



Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders MG CLUB

www.MG-Edinburgh.co.uk



FEBRUARY 2026



Ernie & Elizabeth at the GoF Gymkhana in Arizona

Credits: Helen, Tony H, Martin, Graeme, Fraser

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Name: Anthony Holmes (Tony H)

Occupation: Retired veterinary surgeon

MGs and current state of repair: I bought my first MG in 1970 when I was still a student. It was a Midget, from Jimmy Veitch's garage in Merchiston Mews. An ex-team car for the Scottish Autotest Championships, it had belonged to David Hall of Broxburn. With a bored-out Speedwell Stage 4 tune, nitrided camshaft, branched exhaust manifold, wide wheels, oil cooler, etc. and it was like S*** off the Proverbial Shovel (or a Bat Out of H*** if you prefer) I had no idea what any of that meant, except it got me a lot of free drinks at the old MG Club!



After I qualified, I bought a 1974 MGB for £1,700, the only new car I have ever owned. I used it on my farm rounds, earning the nickname 'The Flying Syringe'. This car distinguished itself by reducing a yellow Ford Granada to something resembling a banana on a 3-lane road near Wakefield. The only damage visible inside the MG's cab was a broken windscreen caused by my girlfriend (Caroline) carelessly banging her head on it. To be fair, the dog had eaten her seatbelt. Also the young lady on the rear parcel shelf hurt her leg. That car is still on SORN somewhere.

I bought my current 1976 rubber bumper MGB during my first overseas leave, back from Botswana in 1980. During my 4 year absence from the UK there must have been a major programme installing speed cameras. As a result, when showing my 4 year old son that an MGB could go at 100mph, I got 3 speeding tickets. Luckily I was back off abroad again shortly afterwards - for the next 20 years. The car was then entombed in a lockup until 2001 and again from 2008 to 2015, and christened 'The Red Mummy'.

When I retired in 2015 the MGB re-emerged and I joined the ELBMG Club. It is in good bodily condition, but needed new sills around 2004. It is now fairly reliable, and as it was in storage for so long the mileage is still under 70,000 - photo on next page.



What is your normal car? My normal car is 'Betty the Yeti', a 2012 Skoda bought in 2015. (I really wanted an XK8 but good sense prevailed). As a smelly old diesel, it spends a lot of time trying to avoid the LEZ. A brilliant workhorse with its current registration plate (1234 AH) probably worth more than the car!

Mileage travelled in the last year in the MGB? Only about 400 miles, mainly restricted to club runs.

Who are you insured with? Footman James insures the car. I have a 'Fleet' policy, covering the MGB and the Yeti, as well as a 1939 Standard 8 and a 1974 2CV. Currently the premium is around £650 which doesn't seem too bad (but I'm open to alternative suggestions!).

Who does your repairs? Jim Syme at Stuart Autos in Balcarres Street, Morningside keeps my MGB on the road and does its MOTs. Normally I would have tried to keep this a secret, but I've been forced to divulge this information due to the rigid article format dictated by Mrs Grumpy!

Favourite run? Favourite runs have been all/any arranged by the club. Socially, scenically and mechanically they have all been great fun, along with my trusty navigator who is gaining in experience - directing me up cul-de-sacs and into front gardens with less frequency.

Going on drives with more knowledgeable club members increases confidence. For example, on one memorable occasion, when a front wheel started to smell a bit around St Boswells, Dave McAnena was on hand to show me where to hit it with a hammer. Problem solved.

If it had been the front leg of a horse I would have known what to do.

A CLOSE RUN QUIZ



A seriously cold and icy night saw enough ELBMG club members brave the weather to make two teams for the quiz night. Team One being Paul, Donald, Peter, Tim & Graeme and Team Three was Jim, Tony, Dave, Chris & Ron. They then got their brains exercised by some challenging and some less challenging questions.

There was Steve's 'Guess the Country' using the shape of said countries - this was either very easy or really rather difficult. My month by month of events during 2025 saw both teams scoring well. Allan's 'Things about Vehicles' questions required a bit more thought. Craig's '12 Days of Christmas' required even more thought and a good knowledge of ELBMG club website, events, newsletter and calendar.

