



# ***MGC NEWSLETTER***

**Christmas, Issue No.29, Dec. 2020**



***“Merry Christmas Everyone”***







## ***MECC Auckland Christmas Concours***

***“Nine Cars and Ten Owners, an amazing turnout guys you have done us proud, thank you all for joining this yuletide event”***

The weather was not exactly on our side with strong blustery winds but the sun shone and there were smiles on our faces. To see nine MGCs lined up on Vellenoweth Green, St Heliers, was very special for me and **Harvey Heath**. Many more than expected, great stuff and thank you all for going the extra mile to come along. Our thanks also to **Meg Nicholls** and **Raewyn**, masquerading as **Mother Christmas**, for sticking the Christmas banners on your windscreens, hope you managed to get them off before driving home. Unfortunately, due to the wind, it was too risky to open the bonnets. Preventing club members, and the general public, the chance to admire our classic straight six, pushrod engines, which makes these swinging 60s sports cars so unique.

**Ian Grant** was not able to be with us and sent his apologies for absence. Ian has asked me to pass on his best wishes to you all.

This event provided the ideal opportunity to present **Tony Barbarich** with our new **MGC Register Trophy** expertly crafted and gifted by **Harvey Heath**. Thank you, Harvey, for this magnificent piece of artwork. (Photo below Tony & Harvey) Tony is a long-serving member of the register and the first



MGC owner I met when we joined the car club. He rarely misses a club night and always does his best to attend our meetings. It was great to have you with us Tony and we thank you for supporting the register.

Ian, Harvey and I unanimously agreed that he should be the first recipient. His support is much appreciated by all and it was my privilege to present him with the trophy.

This was the first time **Graeme Fisher** has brought his C along to the Concours, it was good to see you Graeme and I thank you very much for making the effort to join us. **John Dorking** recently acquired **IMGCI**, as a trade for his **Lotus Cortina**, and has now decided to flick it on. Something we don't hear very often but will provide someone with the

opportunity of owning this 1969 British Racing Green Roadster. The car arrived here from the UK in 1975 and has lived in various parts of the country between Dunedin and Auckland since then. The



last time I saw it was at **Matamata** for our **MGC50** celebration in 2018. It was also good to see **Patrick Cheffins** (photo left) and his family, who recently returned from 12 months in the UK, Welcome home guys. According to Patrick, his late arrival was due to the children insisting on taking turns to ride in the car on their way over to St Heliers, a nice excuse Patrick, apologies accepted. It was also good to meet **John Bertenshaw** (MGC Roadster) for the first time. John lives up North and hopes to bring the car next time we get together. Once again **Nick Wilcox** drove up from **Taupo** but this time in his newly acquired V8 powered C GT race car. (see article this issue) Was great to see you Nick and of course, the car which the V8 boys thought should have parked with them, how wrong they were. **Alan Krissansen** and his mate **Graeme** were also with us, good to see you guys and thanks for coming along.

From chatting to various owners it seems that several Cs are on the move with at least two cars available now. (see "Cars for Sale")

#### **Those present:**

Peter Dunlop	1968 Snowberry White MGC GT
Raewyn Dunlop	1968 Red MGC GT
Harvey Heath	1969 Mineral Blue MGC GT
Tony Barbarich	1969 Tartan Red MGC GT
Patrick Cheffins	1969 Goodwood Green MGC Roadster
Graeme Fisher	1969 Tartan Red MGC GT
Nick Wilcox	1969 Yellow MGC GT V8 race-car
Alan Krissansen	1969 Tartan Red MGC Roadster
John Dorking	1969 British Racing Green MGC Roadster
John Bertenshaw	1968 Tartan Red MGC Roadster (owner only)

Please see our **Photo Gallery** at the end of this newsletter.

## ***John Bertenshaw's 1968 Tartan Red Roadster***

Was great to meet **John Bertenshaw** face-to-face at St Heliers. You were the tenth owner at the meeting John equalling our best turn out ever, many thanks for coming along.



