

# MG Car Club Northern Centre Newsletter

February 2017 — Issue 422



Jimmy, posing with William Kelly, at their first race meeting at Zwartkops.

## **MG Car Club-Northern Centre**

PO Box 11430, Silver Lakes 0054

Clubhouse c/o Umgazi Road & 26th Avenue, Menlo Park Pretoria.

Meetings usually on first Monday of Month, check by phone.

[www.mgcc-north.co.za](http://www.mgcc-north.co.za)

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# Notices

## Club Banking Details

Account Name "MG Car Club-Northern Centre"  
FNB Bank Account Number 62363284359  
Branch Code 250655 Menlyn Square

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the MG Car Club Northern Centre or the Executive Committee.

## New Members

We would like to welcome Marc Haskins to the club.

- We are looking forward to seeing you at many events in the future.

## Subscriptions

Please note that as per the notice on Page 10, subscriptions are now due..



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# FROM THE WORKBENCH

And with that January is a thing of the past and February is here. I hope that everybody is enjoying a productive start to the year, and we are looking forward to seeing a great many MG's at the events of the upcoming year.

We took full advantage of the January weather, and hosted a picnic style breakfast at Rietvlei Nature Reserve. The event was well attended, with an exceptional number of MGB's in attendance, along with a lone MGA and a few modern MG's. Many of us were pleasantly surprised with the Nature Reserve, and it certainly is a location worth visiting in the future if you were unable to join us at the event.

We also hosted another successful Pub-Evening at the clubhouse. It was good to catch up with friends following the festive season. A huge "Thank-you" must go to Avril and Richard Grover for providing the food., which was enjoyed by all. We did not have a car in the clubhouse for the pub evening, and we will likely not have one at the awards evening either. However, from March we would like to restart this "tradition" - so if you have a car which you would like to show, or if you would like to propose a car, please let us know.

On a different note, our Club was once again approached by Ignition TV to feature on one of their shows. This time a show called "Streetcrews" which features groups of people who enjoy their cars together. We are looking forward to hearing when the episode in which we are to be featured will air, and will communicate to the club when we have more information. Unfortunately, the request came through as a very last minute affair, and we were unable to cast the net very wide for participants, which was exaggerated by the fact that the number of cars and owners was limited to four. With that being said, I think that we managed to get together a good cross-section of the club's membership, and MG's.

February is a significant month for the club, as it is the time that we host our AGM. The AGM was advertised in last month's newsletter, and will take place on 6 February at the clubhouse. We generally have a good turnout at our AGM's, and we are looking forward to another good turnout this year. The AGM is a good opportunity to touch base with the club, and see where we are positioned. This is also a convenient time to remind those who have not yet paid their subscriptions that they are now due, and (heaven forbid) you will not be allowed to speak or vote at the AGM if you are not a paid-up member. We like to think that we offer dramatically more value than the R330, or 25 litres of fuel, which are required as subs.

On the heels of the AGM we will host our Awards Presentation Evening on Friday 17 February, where we will celebrate those who have performed highly in the club over the course of last year. Mrs & Mr President, Annette and Tony Craddock, have kindly agreed to cater for the event, and we are looking forward to that.

Finally, we have been approached by Brooklyn Mall to do another time-line type event, similar to what we did last year, in the Queenspark Court. We are in the process of arranging the details for this event, and are looking for volunteers to show their cars—if you are ready and willing to show your car please let either Pepi Gaspari or myself know via e-mail or telephone. In addition to the cars, we will also need the assistance of as many enthusiasts as possible to man the stands and interact with the public. If you are willing to offer some of your time please, once again, let Pepi or myself know. Last year this event was a great success, and we are hoping to emulate that once again this year.

Other aspects on the MG front have been quiet in the Grover household this past month - an unfortunate slow-down after the great time had over the Christmas break—but hopefully progress will pick-up soon. Although looking at the Club Calendar it may only be in March when things finally start to pick-up!

On a final note, I would like to congratulate our members who took part in the opening round of the Historic Racing Season at Zwartkops in January. A particular congratulations to William, as this was his first event. We wish him many years of enjoyable racing ahead!

That's all for now. Enjoy your MG.

Octagonally,  
Steve Grover

# THE FIRST RACE REPORT

## A RACE REPORT FROM A FIRST RACE

William Kelly

This was my maiden outing in Jimmy, the Midget. Jimmy is intended to be a road racer – a road spec car with the option of going onto the track to compete in the handicap races. Before we get to the actual report though, some background...

