



Joke: An old guy in his Volvo is driving home from work when his wife rings him on his car phone,

"Darling", she says in a worried voice, "Be careful! There was a bit on the news just now, some lunatic is driving the wrong way down the motorway",

"It's worse than that!", he replies, "There are hundreds of them!"

### Chairman's Chat

*It's with great pleasure that I take the reigns from Colin in becoming the next chairman of our little club. We have great members and a good strong committee who are very dedicated to maintaining a smooth running and eventful club. We hope this year will be as exciting as last and with some good summer weather to come. Let's look forward to some great days out and reducing our stress levels. Keep your ideas and suggestions coming for days out and we will try and make room on 2005 calendar. Happy MG in' Steve Moore*

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## CLASSIC CAR MOTORING in EUROPE

Or

## THE DO'S, DON'TS and WHY'S of the BUSINESS

### Being the woeful tale of an MGB Roadster and its hapless owners.

The dos: Take out European Cover at the top rate.

The don'ts: Do not break down.

The why's: Well, are you sitting comfortably? You'll need to; this just might take some time..... I'll begin.

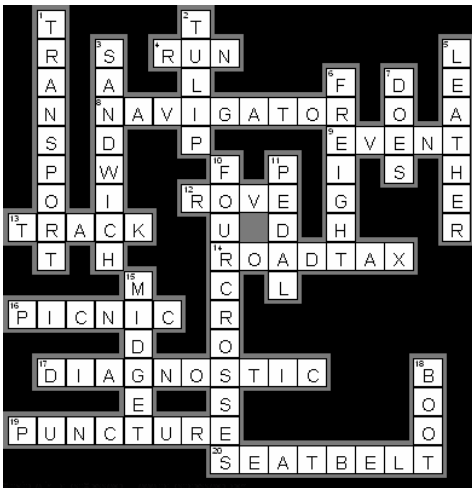
Tartan red coat gleaming, dear old (35yrs+) WFD 363H left home on Thursday morning carrying soft old (?+) driver and passenger who were ready for anything. WFD had been serviced, greased, and with brand new Green Stuff to stop her, she too was ready for anything. Mind you I was a bit miffed as I backed out of the garage, we had a short but wet shower. Still, time schedules must be maintained so I stifled back the tears and reversed her into the rain. My brave words rang true when I said to Val "this is the last rain we'll see for ten days".

I won't drag out the next bit because I know you only want to know the messy, gory details. Suffice to say we had a pleasant dry, and later sunny, run to Portsmouth with time for a drink at the Mayfly, a nice pub on the river Test near Stockbridge.

We had a nice meal and bottle on the ferry and disembarked for an overnight stop in L'arvr (well, it sounds like that!). Friday's uneventful run ended when we interrupted an Anglo-Scottish bottle party in full swing at the back of a hotel in Limoges. Bad planning or what! It turned out to be the Carmichaels and the Cameron hyphen Clarkes, already half cut and ready for a scrap on the car park. Tempers calmed when eventually I offered to buy a round, the second time in two days I had to fight back the tears! Anything for Entente Cordiale.

I am dragging this out, aren't I? Never mind, it will build up the suspense for what will be a tense and emotional finale to the holiday of a lifetime. You hope!

Saturday morning was a cold crisp one, as fast as you cleared one side of the screen the other side misted up. Anyway it promised a fine day so we didn't complain and hit the road for our final leg to Issigeac, 19k south east of Bergerac. Our route took us through the pretty valley of the river Vizere to our lunch stop at the village of les Eyzies, the 'capital' of cave man culture. Cro-



## Across

4. RUN—It's quicker than a Walk
8. NAVIGATOR—aggrivator
9. EVENT—an occurrence
12. ROVE—Wander
13. TRACK—off road, road
14. ROADTAX—Some of us get this for free!
16. PICNIC—A packed lunch
17. DIAGNOSTIC—To identify a problem
19. PUNCTURE—deflated
20. SEATBELT—stool band

## Down

1. TRANSPORT—Vehicles which move and carry things and people
2. TULIP—double kiss
3. SANDWICH—The main ingredient for a Picnic
5. LEATHER—cow hide
6. FREIGHT—Lorries carry it
7. DOES—3rd person singular of To Do
10. FOURCROSSES—quadruple bad tempered
11. PEDAL—foot lever
15. MIDGET—tiny person
18. BOOT—Americans call it the trunk

Magnons and their mates clearly heavily populated this area of the Vizere! After a good lunch of Cassoulet, a traditional meal of sausage and beans with a duck leg thrown in for good measure, we continued south, crossed the river Dordogne and reached our digs mid afternoon. It was a fine day and all in all, a very comfortable one.

