

WESSEX SMALLTALK

No. 250 – June 2026

The Newsletter of Wessex Model and Toy Collectors – Founded 1984

Hello all! Wow - two significant milestones to report... Firstly, look, this is Smalltalk No. 250... And I've been doing 'em since No. 88 - December 1999 - with just a one-year break in 2011 (Thanks, JR!). Surely it's about time somebody else had a go? And the second milestone? Well, since the last Smalltalk your Ed (Bless him) has joined that exclusive (but ever growing...) band of club members, the Octogenarians! I still can't believe it...

Luckily there are still some WMTC youngsters around... And here comes one now!

Chairman's Chatter ~ June

It's been a busy WMTC time of late, with even more to follow!

Two busy club nights – thank you Nick for one, and Barry the Ed for t'other. We must find some harder themes as, so far, all our club nights have been very well supported, with great content every time.

Also in May the W&BAA dropped in to collect their 'big cheque'. No doubt the Ed will mention another club visit to the Air Ambulance base, on 1 July, at 3pm. (Yep! Ed) Well worth attending, and no air miles required...

Next year's charity has been decided, and will be announced to everyone at our June club night.

A slightly longer day out saw a few of us hardy types venturing into deepest Somerset, to the County Classics Motor Museum in Taunton town centre. I keep wittering on about it, but it is well worth the journey – one of the best of its type we have been to. Excellent café too! They do an annual ticket, well worth the money.

Look out for an up-and-coming future day out in the Cotswolds, and yet another museum visit!

Meanwhile WMTC has been invited to a South Hants Model Club evening down in a cosy pub in the New Forest – more details in the Ed's Briefs. One car load of club members so far – let me know if you want to be added to the list.

Looking slightly further afield, if anyone fancies a trip up to MSMC (third Wednesday monthly) let me know, as we sometimes run a car up to visit.

Enough from me, Mr Ed – time for some more of your gems of wisdom!

Chairman Steve

Thank you Steve... But 'gems of wisdom'? Well, I'll do my best!

Barry the Ed

The Ed's Briefs...

First up, here's a reminder... that, as Steve has also reminded you, we have been invited to join our friends at the **South Hants MAC** evening meeting on Wednesday 10 June, upstairs at the Empress of Blandings pub, Romsey Road (A31), Copythorne, SO40 2PF. Their meetings are from 7pm until 9.30/10pm, and the theme for this evening is Partnerships/Joint Ventures/Collaborations. We are told that the pub does excellent food, so we are planning to get down there about 6pm for a bite to eat beforehand! If you are interested in going, please talk to Steve.

And another date for your diary... following this year's second charity donation, we have arranged another **tour of the Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance base**, which is very near the Milk Churn. This will be at 3pm on the afternoon of 1 July – before our club night. As last year, we plan to return to the Milk Churn for something to eat, before possibly starting our club night a little earlier than usual – if our room is free! If you are interested in going, and haven't already put your name down, please talk to BtE...

What a great shame... that MAROnline has been obliged to close down, apparently following the threat of legal action from a party in France regarding a copyright photograph inadvertently used by MAR some while ago, and which was immediately taken down once they were aware of the copyright. Due to their set-up, MAR had no income, funds, or assets to enable them to defend any action brought against them, or to meet any compensation claim if awarded, so the only option seemed to be complete closure. It brings to an end a wonderful history, from the first paper copy of Model Auto Review in 1982, up to the recent 'online' years from 2013. Collectors worldwide will rue MAR's passing, and the loss of so much history and information on all aspects of our hobby. We can only imagine the distress felt by Rod, Maz, Karl and everyone else involved in the magnificent venture at this most distressing outcome...

Looking ahead... For all you F1 fans, at the Forum, Bath on 6 July there is An Evening with Jenson Button (interviewed by Ant Anstead), and on 15 September there is An Evening with David Coulthard and Mika Hakkinen, hosted by Channel 4 F1 presenter Steve Jones... See bathforum.co.uk

And, of course, the usual... reminder that you **MUST enter your car registration** on the magic machine when you arrive at the Milk Churn, or you may incur an **unwelcome fine...** Should you forget, or enter a wrong number, and **get a nasty letter** looking for some money, **don't delay**, contact the pub as soon as possible (**01225 706496**), explain the situation, and they ***should*** be able to cancel any fine... If there is a problem, feel free to get me involved...