Having been involved via remote control with the Youth Program for more years than I care to think about now the urge to race has been strong for some time and it was Nick Parrott who helped structure the deal around buying Jimmy and getting him race prepared. Jimmy is named after his former owner Jimmy Moggeridge and in fact is a pretty good example of a straight and clean Midget. Some say he is too good to race and I'd concur with that observation.

The intention with Jimmy is to race him in Pursuit cars – the *slowest least competitive racing on the circuit with a view to keeping* him straight and clean. After a year we will then take a decision on whether to buy a proper race car, one that we can ding about a bit without taking a really good car and making into 'just a racer'. Jimmy will then revert to road going status.



But the need to race is strong. And as it happens a friend of mine, Rikus, decided to join me in the madness that is racing. He bought into the car, but with limited race experience and even less time with the odd familiarity that comes with owning an MG decided to sit this first race meeting out as a driver.

Things being what they are racing wise I have come to the conclusion that the first outing is unlikely to be a successful one – there is NEVER enough time to prep everything on what is essentially a brand new race car. Nick however got it done – the motor is sweet, the car felt solid and we headed off.

I missed practise on the Friday owing to a meeting that went on a bit longer but I thought qualifying would at least give me some much needed track time before actual race time. Of course as we entered the paddocks the heavens opened and it rained cats and dogs almost literally. On the way to the track the brakes felt suspicious despite having been re-bled that day, but the car kinda stopped - I was hoping they would bed down after a few laps. In the rain however, with zero visibility – and I do mean zero Turkish – it was evident that I had very close to nil braking ability whatsoever and in turn 7 when the pedal went to the floor without resistance I took discretion over valour and came off the track after two laps.

My first race was scheduled for Saturday, 7 am and the diagnosis amongst the YP was that the master cylinder was at fault. Happily Nick had a spare one which I collected on the way home that night and bright and early 5:30 am at Zwartkops Cameron took on the job of swapping it. Unfortunately the replacement was seized and the decision was taken to re-bleed the original, fit it and 'pump like hell'. Which we did and made it to the race with seconds to spare. The windscreen wiper, painfully refitted with a new blade was a casualty of the rush and not being refitted to the wiper arm now adorns a small section of Zwartkops track somewhere. If anyone finds it, and it's not flattened into a pancake, I'd like to have it please.

Having gone onto the track in qualifying was in fact a really bad idea as for reasons yet unknown I placed 11th in the grid of some 40 cars, on a rolling start which is not the norm for the Pursuit class. My baptism of fire resulted in as Clarkson might say "some pooh coming out" in the mad storm for the first corner at which stage I held a middle of the road line, and prayed whilst about a million cars stormed past me in short order. Having let them all go I could then put the hammer down to get in some practise and it was not long before I realised I needed to start a list. The brakes were, well, not present in any meaningful form which was OK since I wasn't really going fast enough to need them. I then developed a serious splutter/misfire to the point where on Lap 7 I didn't think I was going to make it back to the pits. I did thankfully and having been lapped by about 40 cars, twice, was in itself an education in how to studiously avoid faster cars coming from the rear.

I never felt unsafe though and most of the other guys managed their way around me on the odd occasion I found myself accidentally on the racing line. Jimmy was pulling well in between splutters and he handles predictably with more grip

than I anticipated by far, despite using new road tyres barely worn in.

So I retired unhurt on lap 7. Much debate and passing of ideas ensued and we put it down to the coil, or the fuel pump. The location of the fuel pump was an issue, so we left that and changed the coil instead. The brakes we decided to eventually strip the seized master cylinder and change its seals with the original unit. Voila! The seals in the original unit were shot to hell – problem found! Swapping them over took a few minutes and with a token brake bleed I had functional brakes! It was all terribly exciting and Jimmy was sounding great with the new coil.

The last race of the meeting was at 5pm and we trundled down to the pre race paddock – all systems nominal. I turned the motor off and then re-started it. It fired, spluttered and died. And that was that. The rest of the cars made their way onto the track whilst Jimmy got pushed back to the pits for a diagnosis of what went wrong.

James, all of 4, had the comment ‘did you win already Daddy?’. It was no less than Stuart Greig (the late Bill Greig’s son) who had it diagnosed pretty quickly as a fuel line blockage – and he was spot on. Residual goop and gunk from the tank had found it’s way out of the tank into the fuel line and as the last of the fuel left the tank, it blocked.