Mike and Anne carefully timed their arrival to avoid the food run to the local supermarket. They said with a shrug, "It just worked out that way" I think they waited out of sight down the lane until we had gone, then slipped in. The remaining two crews made very good time in one hop from Caen and arrived about half sixish.

Now that all parties were present 'Standard Procedure 1' was activated, everyone visited everyone else's gite and proclaimed, "Oh it's lovely".

To be fair, though, they really were super. 'Standard Procedure 2' followed shortly after, or maybe there was an overlap; the pulling of corks and ring pulls! The true start of an SSMGOC holiday! Late to bed, hangovers you know the sort of thing.

Sunday was declared a day of rest. Where have I heard that before? Just a trip to Issigeac market in the morning and a barbeque early evening. The week that followed, growing a vague memory already, was filled with trips to Saint Emilion, Rocamadour, la Roque-Gageac, Domme and Bergerac. One day, however, remains fresh in my mind.

We had been chatting with Bunty, our landlady, to sort out some Bastide towns (no, I haven't got it wrong!). Graham, our history buff, wanted to see some examples of these places. They are in, the main, ancient hilltop towns that were occupied and fortified by the English when we ruled Aquitaine.

Bunty suggested a scenic route that would take in two such, together with a hilltop chateau, which afforded fine views of the area. This was to be the start of a longer run to Domme. We didn't get there!

Our first stop of the morning was Monflanquin a splendid example of the genre (that's French, I'm not sure what it means but I've heard it used on Radio 4), which occupied more than its allotted time, but well worth it. Consequently we left there with food and drink on the minds of everyone but our leader. He was wrestling with the problem of just where he might slot in a party of twelve for lunch.

We reached Chateau Biron (that of the vistas) and wondered whether or not to stop. We were starving by this time and pretty views do not fill empty tumms. However the more aesthetic of the group prevailed and we parked up, walked up through gates in the outer wall and into an open square beneath the walls of the chateau. The area was enclosed by ancient buildings, one of which was a restaurant with a front patio area in the sun and only two tables occupied! Our hostess nearly had kittens, twelve covers, bang, just like that. We were quite chuffed too. A smashing

spot, excellent food at a leisurely pace and what's more, we didn't impose our customary noise on the near deafening tranquillity of the place. I suppose we can be quite sensitive at times.

We took a walk after lunch to absorb the views before continuing our journey to Montpazier. Domme by this time was a trip for another day. Montpazier was, once again, a delightful little town. The town square was almost totally enclosed by ancient buildings; the ways in were narrow cobbled streets, most not wide enough to take a car. Another hill town that will remain in my memory, together with another thought. Our country was inhabited at the time of the Bastide towns, we had towns and villages, why have we got so few that still have their medieval centres intact?

Val and I dawdled and, leaving some time after the others, made our own way home through the empty country lanes. The car I must add, ran as sweet as a nut, no hint of the problem to come.

Black Thursday (as I fondly call it) started sunny and warm and I led off for Bergerac nursing what I thought was a cold damp engine. I could not even make it up the slope along the track to the lane, and needed a push to help the engine. A check at the top of the slope revealed nothing, life is not that simple. All plug leads on, etc etc.

Mike G gave me a tow back to the gites where I started to play around with the electrics, changing all the bits from coil to ignition plugs; re-setting the point's gap. It was quite pleasant in the sunshine and I was confident of success. Time ticked on and the only thing I knew was that the engine was running on only three cylinders. I totally rejected the idea of a fuel problem, the bloody thing was getting fuel to the other cylinders so it couldn't be that! Besides, I don't like touching carburettors. Later Mike strolled over and said "could be fuel". "No" I replied "I don't think so, it's running on three cylinders so it's getting fuel" .....Oh dear!

Mid afternoon I 'phoned the RAC hoping to get a repair man. At about 4.30 I got a man with a truck. He looked at the car then stuck it on the back of the truck!

To be fair he did fiddle for a while and found out it was running on two cylinders. Bye- Bye motor-car. The plan of action was this, the car would go to Bergerac to the chap's depot and from there to Marmonde 50k south where a garage would check it. I could expect a call at 11 o'clock Friday with news.

Friday 11 o'clock came and went, but in the meantime I'd had a taxi into Bergerac to pick up a hire car. Bunty checked and found the Marmonde garage phone number to ring them direct. They hadn't seen the car, Oh Boy! Where was it?

