

# ***HIGHLAND MOTORING***



The Newsletter of the Highland MGOC

[www.mghighland.co.uk](http://www.mghighland.co.uk)

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## **EDITORIAL**

April is almost upon us and for most of us that means the start of our MG driving season and what better way to kick it off than the Drive it Day on 23 April? At the other end of the season, the Gathering of the Clans is going ahead at Doune on 24 September – bookings for both events are open and there are details later in this newsletter.

*Richard Jenner*

## **EVENTS NEWS**

**Drive it Day** on Sunday, 23 April starting in Inverness is a free entry but you must book. The easiest way is on-line at

<http://www.highlandclassic.org.uk/public/events/did.php>

If you can't access this please let me know and I'll print and post you a form.

Highland Classic Motor Club in conjunction with the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs

# Drive It Day 2017

## Sunday April 23rd

Meet at the V8 Café, Henderson Rd, Inverness for an 11am start



The map shows a scenic route starting from Inverness, passing through the Beauly Firth, North Kessock, Munlochy, Fortrose, Eathie, and ending at Cromarty. The route is marked with a blue line and includes a callout indicating a duration of 1 h 38 min and a distance of 42.5 miles. Various towns and landmarks are labeled on the map, including Inverness, Beauly, Kirkhill, Banchrews, Leachkin, Craig Dunain, North Kessock, Kilmuir, Drumderfit, Tore, Marybank, Urray, Maryburgh, Conon Bridge, Easter Kinkell, Dingwall, Fodderty, Strathpeffer, Alcaig, Culbokie, Culbo, Belmaduthy, Knockbain, Avonch, Avoch, Rosemarkie, Davidston, Navity, Jemimaville, Poyntzfield, Cullicudden, Resolis, Dalmore, Rosskeen, Saltburn, Invergordon, Alness, Swordale, Evanton, Mountgerald, Heights of Brae, and Balnabruich.

- Meet at V8 Café, 12 Henderson Rd, Inverness for departure at 11 am. Breakfasts available from 9am.
- Stop-over at the Old North Inn for coffee and to re-group
- Scenic drive along Beauly Firth through North Kessock, Munlochy, Fortrose, Eathie to Cromarty.

Hopefully by now everyone interested in going knows that the **Forres Theme Day** is on 30 April – details from [pattersonsharon@aol.com](mailto:pattersonsharon@aol.com)

We've been notified about the **Ingliston Revival** on 13 & 14 May; there are some details below. There are quite a few options so best to look at their

website for full details. <http://www.ingliston.co.uk/>



Now is the perfect time to secure your place at Scotland's largest live classic car show.

To book your place at the event, please contact Fiona Wallace on [fee@ingliston.co.uk](mailto:fee@ingliston.co.uk) or call her on 0131 538 4813.

**Classic Car Display £19 (car clubs £15.20)**

The Revival hosts a display of classic cars, motorbikes and other vehicles throughout the event arena. Each vehicle will be allocated its place based on era with entries from 1965 – 1994 encouraged. Awards will be presented at the end of the weekend.

Each vehicle has an information plaque produced by us in your allocated space in the event arena.

## Closer to home but later in the year we have this information about the **Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally:**

### **FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE CLASSIC VEHICLE RALLY Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

You are invited to enter the 15<sup>th</sup> Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally, which will be held in the Fortrose Academy Sports Field, situated within the historic Royal Burgh of Fortrose.

THE EVENT WILL START AT DINGWALL AUCTION MART CAR PARK

You should aim to arrive at the auction mart (half a mile west of Dingwall on the A862) from 10:00am. Refreshments are available to purchase in Teddy's Cafe. From 11:00am you can enjoy a leisurely 60 minute "scenic tour" to Fortrose, following the directions in your entry pack.

Further light refreshments and Entertainment will be available at the rally field in Fortrose from 1:00 pm and throughout the afternoon.

As this is a non-profit making event there is a charge of £5 PER PERSON to cover costs. Please forward the appropriate amount with your entry form & make cheques payable to "Fortrose Classic Car Rally". Following on from a record entry last year, there is a closing date for entries of Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August.

Please submit your entry as soon as possible.

If you would like to receive confirmation of your entry, please include your e-mail address and we will e-mail you an acknowledgement. Entry packs will be POSTED to you approximately 7 days before the Rally and will include your windscreen number, refreshment voucher, road run directions and raffle tickets.

It is a requirement that all vehicles entering the rally have third party liability insurance, we are unable to allow vehicles entry to the field without this cover.

We very much look forward to receiving your entry and to meeting up with you on the day.

### **IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

Entrants are **REQUIRED** to arrive at the Rally Field before 1:00pm. The Rally will finish at 4:00pm.

Should you wish to leave the field earlier than 4:00pm, please inform a Marshall who will arrange for you to be **SAFELY ACCOMPANIED TO THE GATE**

Geoffrey Shakeshaft, Rally Secretary

07778 309080

info@fortroserally.co.uk  
[www.facebook.com/fortroseclassics](http://www.facebook.com/fortroseclassics)



**FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE CLASSIC VEHICLE RALLY**

**ENTRY FORM**

*Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2017*

Name of Entrant: .....

