

# MG Car Club Northern Centre Newsletter

May 2017 — Issue 425



MG's lined up at the Club's Condition Concours hosted in April 2017

## **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

## New Members

We would like to welcome **Alistair Hill** to the club.

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

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

## 2017-2018 Committee Members

Stephen Grover Chairman, Newsletter & Points Register	082 818 0540	Stephendgrover@gmail.com
Steve Eden Treasurer, Vice-chair & Membership Admin	082 372 8740	stevejreden@gmail.com
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Bernard Mostert	082 927 2291	Bernard.Mostert @adaptit.co.za
Geoff Cunnington	082 644 1621	frodo@telkomsa.net



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# FROM THE WORKBENCH

The delivery of newsletters to inboxes late is becoming a bad habit... I think that I should do two newsletters back to back, and try get back on track. If too much MG is not an excuse for getting the newsletter out late then there will never be a worthwhile excuse.

The club celebrated what felt like the last weekend of summer by hosting the Club's Condition Concours, which was well attended as usual. Over twenty five cars were there, along with a smattering of Mini's courtesy of Stuart Greig. Many congratulations to Richard Grover (Y-type), Gary Chapman (TF) and Marelize Mostert (ZB) for placing in the event, as well as the other participants who were prepared to enter their cars.

It was very exciting to see so many saloon cars featuring as part of the concours this year, as well as a growing number of very well presented modern MG's. As the modern cars become more accepted as "Classics" we seem to be welcoming more and more of them to the fold. It is interesting to remember that even the newest local MG TF is now 12 years old—Which is the same age as the newest MGB would have been at the Jacranda Indaba in 1992... Although it must be admitted that in 1992 the MGB's basic design was already 30 years old, while the TF is *only* 22 years old.

Further thanks go to William and Wendy Kelly for providing the food for the April Pub Evening, which was held on the same day as the #ZumaMustFall protests, and certainly facilitated some interesting conversation around the braai and at the bar.

The reason for the delay in putting this newsletter together stems from the fact that I was lucky enough to attend the MMM gathering in Kynsna, followed by the Jaguar Simola Hill Climb. Both events were fantastic, and the Classic Friday of the hill climb really ought to be on everybody's calendar. A comprehensive report for both events should find itself in the next newsletter,

but suffice to say that it was great to have the opportunity to spend quality time with so many MG friends in a beautiful part of the world with exceptional cars to boot. The MG crowd represented the marque very well, in a range of cars. Chris Champion was not in his usual Twin Cam, but rather in an Austin Healey 3000 and won his class from Rodney Green in an MGB. The Les Miller Special, Spider, was beautifully driven by Heyns and Anton Rolino's MGB GT V8 looked 100% sorted on the hill. Nigel Stokes ditched Growler (MGB GT V8) this year in favour of the Jaguar, but looked good on the road and Fred Phillips took up an Austin Healey Sprite. All in all a wonderful day in the sun, and a great pity that we won't be able to attend next year as the event clashes with the Indaba.

The event was unfortunately marred by an incident on the Monday where the transporter carrying five cars away from the event caught alight, and all cars were destroyed. The cars included Anton's MGB GT V8, which drove home how fragile our very precious cars are...

Coming up this month (or at least what's left of it) is the pub evening on 19 May, and the gymkana. The meal for the pub evening will be catered by Annette (& Tony) Craddock, and we are looking forward to that very much. There ought to be a car in the clubhouse, but time will tell what we put in. We are still debating on the venue for the Gymkana, as there is now a car wash where we have previously had driving tests... Details of the event are to follow.

That's all for now. I hope that you are enjoying your MG—however you choose to do so.

Octagonally,

Steve Grover



# Dambusters Run May Day 2017



Each year, on or around May 1st, the Sunbeam Owners Club organises the Dambusters Mission. This is a Treasure hunt type of event and open to all cars, with a preference for Classics of all types.

Hazell & I, along with Geoff & Bev Cunnington had taken part last year and had an enjoyable day, so we decided to do it again.

The Sunbeam Owners Club invited us as the MGCC NC to enter, and in return, we have invited them to our Jacaranda Run in October.



