

Thumbs Up!!!



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2016

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER MG CAR CLUB JOHANNESBURG CENTRE

August 2016

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MG CAR CLUB

Johannesburg Centre



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All Payments can be made directly into the MGCC Banking Account
Remember to reference your deposit with your name and preferably state your Membership No.

A Natter and Noggin is normally held on the first Thursday of each month at 8pm

The Old Edwardian Club, Houghton.

For more details see Motoring Calendar in this issue of “Thumb's Up!

Club Runs are normally held on the second Sunday of each month.

AFFILIATED TO THE MG CAR CLUB -- ABINGDON-ON-THEMES - ENGLAND



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Thumbs Up!!!



EDITORIAL

What an exciting month this has been for our MG Members. Starting with the Noggin which was hosted by Stewart Cuninghame, (see article further on), then there was the Airforce Museum adventure, followed by the visit to the Hall Transport Museum, this was also well attended by many MG enthusiasts, and brought back many fond memories of yester year. We thank Bruce for arranging a good meal at a Restaurant where 17 members enjoyed a wholesome lunch.

On the same day, the VVC hijacked some of our members, who opted to attend a function at their club house.

As for the Youth Project, Cameron, who has been their representative on our Committee in the past, has found himself very busy studying lately, so has nominated Gavin Holt as his replacement on the Committee. Gavin is an enthusiastic member of the youth project. We welcome Gavin Holt onto the Committee and we are hoping that we will get more regular news of their activities in future. He mentioned that they were making good progress in building another MGB Race car. The A had experienced a few problems, but was still going well. We hope to get more details of future events from now on, so that our members can be encouraged to see them in action on the race tracks.

For more information regarding future events, see the Forth Coming Events page, which is now ably handled by Rajesh. Then do not forget the Northern Centres Indaba which is taking place from 2 to 4 September. This is bound to be something exceptional.

On a sad note, I must mention that my brother Ray, has undergone 10 operations on his leg arteries in a period of 5 months. Finally his right leg was amputated below the knee. Hopefully he will now fully recover from this ordeal.

We apologise for the late insertion of the July 'Thumbs Up' magazine appearing on the MG Website, we are still experiencing problems with my computer not being able to communicate with that of our printers, but we are still hoping to find a solution soon.

TOM (Editor)

MG WEBSITES

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From the Chair,

There are so many events peripheral to the 'official' MGCC events that our member's turnout is kept thin. The Show Day, as I mentioned last month, clashed with Piston Ring, a Maluti away run and the European National Gathering. The next big event is the Indaba and we are hoping that this will take precedence over other events.

Closer to home, we had a visit to the James Hall Museum of Transport on Sunday the 10th July. History was not a subject that interested me at school, but recently I have been keen on following the history of Johannesburg. It is by far the largest city in South Africa and very much younger than the rival cities. It was developed in the space of just a few years in quite the wrong place, with only a small spring in Doornfontein to provide water. Over the years many civil engineering feats have been used to provide the ever increasing demands for water - our MG club's visit to Katsi Dam in Leshoto in 2011 highlighted one of the latest attempts. Gold was the driver of all things including war, early Johannesburg was populated by men of all races and religions. The men from all over the world arrived to seek their fortunes. Among them were miners, gangsters and pimps. Johannesburg was divided between the gangs with very clearly defined boundaries. Charles van Onselen has researched this history which is well documented in his book "Foxes and Flies". Now what has all of this to do with MG's? It is all about history -the revamped Kyalami Race Track will be launched with the Festival of Motoring, celebrating 125 years of motoring (about the time that Johannesburg has existed) . This launch is taking place over 5 days at the end of August and beginning of September- yes it clashes with the Indaba! Johannesburg, the youngest city was developed before the advent of the motor car. In fact the first car in Johannesburg was demonstrated where Park Station is today, back in circa 1890. Motoring and its history are inextricably linked to the history of Johannesburg. The history of MG's history is only about 25 years less than that.

The James Hall Museum of Transport houses a comprehensive collection of cars and other means of transport going back to the very beginning of Johannesburg. During the short period that I have lived in Johannesburg, I remember the tram lines (anyone driving a TC would remember those!) I remember the trolley busses running on overhead power conductors. A neighbour of ours in Norwood told me 40 years ago how the first change of horses in a three stage coach trip to Pretoria, was in Orange Grove- and can you believe they are now building a Ria Via station just there! While we were in the museum, we could imagine this history as we walked past the displays. There is a memorial to the riders of the DJ which has been going, with a break during two world wars, for over 100 years.