Address: .....

Telephone (Day): ..... (Evening): .....

E-mail Address: .....

Vehicle Make: ..... Model: .....

Year: ..... Engine Capacity (cc)..... Registration: .....

Please List Membership of Any Owners Clubs ? .....

No of Persons Attending: ..... Amount Enclosed: £.....

Charge of £5.00 **Per Person**; Please Make Cheques Payable to: Fortrose Classic Car Rally

By my Signature Below, I confirm that

(1) the information given above is correct

(2) to the best of my belief the vehicle concerned is suitable for the use to which it will be put during the event and that the vehicle is roadworthy

(3) I and any other person(s) I may nominate to move, drive, control or otherwise operate the vehicle am/are competent to do so and hold a full current driving licence

(4) the use of the vehicle hereby entered will be covered by insurance as required by law

(5) I will carefully follow the Marshall's instructions

(6) I undertake not to allow anyone who is not insured to do so to start, drive or otherwise operate the vehicle hereby entered during the course of the event

(7) In the event of any defect in the insurance referred to above, I undertake to indemnify the organisers in respect of any loss that would have been covered had the insurance not been defective

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*The Rally will finish at 4:00pm.*

*Should you wish to leave the field earlier than 4:00pm, please inform a Marshall who will arrange for you to be **SAFELY ACCOMPANIED TO THE GATE.***

Signed: ..... Date: .....

*Please Return Completed Entry Form & Payment, by 19<sup>th</sup> August, to:*

*Mr Geoffrey Shakeshaft, Huney, Fiery Hillock, Ness Road East, Fortrose, IV10 8SE*

Please note that the **Skye Wheel Nuts** event scheduled for early August is seeking a new organizer *so may not go ahead*.

Lastly on events, Glasgow MGOc has stepped-up to organize the 2017 **Gathering of the Clans** (GotC) at Doune on Sunday, 24 September. You can register via their website (no payment required at this stage)

<http://www.mgocglasgow.com/17.html>



Four Highland MGOc MGs are already booked-in and some of us are planning to stay the night before at Poppies in Callander. <http://www.poppieshotel.com/>

Keep checking our website for the updated events programme.

<http://www.mghighland.co.uk/>

*Richard*

Tim Moore has kindly provided the following very interesting article on the MGC GT written by Australian owner Bruce Ibbotson. We've permission to run it and as it stretches to 15 pages, I've split it up in to sections – here is part 1 with a short introduction by Ian Hobbs who is producing a book on the Australian owned MGCs.

## THE IBBOTSON SAGA – PART 1

Queensland MG enthusiast, Bruce Ibbotson, purchased an MGC GT in 1968 and 49 years later still owns that very same car. As time has passed he has updated and modified his MGC carrying out most of the work himself. As far as I'm aware no other person still owns an MGC today that they purchased new. This is his extraordinary story – Latest Revision: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016.



### HOW TO DEVELOP THE MGC & MGC-GT FOR NORMAL ROAD USE

Many articles have been written about what is wrong with the 'C' by comparing the MGC with the MGB. Even today, over 32 years later, motoring journalists (a late 1999 article in Classic Cars, UK) still write as they did in 1967, that the problem with the 'C' is the heavy motor that is the problem and it cannot be fixed, so that is the end of the story. The big Healey had an even heavier version (but mounted further back in the chassis) and didn't get the same comments. One journalist wrote a lot of rubbish and the following ones simply plagiarised what had been written before with a few deletions or additions in their clever comments.

The School of Automotive Studies at Cranfield (UK) compared an MGB roadster with an MGC roadster; using their inertia test rig, supporting the cars under their exact centre of gravity by an air bearing plus springs to enable measurements of roll, pitch and yaw. Their conclusions apart from the 'C' being nose heavy were that the 'C's centre of gravity (C of G) was 14% higher than the 'B' and it's inertia in transverse yaw was 22% higher. So the 'C' is

22% more reluctant to change direction than the 'B' and will roll much more even worse with the GT. This helps to explain the terrible understeer on slow downhill mountain corners.

It is the higher C of G plus the big increase in transverse yaw combined with totally inadequate tyre section and a very weak roll bar plus [and on my car as delivered] slight positive camber settings that makes the 'C' such a "pig of a car" as a sports car, not helped by the unresponsive *LUMP of "BEST BRITISH CAST IRON"* (with a flywheel more suitable for a light truck) with a real output in the car of about 115 horsepower, according to Daniel Richmond of Downton Engineering. Daniel was the officially appointed technical consultant to BMC for all their range of cars.