Turns out Jimmy’s tank is about 25l. Who knew? Item 2 on list – fix Fuel Gauge! Item 3. Buy a Jerry can. Item 4. Buy fuel for jerry can!

That’s racing – but for me despite not getting onto the track for a second round of humiliation – I was really hoping to at least keep up with someone with (what was to have been hopefully a fixed splutter AND having actual brakes) – what stood out for me was the willingness of the Youth Project to help out, of Nick for the spares in the middle of the night, the Pretoria MG guys who came to watch the races and offer their support, the other race drivers who all had tales of equal woe. The general sense of camaraderie was great and I can see why racing, despite getting hot under the collar sometimes, is something people can become addicted to. It’s thoroughly enjoyable and even for slow poke drivers like me there is an inordinate amount of fun to be had in competing.

I confess I knew I would be quoting Clarkson again in that trademark “MORE POWER” hysterical scream of his, but I genuinely did not anticipate it would be in turn 1 of lap 1 of race 1, the first time I was actually racing. Yes folks, racing is that addictive, instantaneously and I just know Rikus and I are going to have oodles of fun in Jimmy once both he and I learn to curb our natural competitive nature to match our experience levels on the track.



# London to Brighton 2016

Keith Schroder

It's very proudly branded by the Royal Automobile Club as "The World's Longest Running Motoring Event" - and who can argue, the British certainly know a thing or two about tradition!

This year marked 120 years since the so-called Emancipation Run was first held and, besides the war years, it's been held virtually every year since then along the same route from London to the sea-side resort of Brighton, a distance of some 60 miles.

The run came about as a result of the changes made, on 14 November 1896, to the 'Locomotives on Highways Act' which had previously limited the speed of 'locomotives' - aka motor cars! - to just 4 mph. From that date the speed limit was raised to 14 mph and vehicles were no longer required "to be preceded by a man on foot with a red flag".



In line with tradition, the event is held each year on the first Sunday of November, this year's event was held on 6th Nov and we had decided to include the event as the one thing above all else that we wanted to 'see and do' during our visit to London. And, hey, we weren't disappointed.

I had purchased tickets on the open top bus that follows the cars on the same route but the really big plus factor to buying these tickets is that it gives the holder unhindered access to the start and finish paddocks. Wow, up really close to see these amazing old machines!!!

The run starts from Hyde Park Corner, almost half way between Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace. Start time this year was 7.04am. Yes, an odd looking time but that's exactly the time of sunrise on that day and therefore the old cars, most of which only had candles as headlights, are legally allowed on the road. The route is on open roads all the way to the coast and one has to admire the bravery of the drivers who have to contend with the congested London traffic in their somewhat frail looking veteran cars. People line the whole route and from the bus it's something of a moving classic car show as numerous car clubs use the day for their Sunday runs. And yes, the MG guys were out in force as well

This year a total of 436 cars were entered of which 418 actually made it to the start line. That's an awesome number of cars if one considers that all cars must have been manufactured prior to 1905. That's only 21 years before the very first



MG was made!



The oldest cars, in batches of about 10 at a time, are the first away, in this case the run was lead away by car #1, a 3hp 1895 Peugeot which comfortably finished the run within the 9 hour limit. Within the early batches, numerous cars were, in fact, "steamers". But possibly the most unique was a 2 cylinder, coal fired 1896 Salvesan - something like a miniature steam train engine with its tall chimney. A number of other old steamers are oil and/or petrol fired steam generators which are amazingly quick once they get going. (Many work on the principle of the old primus stove to heat the water to create steam).

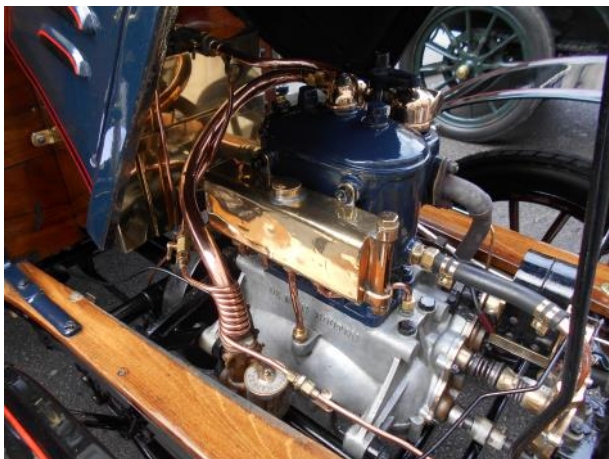
I found the range of cars most interesting. In all there were no less than 111 different makes of cars on the run. The 'smallest' was a

1.25hp 1898 Marot Gardon 3 wheeler. At the other end of the scale the really grand 4 cylinder cars which produce up to 40hp, are still capable of speeds of up to 65mph - not bad given the speed limit at the time of their manufacture.

