



S.G.A.Motors Car Restoration

M.O.T. Repairs

Car and light commercial,
Welding, Body and Spray work,
Servicing and Mechanical Repairs.

Tel: 01425 479117 Mobile: 07879 991152

MORRIS MINOR REGALIA - DORSET BRANCH

Our Branch Regalia stock is managed by **Richard Cyster** and is available at clubnights and our outdoor events. (The illustrated stock list is shown on the website www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk)

Badges	£ 8.50	Keyrings	£ 1.99
Puzzles	£ 12.00	Windscreen car labels	£ 1.00
Mugs	£ 5.99	Calendars	£ 1.50
Money Boxes	£ 5.00	Six pack greeting cards	£ 7.00
Notebooks	£ 1.00	Single cards	£ 1.35
Traveller Money box	£ 12.50	Large Cards	£ 1.50
Small cars	£ 1.50	Placemats	£ 4.99
Large Cars	£ 3.50	Postcards of Corfe	£ 0.50
Diaries	£ 1.75	Sweatshirts	£ 14.00
Yesteryear' DVD's	£ 3.50	Fleeces	£ 20.00
Club DVD's	£ 3.00	Hats	£ 8.50
Club Keyrings	£ 1.00		



Printed by: **Adding Value Solutions Limited**

2 Friars Workshop, The Friars, Jedburgh, Roxburghshire, TD8 6BN

M : 07768 653017 T : 0870 360 7000 F : 0870 360 7001

E : stephen@addingvaluesolutions.co.uk - W : www.addingvaluesolutions.co.uk

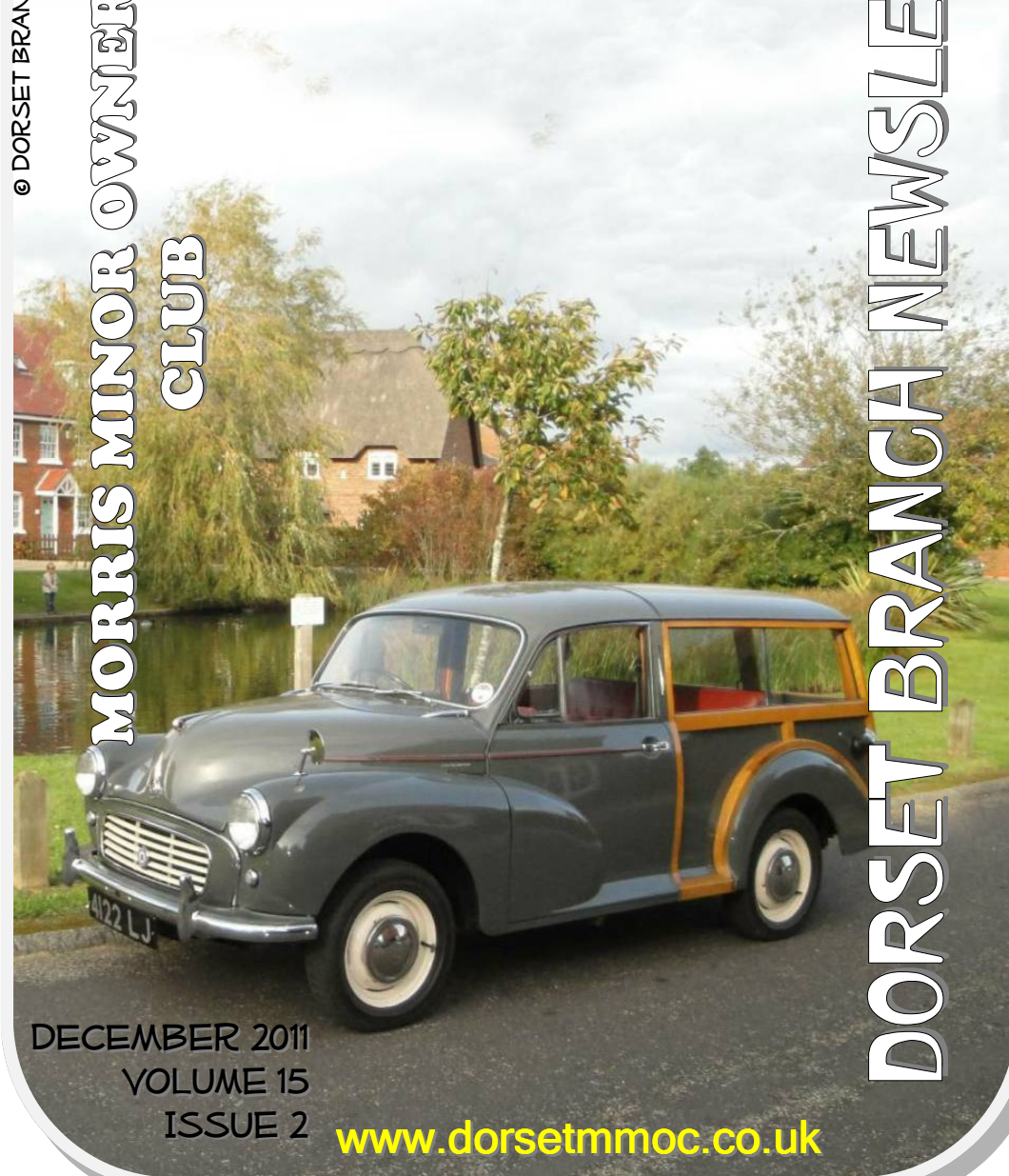
Alternative Medical Definitions

- Artery**—Study of painting
Benign—What you be after eight
Bacteria—back door of café
Barium—what doctors do when their treatment fails
Caesarean Section—area of Rome
Cat Scan—what you do when you have lost kitty
Cauterise—managed to make eye contact with her
Coma—punctuation pause
Dilate—better than dying early
Enema— not a friend
Fester—opposite of slower
Fibula—just a little lie
Impotent— distinguished.

© DORSET BRANCH MMOC - 2011

Dorset Branch

MORRIS MINOR OWNERS
CLUB



DORSET BRANCH NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2011
VOLUME 15
ISSUE 2

www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk

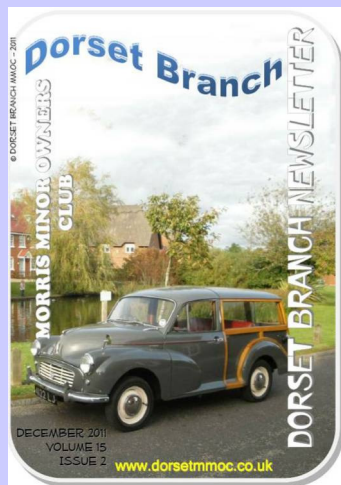
The MMOC Dorset Branch

was founded in 1977 by Graham Melly and chaired in the early days by Aubrey Batt. It is a Branch of the National Morris Minor Owners Club but has its own accounts and organisation (see Constitution for further details) **We meet on the first Wednesday of every month (7:30 for 8:00)** at the Bournemouth Electric Club, Broadway Lane, BH8 0AA. We have an active calendar of events throughout the year – particularly in the Summer months when we attend many rallies and other shows. The monthly Clubnight is an opportunity to meet the other enthusiasts and enjoy a presentation or other activity organised by the Committee.

Membership currently costs £10 per year, £12.50 for joint membership.

Please ask Branch Secretary if you require a copy of the Dorset Branch Constitution. (Also available on website.) For more details contact Laurie Blewer on 01202 522673 or John Jenkinson on 01202 576690

Advertising: Cars or spares for sale or wanted £5 per entry (Free to members). Traders advertisements: £30 per year.



Committee Members 2011-2012:

President: Graham Jarvis (07856 918136)

Chairman: John Jenkinson (01202 576690)

Secretary: Laurie Blewer (01202 522673, 07947 525884)

Treasurer: Jacky Wood (01202 573501)

Membership Secretary – Des Waller (01202 573403)

Events Organiser/H&S Supervisor – Neville Gerry (01202 747687)

Newsletter /Website Editor: Brian Wood (01202 573501)
(brian@dorsetmmoc.co.uk)

Non Committee posts:

Raffle Coordinators: Chris Tilly and Val Palmer

Spares Manager: Brian Wood (01202 573501)

Regalia Manager: Richard Cyster – (01202 526660)

Catering Executives: -Sue Blewer, Lyn Gerry

FRONT COVER

Ron Tickner has been out and about with his camera and supplied us with some nice shots of his rare 948cc Traveller. This one was taken in 'deepest' Throop' in Bournemouth.