Barry the Ed.

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June Coles

Sad to say that June Coles, sister of Roger, and who was a WMTC member herself for many years, died early in April. Long-time club members will remember June, Roger, and their dad Len (also then a club member) regularly at our club nights at the Ushers Club, and also on the various coach trips that WMTC organised back then. June was also often seen with Roger on his Swapmeet tables, with her Lilliput Lane items and teddy bears. Several current and former club members were at June's funeral, and the club has made a donation in her memory to the Bath Cats and Dogs Home, June's chosen charity.

RIP, June...

BtE



Figures...

1 April Club Night

Now this is going to be a fun write-up, because I wasn't there! Thankfully Steve and Nick took some pics on the night, and some of you sent me your own pics later – many thanks all!

Let's start the ball rolling with **Bob B...** As usual Uncle Bob brought a great selection, including Dinky Toy sets of figures, and Johillco and Taylor and Barrett manned fire vehicles from pre-war. He also had post-war Dinky figure sets, and many other post-war 2, 3, and 4 wheeled items which included figures, from the likes of Britains, Morestone, Budgie and Benbros.



< < < Here's the Johillco fire engine, and ^ ^ ^ the pre-war Dinky RAC set...



And above, left to right, a tricycle from the 40s, and Police patrol from the 50s, both by Morestone, and the Budgie RAC patrol from the 60s.



Roger had these Pit Crew sets – Ferrari on the left, and Benetton (I think...) on the right. Not sure of the maker – possibly Asgard?



Aha – pilots! Yes, you are right, it's **Don!** From the left, a 1914 Royal Flying Corps Sergeant (Del Prado); 'Sailor' Malan DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar, the South African born Battle of Britain ace (Corgi); 'Cobber' Kain DFC (the medal's first recipient), the RAF ace from New Zealand (Del Prado); and a partworks pilot.



Here we have, on the left, an interesting selection from Britains, Crescent and Johilloco, with, on the right, a WW2 RAF Fire Crew by King and Country.

As usual **Brian G** brought a varied selection for members to appreciate!

A rare set to start – the pre-war Sound Locator Unit by Skybirds (Priced 9d on the box...Those were the days!) >>

Below we have two mounted drummers (1 drum, or 2 drums!), a Spanish dancer, and Cinderella dancing with Prince Charming, all of them by Wells.

Below to the right – a Police motorcyclist – but Brian does not know the maker... Can anyone help?





< < < Had to get these 'wind-ups' from Brian in – 'Bobby the Walking Policeman' by Mettoy (1951); a highland dancer by Guterman of Nuremberg (1920s); and, a modern Chinese offering, a 'walking' nun... I am fairly confident in saying that this must be the first appearance of a nun in Wessex Smalltalk...

Finally from Brian, a tinplate and clockwork scissor sharpener, by Arnold of West Germany in the 50s. > > >



Our Chairman **Steve** confirmed his love of Corgi with this selection – all with one or more figures! (And do I see an Airfix kit of Napoleon at top left...? Better get it built ready for May's meeting, Steve!)



And here's something completely different from He Who Must Be Obeyed (SC...) – a super jousting diorama from Britains!



Graham said he isn't really into collecting Dinky figures (Could have fooled us, GV!) but managed to come up with a splendid array. The first figures were to O Gauge, and the boxed sets included Train & Hotel Staff, Station Staff, Engineering Staff, Passengers, and the 'Hall's Distemper' lineside advertisement. There was even a shepherd, his dog and four sheep! Later sets to Dublo scale came in a small closed box, so Graham has (of course!) made his own larger boxes to display the figures together with their original box... Later sets included the Fire Station Personnel and Army Personnel (Seated!), plus more recently a set which Graham described as an 'extinct breed of men'... the Road Maintenance Personnel!



Making a change from 007, **Nick** showed figures of every actor who has played Dr Who, including the two who later played the first Doctor, after the sad death of William Hartnell...

The imposing figure on the right is an 1840 Officer of the Grenadier Guards, brought along by **Doug**.