We found out it had gone to a garage 25k west of Bergerac and as they

had only just received it, and it was now 5 minutes to their two hour lunch, would we 'phone back about 4.30 to get a report. We did that and were told that the guy looking at my car had gone out on a breakdown. Just a minute, I thought my car was a breakdown? Suffice to say we got no more news that day.

Saturday morning, leaving day, we packed the hire car and 'phoned the RAC to advise we were going to the garage to check for ourselves, Mike W and Graham had volunteered to have a look at it on their way up to the ferry, Everyone descended on the garage and by the time I arrived the lads had changed all the electrics, without success, and were about to start on the carbs. We tried the back one first as the two back cylinders were the offending ones.

The float jet was jammed into its seat and wouldn't let fuel through. A new jet courtesy of Mike, reassembled, and the engine ran a treat. GREAT! We swapped all our gear from the hire car to the 'B' and called the RAC to cancel the car transport arrangements. All we had to do was get the hire car back to Bergerac and we would be off. No problem, I would drive it and Diane would follow in my 'B'. Closely followed by Roy and Mike G.

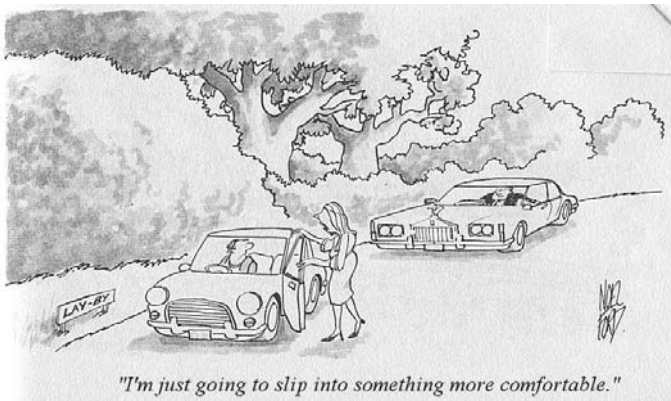
I didn't say did I, the hire car was limited to the local area; I couldn't take it up to le Havre for collection.

A push start was necessary as my battery was now as flat as a pancake. At this point Roy spotted fuel gushing from beneath the bonnet. We found fuel pouring out of the overflow of the other carburettor! Switched off and swore. I envisaged this sort of thing happening all the way home.

It was five minutes to two hour lunch again. I ran back to the garage before he shut, to reinstate the RAC transport whilst the others pushed back my car. At this time they advised me the hire car from Angouleme had been cancelled, on my instruction and, guess what it was two hour lunch time! No problem I said, lets pretend it is still available.

Hey, are you still with me! The entire luggage swapped over again into the hire car. Yippee! I think Val was just beginning to lose her cool. We now parted company, Mike G and Roy to Chinon, Val and I to Bergerac, hopefully to catch them up at the hotel that evening. We had a taxi from Bergerac to Angouleme, two hours north, where we collected another car, one that could be dropped at le Havre on Sunday afternoon. Things were falling into place! Now well experienced in these matters, I made sure where the car was to be left in le Havre and that the office would be open, no problem. By six that evening we were together again, sat outside the hotel supping a well-needed shandy. Val had a bottle of whisky.

For our farewell dinner we booked a table in the hotel restaurant, an elegant room, good service and excellent food. Mike and Ann were to stop with his brother in Paris, Roy and Di to Cane and home. I wish my story could finish there (and perhaps you do too) but there is more. After dropping off Val at the ferry terminal I proceeded to the town station, opposite which I would find the open hire car office. No way! Three times up and down the busy thoroughfare, no office to be seen. As I tried the side streets I spotted a taxi rank, a driver would be bound to know where it



"I'm just going to slip into something more comfortable."

was. He did and we did a deal, he would lead the way, I would leave the car and he would take me back to the terminal. Just a small problem, Sunday, the office will be shut! No problem I said, "I'll pop the keys through the letter box" We reach the office and guess what! No letterbox! And what's more, locals are using the frontage for a Sunday market. I was climbing over and under stalls all along the office front just to find no letterbox. I now had five minutes to catch the ferry. On the other side of the busy road I espied a car compound, admittedly

accessed through a no entry area, but what the hell. I left the car at the compound entrance and threw the keys over the security fence to land out of reach at the portacabin office door. Mission accomplished. The rest of the journey would be easy, after all it would be home territory. Another taxi, another hire car and thankfully home early Monday morning. There is, as you might guess, a sting in the 'tale'. A road works speed camera on the M42 caught me out.