Photo of **MG3** enjoying the stunning Northland views.







## ***Your Insurance Values may be too low?***

It may be wise to review the insured value of your **MGC**. These cars are definitely increasing in value with near Concours models asking well over \$40K. Even good condition non-Concours cars will achieve over \$30K. In view of these changes, it may well be time to up your insurance values especially when the cost of repairs can be far from cheap and insurance company "write off" levels are currently at around 70% of the agreed value. Having given this some serious thought, I've increased our insured values from **\$35K** to **\$45K** on both our GTs. The total additional monthly premium (for both cars) was just under \$10.00, the price of a coffee & muffin, so quite frankly a no brainer. If you need a valuation contact **Paul Walbran**, of Paul Walbran Motors, who is happy to provide this service. **PHD** .

## ***My love for the BMC Six Cylinder by John Vevers***



Have you ever wondered if the "other" car that used heavily revised C series engine was worthy of your attention? In 1986 I traded a lovely 1981 Mini 1000 for a well-used LHD MGC roadster. I set about buying specialist books on the subject and acting on advice that one needed spare running gear from the ill-fated disastrous Austin 3 Litre

(67 to 71) I started looking..... The first Austin 3 Litre I found was \$200 in New Plymouth. My then father-in-law (a lovely man) totally stripped it and parts were sold all around the North Island. I kept the engine and automatic transmission. N.B. I still have them! Next in line in 1989 was a 54,000 mileage car from South Auckland with front and rear damage ( had been stolen and crashed by the Black Power) with receipts for a reconditioned engine. N.B.I still have it! Following closely was another rough \$200 car... N.B. I still have it. Life and debt then interfered, and it wasn't



until 2016 that I bought an almost running Persian Blue, 1971 Austin 3 Litre. It is still almost running! This car came with many spares including two engines. In 2017 I bought a lovely 1970 Austin in Blackberry with Grey Trim, followed 12 months later by a 1972 Austin in damask red with icon red trim. This last car built in April 1971 (one of the last several hundred produced) is factory-fitted with an engine assembled to MGC specification. So quite a collection and I still have the MGC!

**John Vevers**

## ***Unloved or Mistreated MGCs in NZ?***



Do we have any mistreated or dilapidated MGCs in NZ? It seems unlikely but I guess there maybe. This is in response to a question asked by my UK based twin brother, and I quote ***"all your MGCs seem to be in Concours condition, are there any that are unloved"***. So if you know of any please let me know and I'll feature them in our next newsletter.

**PHD**



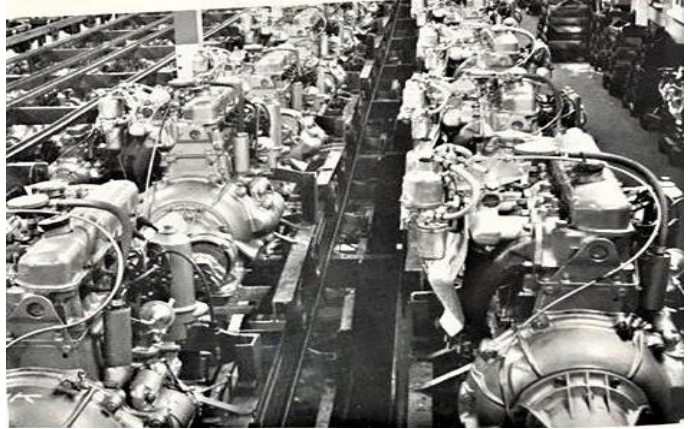
## ***MGC engine photo supplied by John Vevers.***



This interesting black and white photo shows rows of MGC engines, fitted with UK spec inlet manifolds and auto boxes, waiting despatch to Abingdon from the BMC Cowley plant. They are obviously not black and are almost certainly a light Metallic Green. So **Ted Wiggins** (as featured in our last newsletter) was probably a Cowley paint shop man and not at Abingdon, my apologies gentlemen. (PHD)

