

# Thumbs Up!!!



*Please buy a balloon for charity? With Rudi & Anneke's red ZR in the background  
Red Car Day - see article inside*

1969



2016

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER    MG CAR CLUB    JOHANNESBURG CENTRE

June 2016

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# MG CAR CLUB

## Johannesburg Centre



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## COMMITTEE

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**Standard Bank, Rosebank branch 00-43-05: Account Name &# “MG Car Club” 00 203 458 1**  
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.

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**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**

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It is now six months that I have been having computer problems, and have not been able to produce the usual quality that I was able to do in the past. I have however received great assistance from our Committee Members as a whole. Bruce Dixon, PJ and Rajesh and others have helped a lot. But we are attempting to find a programme what is compatible with that used by our printers. I have now been sending what I set up to Bruce. He converts it all and manages to send it to Denise who then puts the finishing touches to it. Then it goes to our Website Manager who gets it onto our MG Web Site. Hopefully I will soon be able to do it all myself again, in the near future.

Now for MG matters. We had a disappointing turnout with only 3 or 4 MGs out on Mother's Day. However for those who did go it seems to have been a very interesting adventure into the distant past. The most difficult part of the day seems to have been to find a restaurant to accommodate them for lunch.

Then, another unexpected item was the late "Red Car Day" event that was sent out at the last moment. And surprisingly, this was better attended and helped the VVC Committee, who organised it to donate a handsome donation to Charity. I am not sure if any of our members attended the PMB Classic Car Show this year, but, looking at their Website it was another great success!

Coming up in the next few weeks, there is our Combined Centres SHOWDAY. This year it is our turn to host it. Your Committee has been very active over the past few months, and I am sure something 'Really Outstanding' has been arranged. This will be held at the newly opened Mall of Africa in Midrand. They have given us a very prominent area to Display, and show off our MGs. So, bring out ALL your MGs, and let's show the public what this Johannesburg MG Car Club can do!! Remember to have a Fire Extinguisher and Triangles with you to Show Day. This is important.

Following on that, we have the Scottburgh Classic car Show. Then the Northern Centre's INDABA in September. It is then time to study up on your General Knowledge on MGs and related topics for the Inter Club Quiz; that will be announced soon.

We must also welcome several new members that have joined us recently.

Norman, and a group of our members have departed for the International MG Indaba in France, and will be doing some sight seeing while away.

Happy Motoring!

TOM (Editor)

## **MG WEBSITES**

Our Website: [www.mgcc.co.za](http://www.mgcc.co.za)

Our E-Mail: [mgccs@worldonline.co.za](mailto:mgccs@worldonline.co.za)

*Printed by John MacKenzie of Kalalex Business*

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# ***From the Chair,***

Another month has flown by. At our May Natter and Noggin we were treated to a movie starring an MGTC. The movie was produced by Walt Disney Productions and was filmed in London and on some English country lanes. The London scenes and British humour were a great change from the modern films with all the high tech stunts and violence. Rajesh and I, having seen it before, sat at the back and watched reactions so we know it was enjoyed.

I have written about the Mother's Day run to Maropeng elsewhere in the magazine. Clearly we need enthusiasm and support in the monthly runs and we thought that this one would be a bit different after all the recent picnics.

John Mac sent me a list of cars that a friend of John Fry's in the UK (previously a member of this club and chairman at some stage) has decided to sell. The long list comprised mostly ex South African cars. The ex-SA tag attracts a higher value! Last month I looked at the investment value of MGs and wrote something that I didn't put in the report but having received John's email I am resurrecting it here. Essentially looking back when the last MGBs were sold in South Africa the ZAR: USD exchange rate was R1,00 got you \$ 1.43 and in '83 it was one to one. The MGB production had stopped and the last ones sold for R16 000,00 - at today's rate of exchange  $16000 \times 15.20 = R 243\,200,00$ . MGs are definitely a Rand hedge.

