British were kept well informed of troop movements etc as well as the location of the detonators for the bridge. The Germans had rigged all the bridges with explosives so that in an event of capture, they could blow up the bridge. Thankfully the intelligence was so good that this was prevented. History has it that when the troops arrived, Monsieur Grondee promptly dug up the champagne which he had hidden in 1939.

A nice brandy upon our return to the hotel at 2am finished off a perfect day..

(Our thanks go to Karen Witton for her lovely ongoing report!

Mo's Mutterings

As most of you know, I am handing over the editorship of the newsletter to Trevor until March. That is unless someone else volunteers their services at the AGM in January. We shall see!

I wish you all a **VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**

Maureen

2008 COMMITTEE CONTACTS:

Chairman:	Colin Greig	01189782087 (colin@greigc.freeseve.co.uk)
Secretary:	Trevor Edwards	01344775012 (trevor_c.edwards@btinternet.com)
Treasurer:	Jean Edwards	01344775012 (trevor_c.edwards@btinternet.com)
Editor	Mo Breakspear	01189733568 (maureenbreakspear@yahoo.co.uk)
Committee:	Don Breakspear	01189733568 (maureenbreakspear@yahoo.co.uk)
	Peter Adams	01256419344 peteradams666@msn.com
	George Ewart	01344778286 (george.ewartx@btinternet.com)
	John Hancock	01189885387 (route66_2003@hotmail.com)

EVENTS DIARY UPDATE!

January

12th Club Night AGM

February

9th Poss. Talk on Wind Turbines

March

9th Poss. Bring and Buy

April

13th Spring Airing

May

11th TBA

June

8th Half-gallon Run

July

13th Concourse

NHAEG 2009 Committee Nominations

Current Committee members have indicated a willingness to stand again for re-election for 2009. However, you are invited to nominate *any* current member of the Club to serve on the Committee, providing you have obtained their permission beforehand. You are also invited to nominate yourself should you wish to do so.

Current Committee:

Officers:

Colin Greig (Chairman)
Trevor Edwards (Secretary)

Jean Edwards (Treasurer)
Maureen Breakspear (Newsletter Editor)

Members:

Don Breakspear
John Hancock

George Ewart
Peter Adams

Nomination(s); (please state for which position nominated):

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Nominated by:..... Seconded:.....

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