Below is, I think, **Sharpie's** display. (That's **Alan S** of course!) Why do I think that? Well, he's ex-Police (a few there...), and also likes nurses...



As we have seen in the past **Peter Harris** is heavily into figure collecting, and had a super selection on show this night. Here (above) is an impressive trio of mounted soldiers, while (right) the late Queen Elizabeth II is preceded by a Standard Bearer.

To the right – a WW2 Auxiliary Fire Service set... And below, an idea of the number of figures mustered by Peter!



A Postscript to Figures Night...

Club member **Chris Price** who is up near Kidderminster is into figure modelling as well as vehicles, and sent some pics of his work. These are all built from metal kits dating back to the 70s...



Here we have, left to right, a WW1 Lewis Gunner, a Swedish trumpeter from 1640, Mr Wm Shakespeare, and Isambard Kingdom... (That's Mr Brunel to you and me!).

Great stuff, Chris!

Well done, and many thanks, to everyone who contributed. I missed a good evening!

BtE

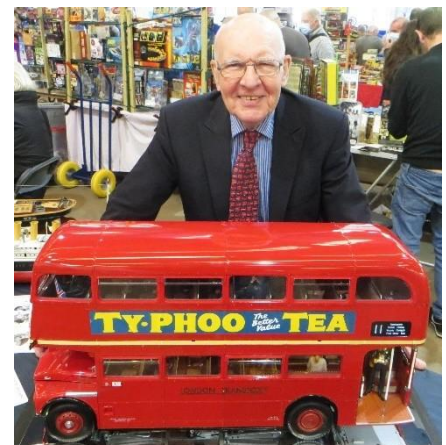
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Kits Chops and Repaints Night – a sort of Prequel...

You may remember back in Smalltalk 223 of December 2021, this pic of **Trevor Smith** with the very large (and heavy...) Hachette Partworks classic Routemaster model he had finally completed after many weeks and months of collecting all the parts to build it... > > >

While Trevor can't make club nights nowadays, seeing that Kits Chops and Repaints was on the agenda for May, he sent me some photos of a recent 'build' – a model of the Transport for London New Routemaster, by Airfix Quickbuild. As a 'Quickbuild' it needs no glue or paint, it just clips together like Lego... The model is 12 inches long, and Trevor contacted **Alex** to find that the real thing is 36 feet 10 inches – so the model is 1/36.83 scale!

Well done, and many thanks, Trevor, another for your bus collection! I see that the kit is for age 6+, so you just about squeak in...



See? As Chris and Trevor have proved, you don't have to be at club nights to show your models – just send me your pics!

BtE

First item on the agenda this night was the presentation of our BIG cheque for **£1725** to the Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance, following our February auction. **Julianne** and **Eric** from the charity came along to receive the cheque, handed over by **Chairman Steve!** (AKA Sooty for this evening...)



Eric thanked us most heartily for our donations (**£3,000** in total, with last year's **£1275...**) particularly as the current international situation has resulted in a big increase in their operating costs for fuel.

On average they respond to 4 incidents a day, with their Bell 429 helicopter, or either of the two Critical Care cars – Volvo C90 and BMW X5 – which offer the same medical facilities as the helicopter. While they cover all of Bath and Wiltshire, they and the other similar services all help each other out as necessary, and recently the W&BAA helicopter has attended incidents as far away as Ledbury, Taunton, and Bournemouth.

As the charity receives no outside funding, but relies on voluntary donations, bequests, and community support, our donation was very well received.

Thank you, Julianne and Eric, it was good of you to come along, and great to see you!

And then it was on to our theme for the night – **Kits Chops and Repaints!**

As 'host' for the night, I (**Barry the Ed...**) led off with a little trip down Memory Lane... In the early days of the club, we ran an annual Kits Chops and Repaints competition, and between 1986 and 1991 the winners were recorded on a large shield for each classification, and given a small shield to keep themselves...



Here are the three club shields, and the little one I got for 'best kit' in 1987... Wonder what it was? A Vanwall I expect!

Included in the notable names on the shields are Roger Coles, Nick Male, and John Roberts... (Who?)

Moving to my current collection, I admitted that, as a long-time modeller I tend to prefer a model I have built, chopped or repainted myself, rather than just buying something and sticking it on the shelf (Even though current stuff can be much better detailed!)