Having started my working life as an apprentice at Rootes Motors in Coventry, I do have an affinity with these cars, although my favourite, the Sunbeam Tiger is extremely rare in SA and unaffordable. The Tiger died when Chrysler acquired Rootes Motors in the late 60s as they were unwilling to produce a car fitted with a Ford V8, and had no suitable replacement engine.



Later Tigers, based on the Avenger with a tweaked engine, and the Lotus Sunbeam kept the marques sporting aspirations alive, along with the Hillman Imp, campaigned successfully in rallies and the British Saloon Car championship. The significant win in the London to Sydney marathon by a humble Hillman Hunter, took everyone by surprise.

Enough history, let us talk about the event.

We all met at the home of the Chicken Pie in Lanseria, after an extremely cold drive from Pretoria for us in the A, roof down of course. Routes and question sheets were distributed and you were free to start in your own time after 09h30.



MGs were well represented with a TC, 2 MGAs, 3 BGTs and a TF present. There were also Sunbeam Tigers and Alpines. Triumph TRs, a big Healey and some Alfas. There was even a 50s, (I think), Bentley.



With 53 questions to answer, a total distance of just over 100km, and no real time pressure, we had a pleasant drive, the sun having thankfully come out.

The route took us all around the Witwatersburg, the Magaliesburg, and the Cradle of Humankind, with a midway stop at Mount Grace for a very expensive, R50, scone and coffee.

The questions ranged from very simple, through moderate to extremely devious.

The run ended at the Moon and Sixpence, near Lanseria, where drinks and snacks were available.



Results were quick to come out as the competitors marked others sheets.

The winners, in an MGA, were not us, but came in with a score of 59, we were not far behind on 54.

The Sunbeam Club had obtained an array of Sponsors and each car went home with a goody bag filled by Castrol, Wynns, Autozone and Shield.

All in all, apart from some heavy traffic here and there, an enjoyable event, and a pleasant way to use your classic.

Many thanks to the Sunbeam Club, and we hope to see some of them at the Jacaranda Run.

Drive your MG, that is what its for! - Steve E.

# **KNOW THE MG PEOPLE**

## **TONY CRADDOCK**

My interest in motorised vehicles started when as a schoolboy in Cape Town I was given the task of driving the school tractor and had to drive it a short distance on a public road from the school building to the sports grounds – this was in the early 1950s!! After obtaining my driving licence in Pretoria, of which part of the test was driving around Church Square, my first car purchase was an Austin Big Seven. My first sports car, however was a Singer 9 roadster, followed a few years later by a Triumph TR3, bought brand new and collected from the dealer in Durban.

I then joined the Pretoria Motor Club and enjoyed many years of involvement in motorsport, especially in the administration and organization of rallies, such as the Total. As a member of the Executive Committee I served the organization in various roles, including chairman, secretary and treasurer.



Then, my focus was on qualifying as a Chartered Accountant, getting married, raising children and forging a career, so sports cars took a back seat for a couple of years.

In the mid 70's, through my friendship with Gareth McConkey (now living in Cape Town) the owner of a MG TD affectionally known as "Noddy", my interest in MG's was nurtured. At that time there were about 10 Pretoria MG owners who travelled monthly through to Johannesburg to attend meetings of the MG Car Club in that city



So, when in 1978 an advert appeared in the Pretoria News inviting interest from MG enthusiasts to start a centre of the MG Car Club in Pretoria, I attended and paid a small fee and joined as member number 11 and the MG Car Club Northern Transvaal Centre was born on that evening! At this gathering at the Palms Hotel in Silverton together with about 20 – 25 others, Rob Breebaart (now living in Cape Town) was elected the first chairman and Peter Noeth (now deceased) was the first secretary and treasurer. Heyns Stead, still a member of Northerns and also now living in CT, signed up at the same time. The Centre's numbers quickly rose and attracted many town and "country" members, plus an interesting array of MG's. The name was subsequently changed to Northern Centre.

Later in 1978, I was elected a member of the Executive committee and given the task as Treasurer the next year. I then held that position from 1979 – 2014 (35 years). My duties included the membership register – no eft's in those days, just a receipt book and lots of change. I held the position of Chairman in 1993 for 1 year, and in 2012, along with my

dear friend Peter Noeth, I was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the club, an honour I cherish.