The lunch at the Troyville Hotel after the museum visit, was enjoyed by all. The hotel portrays some of Johannesburg's rich history. This venue came well recommended by Joe and Norman who are frequent patrons.

The festival of Motoring, which regrettably clashes with the Indaba, have asked us to provide 3 MGs for the display over the 5 days. Northern's Centre has agreed to provide 3 cars as well. Owners of cars on display will gain free entry for the 5 days - normal cost of entry is R 200 per day. If you are interested, please let me know as soon as possible.

A historic event very much closer to home was enjoyed by all with Stewarts

Cunninghame's talk about the 1989 500 mile MG racing event (reported elsewhere in this edition). Stuart and Thelma are an absolutely remarkable couple, not only among the most active of our members ,never missing an MG event but also demonstrating the same enthusiasm in the VVC, DJ and Austin Healey clubs. I am humbled by their enthusiasm and the front cover of this edition has been carefully chosen as a tribute to them.

Bruce Dixon

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Riding in Cars with Boys...

Bronwyn Grover

Well, one boy. In France. Sorry Drew Barrymore, I think this is a better story.

I'm often praised for my patience, acceptance and encouragement of Steve's "car habit". Here's a little secret, it's not awful. It's not even a little annoying. There are so few people in the world that can get as excited and passionate about anything as Steve does about cars. There's never a dull moment and I've been lucky to share in most of his adventures so far, not too forget the incredible people that we've gotten to know along the way. This time around, Steve's habit took us all the way to France! Which was awesome, who wouldn't want to drive across France in a classic car? If you want to hear more about the cars of the European Event of the Year (of which there were 400), you'll have to come to Noggin but if you want to know more about the rest of the trip, well... then here we go.



A very special MG -
Philippe's very first MG.

We arrived in Geneva early Saturday morning, with an app on my phone that I downloaded the day before and a free 80 minute pass on public transport compliments of our boarding pass, we made our way to our hotel. Now in my defence, the hotel had great reviews. And it was a great hotel in a great area. In a great area if you arrived from the right side that is. Which we did. So we only discovered the dodgy neighbouring house of ill repute

and a side of Geneva we did not expect when we were leaving. As for Geneva, it is a gorgeous city. During our one full day and a good 22 km of walking we saw all of the main sights. The Jet d'Eau, the Flower Clock, the archaeological site under the oldest church in the middle of the Old Town, the United Nations and the restoration scaffolding around the Broken Chair monument. What we didn't see in Geneva were a lot of people, the streets were pretty deserted for most of the day. On Sunday we headed back to the airport and met up with our South African contingent and Philippe, our French host. We drove up to Philippe's home in Aubonne, a small town on Lake Geneva with a back drop of Mont Blanc and a foreground of vineyards. The hidden treasure of Aubonne is Philippe's most impressive car collection. In one of Philippe's garages hidden behind a single garage door in what looks like a wedge between two roads lies a 15 car cave of wonder. The most memorable cars from my side were his first MG (a red BGT) and an L1 (which is a four seater pre war MG with a slightly longer bonnet (or something, I'm still learning, there was a long description)).

On Monday we started the big drive, a two day journey from Lake Geneva across France up to the north western coast. Steve and I were in a newly rebuilt MG TF (an old one), Heynes and Ann in an MGA (a special one) and Rolf and Judie in a 'B V8. We were following Anita, Joe and José (Philippe's mechanic, originally from Mozambique) in a Nissan with a trailer. Anita was amazing with directions up front and I was only mildly panicked at being on the wrong side of the car and the road (on the second day that is, on the first day I was very panicked). We took the back roads, through the small towns of the French country side. We stopped to look at churches, to drink coffee and only on Day 2, to eat at McDonalds. It turns out, that there aren't many places you can park a trailer in France. We knew we had arrived at Philippe's home in Aubonne by the stunning car collection on the lawn outside. An afternoon of gawking, driving and settling in to our accommodation was followed with dinner at Les Sports on the main street of Le Touquet. Le Touquet is a gorgeous sea side, small town that is a holiday home for Parisians and an always home for a lucky few. It has a long white beach, many chocolatiers



Lake Geneva at twilight with the Jet d'Eau
visible



All ready for the long-road. MG TF, MRX 43 and an MGB V8.
Lined up in order of cruising speed...



MMM MG's at Registration

and cafes, and occasional sunshine.

On Wednesday we registered for the event and Philippe generously allocated each South African couple a car to use for the event. Steve and I were in a TC Special. And I am now very fond of that epic little car. There was a cocktail party after registration complete with champagne (or MCC... I'm not sure which valley it came from).