On 10 May the director of the PIC told parliament in an answer to a question from the opposition that the PLC lost R 100 Billion in the four days following the firing of Nene the Minister of Finance. The ZAR:USD rate dropped to 17:1. It was at 15.20 today (10th May time of writing this). Now if you were invested off shore your investment converted to ZAR would have been fantastic. It is a no brainer that we are likely to see in the future, especially if SA is given junk status, is a further deterioration. What all this is telling me is that keeping your cars in this dry environment assists in holding its value and we understand and enjoy the cars. Putting the car on blocks is not a good idea. Brakes and rubbers pack up, tyres date and need replacement every few years so you are better off using the cars. Bottom line is -use and enjoy your cars - it is not an extravagance. Above all have fun.

Last month I said KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON POLISHING in preparation for Show Day. Did you know that the slogan KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON was produced as propaganda during WW2 and was the instruction to the British in the event that Britain was invaded by the Germans. The people were expected to do exactly that.

But back to basics -we are hosting the joint Show Day and it is imperative that the JHB centre comes out in force and fills the space. We need MGs regardless of cleanliness or condition. We will cater for the Tops Only, Concourse d'Etat and Concourse d' Elegance for the purists. In fact the N&N will include a Show Day planning and briefing session. We are hoping that the YP will rock up to the session and take an active part in Show Day and have the race cars on display (regardless of the state of completion!).

Bruce

# SHOW DAY

To be held on

## FATHERS DAY

### SUNDAY 19 JUNE 2016

M A L L O F

Africa

Waterfall Park adjacent to Mall of Africa

This promises to be a

## GRAND MG EVENT

### Bring ALL your MGs

(Please make a plan)



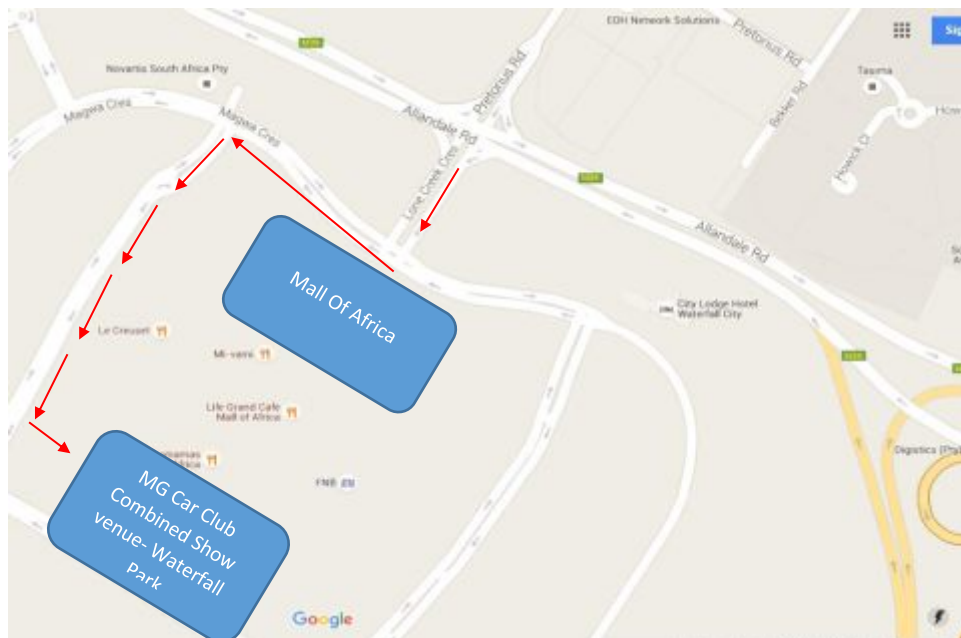
Map on following page

**COORDINATES:**

Latitude: 26° 1.043'S

Longitude: 28° 6.392'E

From the M1 freeway or R55 Main road, turn onto the M39 or Allandale road. Then turn into Lone Creek Crescent which takes you to the Main entrance of the Mall Of Africa. Turn Right onto Magwa Crescent. Turn Left at the first exit and drive to the back of the mall to enter the Show venue. Signs will be posted to direct traffic.

**WATERFALL PARK**



# MGS, MOTHER'S DAY AND MAROPENG



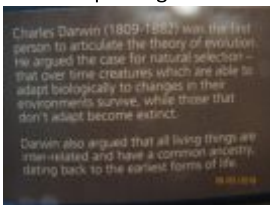
If you have an interest in architecture the building is an attraction on its own. It was built as a Private Public Partnership. Jeremy Rose was the architect and many of the details reflect his unique skill. Sadly he died at a young age in December 2015. An exhibition of his work can be seen at the Apartheid Museum which has similar architecture.