A 1901 Waverley Pope, powered by a 3hp Electric motor, was driven by Jodie Kidd and made it all the way to Brighton - and we thought that electric cars are a modern day 'invention'. Others who we came across in the paddock were F1 boss Ross Brawn who drove his Wilson Pilsher, Pink Floyd's Nick Mason in his 24hp 1901 Panhard at Lavassor and Eddie Jordan who drove a 1901 Benz.

Overall it was an amazing day. Where else can one see in excess of 400 immaculate running cars, from all over the world, all of which are at least 110 years old taking part in an event over a 100km route?

Would I do it again, would I recommend it - absolutely yes!





# Meet the Members

## Steve Eden

Helgard Muller

### **You are obviously a petrol head but why MG?**

For some strange reason, when I was looking for a career after finishing school, I ended up working for the motor industry, strangely enough, I wanted to be a BBC camera man, but that didn't happen. Working as a happy appy, at Rootes Motors in Coventry my first couple of years transport was a variety of motor cycles, starting from a 200cc Triumph Cub and ending up with a genuine 120mph Tribsa, 650 Triumph engine in a BSA frame. Sanity prevailed after a few near misses and one broken arm, and my parents bought me an ancient Ford Popular, an E93A with an 1172 side valve engine.. Good job fuel was cheap as once I'd added an "Aquaplane" cylinder head it wasn't much faster but used a lot more petrol!. With rod operated brakes it was quite lethal. Working for Rootes, and with most of my mates at college working for BL, once money was a bit more available I bought a Hillman Imp, a vastly under-rated car, especially once the motor had been breathed on. The competition between the BL appies in minis and the Rootes appies in Imps was quite intense. (and possibly dangerous) When I got past this stage the appeal of a sports car started to grow.

Eventually I spotted a 1966 Mark II 1098 Midget in a local dealer, this was before I married so it must have been around 1970/1. In black with wire wheels it was a beaut. Didn't need it as a babe magnet but we (Hazell and myself) really enjoyed touring the UK in it. One memorable trip to the Lake district saw us stopping to take the bungs out of the floor plan to let the rain out, the hood was not at all watertight.

The car also used to tow a small trailer with my 325 Bultaco trials bike aboard to trials events in the area.

"Restoration" work on this car was limited by finances to keeping it running and getting it through the annual MOT, this usually involved a lot of new metal and welding. It must have put on a lot of weight during this process.

Eventually the corrosion got too much to cope with, remember this is all in the UK, and I basically gave it away.

I have always maintained, somewhat tongue in cheek, that those who can afford it buy classic Jaguars, those who can't afford Jaguars, buy Austin Healeys. Those who can't afford Healeys buy MGs, and the really poor buy Massey Fergusons, oops I mean Triumphs!

Anyway, rotten Midget disposed of, I was looking for a B or a BGT, however, I spotted a Mark IV Triumph GT6, purple, with a sun roof, which I could just afford, if I sold the Bultaco. The deal was done and never regretted as the straight 6 2L engine was a joy to use inside that small body. You purists may object, but why was the B always stuck with an 1800 4, until the MGC and V8 arrived.

In a couple of years, the patter of tiny feet appeared in 1978. Once the carry cot was too small we took the awful decision to sell the GT6 and bought what my parents called a "real car". I'm too embarrassed to tell you what it was. If I'd known about the move to SA at that time, I would have found some way to keep the GT6.

We moved to SA in 1980, staying in the motor industry with the perk of company cars, initially leased, so we could not justify buying an MG.

A couple of years later, we met Andre and Peter Napier Bax, Andre worked at Sigma as did I at the time. They owned a beautiful white B, a BGT and a rare MkII MGA, and were members of MGCCNC. So we joined, and that was the start of our involvement with the Club..

