



MG NORTHERN CENTRE

founded February 1978

APRIL 2026

UMGAZI Mag



CONTACT US



MG Car Club - Northern Centre



c/o Umgazi & 26th Street, Menlo Park, Pretoria



FNB, cheque, 62 363 284 359



Committee

Chairman: Bernard Mostert

Secretary: Richard Grover

Membership: Robin Clarke

Regalia: Jaco van Vuuren & Michael Mole

Social media: Shaun Freeman

Events Secretary: Frik van Sittert

Valuations: Stephen Grover

Committee member: Dirk du Plessis

*Happy
Birthday!*

3 May - William Kelly

5 May - Richard Grover

9 May - Bernard Mostert

14 May - Denise Tilburn

17 May - Margaret Atherstone

What is happening?

1. Noggin- 4 May

2. Club night - 15 May

3. Weekend away - 23 & 24 May

Chairman's Note



Greetings to all Northern Centre Members

We've enjoyed what I believe were the final days of summer, although by now we should have fully transitioned into autumn. That said, the last few weeks of April in Pretoria felt more like Cape Town weather! Despite conditions not always playing along with planned activities, we were fortunate to have a successful monthly run to the Hartbeespoort Dam area. Be sure to look out for photos from the day, as well as highlights from the club night hosted by Bev and Geoff Cunnington.

I've mentioned the upcoming Indaba in previous newsletters, but time is now running out if you're considering joining us as the entries close on 25 May 2026.

One important update I previously overlooked is the awarding of honorary membership to Esra. Please see the dedicated article for the reasons behind this well-deserved recognition.

You'll also find an interesting feature from 1982 on the MGA Twin Cam, linked to Patrick's ongoing restoration project, showcasing how enthusiasts have historically enhanced performance in their own ways.

Next month promises to be a busy one, with our weekend away at Val on the calendar. Keep an eye on the WhatsApp group for additional activities.

I look forward to seeing you and your MG soon.

Octagonally yours,
Bernard



CLUB Night

On Friday 16 April we had our club night for the month of April. There was wine, good company and prego rolls!

Our hosts for the evening was Bev and Geoff. A lovely evening that was enjoyed by everyone. We even made use of "child labour" to braai the Prego's :)

Thank you for all the members that made it such an enjoyable (as usual) evening. Do join us next month.

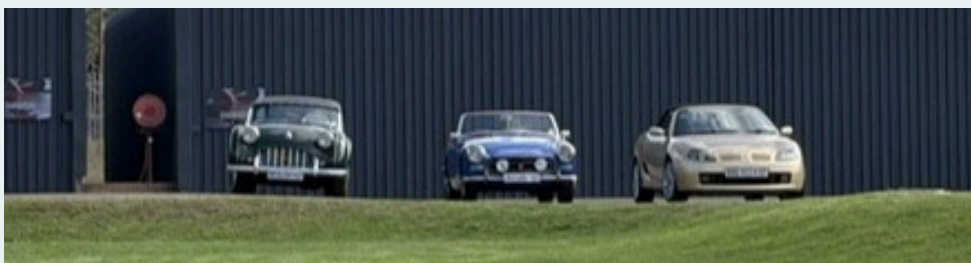


MONTHLY RUN - HARTIES

Sunday 26 April was the last Sunday of the month, which meant that we had our monthly club run. It may have been a long weekend, but we had a good turnout where members joined along the way, or just stayed for coffee.

The plan was to do a "safari run" out to Mulderdrift area, with a coffee stop before we enjoyed lunch in the area. Well the run turned out to be a safari where the majority of us drove more than 200km from the club house, to the Neck and Deck restaurant for coffee and a lovely lunch at Aviators pub in Harties.





MG HOGSVILLE

Norman Ewing - President MG Car club combined centres

Happy Birthday Cecil!

From the Johannesburg Centres earliest days...we have always celebrated the 12 April each year, as Cecil Kimber's birthday, way back in 1888! And on the occasions, when it fell on the same day as Angela's Picnic we would invite our Morgan and Alfa friends along, to share... sometimes awkward with over a hundred MGs! However, as Alfa chairman, way back in 1978, Capo Williams invited me to bring a three man MG team, down to Maseru to compete with forty four Alfas, in Lesotho, where they had TONS of petrol...we went!

As this was still at the time, of the harsh petrol restrictions, with heavy fines if caught at roadblocks, we were forced to be a little creative, hiding the extra for some non MGs (we run in the smell of oil rags remember) there were many hilarious stories of how naughty we had been, thanks to a sprinkling of some CB radios, in the non MGs!!! Ah... the good old days when we were naughty!