The paleontologists have traced time lines and branches of the evolution of mankind going back millions of years.

A good time was had by those who braved the frosty early morning to participate in the Mothers' Day run to Maropeng.



For those who have not visited Maropeng, as we have done a number of times, it is a fantastic education and experience. As we arrived and drove down the entrance past the concrete columns with powerful messages, we were met with a chap sitting on a deck chair in the middle of the road behind the longest camera lens you can imagine – it turned out that Peppi from the NC had sent the paparazzi to practice photographing MGs in preparation for the Indaba! They are going to great lengths to have a hugely successful National Indaba. Maropeng is an interactive experience demonstrating the formation of the earth we live in and the time line of evolution. There is a lot to take in, but some quotes are worth repeating like the one from Charles



Darwin:



Professors Dart, Broom, Tobias and currently Prof Lee Berger have made significant discoveries more or less proving that the cradle of mankind was indeed our very own Southern tip of Africa. Lee Berger has been hailed as making the most significant paleontological discovery of the last hundred years, which has been named Homo Naledi. The National Geographic's lead article in the October 2015 issue covers the find in great detail and refers to it as "a trove of fossils". The exhibit was displayed for a while but is currently being further researched at Wits. The remains of Homo Naledi have not yet been dated (probably 2 million years) but the significant findings so far are that this species buried their dead, walked upright and have near human feet and hands –they had a relatively small brain (560cc

—modern human is about 1200cc)

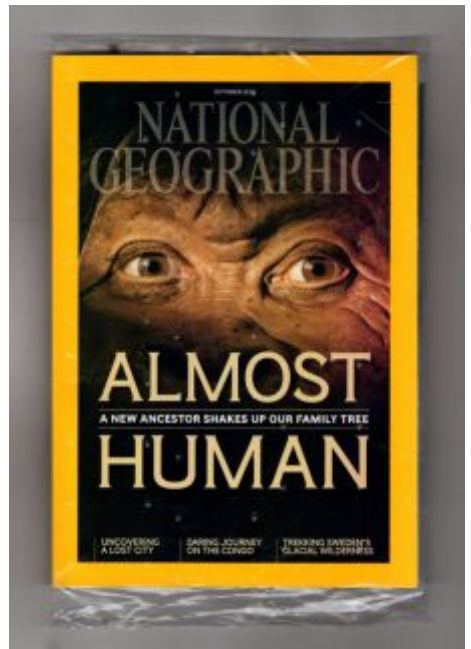


The dig, undertaken in a very difficult to reach cave named the Rising Star could only be reached by very slender paleontologists who were recruited from a number of countries and who worked secretly until enough evidence had been found to publish the find to the world.

Another fact that made me think is that apparently the DNA of all humans indicates that we all originated from a single female- what better day and place to have found out that Big Momma probably came from South Africa!

If I have tickled your interest get onto the National Geographic web site and call up the October 2015 edition with the article titled 'Almost Human' or try to purchase the hard copy. In time it is likely to become a collectors' piece.

Bruce



---

*I pondered over this until I finally conceded ignoble defeat and scrolled down... See if you can do better*

This is a well established sequence. What comes next?

Squeeze your brain:

1	3	5
2	4	?

but the answer is not 6!

Think about it... ..

*See answer on a later page*

# MGS, MOTHER'S DAY AND MAROPENG



Photo by Jooste Myburgh who will be taking the official Indaba pics. This was a practice run, but with less training opportunity than anticipated

An unusual sight for Johannesburg; seen on Christiaan de Wet Rd early



Welcome to Maropeng



The faithful few (Alex Dewar, Bruce & Carol Dixon, Jenny Loader) except for Norman who had already gone home

# NrmanTalks!

## ***“Bloodhound” Friends Return Home***

Last month the Northern Centre hosted a farewell party for our Bloodhound friends, Dave Rowley and Wendy Maxwell. As honorary members of Northern, Pat and I were invited along, and Steven and Bronwyn Grover came and collected us, and took us off for an excellent evening with members and friends.