**John** also points out that .....

- 1) *They definitely appear to have the finished colour applied and it appears to be the MGC metallic green. (not Austin green)*
- 2) *They are all fitted with MGC routed and style fuel lines (Austin is quite different)*
- 3) *They are fitted with the European and English log style inlet manifold.*
- 4) *They all have the PCV valve set horizontally as per MGC only.*
- 5) *They all have the MGC style curved water level alloy housing and radiator cap.*
- 6) *The one I can see clearly has the MGC rear exhaust manifold (Austin is different) – Austin has a more sporting angle.*
- 7) *None are fitted with Austin style oil pressure sender units. (that sit at the rear of the block)*



### **Conclusion**

*Although a little unusual this batch appears to be MGC units with Automatic transmissions built for the British and all export markets (other than North America).*

## ***BMC & BL Special Tuning, Abingdon body kits***



Adding bolt-on goodies was always a cool idea back in the day. I hate to say it, but most of us are now so purist (me included) that we wouldn't dream of adding anything now that wasn't original and fitted in the correct position.

These 1982 photos of our white GT were taken in the **Silverstone** carpark behind the main grandstand in 1982. We had decided to hire a caravan for the "**MG Car Club**" annual weekend (now called MG Live) and, if I remember correctly, I had just cleaned it with cold water from the campsite tap. **Raewyn** had driven up in the C from our home in Sussex and I had towed the caravan behind our bright yellow **Dolomite Sprint** aptly named **Banana Split** by the children. These were great family outings combined with excellent "grass root" club racing. In those days, anything you could bolt on your



car from **British Leyland Special Tuning, Abingdon**, was a must-have. Not only did these items add some credibility to the car they generally improved the performance of your standard BMC or Leyland product. These easy bolt-on goodies also looked good and provided a genuine reason





for attaching the window sticker. The Special Tuning department was based at the MG works focusing mainly on **BMC's** very successful **Mini Coopers** plus the **Midget**, **Sprite** and **MGB**. An easy upgrade



was to fit front and back spoilers. These were manufactured in GRP and relatively straight forward to fit. The front spoiler fastening holes were drilled in-line with the original valance and the unit just bolted in place, all very easy. The rear unit required holes to be bored through the tailgate plus the purchase of a less attractive plastic MG badge in place of the original chrome octagonal badge. In practice, the front spoiler worked well providing a noticeable increase in stability at high speed. The rear spoiler's advantage was not so noticeable and quite frankly I'm not sure if it added any performance-enhancing qualities at all, but I still thought it looked good. Needless to say, it disappeared

when a new tailgate was fitted, never to be seen again. **PHD**

## ***Who's 90 Years old and still going strong?***

Nice to see our newsletter is being read and much appreciate this correction sent in by **Michael Anderson**, General Secretary of the **MG Car Club Inc. New Zealand**.



*"Could I ask you to correct some numbers which appeared under the article **"Who's 90 Years old and still going strong"** by **PHD**. In it, he mentions that NZ has approximately 800 members in total and 500 are in Auckland. That is simply not correct the numbers approximately are the following"*

Auckland Centre	550 <i>(I was close at 500)</i>
Wellington Centre	250
Canterbury Centre	350
Otago/Southland	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,250</b>



**Sorry about that Michael, I stand corrected ....PHD**



## ***LOOKING BACK to TEN YEARS AGO***

Our first gathering at the **MGCC Concours**, December **2010**.