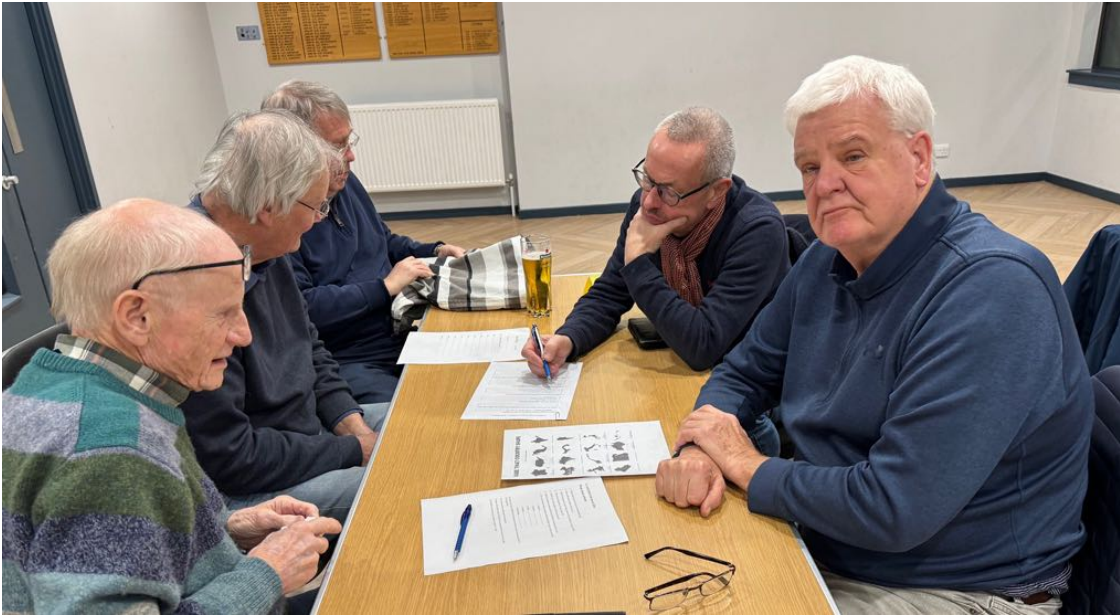
The committee had a go at the questions too and Yours Truly scored well on the calendar question (well I do set it up) but failed to read the question, which asked for the 2025 calendar and not the 2026 one - Duh!

Finally, there was Andrew's 'Feely Bag'. There was a complaint that there wasn't any car stuff - but as Andrew said, 'the car bits last year was so easy everyone got them right.'

Team 3 squeaked ahead to win their prize of a Christmas tin of Celebrations - which they kindly shared around.

An enjoyable evening and thanks to those that set the questions (especially Craig!) and to the members who braved the Baltic weather. As usual, I add some photos of members enjoying themselves. [Mrs Grumpy](#)





CARVERY LUNCH

A small but select group of 20 members met up on a dreich Sunday for the annual carvery lunch at Lauriston Castle Toby Carvery. The food was plentiful with a large selection of joints and veg - much more than you usually get I thought. Also you could only have one large Yorkshire Pud or two small - one small wasn't an option!

Anyway, we all enjoyed the lunch and had a good blether, setting the world to rights and discussing future events. Many thanks to Martin for organising and good to see Royston & Anne Goodman and Paul & Liz Taylor at the lunch. [Mrs Grumpy](#)





MYSTERY CAR

Fraser sent this in and asked what it was. I don't know - but are some of you more knowledgeable chaps any the wiser? Answers to Mrsgrumpy as usual.



THE V8 GREMLIN IS ALIVE AND WELL

Well, Keiran Boyle was brave enough to take on the V8 and her Gremlin! He was warned, but he smiled and said she can't be worse than the pre-war cars.

Anyway, he removed the engine & gearbox, fitted a new clutch and her original gearbox which had been rebuilt by Heathrow Transmissions. The noise at idle was the clutch release bearing but the jumping out of reverse wasn't anything to do with the clutch of course. He put the whole lot back in, with the Gremlin was asleep throughout as there were no problems.