Here are three Stirling Moss cars – Jaguar Mk VII and Sunbeam Talbot, chopped from white metal Marque One Models and Somerville (Promod) respectively, and a little OSCA, chopped from a diecast partworks road car...

What, no Vanwalls, BtE? Oh, ok, here are a couple of old (surprisingly good) Mikansue kits, and also a Motorkits Jaguar SS1 Airline that I rather like...



Of course, with the theme in question, the acknowledged WMTC 'master' has to be **Graham**, and he did not disappoint! He admitted that he enjoys the challenge of creating something different – a 'one off' – so this theme was made for him!

One of his favourite 'rebuilt' is this military hook loader truck, made using the Dinky 668 Foden army truck as a base. It needed much work on the cab, a new extended 8-wheel chassis with two working lifting rams, and the demountable flatbed... An incredible 'chop', which featured in Diecast Collector a while back...



A photograph of the real thing prompted this BMC FG Meccano delivery van, chopped from an Altaya tipper truck, and Graham used the same base model to make the road maintenance truck, which he had seen parked up in Crediton, and photographed.



A surprising omission from the Dinky range of Minis is the pickup... So, of course, Graham corrected their error with this rather effective chop! > > >

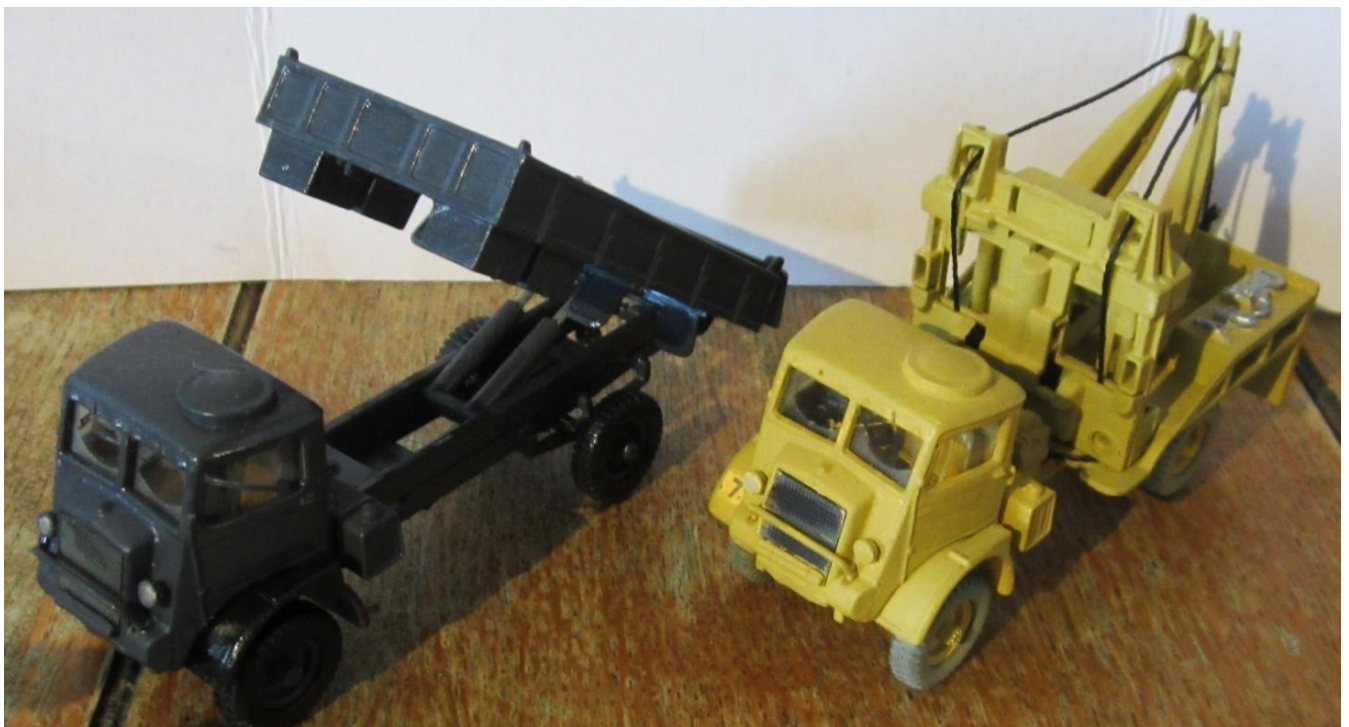


< < < <

While Uncle Bob (That's **Bob B** of course!) is not particularly keen on getting his hands dirty with kits, chops or repaints, he does have this very nice Tootsietoy 'bild-a-car' set, which fits the bill very nicely! It has a selection of Graham bodies, chassis, and sets of wheels, all ready to be put together... Hours of fun!