*Dorset Branch of the Morris Minor Owners Club
Helping to preserve the post war Morris Minor in the
Dorset area and beyond*

Forthcoming Events (see also www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk)

(Don't forget to check the website for latest updates to events)

3rd December – Robin Hood Panto, starring Neil Mitchener
(www.poolechristmaspantomimes.net)

7th December - Clubnight—Christmas 'Noggin and Natter'

27th December – Mistletoe Meander.

2012

4th January—Clubnight (Name the Object Quiz)

1st February—Clubnight (Blind Auction)

18th February – Dinner and Dance – Elstead Hotel **(NOTE NEW DATE)**

7th March—Clubnight (Hobbies Evening)

4th April—Clubnight (TBA)

7th July – Ferndown Carnival

19th August—Bournemouth & Poole MG Club show at Athelhampton

8th July – Dorset Branch Rally – Avon Heath Country Park

31 Aug—2 Sep—Isle of Wight weekend (IoW Branch)

Book Club Plus (by Derek Shearman)

Hello everyone. The re-launch of the Book Club at the November meeting seems to have been a success; five books having been borrowed on subjects ranging from 'the finding of the Bismarck' to 'Morris Minor - 60 years on the road'. However, as the number of books available for Members to borrow has passed the 60 mark, it is only possible to bring a selection to our meetings. With the November Newsletter you will have received an updated list of all titles available. Please phone me on either 07593 623721 or 01258 857492 if you have a particular subject which interests you and I will bring relevant books for you to the next meeting.

Can anyone help with books, photographs, information on the Jowett Motor Manufacturing Company / Jowett Cars Ltd? According to my records they were manufacturing motor vehicles, including the Bradford van, from 1906 to 1954. I had an enquiry from a member's guest last month. Apparently her late husband had a succession of no fewer than seven Jowett Javelin over many years and her eyes lit up when I mentioned I had seen a Jowett Jupiter (sports car version of the Javelin, looks a bit like a cross between a Sunbeam Alpine and a Jaguar XK120) on one of the antique programmes on the television the previous week. I have a few cd's and dvd's (fiction & non-fiction subjects) available to borrow but there has been no recent interest but I will bring these to our meeting for a couple more months to see if the interest returns.....

Earlier this year I was successful in being elected by World Book Night 2011 to be one of the 20,000 'givers' to distribute in April this year 50 copies of Captain Zigzag; the biography of Eddie Chapman who was a world war two double agent. The selection process has started again for April 2012 and I would welcome reactions from members as to whether I should apply again for this. I have yet to know which are the 25 titles available but hopefully this information will be with me before the January meeting. I will only pursue the event for a second year if there is sufficient interest shown by club members. Derek

Shearman

STOP PRESS FROM DEREK...After several false starts, I have just managed to register with World Book Night my wish to be a 'giver' in 2012. I still have to wait for their acknowledgement and acceptance. The book I have requested is **"Notes on a Small Island" by Bill Bryson**. It is a light hearted read with some dry humour. Derek

ORIGINAL CLASSIC PLATES FOR YOUR MORRIS MINOR

"It's nice to know that someone does a plate that fits the back of a Morris Minor. It's a lovely plate and the service was very prompt. I'm very pleased with the finished result"

John Jenkinson, Chairman
Morris Minor Owners Club, Dorset Branch

Front Plate

JEP 123L

Rear Plate

JEP 123L

Our Morris Minor plates are specially designed with radius corners to fit the rear aperture of a Morris Minor. All our embossed aluminium plates are handmade using traditional methods, stoving enamels and decades of experience.