The early Noggins were held at the Pretoria High School Old Boys Club (Phobians) for many years and monthly Committee meetings were held in various committee members homes. Many innovative runs were organized by various members to get the cars out and about, such as the “frostbite runs”, the Jacaranda Run, treasure hunts, travelling suppers, route-finding events and technical talks.

In the early 1990’s through the hard work of Heyns Stead, supported by the Executive committee the current grounds were obtained through a 30 year lease with the City Council, who wished to establish a “community club area”. Various fundraising initiatives were used to finance the clubhouse and many generous donations were made. The Clubhouse was designed by fellow member Sandy Sharp and the clubhouse was duly built. (He recently handed the original plans to the Club for safekeeping)

To this day Northerns is the only MG Car Club in SA to have a permanent home of their own.



My first MG, a MG TD was purchased late in 1978 after the club had been formed. It was sourced through an advertisement and “not running”. I completely restored it from the bodywork to mechanical – not bad for an accountant!! I owned this red TD for 7 years and thoroughly enjoyed driving it. I sold it because I really wanted a TC and the TD ended up being sold and shipped to the USA.



My beloved TC was purchased in 1983 from a family living in Waterkloof and it was towed to my house in Brooklyn, accompanied by lots of boxes. Again an intense period of restoration was undertaken which took 2 years of work. This beautiful car, old english white with green interior, is still in my family and is being lovingly looked after and driven by my son in Johannesburg. This TC (JLP 457GP - “Jalopy”) was used extensively not only on Club runs, showdays and driving tests but driven great distances and frequently won the award at Indabas for “longest distance driven in a T-type”. The last “long” drive was when I drove it to the Clarens Indaba, organised by the Johannesburg Centre, in 2012.

My next MG acquisition, while still owning the TC, was a MGBGT in 1985 – it was resprayed from a “mustard” colour to old english white and eventually sold after 12 years. I was the third owner of this car, which was very original, ran very well and did not need any work.

In 1998, the MG Metro 1300 joined my MG stable and I was at that time again only the third owner. The car had been brought to SA by a British Embassy official who sold it here when his term ended. It was a more usable car, being a hatchback. This car is also very original and has recently been sold to a fellow Northerns member.



My latest and current MG is a MG Midget 1500 (1979), purchased for my wife in 2006. This bright orange Midget (“Oros”) was bought from a motorcycle dealership in Edenvale. It had been traded in for a motorbike! This car was purchased for the initial purpose of participating in the “Spridget Tour” in 2007 and we are still enjoying it! It is very original and has had no major body or mechanical work done to it. “Oros” really is a fun car to own and drive and has been used in driving tests, club outings and many long tours.

The first MG National Gathering, now called Indaba’s that I attended was held in East London in 1980 and I have been lucky enough to attend all subsequent Indaba’s since then. These Indaba’s are organised every 2 years by one of the 7 MG centres on behalf of the MG Car Club Combined South African Centres, the National Body of MG Car Clubs in SA. The Executive Committee of the National Body comprises of 2 members nominated from each SA centre, plus their Chairman. I was nominated to represent Northern Centre and served as National Treasurer for a period of 32 years and retired at the Knysna Indaba in 2014. Unfortunately, due to work, family, & Northern Centre and National Body pressures, I was never a member of any other MG Club or assisted with their financial matters.

It was an enormous honour to be appointed as National President by Combined Centres at the recent Indaba hosted by Northerns.

I thoroughly enjoyed and still do, enjoy all the activities of the MG movement in South Africa and particularly enjoyed being involved in my more active days in events such as the following:

- Organizing club events, such as the Jacaranda Runs, awards evenings, driving tests and the Cat's Eyes Trial. The Cat's Eye trial originated as an evening route finding rally around Pretoria – so you needed cat's eyes to see in the dark! However, due to security concerns, this run now follows a different format;
- Acting as a Local and Combined Centre Concours judge especially on T Types;
- Managing the clubhouse and its facilities;
- Being part of organizing committees for 2 Northern Indabas – with a fantastic team of members;
- I especially enjoyed driving tests and speed events in my TC, including the Krugersdorp Hill Climb and Zwartkop Air Base!
- Participating in tours that were organized such as the Tusker Tour, MGA African Adventure tour, the Spridget tour and the Lap of Lesotho to mention a few, were particular favourites of mine. Of course, I was the treasurer on many of these tours as well!
- Of course, just attending any MG get-together is lots of fun.