The next three days hosted a series of rallies. The first one took Steve and I to Baie de Somme, only after my rally navigating took us on a major detour but turns out I can juggle a route

schedule and map in a breezy open top car and we managed to get to where we needed to be. After an impressively massive buffet lunch, we went on a steam train through the valley. The car park adjacent to the train station was filled with pre war MGs and T types. I learnt the difference between a TB, TC and TD. As for the pre war cars, I'll need a bit more practice (hint hint Franschoek nudge nudge). Dinner for the 800 participants of the event was hosted at the Palais de Congres and we were treated to the most incredible food organised by Philippe's brother, Bernard. The caterer was Michelin starred and the food was a set menu with paired wine. Wow. Participants of each country in attendance presented the hosting nation with a token of appreciation. Norman Ewing representing South Africa went last and gave a great speech thanking the organisers and then called up Philippe, presented him with a wooden octagon and sincerely thanked on behalf of the South Africans for his generosity and hospitality.



MG's lined up next to the railway track at Baie de Somme



A line-up of MGA's and YT's at the ladies Rally.

the participants dress the part. A quiz night followed another sensational dinner (which included aperitifs, paired wines, the most perfectly done steak and I dessert I couldn't finish and couldn't take home). A quiz night for 800 people might seem like a bit of an overly ambitious undertaking but each table submitted answers via a website and it worked brilliantly.

The third rally took us to the Blockhaus d' Eperlecques. We got lost again, but had great fun problem solving the route map and enjoyed the comradery of all the other lost participants. We were meant to tour the Blockhouse at 10.30, when we arrived at 10.25 we were only the fifth car to get there. The others were still out accidentally exploring France. The Blockhouse was fascinating, it was originally built as a V2 missile launch site by the Germans but was then bombed. So they decided not to launch missiles from there but continued to construct a liquid oxygen plant for fuel for the missiles... and then it was bombed again. So they stopped. We then headed out to the La Coupole, a bunker that used as a V2 launch base and missile storage. Leaving here we got caught in rain in a car with no weather kit. Driving through tiny little French towns, in an open TC, in the rain... I think this experience was my favourite part of the whole trip.

The final day of the event involved a display of MGs across town. The pre-war cars were in the market square, the T types were outside the Palais de Congres, the A's were parked along the main street and the B's and moderns were adjacent to the sea. After yet another incredible meal (which included a French take on paella) and Steve was announced the winner of the photo quiz.

The days following the event we toured the historical sites of the countryside with the South African group. Now you might be asking "But what did you see?" or maybe "But what did you drive?" instead I'm going to tell you what we ate. Every morning we started the day at Philippe's home and were treated to the most incredible spread of fresh loaves (French loaves... obviously. Bought everyday from a local bakery), a selection of cheese, jams, cured meats, eggs, yoghurt, spreads and perfect strong coffee. If we were travelling without Philippe, lunch was usually something quick and efficient with a pastry from a patisserie as a late afternoon treat. If we were travelling with Philippe, then lunch was a two hour occasion at a small restaurant with waitresses that only spoke French and served food I wish I could pronounce or spell but will forever remember. For dinner we tried several restaurants in Le Touquet, enjoying the seafood pots and beef stews and extensively sampling French wines.

Eventually the time came for the South African group to head back to Aubonne. Heynes and Ann led in a Jag Mk 2 and four MGs followed them. Ann was armed with a map and so we made our across France with no French speaking guide and no trailer this time. Steve and I in the TC without weather kit (Philippe insisted I wear his jacket, so I had three jackets on and felt and looked with a marshmallow for the first stretch). Norman and Pat were in the MGA (the special one), Anita and Joe in the purple 'B V8 (lovingly referred to as the Jacaranda) and Rolf and Judie in the maroon 'B V8. It was a smooth drive, with a few rainy sections and a few coffee stops.

After arriving back in Aubonne, we all got ready to go our separate ways. We celebrated the end of our awesome adventure with a toast to Norman for organising and to Philippe for his inspirational generosity... and before I forget, a Swiss cheese fondue for dinner.



The group of intrepid Travelers, and our a very special TC "Special".

A MaGical MG Experience...

Stephen Grover

Growing up with the MG Car Club I have always been inspired by the tales that enthusiasts had about International Travels in MG's, the people who were met along the way, and the incredibly experience gained. So, needless to say, I didn't need very much convincing when my friend Norman Ewing suggested that we should join him on a trip to Europe to attend the 2016 MG European Event of the Year...