As our Alfa friends had been there for us in the early days, and some were keen to join us, on our MG Blue Train and MG Overseas trips, it was only right that they should be invited along, to celebrate with us...Cecil Kimber.

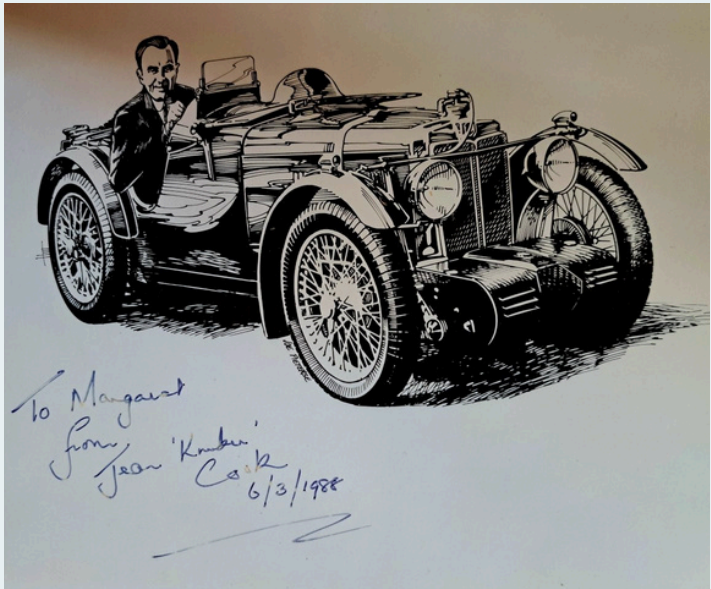


Hogsville is the Highveld home of Wilf and Lyndie Mole, world renown for their glorious farm in the Free State...Sandstone Estates, who have been friends of the MG Car Club since the early seventies, when Wilf bought a little MG J2. He very kindly, gave us the use of Sandstone, in its entirety for the 2012 Indaba, even preparing at great expense, two steam engines to take the delighted MG members, from South Africa and abroad, joyriding on his more than twenty five kilometres of track, around the glorious Free State... Estate!

So there was the combination...MGs from Johannesburg and Northerns, as well as Alfa members, all enjoying the first filling station built between Pretoria and Johannesburg, still with its hand operated pumps...and to be treated to a real treat, of seeing immaculately restored Massey Ferguson and John Deers, this is a working farm, trundling back and forth, with loads of whatever.

Lyndie Mole was asked to cut the cake...and a special surprise was when Jay Westaway arrived in his immaculate Iris Blue 'B' roadster, with a framed copy of Cecil Kimber in the 'C' type 'Hoodoo' at Craigauntlet, by Joe Pieterse, and signed to his late wife Margaret, by Kimber's daughter Jean, when she was our guest in 1988.

A special tribute on a most memorable day!!



HONORARY

MEMBERSHIP

At the 2026 Club AGM Esra Martins was made an Honorary Member of the Northern Centre as a tribute to an MG Club Icon who joined the Northern Centre when he relocated to Pretoria, having been a member of the Johannesburg Centre for many years. Always keen to participate in Club events from Noggins to monthly runs as well as Indabas and weekend events Esra participated fully in the life of the club. Now well into his nineties and still driving his MGB its fitting that he joins this elite group of Northerners Centre Honorary members

This year, 2026, marks the fiftieth anniversary of MG ownership by Esra Martins and so it seems timely that the MG Car Club, Northern Centre should confer Honorary membership on him. He bought his first MG in somewhat bizarre circumstances, having travelled from his farm in Babsfontein to attend an auction at Burchmores where a Rolls Royce. was on offer. Having failed to acquire the Rolls he walked past a car dealer, TAK, where he spotted an MG TC for sale. The rest, they say, is History and so started a fascinating relationship with MGs. As it turned out the car had an interesting background having been owned and restored by Basil Landau, the chairman of Leyland, South Africa. After 42 years of ownership, a complete rebuild and lots of TLC he reluctantly passed it on.

An MGA was his next, and also his favourite MG. Bought as a basket case and fully rebuilt he had several outstanding overseas adventures rallying it from Amsterdam to Moscow in a field of about 100 classic cars. In 1999 the A was again pressed into service for the Mille Millas rally in Uruguay. The Historic Monte Carlo rally in Europe was next of his list, although for technical reasons, it was re-named The Winter Challenge.