The MG club has been an integral part of my life for nearly 40 years (next year) – the years of fellowship and enduring friendships are irreplaceable. I have been blessed with meeting the most passionate, interesting and caring people. To me it is more than a Car Club it is my extended family and I am lucky enough to have a supportive wife who has many joint MG Memories with me, which are very precious to us.





# **The devil made Jimmy do it**

## **Historic Race Report**

### **29 April 2017**

Friday 28 April, 6 am saw us up and at it. Loading Jimmy onto the trailer, Rikus and I set off for the legendary Phakisa race circuit for Round Two of Pursuit and an opportunity to add tales of awe and wonder to our meagre stock of racing folklore.

We arrived all in good time for the first practise at 10:30 – but it took an hour to get through scrutineering as there was quite a queue of folk in their cars. Jimmy passed despite a dodgy kill switch and we just made practise at 10:30. Rikus took Jimmy out first to see the lay of the land, neither of us having driven Phakisa before. Jimmy was running well. I then went out for Round 2 - and neither of us were entirely sure of our times. We think Rikus got around a 3:00. Sounded great!

We also noticed that 'Cheese' was present – this being a yellow 1275 GTS mini that had been in the same shop as Jimmy recently. We know 'Cheese' had just had straight cut gears fitted and the motor is super hot, so Cheese, naturally, although clearly out of our fighting weight was still our closest competitor. Timing him we noted that he was posting sub 2:40's, which wasn't exactly encouraging at that point in time.

Still as things progressed I took Jimmy out and if I do say so myself by the end of the day managed to set a reasonable time around the 2:34's or so. This I must admit was on discovery via WhatsApp and c/o Steven Britz (of the MG Youth Project) that actually you can take the two corners at the end of the straight flat out (thanks Stevie!). Jimmy is still on skinny road tyres so he tends to not corner particularly well but the handling is at least predictable and he's pretty forgiving of driver error.

We left the track after practise to go back to our guest house where we met up with some fellow racers (one of which was driving a really quick red MGB GT) and learned from them of a serious crash in the Lotus Challenge series. Sean Allen had had a big off running into the back of someone on the main straight, and with the Lotus 7's effectively being open wheel racers a tyre touch can be disastrous at over 200 km/hr. This tragically proved to be the case as we learned the next morning early that he had been killed.

No-one wants this kind of news, and despite it being the first fatality in many years at a race meeting of this nature, it serves to drive home that racing can be extremely dangerous.

Whilst open wheel racing has never been a thing for me (purely because all the serious accidents I've seen have seem to have come from open wheels touching) I must admit that my enthusiasm for horse power was been diminished somewhat.

On Saturday, I did qualifying for Pursuit. As it happens I discovered that Jimmy could take the two corners leading into the main straight flat out too which was happy news and that shaved a coupla seconds off – and we managed to set a time of around 2:30 as our time for the race. Rikus set a time a bit slower than that but he is after all still learning the car and how he handles, and of course has never raced before. But finally, this was to be his first race under the belt!

In the first heat, I had the amazing experience of having someone start in front of me – admittedly only by one second, and yes, it was Cheese! Somehow, I had managed to set a slightly better time than him in qualifying and so I finally had someone to pursue. I can't explain how awesome that is.

Off we went on our 8 lap derby and it became quickly apparent that overtaking Cheese was not going to be easy. Naturally, sheer talent allowed me to catch him in the corners but sheer horsepower allowed him to leave me in his dust every corner thereafter.

As other cars started to catch up with us it became harder and harder to keep him close but eventually somewhere on lap 6 or so I managed finally, in one corner with much cursing, sliding and heaven knows what else, to pass him on the

entrance to the front straight and for about 4 seconds before he simply powered past me again it was absolute bliss. My first pass in an actual race with someone to actually race against!