**Tony Barbarich, Peter Dunlop and James Smith**



## **Nick Wilcox buys another one!**

We now know where this elusive and rather unusual yellow **MGC GT** is. It is with **Nick Wilcox** down in **Taupo**. Nick brought it along to the Christmas Concours and also the MGCCs Pukekohe **Sprint Meeting** recording some respectable lap times considering it was "fresh out of the box". Since then Nick has competed in the recent **MG Classic Race** meeting at **Manfield** and sent us this "potted history" of the car:

*"The car is a **1969 MGCGT ex US (LHD)** imported into Australia by **Steve Fawcett**, a Queensland Motor Trimmer, who proceeded to fully restore it. The car was*



*then exported to NZ in 2007 and Steve sold it to a **Michelle Kirk** in 2015 who then sold it to me. Steve has owned many MG's including C's and an RV8 and had a vision of creating the ultimate 'Track Day' car. He had an offer to exchange the C drivetrain for a brand new **4.6 Rover block** which he fitted to an **LT77 gearbox** (I was also supplied with a rebuilt R380 'box'). The rear end, as with many similar conversions is **Ford LSD** with **Disc Brakes**, plus the usual **Tramp and Panhard Rods**. Standard **Torsion Bars** are retained with **uprated Anti-Roll bar**. Being based in Queensland, Steve also decide to fit bespoke **Air Conditioning**. There was no roll cage fitted*



*during Steve's ownership, this was done later, by the people I purchased the car from, who intended to use it for Classic Racing. Since purchase, I have fitted **genuine Minilites** for road use and removed the front half of the roll cage. As a race car, it is not breathtakingly fast, but fast enough to be fun! My best result at the recent Manfield **MG Classic meeting** was a second place behind a **Falcon XY GT**. This was a handicap race where the grid is lined up with the fastest cars going off last. I started from 21st position and managed to find my way up the*



*field to second. An excellent result for the car's maiden NZ race and its new owner". **Nick Wilcox***

(Photo above: Nick with Dave Mallin MGCC in his MGB GT)



## ***The Demise of BLMC .....Ian Grant***



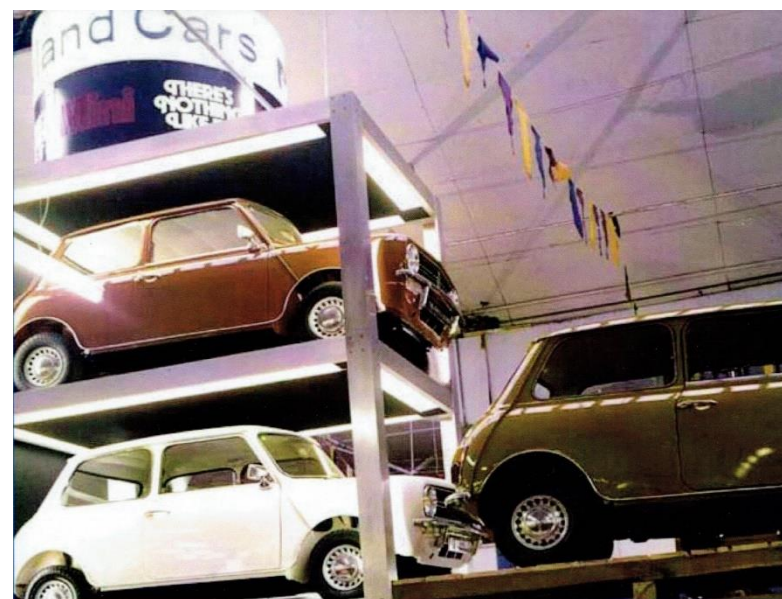
I left school in at the end of 1969 and started work at a BLMC dealership which is where the whole MG thing started and continues to this day and, hopefully, beyond. A couple of years later I moved to another dealership, a larger operation, working in the parts department and the whole BLMC situation was being felt in NZ. In the mid-'70s we added Datsun as the Japanese influence was really starting to have an effect and the closest BL dealer to us closed its car operation to concentrate solely on the marine side of its business - they could see where BL was heading. As 2-IC I was put in charge of bringing all of their parts stock to our place and we then ended up with duplicate sets of the parts catalogues and my boss responded positively to my request to help myself to

all of the MG parts books which I still have today. Priceless reference material.