And so it came to pass that on 4 June 2016 Bronwyn and I boarded a flight destined for Switzerland where we would meet up with other Enthusiasts and the co-ordinators of our expedition Norman and Philippe Douchett.



Mon Ami Mates
Philippe and Norman



TF at speed and at a standstill, in rural France.

an L2 through to a MG SV, with everything in between, including the Harewood special and K3026. A car which particularly caught my eye was a TC special done in the style of a MMM car – a very interesting take on the T-series theme.

While we were getting settled in Bronwyn and I were offered a very nicely prepared MGB GT V8, with an incredibly purple interior! (After driving a B V8 I now look upon Gary Chapman's V8 build with heightened anticipation. A rover V8 in a B really is a wonderful combination).

We attended registration, which was a marvel of organisation – as was the entire event. With 400 entries, 400 cars and around 800 people it was incredibly to watch the event unfold like clockwork over the course of the five days. The

After a night spent in Aubonne and preparing the cars, we were off on our driving expedition across the mountains and into France. We were a convoy of three MG's – a TF Midget, an MGA and a MGB V8. The drive across the mountains was mechanically uneventful, with the exception of the MGA getting a bit hot under the collar and the MGB's fuel gauge not working. The scenery was stunning, and the weather played along exceptionally well.

I will be the first to admit that I hadn't spent very much time behind the wheel of a T-series, but that was all to change on this trip, and my life certainly better for it! The TF ran beautifully, but after only ever driving long distances in MG's with overdrive ratios the direct top-gear took some getting used to! This TF was also particularly undergeared, with 110km/h coming at about 5000rpm – this gearing did give the TF a reasonable urge though, which was great.

We stuck to the back-roads as much as we could. Better to drive and better to see the countryside.

Arrival in Le Touquet was the beginning of a MG extravaganza the likes of which I have only dreamed about! We were glad to be welcomed by Philippe and Norman who had gone on ahead to prepare for the event. We were thrilled to meet more MG family, and get start to get to know the people who we would be spending so much time with over the next two weeks. There were all sorts of wonderful and interesting MG's at Philippe's house – from

format of the event was as follows:

Day 1: Registration and Welcome
Day 2: Choice of four rallies, from 137km to 265km.
Day 3: Ladies Rally or Track-day at Abbeville
Day 4: Choice of four rallies – as for Day 2
Day 5: "Showday" with displays across town of different types of MG's

I was delighted when, after the registration, Philippe suggested that we use the TC for the duration of the event. He had been hesitant to allocate it because it had not weather kit, but this was not something to deter Bronwyn and my enthusiasm for the car, or the event.

We did three rallies, and did not do the track day – although I think that the track day could have been fun in the TC, it was better to drive cross-country and see some of the scenery. I must add that Bronwyn did an incredible job navigating the event, and I would have no hesitation in now tackling a classic rally with her. Bring on Mille Miglia...



In the Belleuve Special with Jose and Norman telling the history.



Harewood special and TC side by side.
Wonderful cars to be able to enjoy

The TC performed faultlessly, and running HS4 carbs, no air-cleaners, no interior except the bucket seats, no weatherkit and an all Aluminium body it went incredibly well! What a wonderful car – I would love to build something similar, maybe when the J2 is complete... (The car to build, in this spirit, would probably be a TB – of which there were several on the event – which is equipped with sliding trunion suspension rather than the shackled suspension of the TC. It is also eligible for the Mille Miglia... So if anybody knows of a TB chassis let me know – all I need is a chassis!)

Another very interesting car on the event, which was driven for the duration by Heyns and Ann Stead was the Harewood special. A car built in 1954 for Ernest Harewood, based on a Lister type 51 chassis with TB rear end, Y-type / TD front suspension, TC gearbox and a very hot XPEG (1500cc) motor with a Laystall Aluminium Cylinder head. A very special car, very quick, and rather hard. I admired the Steads driving it over the

course of 500km of country roads!

Norman and Pat did the event in the ex-works MGA MRX 42, which competed in the Liege-Rome-Liege rally. A very special car with many interesting period features.

Other cars taking part in the event included the Ex-Evans NA Bellevue Special which now belongs to Philippe, as well as a very good replica of the car. There was also the replica of EX182, the all Aluminium MGA prototype which ran in Le Mans in 1955. Also taking part in the event was the original 1956 Mille Miglia MGA MBL867—this car, driven in the event by Nancy Mitchell, is still owned by her family. It is also the earliest MGA known to exist—the 5th produced.