Ez and Mathew, his London based navigator, were among the 63 finishers out of a field of 176.

Together with Willem van der Stoep he converted a MG Y Type saloon into a roadster based on conversions carried out by Swiss coach builders, Reinbolt and Christie.

When he moved to the United States he took with him his current MG, a rebuilt TF which served him well, enabling him to take part in many tours and runs before returning to SA. He then acquired an MGB V8, which many years later ended up in the ownership of Stephen Grover. Esra's daily driver is a Rubber bumper MGB which he bought from Geoff and Bev Cunnington completing continuous MG ownership for 50 years.



Unique MG Twin Cams

Lawrie Alexander - Moss Motoring 1985

The double overhead camshaft engine fitted to the MGA Twin-Cam models was known as much for its notorious unreliability as for its 108 bhp output. Clearly, this head design extracts more power from a given displacement and some manufacturers achieved solid commercial success with it (Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Jaguar, to name just a few). MG, however, discontinued the twin-cam in the face of poor sales and thus the only post-war MG factory engine of this design passed into history.

Few historians have documented other, non-factory supported attempts to produce twin-cam MG engine conversions. Realizing the performance potential of the double overhead cam head, a number of privateers in the U.S.A experimented during the 1950's.

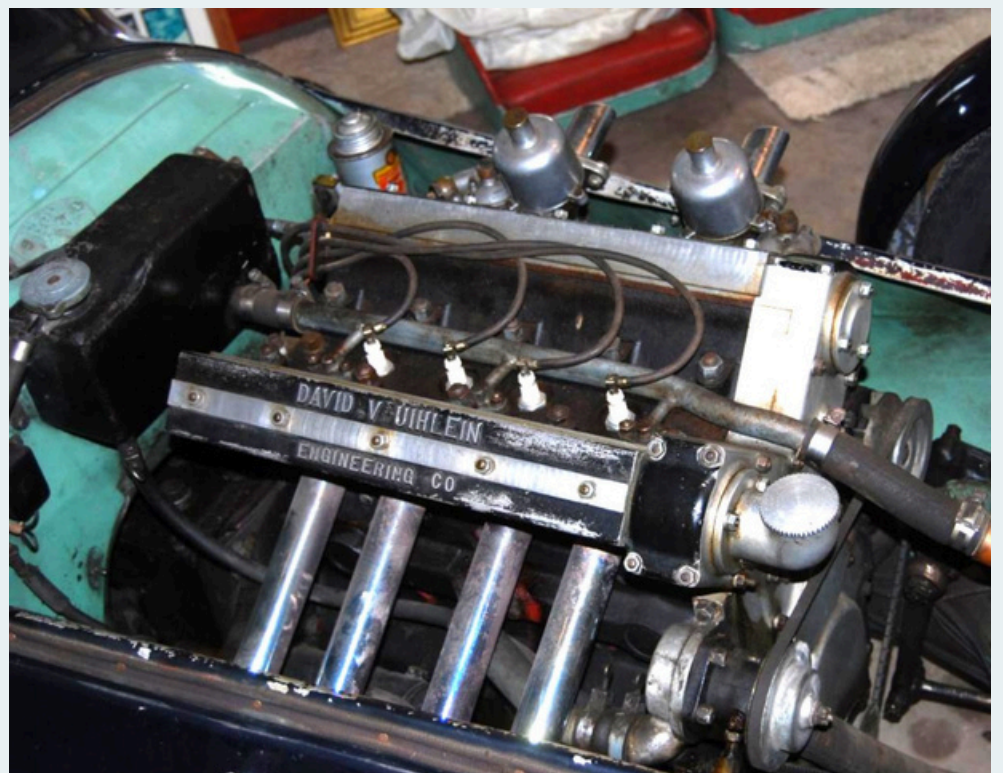
All shared a common goal to make a race-car go faster. Sadly, they all also met the same lack of success. Here we will deal with four variations of the twin-cam theme, based on XPAG/XPEG blocks. Two are fairly well known, thanks to publicity in the 'Hot Rod' press at the time they were built. The other two are virtually unknown and this is the first documentation of their history and their existence.