Dave in his farewell speech thanked the club yet again saying that if it had not been for MG car Club they could never possibly have done what they did in the last four years - staying with club members around the country. The fact that I had talked an MG6 out of Morris garage made transport the very last of their worries, and sadly not once was the fact that Andy Green - the world's fastest man - driving an MG6 in South Africa EVER used by the local dealership to promote and sell the cars. Just incredible! And, to let Jaguar/Land Rover grab the bit, when they took back the car, showed a total lack of Marketing Capability. What a

shame.

Funds are now the problem, as an amount of four hundred thousand pounds is needed to keep forty top engineers in South Africa for three months. A tall order. What was fantastic was that a cake in the shape of “Bloodhound” was produced for Dave and Wendy to cut, promising to return as soon as possible.

Wendy told me some really great stories. “Stig” although no one knows who HE is - has a motoring idol - and a picture of Andy Green with an MG, is on his wall!!

Ron Ayers - designed Bloodhound and Thrust was decorated by the Queen, days after Prince Philip had travelled down to Bristol to inspect Bloodhound, “And, what do you do? The Queen asked Ron. “I design Supersonic Cars” said Ron” “How interesting” she replied “Philip went to see something like that the other day.”

Ron was tickled pink that Prince Philip had probably described what he had done that day as any married couple would, and that the Queen had



even seen to mention that;  
and Ron was really chuffed.

Sadly we will miss Show day -  
but as this is Johannesburg's  
turn, our Members MUST  
support their Committee with  
not only a large turn out, but  
also volunteers to man the gate  
- put the cars in position -  
judge the day and help to make  
it a success.

We will toast you at the MG  
event in France.

So come on -- "Make Show Day  
a Great Event"

Octagonally,

Norman

*And the answer is...*



## Obituary

**John Paterson 1929 -2016**

We sadly announce the passing of John on Sunday the 15th May. He was one of our earliest members and very active in club affairs in the early days. He will be sadly missed by all. Our sincere condolences go to his wife, Barbara and family.

### **The death notice from his workers says it all**

"A kind and respected Boss, who I have been with for 43 years, and have never wished to leave in all that time. ENOS NKOMO.

Shudu and Joseph are also sad that he has gone, as he was so kind and generous to them."

# Obituary

## FAREWELL RALPH

On a flight to Cape Town I struggled with what I was going to say at Ralph Clark's funeral service. I had been asked by Robin to speak about his Dad's MG life and I didn't know where to begin. On arrival I asked Heyns Stead for paper and pencil to try and muster my thoughts to no avail- and that night I still could not muster my thoughts. How do you begin to say farewell to someone so loved and respected for over forty years?

I managed to write a few lines before leaving for church to follow Brian Hogg who would talk about Ralph's time at BMC- Leyland SA.

I began "We are here today because we were all blessed to share a part of the life of a very special friend for Ralph enriched the lives of all he met with his gentle softly spoken manner he was the epitome of a gentle-man!"

"There are many here today who knew him in his youth- racing and hill climbing his PB but I only met him in 1975 and that magical October Sunday morning where we shared our love for MG and cemented a 42 year longdistance friendship" I then just spoke as I remembered the friendship.

He had taken me to see the 'R' type in bits behind a dummy wall at the Blackheath factory. Swearing me to secrecy, we examined every bit, enjoying every moment of doing that together. I invited him to a Cape Town noggin- he came!

On our regular December visits to the Cape to see slides of our MG Trip around the world spending time with Ralph was a special highlight. His passion for pre-war MG cars and his great knowledge ensued. He was held in high regard world wide.

Brian Hogg spoke of Ralph's engineering achievement at Blackheath working under George Tuck. His input towards the local content programme - casting the first engine blocks in Cape Town and being involved in everything from Austin to Scammel- Mini to Jaguar- it was all controlled by Ralph.

In 1980 he phoned to ask if he and Hilda could be included on the MG tour to Holland, England and Silverstone. What a question! The factory at Abingdon give him an MGB-GT for the trip and he requested one for Brian. He was invited to dine at the factory and, like a little boy described the event in excited tones, the MG napkin rings and where Cecil Kimber and George Tuck would have sat.