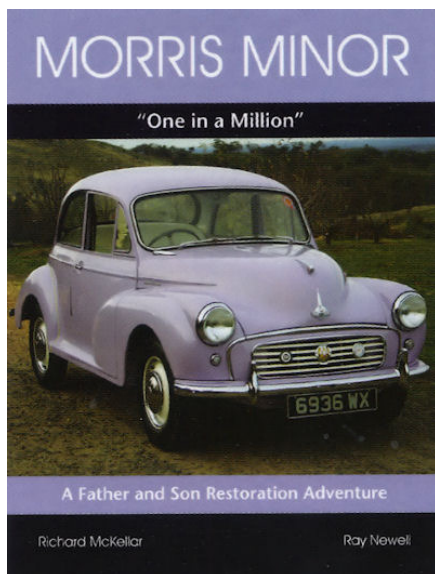
VINTAGE & CLASSIC
PLATES BY
Jepson
Est. 1894
MADE IN
SHEFFIELD

0114 273 1151

www.jepsonclassicplates.com

Jepson Classic Plates, 44 East Bank Road, Sheffield, S2 3QN

'One in a Million'



by Richard McKellar and Ray Newell

This book charts the restoration of a Morris Minor to the highest possible standard. It is also an interesting account of a father and son working together towards a common goal.

We have managed to obtain a limited quantity of this book—jointly written by Ray Newell—the MMOC Secretary. Whilst the subject obviously concerns a Minor 'Million', it will be of considerable interest to anyone restoring any Minor. They are priced at **£24** to members which is at least £4 less than rrp and with no postage charges.

If you were thinking of one for a Christmas Gift, then this is your big chance!. These will be available for purchase at the December Clubnight.

IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Dorset Branch Newsletter

December 2011



**MORRIS MINOR
OWNERS CLUB**

Volume 15 Issue 2

CLUBNIGHT ACTIVITY:
Noggin and Natter

Inside this issue....

Editorial	4
Secretary's Report	6
Chairman's Report	7
SU Story (Part 3)	8
Oxford Bus Museum	9
Electronic Ignition fitting	10-11
Laurie's NEC Photos	12
For Sale and Wanted	11
What's On?	15
Book Club Plus (by Derek Shearman)	15
Rear View & Branch Regalia	16

NEXT CLUBNIGHT ACTIVITY: QUIZ—"NAME THE OBJECT"

The Dorset Branch Newsletter is published on the first Wednesday of the month and sent by post to paid-up members. It is also available for download from the Internet usually about 10 days before the clubnight.

Editorial

Hello everyone and welcome to the December newsletter and the club-night is the traditional 'Noggin and Natter' evening to give you a chance to catch up on the gossip and enjoy some eats and drinks on the Branch.

As many of you will know, the Branch managed to raise a creditable **£300** for our chosen charity to support in 2010-11; the Green Island Holiday Trust as promoted by Derek Shearman. We were grateful to Derek for explaining the aims of the Trust to us at the last clubnight and accepting the cheque on their behalf. We received a letter of thanks from the Trustees:

"I am writing to thank you most sincerely for this wonderful contribution to our trust. We are very grateful indeed for your support and interest. It costs us £750 to provide one holiday for our disabled friends and this donation goes a long way to support that. On the other hand it will provide 20 holiday makers with their pony and trap rides which is a source of great enjoyment. We are grateful to Derek for receiving this donation— it so happens that the rest of us are either out of the country or ill!. Nonetheless, you have our very grateful thanks. Best Wishes, Jo Davies (Chairman)."

I was advised a short while ago that the publisher of 'Minor Monthly' is in trouble and as a direct result, there will be no printed December issue. Russ assures me that he is doing his best to find another publisher to take it on. In the meantime you can find out the latest situation by checking their website: <http://www.minormonthly.co.uk/en/>

Thanks very much, Theresa for the envelope of items for the newsletter (on the back page and Oxford Bus museum article!) and to Laurie for his NEC photos (I went, but forgot to take the camera!). Who are those two cool dudes standing by the Panda car?

We purchased a quantity of electronic ignition sets from Accuspark while we were there, so we have a few left at £27 each. The kits are for the 25D distributor and we have an article on fitting them in this newsletter on pages 10-11. An alternative, if your distributor is a bit tired is the Accuspark replacement distributor unit—which is extremely good value. This comes with the electronic module already fitted and complete with the diaphragm, cap and rotor etc.

We have opted for the later '45D' unit which will fit any OHV Minor and works out a bit cheaper and is a bit stronger. We have them in the spares stock for the clubnight at the most reasonable rate of only £49 each.