It goes without saying that as soon as Jimmy get some proper semi slick tyres on, Cheese is history! All other conditions being equal of course.

So that was Race 1 of 2 – Jimmy ran perfectly I must say. When the results came out it turns out I had broken out of my time – I did a 2:26.8 (from an allowable 2:28.2) so that was that – 1.4 seconds is just too much and so it was a bit fat zero points on the scoreboard for Will. So much for talent.

As it happens Cheese also broke out and registered a zero (I was quite pleased about that).

All Rikus had to do then was to get on the track (the new disqualification time is based on the old fastest lap time) and he'd score points in his first race. The time came to line up for the grid, and of course, Jimmy turned over but absolutely refused to start!

It's simply unbelievable. Not once, not once had he failed to start on the first turn. He had performed flawlessly for two days of practise, qualifying and a complete race. He was even started after the race to check.

We had fuelled the car prop-vol, there was spark, the fuel pump was working and we were jumping around like mad things. There is no worse feeling. But the race started and 20 minutes later as it was finishing we had located the source of the issue – one of the carbs had a stuck air intake thingymajig – jammed wide open – and there was no way it would start.

I can only say the Devil made him do it. We'd done practise, qualifying and racing without missing a single beat, only for Jimmy to scupper Rikus's first chance of mixing it up on the track. I have to say that Rikus took it reasonably well because when it happened to me I was quite cross and frankly irritable for days.

Still, for consolation we had entered the Enduro – a two-hour race – because at the time we had figured what the hell and why not? Turns out the fastest machines of the day all entered the same race - and the prospect of being lapped, EVERY lap, was not an appealing one, especially so when there was no-one else within even 20 seconds of our times. So, when Jimmy happily jammed the carb open for Rikus again on the formation lap, Rikus and I retired gracelessly, loaded him onto the trailer and came home.

So it wasn't the greatest weekend but certainly not the worst either. We remembered to take our camp chairs this time which was good and represents progress. And our list of Stuff You Will Need now includes a pair of long starter cables to plug into the starter machine which ships with these incredibly useless short things, a drip mat, some duct tape to hold the transponder onto the car, a squirter bottle for some fuel, the same for water for the radiator, some extra oil (which we put in to make us feel better) and, oh yes, a new car...

Just kidding. Whilst Jimmy is in deep trouble for misbehaving, in time we'll forgive him and withdraw the threat of a match down the fuel chute...

For now it's time for a carb strip and clean and hopefully that'll be the issue sorted out once and for all. Rikus, it is agreed, gets the first race next time at Red Star 3 June, so we'll see what happens there. Hopefully he can finally get this thing done. Our tales of track time are in pitifully short supply, but our litany of racing driver excuses is piling up faster than Zuma's scandals.

# Upcoming Events

## Pub Evening

Friday 19 May 2017

Please join us for a drink, meal and catch up after the week at the club.

This month Annette Craddock will be catering with homemade pies, and we are looking forward to it very much.

All are welcome. These events are a great way to meet new friends and reconnect with existing ones..

We are looking forward to seeing you there.

Date: **Friday 19 May 2017**  
Time: **17:30 onwards**  
Where: **MG Car Club Northern Centre Clubhouse**

## Gymkhana

Sunday 28 May 2017

MG Car Club Northern Centre is to hold a Gymkhana on the 28th of May.

.All you will need is a MG, (Triumph), a co-driver and a sense of humour.

A gymkhana consists of 3 or 4 courses with various tests or obstacles that will test the co-ordination between driver and co-driver who must complete each course within a specified time period and collect the least number of penalties possible. Although there will be a time allocated to complete each course it is set at a very reasonable duration, penalties will be added for every second over allocated time and deducted for every second under allocated time. Penalties will also be allocated for poles knocked over and various 'faux pas' accumulated within the course, remember the faster you go the more penalties you are likely to accumulate, find a good balance between speed and precision remembering the tortious won the race. This is NOT a speed event so there will be no strain on the vehicle, (only between driver and co-driver). All courses are designed to be fun with family participation encouraged, so no seriousness will be tolerated.

Prizes will be awarded to the crews with the least number of penalties as well as to the best dressed participants who are dressed in the period of their car.