He will forever be remembered for the 'R' type; thrilled when he beat all the ERA, Bugatti and Alfa opposition at Goodwood in 2008. Hoodoo was another car brought back to life by Ralph and his lifelong friendship with Philip, Nora and Guido Costas ensured that all their MGs were restored to perfection. He loved and respected George Tuck- and George and Sue Tuck adored Ralph- they told me often! He flew up when we lost Jane and while I was still 'Uncle' Norman to Robin he would hitch up from Army Camp Potch for the odd SA Grand Prix or race at Kyalami- a chip off the old block- always welcome- the girls enjoyed him.

He was a very reluctant National President and in spite of his serious illness soldiered through the MGB photo shoot and late night prize giving at the Clarens Indaba in 2012.

The happiest I ever saw him was last February at Franschhoek and after blasting around the L'Ormaras Track in the K3, C Type, Barry Foster and Costa's family C Hoodoo- then being presented that evening with a very special MG book, he called Hilda up to share in the moment as she had shared all his life. Surrounded by the people and cars he loved. It was a very special moment!

Octagonally

Norman



## Future Progress of the MG Youth Programme

**By Cameron**

The MG Youth programme is steadily continuing to grow and to become more and more popular in both racing movements. This year we have trained two new drivers and they have already seen action in the MGA. These two drivers are Warrick Eva and Sudev Singh. We are currently looking to train three more drivers in this season, all three eagerly waiting their turn in the seat. The youth have had a relatively tough year with the loss of the Roger Pearce's MGB, and the racing being more coastal this season. The youth have also had a few incidents with the MGA; Yorick Smith managed to kill a Ford GT40, which damaged the A to a degree. The car has been running competitively with all the youth members hard at work keeping it on track as well as trying to build a fleet of racing MGs.



*Some of the team keeping the MGA spotless.*

## *The New Fleet*

During the course of the year we were generously donated two MGs, a MGB from Joe de Castro of Denver , the other a MG midget. The youth unfortunately have had slow progress on the MGB as we do not have all the parts to continue the build. We have had an idea for acquiring the parts we need and yes of course that is from the dear club members. We will be putting every person's name on the car that has kindly donated the parts we require. The list is extensive and will follow in the magazine next month. We are also in the need of funds to sandblast the MGB shell before we continue. Here is a picture of the MGB, totally stripped of paint before the sandblasting and the real work commences.



*The soon to be beautiful MGB race car*

On a final note we as the Youth would like to thank the MGCC and Nick Parrot in particular for the continuous support and help as well as dealing with all the dreadful youth. Roger Pearce for the use of his MGB for an overly extended period and for the yearly adventure of the six hour, the awesome weekend at Phakisa. Glen Parker and his company Sizani for the continuous sponsorship and support. Lastly we would like to thank everyone who helps and supports us in every way possible. Thanks and looking forward to seeing you all at the next racing event. We the YP have been amiss in focusing only on the racing and have neglected participating in the other club activities. We plan and promise to be out in force for Show Day.





The midget totally stripped. Will soon show progress reports on a monthly basis.

## TRADING POST

I am a member of the MGCC in Cape Town, and am looking for a 1966 MGB Roadster (works) hardtop. Any condition, but reasonable restorable condition obviously preferred. Must be the Original works version, (Not the modern aftermarket version)  
Contact: Chris Dixon  
[chrisd@synapp.com](mailto:chrisd@synapp.com)  
Mobile: 082 780 3088

# RED CAR DAY



*Seeing red in Parkhurst*

**Seeing red for a good cause.**



*The Erasmus & Dixon families in red; Jeanne, Carol, Bruce & Hentie*



*Just simply "red"*

The VVC & Piston Ring members (plus others) lined the streets of Parkhurst on Sunday 22nd May '16 to raise funds for "Children of Fire".

There was a wonderful atmosphere along 4th Avenue in Parkhurst as car owners & the public told stories about their cars, folk sat on the pavement watching the world go by while sipping their coffee, while others tucked into their tasty breakfasts.



*A motor cycle, bicycle with red baby chariot in tow plus a few Ferraris (what a surprise, red)*



*Jocelyn & Rodney's arrival in Ruby (their red MGB GT)*



*Naturally private parking for an MGA, now classified as an antique*



*More VVC / Piston Ring / MG folk in red; Hentie & friend, Roy Jones, Rudi & Anneke De Groot*

# **We are still No1**



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your MG.**

# TECHNICAL RUDGE-WHITWORTH HUB

Invented to deal quickly with frequent punctures, this rapid-release system became standard in Grand Prix racing and lasted until the 1960s. Keith Howard describes why the knock-off hub-spinner is even more ingenious than it looks.