THE UIHLEIN TWIN-CAM

Readers of the September, 1953, issue of 'Speed Age' were treated to a cover shot of a low, sleek two-seat racer, and a 3-page story on what the editors called... 'a serious threat to foreign domination of the 1.5 liter class'. Built in Milwaukee, the brainchild of David V. Uihlein, the aluminum body topped a modified TD chassis. Under-hood lay the twin cam, XPAG derived engine designed by Weikko Leparen, reputed to give 90 bhp.



The head and cam housings were cast of nickel-alloy steel and provided 360 degree water cooling around the 1 7/16" valves The cams were gear driven from the crankshaft via an all new gear drive arrangement, although the original cam remained to drive the oil pump and distributor. Combustion chambers were hemispherical with centrally located spark plugs. Dual SLTs were mounted on the left and four long, straight pipes exited on the right. Speed Age reported "The Uihlein special retired with minor mechanical trouble in its initial test at the Chanute Field sports car event at Rantoul, IL, on June 14th. But Uihlein and his companions in this venture are confident the bugs common to any new design will be eliminated'. Sadly, this was not to be! There are no known reports of the car ever performing in a convincingly successful manner.



THE RUNYAN TWIN-CAM

March, 1956, saw an XPAG-based twin cam engine publicized in 'Hot Rod' magazine. Not a great deal of information was given, but dynamometer readings of 78 to 80 bhp were reported, and over 110 bhp was projected for the engine in its final development stages. The engine was developed by Dale Runyan, Bill Zimmerman, and Norman Timbs, presumably in the Los Angeles area. It was to be offered as a \$500 kit but no mention was made in the article as to where you could buy one of these kits. Whether many people did, or if the engine was ever successful, remains undocumented. Two are known to exist today, although neither is installed in a car or running.



The Runyan XPAG twin cam engine

THE KEN MILES TWIN-CAM

This one surfaced in 1977, when a chap showed up in Santa Barbara with photographs of a TC engine with a double-overhead cam head. Shortly thereafter, Chris Nowlan (Moss Motors' Product Development Manager) purchased the engine and an assortment of spare parts.

The engine was, in fact, built around one of the factory 1500 competition blocks made for the EX 179 Record attempt in August 1954. The head, machined from a solid billet of aluminum and extensively decorated by damascening (a' la Bugatti!), had hemispherical, combustion chambers, two cams chain driven via an idler on the original camshaft, a Lucas magneto driven off the rear of the exhaust cam and provision for a dry sump system.



No induction system was fitted but the spare parts included four Amal motorcycle carburetors which neatly bolted to the head. Likewise, there was no exhaust manifold, just four stub pipes off the head. An interesting note was that the firing order was 1-4-3-2, although the crank and rods were stock TF 1500 with high-top pistons. The engine had obviously been run, had seized up from lack of oil (#3 rod bearing had spun) and the block bore evidence of an external fire on the exhaust side. The likeness to a TC engine came from the fact that the motor had a narrowed TC front bearer plate.

Many months of enquiries shed no light on the engine's history. Eventually, it became reasonably certain that it had been built by Ken Miles for his second famous MG special, 'The Flying Shingle'. Miles had been one of the drivers (along with George Eyston) of EX 179 and rumor had it that a number of the spare engine parts were Ken's 'thank-you' from his involvement in the successful record attempt.

Both Miles specials had used TC bearer plates, and the centers on the engine fit exactly the mounts on 'Shingle's' chassis. This was confirmed by 'Shingle's' present owner, who also found that the specially built dry sump oil pan included in the spares Chris bought fit the chassis layout perfectly. 'Shingle' used a TC gearbox and the engine's lightened flywheel was an early, small flywheel which had been modified to run an 8" clutch in a TC bellhousing. The most positive clue came from one old-time racer who remembered seeing 'Shingle' driven in a club event between the one full season Miles raced 'Shingle' and the next year when he first drove the 'Pooper', or Porsche-Cooper special. This was probably 'Shingle's' last outing in Miles' hands and the old-timer remembers it retired when an oil line broke and caused an engine fire ...! Not proof that it was Miles' engine but enough circumstantial evidence to sway most juries!

Where is it now? Don Martine of Pacific Grove, California acquired it from Chris and fitted it, reworked, to a TC special which first appeared at the Santa Barbara GOF in 1982. The car was then raced in a few West Coast Vintage events, putting up some very creditable lap times. Unfortunately, it also suffered many minor problems; culminating in a dropped valve. It now awaits further development.



THE PUMA TWIN CAM

In 1980, a chance meeting led Lawrie Alexander (Moss Sales Manager) to another one-off twin cam conversion.