Following Tootsietoys' lead, in the early 50s Solido introduced sets to build your own cars, but with clockwork motors. The sets ranged from 2 bodies and just 1 motor, to 10 bodies and 2 motors! Later sets included a caravan, or a speedboat and trailer... > > >

Bob also showed some of the much later Solido models that were available in kit form, and some repainted Dinky, Corgi and Spot On that he has.



Next up was **Don** with a couple of nice chops... ^ ^ ^
 On the left, a Corgi QLD Bedford converted to a QLW of the Airfield Construction Board, in the post war colours of RAF blue with black wings. And on the right, a possible 'one-off', another Corgi QLD, but fitted with the crane gear from a wrecked Chevrolet CMP wrecker...
 Don has a pic of a real Bedford so adapted... (Actually the crane gear for Don's came from a Corgi Diamond T wrecker!)

Don also had a whole load of Hot Wheels models that he has tried to improve with different wheels, etc. > > >



Sharpie (That's Mr **Alan Sharpe**...) is well known as a kit builder, chopper, and repainter! This night we saw the Cooper Bristol, Ferrari, and Vanwall by Crescent, all stripped, the castings cleaned up, and repainted. They did do some nice models... >>>



<<< Also into his slot racing, here are an Austin Healey 100 and Jaguar Mark II that Sharpie built.



And on the Dinky lookalike front, how about this Albion tanker in Mobilgas livery, like the Dinky Foden? The cab is by Kingfisher Models... > > >

Another member who, while he doesn't do modelling himself, has suitable candidates in his collection, is **Brian G...** V V V V V



Here are the Dinky 39 series Studebaker and Lincoln Zephyr, Brian's original toys (lucky chap!) rescued from the repainted and played-with state they ended up in, and now professionally restored to as-new condition.

On the right is another Lincoln Zephyr, by Hubley. Brian's uncle worked for a chap who owned the real thing, and Brian remembers riding in it as a lad!

Below is a Kemlow Fleetmaster and caravan from 1948, restored to original colours



Roger showed this nifty little diorama, including (of course!) a poor old Porsche awaiting discovery and restoration! > > >



<<< Another who likes collecting chops and repaints is our **Doug**, who brought along a good selection. Included were two fire engines which somebody has 'chopped' using the Dinky Leyland Comet and Albion Chieftain cabs, married to the body of the Commer fire engine. Very effective! V V V V



As we know **Nick** is well into chopping and repainting. Here is Rob Gravett's 1991 Ford Sapphire RS, chopped from an all-yellow Burago rally car which Nick masked and oversprayed red, with decals found on eBay. He still needs to find some decent wheels to finish it off!



Two more examples of Nick's handiwork – standard road cars chopped to Police vehicles, using aftermarket decals and accessories.

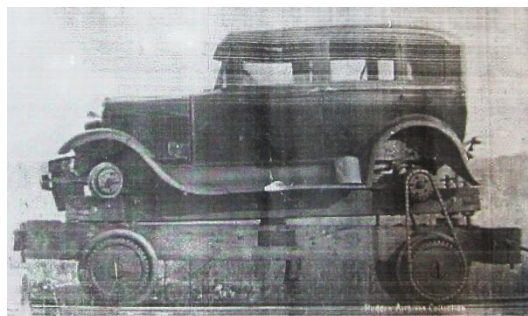
Nick also showed this one – a Ford Transit in the livery of Iceland. Not his own work, it was 'chopped' by member **Trevor Smith**, a model of the van he used to drive! Trevor can't make club nights nowadays, but more from him later! (Earlier, actually...!) Why has Nick now got it? Well, it's a Ford, innit!! > > >



< < < **Brian W** always has something on the go... He showed these two Swiss-made wagon kits, still awaiting his attention...