There were many J2's P-types and even an L1 Saloonette which was a joy to see. It was very exciting to see a beautifully presented ND, as well as two TB Monaco bodied cars.

I was very lucky, over the course of the last day of the event, to drive an L2 with a pre-selector gearbox and the Harewood special. It was humbling to see how generous Philippe was with his incredibly scarce and special cars. I aspire to be as generous with the keys of my cars as Philippe was over the course of the time we were there.

The MG Event was exceptional. New friendships were made, and old friendships were strengthened.



MBL867 on display with other MGA's at the showday on the last day of the event

After the event we did some touring of the areas around Le Touquet, seeing Delville Wood and the exceptional museum in Albert, as well as the main palace and cathedral in Arras. We also took in some of the Atlantic Wall, Wellington Quarry in Arras and the preserved trenches at Vimy. The cathedral in Amiens was truly spectacular, as was the fortified city of Montreuil. There was just too much to describe! Certainly a personal highlight was spending time on the Great War battle fields, and coming to grips with the incredible loss of life suffered in an effort to preserve our ideals of freedom. A humbling experience.

The drive back was wonderful! Bronwyn and I were thrilled to be back in the TC after a few days spent in the cosseted environment of modern cars, and a bespoke Jaguar Mk2. We left in relatively heavy rain, which was an interesting challenge and a good test of our weather-proof clothing (which it passed). It is always fun to drive towards a destination, and it was nice to be on the long road back to Switzerland. The TC performed faultlessly, and I



Heyns and Ann in the Harewood Special.
The MG they used for the event

thoroughly enjoyed driving it enthusiastically through some of the tighter sections of road.



Norman alongside MRX 42, an ex-works MGA in which he has done many miles.

After an overnight in Troyes we hit the road for the last leg of our journey to Switzerland. The drive went well, but we were in for an absolute treat on the mountain pass crossing between France and Switzerland. Wet conditions prevailed on the French side, to the point where it was necessary to drop the Aero-screen on the TC and endure the weather for the sake of visibility, but even heavy rain couldn't ruin the joy that was crossing the Jura Mountains in that wonderful TC! And then the weather broke, and there was sunshine and dry roads on the other side – descending that pass, with a view of Lake Geneva is something that I hope to remember forever! Wonderful.

Bronwyn and I are very lucky to have taken part in this MaG-ical experience. None of it would have been possible without the tremendous generosity of Philippe Douchet and the enthusiasm of my friend Norman Ewing. We owe a tremendous

debt of gratitude to these two enthusiasts! Thank-you. Merci.

Now. What's next??



Behind the wheel of the TC. A great place to be, whatever the weather conditions.



Bronwyn and I in full weather gear while climbing the mountains out of France

Getting-Old is a Hell Of A Thing!

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Do you wish to know the Endings of all the Fairy Tales?

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Submitted by Kevin

1) Did you know, Cinderella was Divorced?



WHAT A GREAT NOGGIN



Stewart singing the praises of a grand MG team effort way back in 1989 when the MG team won the index performance prize



Roger making a point with Stewart



Some of the 1989 team that were present at the noggin: Alan Uzzel, Denise Harvey, Rod Green, Stewart Cuninghame, Roger Pearce & Jay Westaway

July Monthly Run

James Hall Museum of Transport



A sight from yester year that many members may recall, the Christmas bus, now parked at the museum



Put foot & trek McLeods; Les & Cameron recently returned from the Put Foot Rally in their Chev station wagon. It would be good to learn more at a future noggin.



Northcliff rendezvous; Tania, Anthony (PJ's friend from Harare), PJ, Clive, Jenny & Mike



A fire pump with a history, built in London during 1877, used in the Anglo-Zulu wars & captured by the Zulus in Isandlwana Jan 1879, later recovered & used in Newcastle & Jhb



Keith Watson, Dolf Peche & the Thulsie brothers, Jay & Rajesh, talking "cars" prior to the museum tour



Maureen Wilmot's Opel Kadett won in a crossword competition, donated to the museum in 2010 when Norman persuaded Bob to free up his garage for Norman's J2 restoration



The impact of inflation, 30 minutes of parking used to cost a whole 5c. Do you remember the Meter Maids?



