



The Moke Club Kicked off their show season with a friendly meet at the Ace Café.



I wonder what car Max's first car will be?



A tidy 1960s English model.



Our trusty steed, a 998cc Portuguese model owned by Phil Bowring.



This isn't a Moke, but a 1968 Jimini, a Mini-based Moke-a-like.



The Moke Club brave the drizzle for a group shot.

"The weather is no barrier for the Moke Club"

Kick off 2011

Words and photos: Stephen Colbran

The Moke Club invited MiniWorld to join their first meet of the year at London's iconic Ace Café on 26 February, and even offered a Moke to take part in a convoy to the venue. It was a real treat to be offered the keys to one of Phil Bowring's three-strong Mini Moke fleet, and having never driven one before, I jumped at the chance.

We met at Phil and Suzy's earlyish on the Saturday morning and 17 Minis from Basingstoke Mini Club joined a handful of Mokes in a slightly soggy convoy to the Ace. Considering the weather, a Moke count of 17 was impressive, with many varieties from Mk1 English models to later Portuguese Cagiva imports.

The weather, it seems, is no barrier for the Moke Club. Whereas some Mini owners will not even brave the rain in their saloons, a lack of a proper roof and doors didn't deter the Moke crew from having a fun drive on a chilly February morning. Admittedly, in our loaned 1987

Portuguese Moke we had it easy – a functioning heater and waterproof sides kept us surprisingly warm and dry once we'd worked out how to turn the warm air on. 1960s English-built Mokes are rarely found with such luxuries!

The Moke itself was a joy to drive, and the only noticeable difference from a late 80s 998 saloon was the higher seating position and lack of doors. If anything, the performance is improved due to the lower weight, although lorries and buses do seem that much bigger and scarier! I can imagine it being incredibly rewarding in the summer with the roof and sides off.

Once at the Ace Café, a mouth-watering fry-up and mug of tea was a welcome brunch, and we had a few hours to chat to our fellow Mini fans and hide from the showers. If you need to know anything about these quirky Mini derivatives, the Moke Club should be your first port of call; what they don't know about Mokes probably isn't worth knowing! Thanks go to Phil, Suzy, Chris Naish and the Moke Club members for a fun day out. Can we have some sunshine next time please? Find out more at www.mokeclub.org.



Suzy gives the thumbs up as we leave Camberley.



Tasty and affordable munch from the Ace Café – a cool place.



A few hours with the Moke Club and you'll be an expert!



Steve Potter's Aussie Moke has had a three-year resto and looks awesome.



All varieties of Moke turned up.



Chairman Chris Naish brought along his funky miniature replica.



Gina and Steve came in their cool Prisoner-themed 1967 850.



See, we said Wesley and Anja from Belgium go everywhere in their Moke!



Derek Phipps' 1965 English Moke was the earliest in attendance, having been rescued from a farm.



Suzy and Phil with their airbrushed English Moke.



Peter James' Gulf Moke has a Vmax charger and 157lb/ft torque!



Emily of the Brady Bunch is also into her Mini Mokes.