As we are zooming headlong towards the end of the year, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your continuing support of the branch in 2011 and to wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year. **Brian & Jacky**



MARKHAM GARAGE



☎ 01202 522140
168 MARKHAM ROAD, CHARMINSTER
BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET, BH9 1JE

SPECIALIST IN SERVICING & REPAIRS
TO CLASSIC & VINTAGE VEHICLES

Old Autos

Old, Interesting and Classic Cars in any condition

BOUGHT AND SOLD

Paul 07890 096907, Ken 07814 385781

old_auto@yahoo.co.uk

Open Friday and Saturday or by appointment
970 Wimborne Road, Moordown B'mth BH9 2DF
(next to A.J.Autos)

For Sale & Wanted & Club Notices

Please let me know if you no longer wish your ad to be included in the newsletter/website. *Editor.*

The Branch Website has a 'Spares Shop' which advertises (mostly) spares. Why not browse the bargains or send me an ad or two with a decent picture.

New Morris Minor Spares are available through the club. The current list is posted on the website under the 'New Spares' tab. We hope to have a new spares table at the club-night, so let me know if you need anything Brian.

DORSET BRANCH SPARES

December Special Offers

ENGINE SERVICE KITS
(separate parts cost **£24.50**)
Kits normally **£18.50 & £19**
OFFER PRICE £17.50

AccuSpark Electronic Ignition kits:

£27 each.

Complete new distributors with elec ign £49



FOR SALE: Hood bag and carpet set. Both in excellent condition. Carpet set is new. Hood bag £45, Carpets £65. John Jenkinson 01202 576690



Laurie's NEC Show Photos



Ex-GPO Morris 8 Z van recently 'discovered'



Very nice 'J' van with a Minor Panda below

Local Dorset car revolving on MMOC Stand

BULL MOTIF SPARES

TEL/FAX:01386 831755 FAX/ TEL:01386 831716

Email: bullmotif@btconnect.com

**Reardene Workshops, Cleeve Road,
Middle Littleton, Worcs, WR11 5JR**

Mail order – same day despatch. Mention MMOC no.



Specialist body repairs and paintwork: Free estimates. All insurance repairs undertaken. Collection and delivery service.

ACCIDENT REPAIR CENTRE.

Low Bake Oven
COLIN HUGHES

Body Jig
MIKE DREWETT

UNIT 5, BROOK PARK, 27 BROOK ROAD, WIMBORNE, DORSET, BH21

<http://www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk>

Editor's Inbox



Derek Shearman accepting the charity donation cheque on behalf of the Green Island Holiday Trust from Branch Chairman, John Jenkinson

www.morriswoodwork.co.uk
01243 788660
WOODIES
Email: forwoodies@aol.com

(Proprietor, Steve Foreman)
Unit 25, Eastmead Industrial Estate, Lavant, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0DB, UK Phone/ Fax: +44 01243 788660

"At Woodies we specialise in the Morris Traveller but we can fabricate timber frames for all classic cars. We have completed many Morris Travellers over 30 years, as well as many other wood framed vehicles."

Nidor BODYWORKS
Accident Repair Specialists
Insurance Approved
Restoration Work
Resprays

Unit 23 Dowkins Road,
Hamworthy Industrial Estate
Poole, Dorset BH15 4JY
www.nidor.co.uk

01202 671741

Forge Garage
(now incorporating Winton & Moordown MOT Centres)
GENERAL SERVICING AND MOT's

Call: 01202 528 667
Car MOTs £39.95
Morris Minors (Members only)

DISCOUNT FOR CLUB MEMBERS

Book your MOT test on-line at:
www.forgegaragebournemouth.co.uk

Chambar Engineering Ltd

Parts made or repaired for Classic Vehicles

3, Telford Road,
Ferndown Industrial Estate,
Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 7QN.
Tel: 01202 871143
Fax: 01202 897045

DAVID SMITH MOTORS
Est 1978

21 TELFORD ROAD, FERNDOWN, INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,
WIMBORNE, DORSET
BH21 7QS. TEL: 01202 871858

MoTs Cars & Motorcycles
ALL CLASSIC VEHICLES WELCOME

Secretary's Report

Good evening and welcome to the December clubnight. I hope you all found last month's Halloween quiz suitably frustrating – I know that I did when I had to do it.