Photo left is the cover of a book, published in 2012, that I purchased a few years ago and have read twice. This 200-page account of the BL situation covers each year as a separate chapter starting with the BMC history up to 1968 and also what was happening with Rover, Triumph and Jaguar at the time BL was created. There are chapters covering each of the cars that were produced during this period - Austin Maxi, Morris Marina, Austin Allegro, Triumph TR7, Austin Princess and Rover SD1. Other lower volume vehicles such as the Triumph Stag are detailed, as well as the international side covering North America and Australia. Numerous factors caused the demise of BL, both internal and external plus well-documented company issues which the management had no control over.

**Chris Cowin** closes his book off in 1978. He explains why in the prologue -

*In terms of dates, the start was fairly easy to identify, being the May 1968 merger*



### **BRITISH LEYLAND: CHRONICLE OF A CAR CRASH 1968-1978.**

**CHRIS COWIN**



*between British Motor Holdings and the Leyland Motor Corporation which created British Leyland. But the endpoint was less easy to define.*

*It could logically have been set as 1975 when the **British Leyland Motor Corporation** became dependant on state aid and was renamed British Leyland Limited, or 1978 with the replacement of the British Leyland name with BL, and the start of the Michael Edwardes regime. Another key year was 1988 when the Rover Group was acquired by British Aerospace and returned to the private sector.*

*Alternatively, the complete convoluted history of British Leyland's successors and splinter companies, right up to the collapse of MG Rover in 2005, could have been included.*

*Ultimately it seems best to concentrate on the period between 1968 and 1978, covering the seven years of British Leyland's existence as a corporation in the private sector together with the time when the misconceived Ryder Plan was being followed. That was when the damage was done.*



**A timeline note** - BMC (British Motor Corporation) acquired Pressed Steel in 1965, the supplier of car bodies to both itself and Jaguar, one reason why Jaguar Group “merged” with BMC in 1966 to form BHM (British Motor Holdings).

### **The collapse of BLMC on BBC Radio including, the Reunion and Interviews with workers.**

This BBC Radio program is interesting, it runs for 41 minutes.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000lz6n>

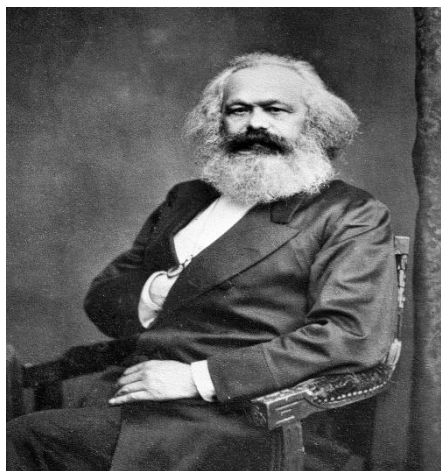


### **COVID-19**

This time last year we were blissfully ignorant of what 2020 would bring. The sun was shining and we had six cars at the Christmas Concours. Then March arrived and life changed forever. **New Zealand** has shown the world how to deal with this unprecedented pandemic and has coped well. Let's hope this continues and the availability of vaccines allow us to return to some sort of “new normal” in 2021. Enjoy your Christmas and my best wishes to you all for a happy and safe new year. **Peter Dunlop**



### **And Finally .....**



“Everyone has heard of **Karl Marx**, the socialist revolutionary, but no one remembers his sister **Onya** who invented the starting pistol”.

**Have a great Christmas guys and stay safe!**

*Peter Dunlop & Ian Grant*



## **Register Contact Details**

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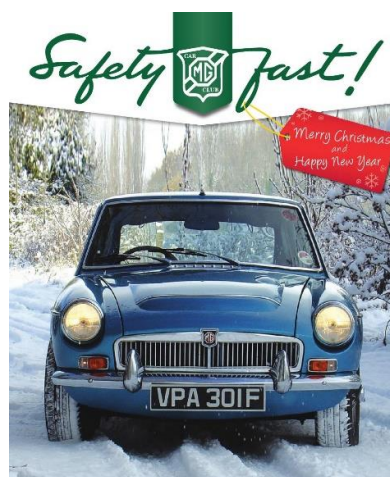
## **Your MGC Register Team**



***Peter & Raewyn, Ian, Jane & Harvey at Chateau Impney, June 2017***

**NB: No calls after 9pm please.**

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MGCC, the MGC Register or its Editor. Readers should exercise their own judgement when considering technical or other matters, information and advice.