PUMA an acronym for Purdy-Muller Associates, was the name given to this head which was built in 1955 by Hatton Purdy and Rudy Muller in Los Angeles. Rudy was a patternmaker who had built a number of such heads for V-8 engines; Hatton was a machinist and sometime racer. They had planned to race this engine a TD, then sell complete kits, but never went beyond the first engine.

The head was cast aluminum as were the valve covers, water manifolds, timing chain covers and numerous small fittings. The cams were specially made, operating directly on valve buckets (similar to the Jaguar set-up), driven by gears from a chain driven centered gear. Two induction systems were prepared, one using two 1/2" SUs on a log manifold the other with a pair of homemade (!) twin-choke SUs on a direct-feed manifold! A T-series water pump was mounted to one side of the new timing cover, cooling the engine via special manifolds.

After acquiring the engine, Lawrie found the reason the project was abandoned: the head was cracked. After several attempts to repair what proved to be a very porous casting, the engine eventually went together and was installed in a TD for its first real test drive-3,400 miles to GOF in Victoria, EG, and back. This trip proved the conversion had potential, so the engine was removed for additional work to cure its numerous oil leaks around the head and cam drive gear. It is also being fitted with re-profiled camshafts (to enable the timing and clearances to be set with less guess work), and different carburetion. If all goes well, it will reappear later in 1985 fitted to Lawrie's boat-tailed TD race-car.

So, in a world where many MGA Twin Cams are still cherished by their owners, there are four known twin-cam versions of the XPAG/XPEG design. Are there more?

Events - 2026

Club Calendar - 2026




MONTH	Noggin	Club Night	Monthly Run	Note
January	-	23rd - Bring and braai	25th - SAMCA (V8 Roadhouse)	31st - Passion for speed at
February	2nd - Koos Zietsman visit	13th	22nd - Wondermill Smokehouse	
March	2nd - AGM	13th - Prize giving	22nd - SAA museum & Harvard café	15th - Piston Ring Swop meet
April	13th - Slot car racing	17th - Bev & Geoff	26th - Mulderdrift safari run	
May	4th - Rocker racing	15th - Avril & Richard	23/24 - Weekend away	
June	1st	12th - Marelize & Bernard	21st - Club Show day	14th - POMC British car day
July	6th	17th - Leen & Shaun	26th - Combined Show Day	
August	3rd	14th	23rd - Sergeant Pepper	2nd - Cars in the park POMC
September	7th	18th	20th - Piston Ring Swop meet	21 to 24 - Indaba
October	5th - Rocker racing	23rd - Liesl & Robin	11th - Jacaranda run	
November	2nd	13th	22nd - Cullinan	
December	-	5th - Christmas Party	-	

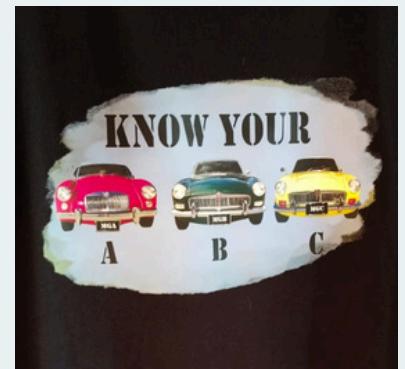


DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Golf shirt - white & grey - men - short sleeves 	R 160.00
Golf shirt, grey & black - ladies, short sleeves 	R 130.00
Lounge shirt - silver - men - short sleeves 	R 180.00
Vogue blouse - grey - ladies - long sleeves 	R 150.00
Golf shirt - grey striped with black collar - men - short sleeves 	R 160.00
Golf shirt - blue with white collar - men - short sleeves 	R 160.00
Golf shirt - blue with white trimmed collar and sleeves - men - short sleeves 	R 160.00

DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Cap - grey - show day 2022 - with Jhb Centre logo 	R 40.00
Cap - grey & black 	R 60.00

DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Socks - navy blue with logo 	R 90.00
Socks - black with logos 	R 90.00
Socks - white with logos 	R 90.00

DESCRIPTION	PRICE
MG Badge (100 yr Centennial) 	R 450.00
MG Keyring (60 yr celebration 1962-2022) 	R 40.00
MG rad cap loosener 	R 20.00



T-Shirt
R280 - size guide, see here below

Size	Body width (in cm)	Body length (in cm)
S	50	70
M	53	72
L	56	74
XL	59	76
2XL	62	78
3XL	68	80

CLUB REGALIA



Contact: Jaco - 082 823 2681