Bookings are coming in for the Dinner and Dance, the Devon Weekend and the Isle of Wight trip so please get your slips in to Jacky as soon as you can. The next event will be the Mistletoe Meander so please get your booking in tonight so we know how many are coming and how many to cater for.

Membership renewals are coming in well so if you haven't renewed yet please do so now.

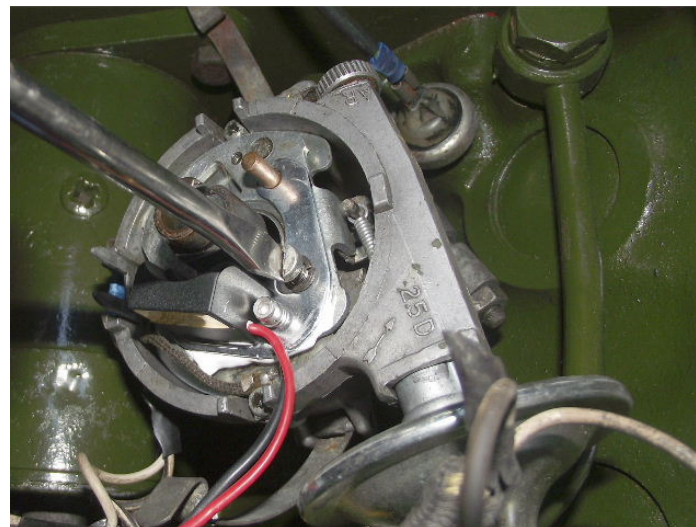


Brian, Nev and I have been out and about last month. Firstly, we went down to the Bath and West Showground for the Restoration Show and Autojumble. It was quite a small show with only a few autojumble stalls but I still managed to pick up a couple of bits and bobs including a Smiths electric clock for the early gold dashboard. I haven't tried it yet but hopefully it will work and can be installed in the Lowlight. I also managed to pick up some period style "Lucas" battery stickers which I plan to use on the Lowlight as well. Finally, I bought a one instrument holder to install the clock in the Traveller which I bought at Beaulieu.

The following week the three of us made the pilgrimage to the NEC for the International Classic Car Show. This was a fantastic – and enormous – show. The show covered 6 halls and we arrived at 10am and left at 4pm without stopping for a break once. We even ate our lunch on the move. We could really have done with the whole weekend up there to do the show justice. For me the highlights of the show were, of course, the MMOC stand which featured some very nice vehicles as well as a very welcome tea stop on more than one occasion. The Bexhill Motor Club had a fantastic display of 6 different models from the Morris range. All 6 vehicles had been discovered and rescued from a garden only 16 weeks previously and were displayed as found. The Veteran Car Club displayed some fascinating cars including two that had appeared in Downton Abbey. There were so many clubs displaying a vast array of fantastic cars that it is very hard to know which ones to tell you about. We had a chat with Ray Newell whilst there and had a good discussion about the 2013 events.

We have managed to get hold of a very limited number of Ray Newell's new book – Morris Minor "One in a Million". (See page 14—Ed) This is a fascinating tale of the restoration of a Minor Million by Richard McKellar in Australia. The attention to detail on the restoration is amazing and it is a very good read. We are able to sell them at the vastly discounted price of £24. This will make an ideal Christmas present for the Morris Minor enthusiast in your life – my copy has already been wrapped! (So has mine—Ed!).

That's about all from me for this month,
Until next time, have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy "Minoring" New Year, Laurie.



you could return to the old contact points in the event of a problem. Leave the screw loose while you fit the trigger ring to the centre cam and refit the rotor arm making sure they are properly seated. Now adjust and get a uniform gap between the module and the trigger ring and then tighten the screw. The electrical connections are pretty straightforward but you may wish to shorten the cable and fit more suitable terminals if you need to (as I did) to tidy it up. The red wire needs to go to the coil terminal marked 'SW' (goes to the ignition switch). You can always check to ensure it goes to 12V when the ignition is on. The black wire needs to REPLACE the wire on the coil ('CB' terminal) which used to go to the distributor. I left my old wires in place but taped them up neatly out of the way—again, a precaution against non-reversion in the event of future failure. That's about it. Take a deep breath and give it a whirl. Mine started first time and seems to run well. It is early days yet but I am a 'convert'. I need to buy myself a new strobe light and check that the timing is accurate since it could now be slightly off. You should also remember that the distributor itself should be in good condition. The advance and retard weights should be checked to ensure that they are working properly and not jammed (as mine were) and that the diaphragm is not leaking (as mine was). If you decide to have a go, the job only took about an hour, but if anyone wants a hand, I am willing to assist if I can.