## ***Parts for Sale***

### **Harvey Heath's rebuilt MGC Water Pump supply.**

I have a number of repair kits in stock and can offer EXCHANGE WATER PUMPS with new bearings and seal seals fitted for the princely sum of \$70.00 plus post and packing. For more information please contact:

Home: 09 8342552, Mobile: 021 1721033, Email: [harvey.w.heath@gmail.com](mailto:harvey.w.heath@gmail.com)



### **Harvey Heath's MGC King Pin service.**

I can now offer a full service of fitting, reaming and setting up the king pin end float to anybody who requires it.

**There are a number of options available:**

- 1) You can send me your stub axle assembly and I will refurbish it and send it back to you ready for fitting onto your car.
- 2) You supply all, or some of the parts, and I will assemble your stub axle assembly correctly and return to you for fitting on your car.
- 3) You bring your car to me and I will do the complete job including removal, refurbishing and refitting.

I have a full selection of shims and bushes and king pins in stock.

COST Option (1) \$80.00 per side labour, plus parts, packaging and delivery (courier or postage).

**Please call** me for further information on the above options, the work you require and the total price for the job.

**Harvey Heath**, Home: 09 8342552, Mobile: 021 1721033, Email: [harvey.w.heath@gmail.com](mailto:harvey.w.heath@gmail.com)



## ***CARS for SALE***

### ***1969 British Racing MGC GT***

This New Zealand new car has been under long term rebuild following a major accident in 1980. The work was finally completed by **Paul Walbran Motors** and **Garth Bagnall** in 2013. It has been owned by one family since 1980 and stored at Paul Walbran Motors on completion. The car was not rebuilt to Concours levels but is in very good all-round condition. There is also an MGC **Steel Bonnet** for sale. For further information and prices please contact:

**Mike McMurray**, (email) [mike@mcmurray.co.nz](mailto:mike@mcmurray.co.nz) (mobile) 021713127



### ***1969 British Racing Green MGC Roadster.***

Recently acquired as a trade on my Lotus Cortina and am ready to let an enthusiast get his hands on it! There is a folder full of receipts, and recently had all fluids changed (engine, diff, gearbox, hydraulics, Cooling) Carbs adjusted, plugs etc. **Lumenition** ignition fitted so no need for points. Brakes checked & adjusted, rear suspension new bushes, Springs reset. Alloy rocker box cover fitted. Minilites with good tyres. No overdrive. Chrome luggage rack and MotoLita wood-rim steering wheel. (Original wheel and rocker cover supplied)



Engine apparently overhauled and uses no oil or do anything it shouldn't. 27.5 mpg on the trip north. Some paint touch-ups and stone chips. Inside is tidy but not mint. Has a very good hood and tonneau cover. Expressions of interest please to: **John on 0275582948, or johndorking@outlook.com.**

### **1997 MGF 1.8i**

Rego LNS 664, Mileage 101,887 Km  
Colour: British racing Green  
Interior standard trim Green/Grey, Black carpets  
New WOF expires 6/2021, Registration Expires 3/2021  
For full details and price please call:  
**Alan Thorne**, Mobile : 021 343 576,  
Email: alanjthorn@icloud.com



### **1997 MGF 1.8i 1796cc**

Rego JPC 591, Mileage 98,177 km  
Colour Amethyst  
Interior standard trim Green/Grey, Black Carpet  
WOF expires 6/2021, Rego Expires 3/2021  
For full details and price please call:  
**Alan Thorne**, (M) 021 343 576,  
Email: alanjthorn@icloud.com



## **PHOTO GALLERY**



**TONY BARBARICH with the MGC  
Register Trophy, December 2020**



# PHOTO GALLERY



***PHD and Tony (below)***



***Alan  
Krissansen  
(right)***