Being a member and not owning or having access to an MG is a little like fish and chips without salt and vinegar, something feels missing.

Initially I bought a somewhat rough, well very rough actually, MGA with a B motor with the aim of a restoration, that didn't happen and the car is now Heyns Stead's race car, extremely modified



of course.

This was followed by our current BGT in about 1988 which we have used and abused all over SA. As this car was built the year we got married, we will never sell it. How we got the car will take too long to tell

I then went through period when we had a Triumph Spitfire (yuch) and a Lotus 7 (nice but totally impractical for road use), both disposed of, and a 1275 Midget (good fun until age caught up with us) sold last year.

Around 2003, we were at the PTSCC Christmas party, when someone mentioned an MGA on a forecourt in Silverton, to cut a very long story short, if you ask I 'll tell you, we bought it. What a pleasure it has been to own and drive for these few years. We completed the 50th anniversary tour but not the 60th due to my health, the car was ready to go.

**What does the MG Club mean to you?**

Mainly camaraderie, but also availability of advice, social events, runs and competitions, as Hazell says it gets me out of the house.

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**Before driving off on a run what items are on your checklist?**

Oil, water, brake and clutch fluid and tyre pressures. Lights if I remember. I think having competed in so many rallies this all becomes natural and a weekly event.

**Do you drive with a full set of spanners?**

What essential tools do you take along on a run?. Basically yes, my tool box moves from A to B as required

**With R 20 000 what would you add or modify on your MG?**

I've actually just done this, and it was about this amount, and that was putting disc brakes on the front of the A, an expensive but extremely worthwhile update. A lot of people would say fit a 5 speed box, but I would rather leave that alone.

**If you can wish for a "barn find" like stumbling on this absolute classic beauty in restorable condition available at an affordable price-highly unlikely but- what car would be your wish .**

Believe it or not my dream car for many years has been a Daimler SP 250/Dart, V8 2500, fibreglass body. I've only seen one in SA



# Subscriptions 2017

It's that time of the year again, where we need to pass the hat around and gather some funds to allow us to continue into the upcoming year...

Those with reasonably long memories will recall that 2015 was a particularly tough year for the club financially, with a particular burden being the non-members who joined us for an unofficial meeting and left with our regalia, drinks, hi-fi and a fair amount of destruction in their wake. The costs associated with this and the follow-up installation of a radio linked alarm system and armed response made for a tough year for the club and we were left with little option but to increase the subscriptions for 2017 to avoid eating into our savings.

We are very pleased to report that the 2016 year has been much better for the club, financially. We have collected a good number subscriptions from members, have benefitted from good attendance at events at the clubhouse and the bar has turned a tidy profit. We have also not suffered any unexpected capital outlays. All-in-all a good year for the MG Car Club Northern Centre.

We are therefore glad to report that as an Exco we have taken the decision not to increase the subscriptions for next year, but have decided that they will remain at R330 for the year, with a R30 discount being offered to those who are able to pay by means of EFT and limit the banking charges that we have to pay to process the payment.

As with any entity, we would appreciate payment as early as possible—so please include us in your next payment run! Furthermore, we would like to raise the option of *Life Membership*. In terms of our constitution it is possible for members of long and good standing to apply to the Exco to purchase *Life Membership* for the equivalent of ten years annual subscription. Please contact the club Secretary, George Dehlen, if you are interested in applying for Life Membership.

## AGM - 6 February 2017

In terms of the Constitution of the MG Car Club Northern Centre (MGCC-NC) notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the MGCC-NC will be held on Monday Feb 6, 2017 at the Clubhouse, 26 Umgazi Road, Menlo Park Pretoria, at 20h00.

In terms of the Constitution three existing Committee members must be carried over to serve on the 2017 Committee. Nominations are required for a minimum of a further four candidates to fill the remaining positions.

Nominations, signed by the nominator and nominee, must be submitted to any Exco member before 20h00 on Feb 6, 2017.

Any member, wishing to add an item to the AGM agenda for discussion must submit a suitably motivated request, signed by five members, to the Secretary before January 30 2017.

### Nomination Form for 2017 Committee

I, ..... Being a member in good standing of the MG Car Club, Northern Centre, hereby nominate ..... to stand for election to the Club's Executive Committee.

Nominator Signature: ..... Date: .....

I accept the nomination and agree to serve on the committee if elected.

Nominee Signature: ..... Date: .....