Brian Wood

(see page 13 for details of Branch Spares offer)

Electronic Ignition



Electronic ignition is quite a popular and simple upgrade for any classic car. It eliminates one of the weak points in the ignition system—the contact breaker and condenser. At a stroke, your car will no longer need to have new points (and condenser) at every service. Two of our own cars have had *Lumenition* systems fitted now for some time and I am pleased with both—enjoying the benefits of easier starting, smoother running and lower fuel consumption. The Lumenition system is good, but it is about twice the cost of the AccuSpark system which I have now fitted to our black 948cc 4 door saloon. The rest of

this article describes my experience of fitting an AccuSpark kit to the Minor with a 25D Lucas distributor. The kits come in a sturdy 'bubble' pack with all you need plus a detailed instruction leaflet. You should read the instructions carefully and not interpret this article as any form of substitute. First, you need to remove the old contact

points and condenser and keep the larger cheese-headed points fixing screw. You get a sachet of 'heat sink' silicone material which should be smeared on the base plate so that the module can dissipate its heat successfully through the distributor body. Now fit the module to the distributor. Incidentally, one big *advantage* of this system over the Lumenition kit, is that you don't need to chop off the pivot post—so



Chairman's Report

Good evening and welcome to December's Clubnight. Laurie and myself had a meeting with Beaulieu Events staff a few weeks ago to talk over the ideas for the Centenary of the Morris motor car in the year of 2013. If you know of any Morris'es such as Bull Nose, Cowleys and Ox-fords, Marinas and Itals or some Morris commercial vehicles—please let Laurie know so that we can sign them up for this event. Don't forget to put in your sheet for the Mistletoe Meander (see below) which is coming up soon on 27th December. Also the dinner and dance on the 18th February 2012. Also, there are a couple of rooms left for the Sidmouth weekend on 13-14th April 2012. If you would like to go, please let Neville know.

I would like to thank Eddie for coming over recently to change the differential on Ann's convertible from a 948 to 1098. We also changed the oil in the engine and put antifreeze in the radiator ready for the winter months.

We are still looking for a garage to put the club van in and also to store the club regalia and other equipment.

I hope you all enjoyed November's clubnight—the Dracula Halloween Quiz. Thanks to Laurie and Graham for organising that for us.

We hope Sue is getting over her knee operation and makes a speedy recover.

On a sad note, I was sorry to hear that branch member, Carol Archer passed away over the weekend of 18-19 November. The funeral was held Tuesday 29th at Poole Crematorium. Our thoughts are with Colin and the family.

Have a good clubnight with a glass of wine—all the best for the new year, Merry Christmas, John.



Mistletoe Meander

This year's post-Christmas Mistletoe Meander will take place on 27th December—meeting at the Electric Club for 10.30 kick off (Coffee and Mince Pies). There is still time to get your entry in (by December 17th at the latest please). Let's have a good turnout this year and blow away those Christmas Cobwebs. **(Contact Jacky Wood).**

Norman J. Kimber

D.S.A. Approved Driving Instructor
Full theory training given
Pass Plus Scheme Available
Discounts for MMOC Club members
Tel 01202 779092 Mobile 07889 461262

BRANCH REBATE SCHEME

You may be aware that the branch receives a financial rebate according to the numbers of national MMOC members who attend the monthly clubnights. We therefore need to update our records so that we can take advantage of this scheme. Please would you advise Des Waller (or any Committee Member) of your MMOC membership number and renewal date and make sure that you sign the attendance sheet at the clubnights. Thank

The History of SU (part 3)

In 1988 the Company was acquired by the Hoburn Eaton Group, who themselves were acquired by the large USA based multinational Echlin Corporation eighteen months later. Echlin itself was acquired by the Dana Corporation in 1998 and the company traded under the name of Dana SU Automotive.