Nina & Hyla (daughter & mother) standing beside the Gospel caravan which was used from the 1890s by the Salvation Army, the high porch doubled as the pulpit



Keith & Noel dressed for the part



Safe parking in the back street behind the Troyeville Hotel



Dolf Peche in his immaculate MGA Coupe ready to head back to Midvaal



Lunch at the Troyeville Hotel, great Portuguese cuisine & worth a visit



A typical scene from the Troyeville suburb



The Johannesburg skyline that features on the Troyeville Hotel's logo



The McLeod family arrive for lunch

THE TRIP TO ZWARTKOPS AIRBASE

The 2nd July was a beautifully crisp winter's morning & an ideal time for a ride in one's MG. So at 08h00 four MG Johannesburg members met at the BP Oasis (Beyers Naude) before driving out together to Zwartkops. The idea was sound, meet for some camaraderie & then drive out to the Airforce Base together for support & company. Sadly though we lost Mike Brett on route when Mike's car broke down; to compound the problem Mike had left his phone at home so wasn't contactable by mobile phone. After a short re-group Mike O'Keefe opted to head back along the motorway to find Mike Brett, while Glen & I continued on to Zwartkops.

Once at the Zwartkops Air Force Base it was good to meet several folk from Northern Centre & amongst other things learn more about the forthcoming MG Indaba. Must say that there was an impressive attendance by the Merc Club.

Pepi managed to organise a ride in the SAAF helicopter for most of us, which is always an enjoyable experience. After our helicopter flip Glen & I made a few phone calls & established that Mike O'K hadn't found Mike B in his MGTF. After a boerewors roll Glen & I decided it was time to also head out in search of the missing MGTF. As it turned out, we were on route to the motorway when Lou (Mike B's wife) called with the news that Mike B was safely home. At this stage Mike O'K was still riding the highways in his Subaru in search missing MGTF. A phone call later we'd called off the search; Glen headed back to Zwartkops (perhaps for another wors roll), while Mike O'K & I headed home. Hopefully we'll get to see the Vampire jet at next year's event.

Many thanks for Hilton Woolf from the Merc Club for organising the day out at the museum.
Kevin



Some of the Johannesburg & Northern Centre MG folk who attended the morning outing



Superb photographic opportunities & an ideal place to visit for anyone interested in military aircraft

Mike O'Keeffe, Glen Parker & Michael Brett met at the BP Oasis to travel through to Zwartkops Air Force Base



All donations willingly accepted for the museum fund; thanks to the Merc Club for a day well organised





Good wishes and get well for Tom's Brother recovering from an amputation.
Condolences to Carol, Bruce and family for the loss of her Dad.
Congratulations to Bronwyn Grover on her Phd - we missed this last month.
Get well for Thelma recovering from her fall.
I also know that Doron Shaffer has a new MGA

Welcome Gavin Holt to represent the YPO on the committee
Remember to keep Sunday 13th November open for the Christmas Lunch - BOOK EARLY

Our MaGnificent new members

2207 James Marshall 'YP' Windser East jamesmarshall99@gmail
060 767 8117

2208 William & Nici Combrinck Kyalami
William@forestflooring.co.za 083 703 5999 MGA + 4 others

2209 Ian & Sharon Crook Glenadrienne scrook@mweb.co.za
074 103 6070 MGB

2210 Neil Murray Parkhurst laprops@mweb.co.za 082 877 0007
MGA x 3 + MGB

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*Welcome to these new Members, and hope to see them out
enjoying their MGs*

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The MGB: What This Vehicle Did For Future Sports Cars

Submitted by Rajesh

There's a legendary story that when Mazda engineers were developing the Miata, they were so adamant about capturing the intangible "Britishness" of a classic roadster, that one of its engineers was told to daily drive a vintage Lotus Elan while the team reverse-engineered a number of classic British roadsters to understand just what made them so special. So to say that the little Mazda owes a lot to the Elan is an understatement - hell, it even looks like one. And with nearly one million Miatas sold since its introduction 25 years ago, the Lotus has rightfully earned its place as one of the most influential sports cars in history.

But there's more to the Miata's Japanese-engineered Britishness than just the Elan. Because when it launched in 1990, it was aimed at Baby Boomers who once owned the classic roadsters the Miata was based on. With only 16,000 or so Elans built, not many prospective Miata buyers ever owned a Lotus. The vast majority of them owned MGBs, the venerable sports car that bridged both the Swinging '60s and the Malaise Era, and with 512,243 cars sold over an 18-year span, it was the world's favorite roadster before the Miata came along to steal its crown. To understand the Miata's success and enduring appeal is understand the MGB, and the effect it had on the sports car world a half century ago.



While Mazda had to engineer pedigree into its roadster, the MGB was a true successor to the sports car throne. In 1945, MG launched the TC Midget, a 55 horsepower roadster that traced its roots back to 1936. Compared to the giant chrome steel sedans in the U.S. at the time, the spindly little roadsters may have looked delicate and antiquated, but they handled like a dream, were easily hot-rodded, and were great racers to boot. The TC first became a favorite of well-heeled American officers stationed in England, and when it was time to come home, they brought their MGs with them, introducing the land of the free to a whole new concept: The sports car.