..and this interesting little wooden wagon > > >

V V V Brian also had a couple of diecast American cars, which will eventually become converted to run on railway tracks, as in the pic below right...



< < < Our **Alex** is another one well into chopping and repainting – usually on donor vehicles supplied by his tame posse of 'little old ladies' that we often hear about...!



< < < Here are just a few... V V V



And next up, what a surprise – Chairman **Steve!** This is not his favourite club night, not being into the 'active' side, but even he managed to find some suitable items to show!

Not surprisingly Corgi Toys featured, with this little quartet of ERF lorries – two original and two repaints!



Having said that he's not into the active side, Steve had this rather nice Scammell tanker by Morestone which is *almost* mint, but a previous owner had overpainted some of the detail. Steve is slowly and carefully removing the added paint to return it to original!



Then there was this beauty... Some years ago John Roberts did a little run of 6 (I think...) of the Austin A95 Countryman, using the Lansdowne A105 as a base.

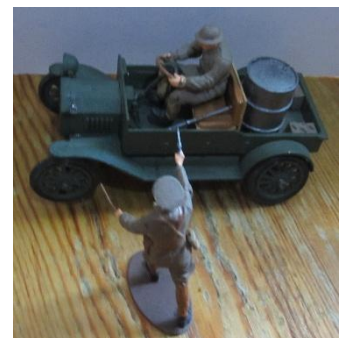
The altered bodies were cast by Brooklin... Highly desirable – John kept one, I've got one, Steve's got one... I wonder where the others are?



And to finish off the evening (!) it was **Ashley!** He told us that he has been building models since about age 8, so that's quite a few years of model making under his belt!



As we know he is well into military modelling... Above left is, I think, a Whippet, in an effective little diorama. And on the right? Well, Pickfords had to appear, and here is a chopped Scammell! On the right, a military Model T (?) and below, three more WW1 tanks!



And so another great evening comes to a close.... Well done, and many thanks, everybody!

BtE

County Classics Motor Museum, Taunton

Thursday 14 May

A little band of WMTC 'hardy types' (the Chairman's description!) ventured into Somerset to pay a visit to this relatively new museum – it was officially opened by Richard Hammond in November 2023. It really is an excellent museum, focusing on cars and motorcycles from the 1960s to the 1990s, but there are earlier (and later!) examples as well. The museum is also full of automobilia items, and lots of toys and models.

It really is well worth a visit, and, most essential, there is an excellent café too!

Here's the 'hardy' WMTC group – **Brian G, BtE, Don, Sharpie** and **Steve**, with **Graham** behind the camera!
> > >



Above – Hillman Avenger Tiger (Now a Corgi Vanguard's model!)



^^^ Of course, the obligatory Volvo for Brian!



<<< Some nice bikes too...

Austin J40 pedal car... >>>



<<< One of many nice Tri-ang toys dotted around the museum. (That's one for **Alex!**)



All facts, opinions, comments, criticisms etc. contained within Smalltalk are the responsibility of individual contributors (especially if anonymous!). The Ed just keeps on looking for the light at the end of the tunnel...!

Your 2026 Committee comprises: -

Chairman:	Steve Clements	devizesdiecast@aol.com	01380 725322
Vice Chairman:	Doug Male	malesatone@btinternet.com	01225 755043
Zoom Meister:	Ashley Jones	pickfords1630@yahoo.co.uk	07516 478830
Membership Secretary:	Nick Male	njmale007@gmail.com	07905 546287
Ed/Treas/Sec:	Barry Lloyd	barrylloyd1946@gmail.com	01179 866503
	Bob Warfield	bobandjill1945@gmail.com	01373 864820

Co-opted Committee Members (AKA SLH – Steve’s Little Helpers): Alan Sharpe and Don Stevenson

WMTC meets at The MILK CHURN, Commerce Way, Melksham SN12 6AD, usually on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month from 7.30pm, but just occasionally at lunchtime, 12 – 2.30pm.