Burlen Fuel Systems

By the early eighties SU was seriously considering ceasing production of HS pairs (for MGB Midget, Spitfire etc), but they were persuaded to keep tooling operational by Burlen Services.

Burlen Services was formed in 1971 and first became involved with SU carburettors in the fuel crisis of 1974, when they were first appointed as agents. There followed a long period of co-operation, to the mutual benefit of both compa-

nies, culminating in a joint venture to rescue the defunct Solex UK production in 1985.

Burlen now trades under the name of **Burlen Fuel Systems** which was formed in 1986.

Burlen Fuel Systems. were responsible for the re-emergence of the SU brand after its many years of neglect. They upgraded the image with the new SU blue livery and first promoted the product at Autoequip in 1987, followed quickly by several other UK shows and the prestigious 1988 AutoMechanika in Germany.

1994 saw the end of an era of carburettor production for the great marques of motor-

ing manufacturing, when SU ceased original equipment carb production.

On 16th August 1994 the final units, designated HIF and KIF, were produced, direct descendants of the original design by the Skinner brothers, the longest-running UK carburettor in production.

However in June 1996 Burlen Fuel Systems set a commitment to producing aftermarket SU product for years to come.

In 1997 Burlen acquired 'The SU Carburettor Co Ltd' which had been wound up in 1996.

The following years represented a continual period of product enhancement (including electronic switching for fuel pumps) and expansion through cataloguing, world wide sales promotions and investment in new tooling, to support the classic car market. Burlen Fuel Systems are also responsible for the packing of the well-known service and rebuild kits associated with SU carburettors and pumps.

Recent Developments

November 2001 saw the official closure of what was once the SU factory and Burlen Fuel Systems became the world's sole manufacturer of genuine, new SU product.

Burlen Fuel Systems, a BS5750 (ISO) Registered Firm is dedicated to ensuring the long term supply of genuine SU parts for your car. All Burlen's SU products are packaged using the SU logo and all literature contains both the SU and the Burlen logo - this is your assurance of a quality product.

John Burnett
Burlen Fuel Systems Ltd.



Oxford Bus Museum

Historic Blenheim Palace, with its Marlborough and Churchill connections, is the main reason why tourists head into the eastern Cotswolds to the north-west of Oxford. But next to the little wayside rail station at Hanborough, the nearest mainline connection to Blenheim, is a collection of industrial-style sheds that houses less traditional museum material. The Oxford Bus Museum and the Morris Motors Experience celebrate the transport history of the city a dozen miles away, and the distance is symbolic as well as real. Oxford, city of university, intellectualism and dreaming spires, appears often to have been somewhat at odds with its modern role as a manufacturing centre, with its attendant influx of population and the transport services they require. It's the Oxford of town rather than gown, of Cowley and Blackbird Leys, that the twin attractions in the station car park cover, and very well they do it. The bus museum has more than 30 public service vehicles, and most have seen service within 30 miles of Oxford. There's a concentration among the buses on the post-World War Two era, and many are open so you can climb aboard. London visitors may notice the restricted headroom upstairs, a product of low railway bridges in Oxford, and there are useful explanations of how this was achieved on standard chassis. Engineering is explained, gently and lucidly, as part of the story as a whole, which is how it should be. But there's a lot more than buses. The walls carry a timeline of Oxford's bus



services in hundreds of atmospheric photos and artefacts; displays show the paraphernalia of bus travel, with tickets, timetables, badges and bits. This is rich social history. It's political history too. William Morris, the car making hero of the second exhibition on site, intrudes into the bus museum as the man who took on the city fathers to demand a bus service for workers at his factories, when the don-dominated council provided only a restricted horse-drawn tram service in the ivy-clad areas. He set up his own, and some say Oxford never really forgave him. Perhaps that's why, on the wrong side of town from the Cowley plant, the Morris Motors museum is here too. The visitor gets the chance to see inside the factories, and pick over the minutiae of working lives lived under a paternalistic employer. Apprentices' names on honours boards, invoices, skittles leagues, a visit from a Prince of Wales: the humdrum and the special are seen side by side. These friendly museums both rely on volunteers and opening hours are limited. Best check the website first. But they make a nice contrast to the Churchillian grandeur up the road.

John Pullin