With the exception of high-priced toys for the rich like the Murcer Runabout and Stutz Bearcat of the 1910s, and the Auburns and Duesenbergs of the '20s and '30s, the sports car was largely nonexistent in America at the end of the 1940s. The MG changed that. Thanks to the popularity of the TC and subsequent TD, a small but intense interest in sports cars began to grow. By the early '50s, Jaguar, Porsche, and Ferrari had begun to sell cars alongside MG in America, and in these early days, the imports could be seen pitted against each other on race tracks across the country every weekend. By the middle of the decade, however, the market exploded, as Chevy had introduced the Corvette and given it a V8, and Jaguar and Ferrari's cars grew more powerful by the year. The sports car segment was here to stay, and it was no longer cornered by the flare-fendered MG. In 1955, the company replaced its antique T-type car with the MGA, a modern, pretty roadster that brought MG into the modern age.



The MGA was a contender too. Cheaper than a Porsche, the roadster was a favorite at Sports Car Club of America events, and even competed in NASCAR between 1960 and 1963. But the game was changing so quickly, that by the early '60s, MG needed an all new car to keep up. On top of the Corvette, Jaguar E-Type, and the more expensive offerings from Ferrari and Porsche, buyers could now choose from a crowded field of affordable roadsters from Triumph, Austin-Healey, Sunbeam, Alfa-Romeo, and even Datsun. But the MGB stood out, and with its clean lines reminiscent of a mini Ferrari 250 GT California, and affordable \$2,605 base price, it was an instant success.



Compared to the outgoing MGA, the B was practically a luxury car, with a bigger cockpit, amenities like roll-up windows, and a top that was actually easy to operate. It also had a thoroughly modern monocoque body, a lower center of gravity, handled better, and had more power. Even as Detroit was cranking up displacement and boosting the horsepower, the MGB spoke to thousands of buyers in a way that a Mustang or Charger never could. In 1965, MG released a fastback coupe version called the MGB GT, with its greenhouse tastefully styled by Pininfarina. The Mark II Bs and GTs were introduced in 1967, but the majority of changes were under the skin, and the B proved so popular that the company barely changed

By the '70s, U.S. safety and emissions standards began to change quickly, and MG kept up the best it could to keep the car salable in its biggest market. The cars were still popular, but by 1974, safety mandates meant its restrained chrome grille and bumpers were replaced by heavy black rubber beak, taking away from the car's charm, and marking the beginning of the Mark III cars. Still, the MGB endured, even while muscle cars virtually disappeared, and the market for affordable sports cars started to dwindle in the face of stricter requirements. But by the end of the decade, the MGB was one of the oldest cars on the market, and MG, a brand owned by British Leyland, was under severe financial strain. MGB production ended in 1980, when British Leyland closed MG's lone factory in Abingdon, and discontinued the brand.

But the MGB's story doesn't end there. British Leyland revived the marque in 1982, and used it to sell a series of rebadged Austins. By the '90s, British Leyland was long gone, and MG was owned by Rover. In a bizarre twist, success of the Miata spurred Rover to get the MGB's tooling out of storage and introduce the RV8, a limited edition V8-powered take on its iconic roadster. It followed up with an all-new car, the mid-engined MG F, but it just couldn't capture the magic of its predecessor.



Today, the MGB is one of the most popular and versatile classics on the market. With its iconic looks, simple mechanicals, and low buy-in (running examples can easily be found for under \$10,000), it's a perfect classic car for the hobbyist. The car's two biggest demons are its unpredictable electrical system and rust - both common problems on British cars of the era. But if you can conquer those, it's a small price to pay for a truly timeless and rewarding driving experience.

In 1962, the MGB was a cheap, capable sports car with world-class looks, great handling, and a popularity that lasted for decades. Sound familiar? Sure, Mazda did all these things on a larger scale with the Miata, but without the template created by the small British automaker that practically invented modern sports cars, it might never have happened at all.

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TECHNICAL *ANYONE FOR T...*

TECHNICAL Anyone for 'T' Part 2

So in part 1 I gave a general overview of turbocharging a B engine, in part 2 we can take a look at some of the challenges in doing this conversion.

Draw through vs Blow through set up.