The club loves to receive **any** feedback from members, so please email us at **wmtc25@aol.com**
And don't forget to email your contributions for **Smalltalk** to the Ed at **barrylloyd1946@gmail.com**
Or, send by post to: **Barry Lloyd, 36 Windrush Road, Keynsham, BRISTOL BS31 1QP**

WMTC Diary Dates: All information, including swapmeet dates, is given in good faith, but please check BEFORE setting off! Club events, or events where the club will be represented, are in BOLD.

31 May Stonehouse Gloucester Toy Fair, Magpies Social Club, Oldends Lane GL10 2DG **(SCF)**

3 June Club Night – ‘Pre 1960 – and Corgi’s 70th birthday’

6 June Southampton Toy Fair, St James Rd Methodist Church, St James Rd, Shirley SO15 5HE

6/7 June Middlewick House Open Garden, Corsham SN13 0PX 10am – 5pm. Advance booking required – middlewickhouseopengarden.com. All in aid of Wilts & Bath Air Ambulance, and Wilts Bobby Van Trust.

7 June Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle & Family Fun Day, Meadow Farm Nurseries, Langley Burrell, SN15 4LW 10.30am – 4.30pm www.cvs.rocks

7 June Kidderminster Toy Fair, Kidderminster Harriers Social Club, Stadium Close DY10 1NB

7 June Simply Ford Day at Beaulieu, SO42 7ZN

9 June Hook Toy Fair, Community Centre, Ravenscroft, RG27 9NN **(SCF)**

10 June Invite to the South Hants club night meeting. See Ed’s Briefs, this issue...

13 June SWINPEX 2025 (Stamps and Postcards Fair) at the Grange Leisure & Community Centre, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, SN3 4JY.

13/14 June Wiltshire Steam & Vintage Rally, Park Farm, Whistley Road, Devizes SN10 5TB

14 June Lions on the Green – hosted by Devizes Lions Club at The Large Green, Devizes SN10 3AG

16 June Royal Wootton Bassett Toy Fair, Memorial Hall, SN4 8EN **(SCF)**

NOTE... Sadly the annual informal evening classic car gathering at Poulshot village, near Devizes has now ended...

21 June Salisbury Motor Show 2026. Centred around the Guildhall SP1 1JH. thebritishmotorshow.live

27/28 June Bath Festival of Motoring, Walcot Rugby Ground BA1 9BJ. Bathfestivalofmotoring.com

1 July W&BAA Tour (see Ed’s Briefs), followed by Club Night – ‘Red’

4/5 July Heddington & Stockley Steam Rally & Country Fair. Next to the Ivy Inn, Heddington Nr Calne SN11 0PL

6 July An Evening with Jenson Button at The Forum, Bath

12 July 23rd Annual Classic Vehicle Show, Atwell Wilson Motor Museum, Calne SN11 0NF www.atwellwilson.org.uk

14 July Hook Toy Fair, Community Centre, Ravenscroft, RG27 9NN **(SCF)**

18/19 July Attack! Devizes & District Wargamers, Devizes School SN10 3AG ddwg.org.uk

19 July Wickham Toy Fair, Wickham Community Centre Mill Lane PO17 5AL **(SCF)**

24/25/26 July Devizes Scooter Rally, Lower Park Farm, Whistley Road, Devizes SN10 5TB

25 July Bristol Toy & Train Fair, BAWA Health & Leisure Centre, Southmead Road BS34 7RG

25 July Calne Bike Meet calnebikemeet.com

29 July The CTP Noggin, Nosh and Natter at the George, Longbridge Deverill BA12 7DG

2 August Newbury Classic & Vintage Car Show, Newbury Showground, RG18 9QZ www.newburycarshow.co.uk

2 August Norton Radstock Classic Club Camerton Gathering, Camerton Community Hall BA2 0NL nrcvc.org.uk

5 August Club Night – ‘Sky High’

SCF = Steve Clements Fairs

BDF = Bulldog Fairs (Stu Vowles)

Our Chairman Steve of Steven Clements Fairs (SCF) kindly offers all WMTC members ONE FREE ENTRY to all his fairs, on production of a current WMTC membership card. BUT PLEASE NOTE – this offer applies ONLY to Standard Entry times, NOT EARLY ENTRY

Wow, a bit tight for space – just room to say ‘Bye for now!’ Barry the Ed