Then he started on fitting the EZ power steering. I'll say now, I deliberately did not go for the hydraulic system - pulleys and pumps in the V8 engine bay, while possible, are not what I wanted. I preferred the EZ system from Holland.

Anyway, I asked Clive Wheatley if there was an EZ system for a RHD rubber bumper V8, he checked with Holland and yes there was one that would fit a RHD car, but they'd never fitted one to a V8. Now, I don't know when the wires got crossed, but a system for a RHD car is not the same as one that will fit a RHD car - so what I actually got was the LHD system which will fit a RHD MGB.

Keiran discovered this the hard way as if he offered it up with the motor pointing to the door, the ignition lock was in the wrong place!! If he fitted it with the motor pointing to the console, then he'd have to cut out a chunk of the console and reckoned it would foul the fresh air vent.

In the 1800cc, the fresh air vent not working isn't really a problem, but in a V8 it is. I have awful memories of roasted feet when the V8 had the cast iron exhaust manifolds, even with the heater off and the air vent open fully, you got seriously toasted feet - to the point of discomfort. Once the car got tubular manifolds, the residual heat lessened - but you'd still want the air vent open.

I phoned Mike Howlett who'd fitted the EZ system to his early V8 conversion and he said cheerfully "Oh, I can't use the air vent, I just put up with being hot!" So, I'm not a happy bunny and now thinking of not fitting the system. I entered the email conversation between Keiran, Clive and Ruud from EZ in Holland. I have to say, Clive was great when I explained why I wasn't happy and Ruud offered to send a tube with the ignition switch in the correct place so Keiran could fit it with the motor pointing to the door, providing it didn't hit the wiper motor.

I asked Keiran to investigate and he thought he'd have to move the wiper motor 30-40mm which would involve a lot of serious hassle like removing the dash and shortening things you'd rather not shorten - so not an easy fit. Meanwhile, I'd had a rummage in the attic and found a mint V8 centre console that I didn't know I had, along with the scruffy one that I knew about.

That made me happier about cutting into the existing one (I always like the option to return the car to standard if required) and Ruud in Holland said people generally don't need to use the manual adjustment, so I don't have to have a large switch fitted somewhere in the V8's very original interior. The final clincher was that Keiran found the air vent would open 3/4 of its travel, which may mean it'll only stay open at the first setting - but that will be enough now the car has tubular manifolds. So, the EZ PAS is getting fitted!

I then get a phone call saying the U-J for the steering rack was faulty (that explained the 'jump' at full lock) - so a new one bought. Then one of the propshaft U-Js was found to be a bit chewed up - it wasn't noisy but since I've never changed the U-Js on the propshaft in the 40 years I've had the car, they don't owe me anything and they got changed too. Beginning to look like the Gremlin has woken up!

Next phone call was to say the steering rack was knackered - "But it's been reconditioned and was only fitted in May!" So, up to Inverkeithing with my spare reconditioned rack (which was the V8's original one that was meant to go on Boris so I could get rid of the Argentinian one that's fitted to him) - that rack passed muster and is getting fitted.

I have to say the final installation of the EZ power steering is a lot neater than I was expecting and Keiran fitted the adjustment switch under the dash so it can't be seen but is within easy reach if required. OK there was a lot of hassle for Keiran, but that was due to me expecting a RHD version - had we gone straight for pointing the motor to the console, there would have been less grief all round!

From what Keiran discovered, I don't think a RHD version for later cars will be an easy option because of the immovable wiper motor. EZ have fitted a RHD version to an early MGB (without the collapsible steering column) and managed to move the wiper motor enough - but in the photos it looks like it may be in a slightly different position from cars with the later collapsible column.

Anyway the power steering is lovely, well worth the trouble and I'm glad I opted for the EZ system. Admittedly, I've only driven round the block a few times at slower speeds (too much salt on the main roads) but it feels delightful to drive - and full lock coming out the lock-up is now so easy!