Legend has it that the centrelock wheel – originally known as the QD (quickly detachable) wheel – came into being as a result of two Coventry men sharing a car one day during the early 1900s. One of them was John Pugh, whose father Charles had established the Whitworth Cycle Co in 1891 and three years later rescued the ailing Rudge Cycle Co to form RudgeWhitworth Ltd. The other was Victor Riley of the rival Riley Cycle Co.

When the car they were travelling in suffered a puncture, the two men agreed there must be a better way of dealing with a flat tyre than the Stepney rim system then in use, whereby rim and tyre were removed from the wheel and a replacement slid into place. Inspired by this shared experience, Pugh and Riley each designed centre-lock wheels that could be quickly removed by undoing a single large wheel nut, although the details of their fixing arrangements differed.

Legend also has it that, following many years of consequent patent litigation between their two companies, Pugh and Riley agreed to bury the hatchet in a train carriage on the eve of WWI.

Whatever the truth of these two incidents, the essentials are correct. Rudge-Whitworth, Riley and the Goodyear Wheel Company were all involved in prolonged legal

wranglings as to who owned the intellectual rights to the detachable wheel, right up until the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. In fact the Great War intervened in more ways than one. Once it was over, Riley considered there were bigger fish to fry and withdrew from wheel manufacture, despite having supplied a remarkable 183 car makers worldwide by 1912. Rudge-Whitworth continued.

Amazingly, the Rudge-Whitworth wheel was originally sold as what today we'd call an aftermarket fitment. Automobile tyres were in their infancy in the early years of last century and tediously puncture-prone, so being able to repair a flat tyre quickly was important. Pugh's centre-lock wheel was fast to remove and replace but, like the Riley equivalent, it required changes to the hub as well as to the wheel itself.

So hub and wheel kits were offered as replacements for the most popular cars of the time, some hubs even including brake drums. If everyday motoring was blighted by tyre unreliability, in the emerging sport of motor racing it was a major issue. Being able to change a wheel quickly in the event of a puncture, or when the tyres were worn, could win you races. So it was inevitable the detachable wheel should find its way into competition. Some people fretted about retaining a wheel with a solitary nut – particularly one that lacked the Riley wheel's evolving positive locking arrangements – but they didn't appreciate the subtlety of Pugh's design.

By an apparent miracle, it was self-tightening. In its essentials the



Rudge-Whitworth wheel comprised three key components: a splined hub and two pairs of matching tapers (conical surfaces), one comprising the inboard end of the hub and the inboard wheel centre, and the second the retaining nut and outboard wheel centre. These tapers served three functions. First, they automatically centred the wheel on the hub. Second, they transmitted a significant fraction of the drive and/or braking torque so as to reduce the load on the hub splines. And third, they made the wheel-retaining nut self-tightening – or as Donald Bastow (ex-Rolls-Royce, ex-Bentley, etc) was to express it many years later, "perhaps more importantly, not self-loosening". To picture why, imagine that the nut loosens slightly so that the tapers on the wheel and nut touch at only one point on their circumferences.

Because the male taper is now of smaller effective diameter than the female taper, rotation of the wheel on the hub under braking will cause the nut to rotate on its thread. If this rotation is in the correct direction – which is ensured by using differently handed threads on either side of the car – then the nut will automatically retighten itself.

In the original Rudge-Whitworth design, the male taper was on the wheel and the female taper on the nut, so the car's left-hand wheels required a right-hand thread and vice versa. On wheels where the male taper is on the spinner (such as those fitted decades later to Special Equipment versions of the original Lotus Elan) the thread sense is reversed.

If it sounds a precarious arrangement, competition proved otherwise. At the 1908 TT race, 21 of

the 35 entrants used Rudge-Whitworth wheels, and only one of the finishers didn't. By 1913, the use of detachable (Rudge and Riley) wire wheels was universal in grands prix, and they were widely employed immediately after WWI on such LSR contenders as Henry Segrave's Sunbeam Tiger and Parry Thomas's 1926 Babs.