The draw through system is the simplest and easiest system to fit, as the name implies the carb is fixed to the air intake of the turbo compressor and the fuel/air mixture is sucked into the compressor where it's compressed and forced into the intake manifold of the engine.

In this case there is no need to modify the fuel pressure system or the carb as everything is under normal atmospheric pressure. Distinct advantage of this setup is that the pressure drop at the compressor inlet partially vaporises the fuel resulting in a cooler charge, but this can be a disadvantage on a very cold winter's morning as the carb can ice up but it's good on a hot Highveld summer's day.

A further disadvantage is that fuel in the mixture can and will condense and form droplets of petrol that will collect in lower portions of the boost pipe and manifold resulting in an inconsistent fuel/air ratio going into the engine. After engine shut down this fuel will also form minute pools of fuel in the intake system resulting in difficult cold starting.

In addition when the throttle is closed as when you change gear the high vacuum in the intake and compressor can cause the oil in the turbine side to be sucked into the compressor. This system needs a carbon seal between compressor and turbine but these carbon turbo seals are no longer available.

Finally for the reason of fuel condensation it is not possible to fit an intercooler as the fuel will collect in the pipes of the intercooler.

Interestingly a recent copy of Classic Car Africa magazine featured this type of conversion by Brospeed Tuning here in Johannesburg in the 1980's that they applied to Fords and Mazda's.

To Quote Corky Bell "draw through systems SUCKS!"

The blow through system also harks back to the 1980's before the advent of fuel injection and engine management computers, in this system the compressed air is blown through the carb where the fuel is added and into the engine intake.

Blow through systems are more complex but offer superior control compared to the draw through system.

In this system the carb is placed between the compressor and the intake manifold so it only compresses the intake air, fuel is added as the air passes through the carb venturi. These systems are more complex as the carb now operates under greater pressure and requires more mods to both the carb and fuel supply. The choice of carb for this system in the USA is usually Weber, Del Orto, Holley or Mikuni, I chose the SU HIF 6 as a similar set up was used on the MG Montego.

Under pressure the carb must be sealed viz float overflow must be blocked off, engine vent to carb port must be blocked off, throttle spindles must be sealed, brass floats must be replaced with plastic (if using HS carbs), finally the piston damper chamber also has to be sealed.

Other mods required for the carb are a range of piston needles and a larger 0.100"

needle and seat in the float chamber. The HIF 6 and HIF 44 SU carbs are fitted with neoprene spindle seals but in the case of the SU HIF 6 these seals must be fitted in reverse as the carb is now under pressure and no longer under vacuum.

TECHNICAL TIP

Repair a faulty MGB “Indicator Switch”

If you have ever had that annoying problem that your MGB indicator switch doesn't cancel after you've made the turn, this can drive you around the bend .

Last year I acquired a 1973 B roadster that had this problem, I tried everything to sort it out. I built up the cam on the steering column; I changed the profile of the cam I replaced the column shaft bushes nothing worked.

After a while I had one of those eureka moments, those nylon levers that are activated by the steering column cam must have lost some of their Spring Resistance. There are no springs, they rely on the flexing of the nylon.

If I could increase that spring I could solve the problem so I tested my theory with an elastic band I wound it around the two levers so as to bring them closer together and it worked every time.

I dashed off the Crazy Plastics store and bought a packet of assorted rubber bands found the right size and there you have it a R1.50 repair that has lasted more than 12 months. In time I guess that the rubber band will perish but what the hell I have a packet of 30 to choose from.

Randall

DOES ANYONE ELSE HAVE ONE OF THESE?



Whilst doing a little clearing up, and sorting out, we unearthed this wine, that had been tucked away carefully, and I thought it would be a great addition, as the INDABA is coming up this year.

It was Martin Luckock's first INDABA - 1986.

Submitted by Denise Luckock



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Forthcoming Events: Runs, & Noggin's

August Natter and Noggin

Old Ed's - 4 August 2016

Report back on the MG meeting in Europe by Stephen Grover. Members of our club were also in attendance.

August Run

14 August.

Run to Magalies park. Magalies Park is located at the foothills of the Magaliesberg mountain range and 10 km from Hartbeespoort Dam. Come in and spend the day at the restaurant. We will allocate a block for parking in the golf parking area, alternative at the OCV parking.



September Natter and Noggin

Old Ed's - 1 September 2016

Topic to be confirmed.

MG National Indaba 2016

2 to 4 September 2016.

2016 Tshwane MG Indaba. Start your preparations and confirm all bookings now. Your contacts from the Northern Centre are: Pepi Gaspari (082 410 1569) / Steve and Hazell Eden (082 372 8740)

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