And the Gremlin? Well, there is an unusual growling noise in reverse when you start off and then it segues into a noisier-than-usual-but-fairly-normal-sounding reverse gear noise. Reverse is always noisier in any MGB (something about straight cut gears) and much worse in V8s - but I've never heard that funny growling noise before. Anyway, phoned Heathrow Transmissions and they asked for a recording. Duly sent one and Gary phoned the next day - he agrees it is a bit noisy but reckons it should bed in. There was one part they couldn't replace as it's NLA for

V8s (laygear or layshaft? I'm not up on gearbox bits). He assured me it won't fall apart and should settle down - so it's a case of live with it and at least it's not jumping out of reverse!

I do wish I could have sent both V8 gearboxes down and told him to make one decent one out of them - but the logistics were simply too difficult. And yes I know the Mazda 5 speeder is a lovely gearbox, but having to take TAJ's engine & gearbox out within a year because the concentric slave cylinder leaked kinda put me off it.

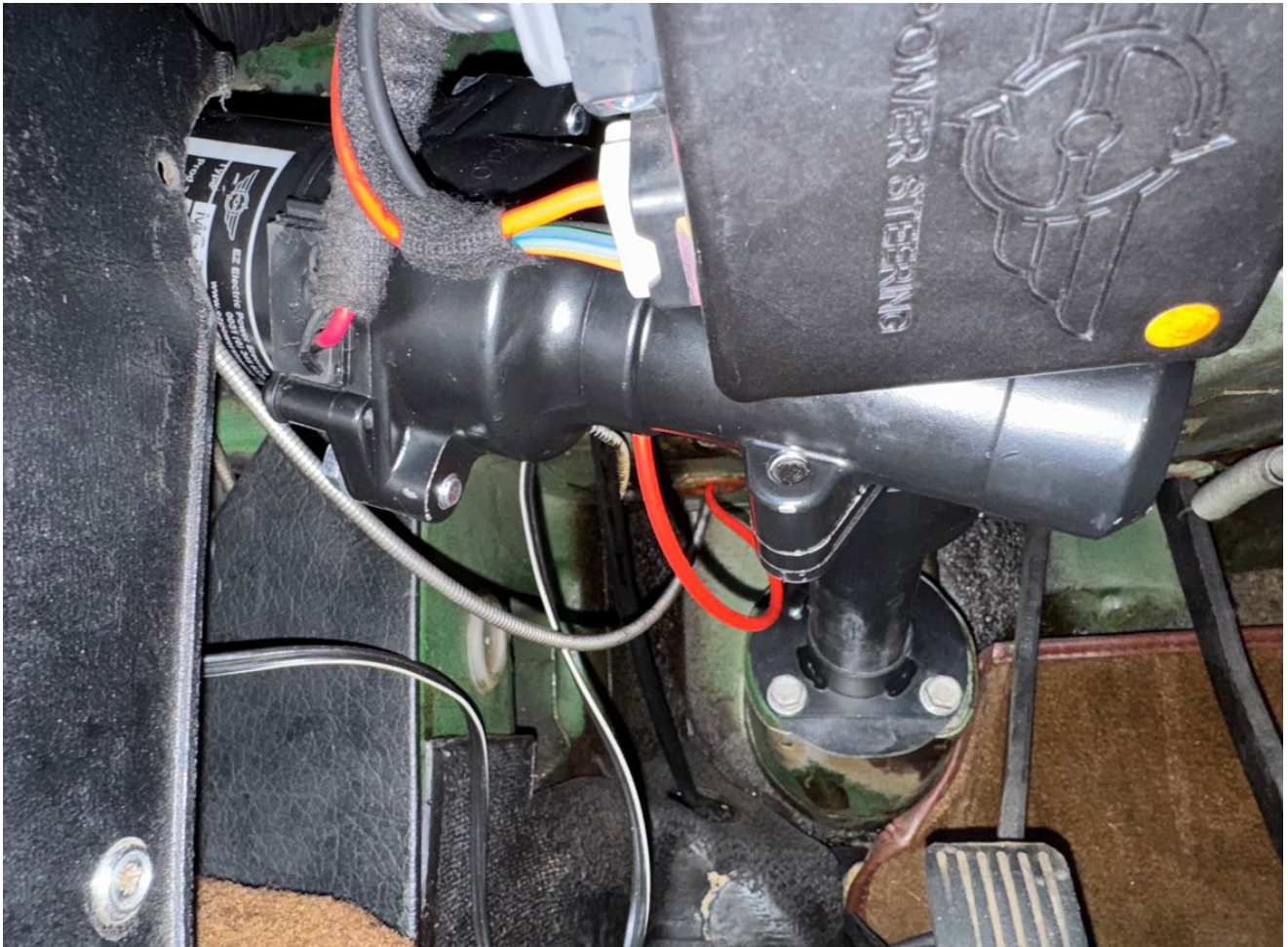
Anyway, the V8's back, going well and I'm pleased we persevered with with the EZ system. Keiran is looking on the experience as a learning curve - avoid V8s and their Gremlins!!