Italian Carlo Borroni licensed the Rudge-Whitworth design for his famous wire wheels, which Ferrari used on its grand prix cars into the early 1960s. Rudge's wheels were also used by German giants Auto Union and Mercedes during the 1930s, proving themselves well able to transmit engine power in excess of 500bhp and sustain speeds of over 250mph in the Rekordwoche runs. All with just a couple of firm, not heavy, blows of a copper-faced hammer to tighten the eared spinners – a refinement of the original Rudge design introduced by Peugeot in 1913, in place of a large spanner.

But the 1930s weren't kind to Rudge. Profits had been largely spent on its motorcycle racing exploits, so when the Great Slump struck, there was nothing in the kitty to tide the company over. The Receiver had to be called in and Rudge was sold off piecemeal. When John Pugh died, broken-hearted, in 1936, only the motorcycle business remained.

EMI, of all people, eventually bought that with the intention of moving operations to its Hayes factory in Middlesex, but war with Germany once again intervened. Jaguar acquired the rights to Rudge's wheel business and together with Dunlop continued to exploit the design – first with wire wheels, then disc wheels – long after WWII finished, on the XICs, C-type, D-type and E-type. Similar

designs were used by others like MG. Simple, effective, failsafe, the Rudge-Whitworth wheel was an object lesson in how a little original thought can save a lot of engineering complication. So why isn't it still used?  
Article courtesy of Motorsport Online (2001)

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## **The "PMB" Classic Car Motor Show**

Here again very little was mentioned about this very popular annual event in Pietermaritzburg this year. I first heard about it on the Friday morning, just before the event was to start on the Sunday. I had a call from my son Colin, who was on his way to the Berg for a Golfing Weekend. He phoned to ask what all the Classic Cars were doing on the N3 so early that morning, including a number of MGs. For the moment I could not think of any events taking place, but only later that morning I spoke to him again to tell him about the Show. He had already been informed by one of the Drivers along the way. He then wanted to know why I was not amongst them. That was of course a sensible question, but for some odd reason that is one event that I had never yet attended. Just thinking that it was a long way to go just for the weekend and be back on Monday for work. Yes, I did go to Scottburgh but always stayed over for a week's break.

However, I have been onto the website, and came across pictures, showing some of the interesting entries at this year's Event.

Editor.

***[www.carsinthepark.co.za](http://www.carsinthepark.co.za)***

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# **JULY NOGGIN**

Thursday 7th July 2016

**Stewart Cuninghame**

Presents:

The "Champion 500" km Relay Race  
held at Zwartkops Race Way M.G.  
Victory, in the year 1989

Explanation of the Event, Drivers  
and Officials, and Event Procedure

----- Drinks Break -----

1989 DVD Sound Film covering Race  
Preparation ---  
Pit Activity  
Practice of Cars ---  
Qualifying of Grid Positions.  
The Race.

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## ***Who is Gerry? What is she? Why does she matter?***

This is a story about a car and a man.

The car is a 1936 MG PB called Gerry. The man was Ralph Clarke.

Nothing is known of the pre war history of Gerry but a chap called Stewart Cunningham bought her from a local, Johannesburg dealer towards the end of the war. Stewart used her as every day transport between his home in Johannesburg and his work in Pretoria. Today a trip of some 65km by motorway, but then a long road through Orange Grove, Halfway House and Irene. Not a jaunt to undertake lightly in a little 950cc sports car. Every day!!

After a couple of years a Rhodesian called Sam Tingle made Stewart an offer he couldn't understand for the car. That money was used as a deposit to buy a brand new MG TC at which point exit Stewart from the history. Sam removed the engine, gearbox and brakes before abandoning the remains in a hedge in a leafy suburb of Johannesburg. He took the parts and incorporated them in what became a well know Rhodesian racing J2 special. This car is still owned by the Tingle family and as far as I know is still north of the border.

Along came an engineering apprentice called Ralph Clarke who extracted the car from its hedge, it is not know if he paid for it, and then rebuilt it. Then blue it was used as daily transport, to race and most importantly to court Hilda.