Date: **Sunday 28 May 2017**  
Time: **09:30 onwards**  
Where: **TBA**

## Forthcoming Events in Brief

Point allocation c=Clubman, v= Victrix/tor Ludorum, RR=Regularity Rally, HR=Historic Racing

### May

Mon 1	Dambusters Run	Sunbeam		
Mon 8	Natter 'n Noggin	NC	Clubhouse 19:30 for 20:00	c
Fri 19	Pub Evening	NC	Clubhouse 17:30 onwards	
Sun 28	Gymkhana	NC	Details on Page 6	c/v

### June

Mon 5	Natter 'n Noggin	NC	Clubhouse 19:30 for 20:00	c
Fri 16	Pub Evening	NC	Clubhouse 17:30 onwards	
Sun 25	Combined Centre's Showday	NC/JHB	Pretoria Botanical Gardens	c

### July

Mon 3	Natter 'n Noggin	NC	Clubhouse 19:30 for 20:00	c
Fri 10	Pub Evening	NC	Clubhouse 17:30 onwards	
Sun 23	Proposed Brauhaus am Dam Run	NC	Details to follow	c

# Trading Post

## FOR SALE

1. A-series 1500 engine for RWD Austin / Morris /Wolseley, might fit an A. No 15AMW-U-H 97195. Seems internally complete and supposedly was re-built. Been sitting in my garage or years. Make me an offer around R1000.

2. Stainless steel OE pattern Midget boot rack. Never fitted. £204 from the owners club. Yours for R1200

Steve Eden  
0823728740

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Should you wish to advertise items for sale, wanted or to swop please e-mail the editor at [Stephendgrover@gmail.com](mailto:Stephendgrover@gmail.com), or call on 082 818 0540

## TC's Forever More

Mike Sheryl, the author of the definitive MG TC restoration book *TC's Forever* has released a sequel—TC's forever more. The book promises to be very insightful, and offers advice for running TC's in the modern era.

We have arranged for a shipment of books locally, and a few are still available. The costs is estimated at R964 per book, subject to final ROE when imported.

Please contact Pepi Gaspari at [marpepi@iafrica.com](mailto:marpepi@iafrica.com) should you be interested in a copy.

*"While 'TC's Forever' is an appreciation and reference of the Factory Spec. car, this new book is again an appreciation, but also an expansion into owning, enjoying, and operating the wonderful, time-defying chariots into the 21st Century."*

Mike Sherrell



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# MG CAR CLUB KZN 2017

## WEEKEND AWAY

Many of you will have seen the notice in the March Newsletter advising of a club weekend away to the Midlands and staying over at the Nottingham Road Hotel. The dates were to have been the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> August. The dates have had to be changed to a week later due to unforeseen circumstances and will be held from Friday night the 11<sup>th</sup> through to Sunday morning.

The MG Car Club KZN Centre is to hold a weekend away at Nottingham Road Hotel from Fri 11<sup>th</sup> – Sun 13<sup>th</sup> departing on Sunday.



This 1900<sup>th</sup> century hotel has recently been up graded to a charming cosy country hotel. The revamped rooms are of a high standard with many variations to suit double or single beds and so on. Bath as well as shower in most rooms.

Fire place in the dining room and of course the fire place in the all-time favourite pub. The Hotel is very conveniently situated for visiting the Midland Meander sites.



There are 10 garden suites and 14 old rooms in the body of the hotel. This amounts to a capacity of 48 guests. At this stage there are only a limited number of rooms reserved for us.

Please advise Peter & Bev McNaught if you wish to join in the fun. If numbers warrant it, it may still be possible to secure additional rooms but Bev needs to know ASAP.

Email: [mcod@telkomsa.net](mailto:mcod@telkomsa.net) Tel: 031 904 1522 Cell: 082 927 8170

COST:- R500.00 per person sharing per night, bed and breakfast which is a special reduced rate for the MG Car Club members. Normal price is over R700 p.p. sharing.

Once you have notified Peter or Bev you may make your booking and pay the required deposit directly to the Hotel. Deposit R500.

Nottingham Road Hotel Contact details:-

PO BOX 330, Nottingham Road, 3280,

Tel/ fax: 033 2666 151