Mrs Grumpy



The V8 stripped down and the EZ PAS being offered up.





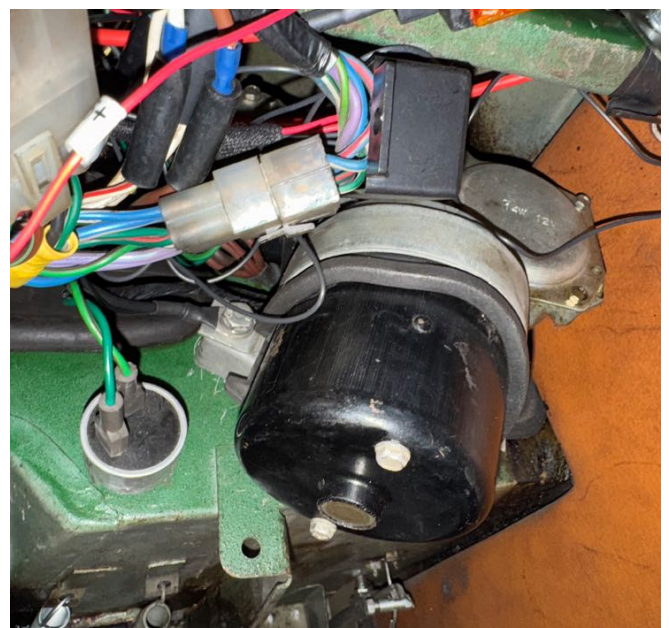
The assembly finally fitted



The neat controller



The offending wiper motor



THANKS

Andy says thanks for his Get Well Card and Honorary Membership and wishes everyone a Happy New Year.

MEMBERSHIP SUBS ARE DUE - PLEASE CONTACT ANDREW

It is £15 per household including children up to 18. You can pay by cash, cheque or preferably by bank transfer. This is due by the end of February.

The club details are: Edinburgh MG Club, 80-22-60, 14185469.

MANY MOONS AGO

2018; our last visit to Classic Restorations in Alyth - it's well worth another visit.



GOING FOR A DONATION TO CLUB FUNDS

MGB Roadster door, driver's side. It got a new door skin a few years ago. Door carcass was wax treated at the same time. The door is free, with perhaps a small donation to the club funds.

Available to view at his home address, 35 Grigor Avenue, EH4 2PG. Contact Richard Middlemiss at 07426 465446.



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Please feel free to contact the committee if you have any queries.

Monthly meetings have resumed at the rugby club, second Thursday 7.30 for 8pm

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All provisional

February 12 Meeting, AGM & Raffle

February 22 Visit to Stewart Brewing, Loanhead. 16 places available 4.30-6.30pm. Please contact Steve.

March 12 Monthly Meeting

March 14 Technical Day, visit to Classic Restorations, Alyth. 10am -12. Please contact Andrew

April 9 Monthly Meeting & Raffle

April 26 Drive It Day with BVAC

May 10 Stirling Classic Car Show - as on previous page.

May 14 Monthly Meeting

May 16 Fisherrow Harbour Day

May 24 tbc Classics in the Park

June 11 Monthly Meeting & Raffle

June 14 Tayside Classic Car Show, Errol Airfield, please contact Steve

June tbc Joint Run with Glasgow MGO

July 9 Monthly Meeting

July 11 Dunbar RNLI

July 12 SVVC Glamis Castle Show with Tayside MGO

August 13 Monthly Meeting & Raffle

August tba Run to Bo'ness Motor Museum