Oh! The only rain we had was on the drive up from Portsmouth, not bad eh?

We had a lovely holiday in great company. Our thanks to everyone. *Colin Hawkins*

### Joke: The O'Mally Brothers -

A man stumbles up to the only other patron in a bar and asks if he could buy him a drink. "Why of course", comes the reply. The first man then asks: "Where are you from?" "I'm from Ireland", replies the second man. The first man responds: "You don't say, I'm from Ireland too! Let's have another round to Ireland."

"Of Course", replies the second man. Curious, the first man then asks: "Where in Ireland are you from?" "Dublin", comes the reply. "I can't believe it", says the first man. "I'm from Dublin too! Let's have another drink to Dublin." "Of course", replies the second man. Curiosity again strikes and the first man asks: "What school did you go to?" "Saint Mary's", replies the second man. "I graduated in '62." "This is unbelievable!", the first man says. "I went to Saint Mary's and I graduated in '62, too!"

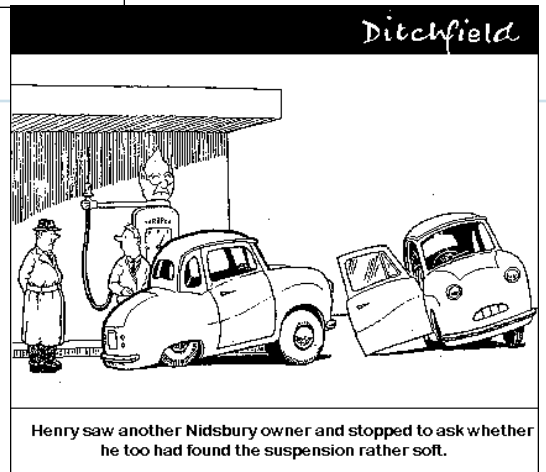
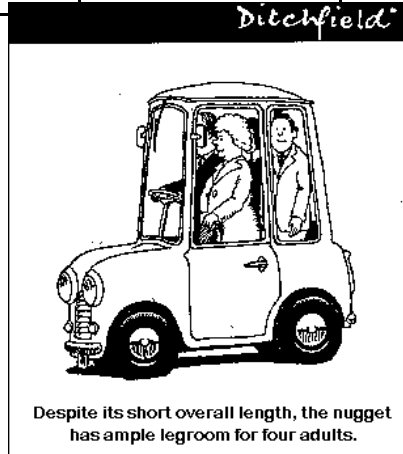
About that time in comes one of the regulars and sits down at the bar. "What's been going on?", he asks the bartender. "Nothing much," replies the bartender. "The O'Mally twins are drunk again."

**What is Going On?!!**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Organiser</u>	<u>Details</u>
20th February	MG Show & Spares	Stonleigh Warwickshire	Dave Barton	
13th March	Restoration Show	Stonleigh Warwickshire		TBA
25th March	Torquay Easter Weekend	Torquay	Dave Powis	More spaces available in an adjacent hotel
3rd April	Cotswold Run	Cotswolds	TBA	
17th April	Kimber Run	Chatsworth area	Roy Clarke	Marshals required

**Mike Greetham**

Mike has unfortunately had a relapse in his cancer treatment and has undergone further operations. At time of going to press Mike is recovering well and should be back with us soon. Our thoughts are with Mike, Ann and family and we all wish him a speedy recovery.

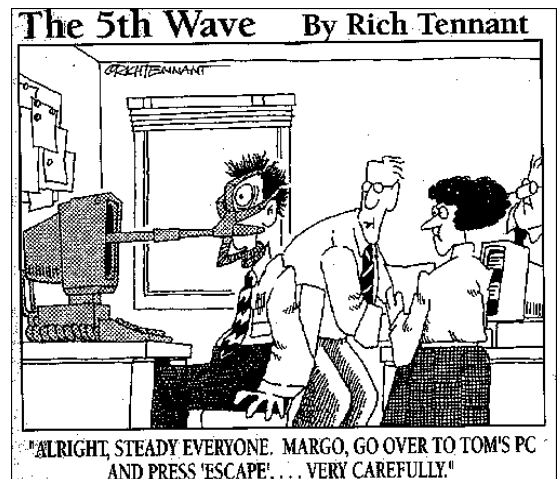


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Our Thanks to Karen Brookes for posting.