As a racing car Gerry is reputed to have achieved 90 mph around the Gunner Circle track in Epping, Cape Town. That is 145 kph in 1950/51 from 950cc and on narrow 400 wide tyres. For those who don't know, Gunners Circle is/was a wide road built as part of the development of a new post war industrial area outside Cape Town and even today to achieve this kind of speed would require big .....”what ever”. At some stage the car was fitted with smaller hydraulic brakes.

Ralph married Hilda and eventually sold the car. The arrival of Robin may have had something to do with its sale. Is history for around 6 months is not clear but it was then bought by Dick Riley who became a neighbour of my parents and was eventually bought by me in 1970 although I had had the use of her before buying her.

Ralph and Dick were good friends and Ralph retained his interest in her over the years thereby ensuring that I also became a friend of his. Dick did extensive work on the car and painted it black.

I used the car regularly for a while and my then wife used it to take prospective clients to see houses in upper Sea Point and Green Point. Dodgy brakes, crash box and low power not with standing. In a process that is in its self a story, Dickon Daggitt and I swapped the small brakes that he needed for his J2 with the correct cable operated large drums she now wears.

At the first MMM meet in Franshoek in 2013 Ralph drove Gerry, now red, for the first time in probably some 60 years and reported that she felt exactly as she always had.

Ralph: Gerry and I will miss you greatly and I am sorry you could not be reunited with her again last year.

Henry Watermeyer  
Hon Life Member MG Car Club, Cape Town



# Testing the limits of the MG GS

Submitted by Denise Luckock

Do you know what a new car goes through just to make sure it's right for every eventuality? Rigorous testing, worldwide travel, freezing temperatures and strong winds are just some of them.

Next month, the new MG GS goes on sale in the UK. To mark such a momentous occasion, MG has been keen to share the stages of the SUV's growth; from the design brief and early sketches through to what it's gone through to ensure it performs at its best.

All new models are put through their paces, and the MG GS is no exception to this thorough testing. The GS has travelled over 750,000 miles as part of its testing and it has braved the 46°C heat of Australia's Alice Springs and -30° chills of Arjeplog in Sweden. Testing in such extreme temperatures guarantee that wherever you take your GS for adventures, it will stand up to the challenge.

To make sure the GS is as streamlined and fuel efficient as possible, it was also put through more than 200 hours of wind tunnel testing to develop its highly-efficient aerodynamics.

Testing has also covered the 'wet dog in car' scenario. By placing wet cloths in the GS, tests were able to determine how quickly the car can demist when moisture is present inside. Carrying out tests like this allow engineers to fine tune systems to ensure the GS runs at its optimum performance.

Matthew Cheyne, Head of Sales and Marketing for MG, said: "When you look into what a new car endures prior to going on sale, it's fascinating and demonstrates the effort that goes into ensuring the car is the best it can possibly be.

"With the imminent arrival of the GS, we're excited to share facts and figures and nuggets of information people may have not been privy to before. By sharing these, we're showing customers that when they step into the GS they know it can stand up to all challenges and adventures they put it through."







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## **Forthcoming Events: Runs, & Noggin's**

**May Natter and Noggin Old Ed's** - Thursday 5 May 2016 Movie Night - Bring along your eats, and enjoy an MG Movie.

### **Monthly Run**

**June Natter and Noggin Old Ed's** - 2 June 2016 Topics to be confirmed. Suggestions Welcome.

**Monthly Run Sunday 19 June 2016 (Fathers Day) Combined Centres Annual Show Day.** - A brilliant venue to be confirmed. Start preparing your MGs NOW!!! This will be something outstanding.

**July Natter and Noggin Old Ed's** - Thursday 7 July Stewart Cuninghame presents the "Champion 500" Relay Race in 1989 + an Historic 1989 DVD on Motor Racing Procedure.

**Monthly Run** Details to be advised.

**OTHER CLUB EVENTS** Pietermaritzburg Cars in the Park, Sunday 15 May 2016.  
Cell. 083 369 7020

Scottburgh Classic Car Show, Sunday 17 July 2016  
W/Site [scottburghclassiccarshow.co.za](http://scottburghclassiccarshow.co.za)

Cars in the Park, Zwartkops Race Track, Sunday 7 August 2016.

***Get into your MGs, Drive them, and Enjoy them!***



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