I thought this pre-amble a good way to start an article on my 'C-GT' from when I drove it from Dalgety # 2 wharf on the 6th of August 1968, up to today when we have a 3 Litre sports car able to keep up with modern traffic and indeed what a big engine 'B' should have been like had Abingdon had the time and money to develop the production car, remember how good the GTS C's were. It appears that the competition department knew all about the shortcomings of the production car and had been in the process of developing stronger Torsion Bars and a Faster Rack when the racing program was cancelled. (The MGC-GTS cars had an MGB rack with short pinion shaft and 2 universals to clear the cross member) The "Comp's" department people apparently never talked to the production people, and vice versa so there was no interaction when the car was being developed. Pidgeon Hole minds.

I will describe the car as it arrived and then what was done by me with helpful suggestions from the experienced designer and engineer who developed the Centaur Sports Cars. As usual with my generation "*making it go*" was priority # 1 (it couldn't keep up with a mildly tuned 179 EH Holden) we knew handling was more important, but in 68/69 we did not have the knowledge or experience to do anything about that problem, so the motor was the first priority. A few years later after a terrifying experience changing lanes, my mechanical engineer friend said "what that car needs are some decent roll bars front and rear". Not understanding this it took until December 1993 to actually address what turned out to be the real problem and it transformed the car beyond my expectation. This was followed later by giving the car approx. 1 degree of negative camber [removing all the top wishbone shims on both sides] and later again fitting 185/65R15 tyres, giving an effective diff ratio about one third way between the early and later cars, effective diff. ratio approx. 3.446:1. (Speedo reads approximately 4.5% high). An MG Motorsport rack and pinion (2.875:1) followed and this gives some feel to the car when used with a Moto-Lita 15" wheel.

#### **FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF A LONG AWAITED C – GT**

Having had four enjoyable years with a 1963 MK1 MGB it seemed that a 'MGC-GT' would be a good car as I was going to live in Hong Kong. After settling in I visited Dodwell Motors, Hong Kong, to order an 'MGC-GT' with all useful options and was expecting delivery in late 1967. As we all found out later this was a period of total and utter confusion at BMC as "Triumph men" from Leyland were about to try to promote "Triumph" as the corporate sports car and hope the 6 cylinder MG would fade away. Sales of the TR6 were falling away and the terrible 'STAG' was close to release. Many spanners were thrown in the works with



the formation of BLMC, I mentally considered *"Bloody Lousy Motor Corporation"* was what BLMC actually stood for.

By the time the car was due to ship [In mid May 68] I had returned to Australia so the shipping address was changed to Brisbane (Personal Import Plan #4,) so this is how I got my 'C' in Australia delivered on the wharf new from Abingdon with 17 miles on the odometer. Two other used "C's" were imported about 2 years later, one to Moe in Victoria and the other one to Alice Springs, probably from Papua New Guinea where some were sold new.

HONGKONG, 14th Dec., 1967.

We have this day sold to Mr. B. B. Ibbotson,  
Penthouse, 1 Cameron Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong,  
the undermentioned goods on the terms and conditions stated on the face  
and back hereof.

One (1) New M.G. "C" G.T., Right Hand Drive:-

@ U.K. retail price	£ 954. 5. 0.
Heater .....	12. 5. 0.
Chrome plated wire wheels .....	64.10. 0.
Overdrive .....	50. 0. 0.
	<u>£1186. 0. 0.</u>
Shipping charges to Brisbane, Australia - approx. ....	95. 0. 0.
	<u>£1281. 0. 0.</u>
@ 1/4-3/8 =	HK\$17,382.60

**Payment:** 20% deposit at time of placing firm order, balance in full prior to shipment from England to Australia.

**N.B.** The following are to be supplied, if available, at extra cost:-

1. Set of brake pads and linings	1 set of each
2. Set of engine gaskets (complete)	1 set
3. Workshop manual	1 copy
4. Air filter elements	2 each
5. Oil filter elements	3 each
6. Limited slip differential	1 if possible

*See declaration from B.M.C. to D.O.T. AUSTRALIA*

Clearance - - - - -

Shipment To arrive in Brisbane, Australia, As soon as car is available.

Salesman House

per pro, DODWELL MOTORS LTD.  
*Auger*  
Asst. Sales Manager

天 祥 汽 車 行

DODWELL MOTORS LTD.

On the 3rd August the "SS Auckland Star" arrived with my 'C' on board, deck cargo in those days. I inspected the car on the 5th and took the dry charged batteries to Century Batteries for filling and overnight charging, which they did free of charge and I still buy Century Batteries as a result of this excellent service, so next morning armed with my toolbox and 1 gallon of petrol I picked up my Batteries and headed for the wharf. After installing the batteries and adding fuel my next step was to remove the plugs and pump up the oil pressure to 20 PSI - the motor was tight with only 17 miles on the clock. Then refit the plugs and attempt to start the monster, a few feeble splutters but no go. The plugs were very dirty and oily so out they came, again, and off I went to the nearest garage (there were garages with real mechanics back in 1968). Back I went to try again, this time 3 cylinders actually tried to run, ah! Let's check the SU pistons, 1 piston moved easily, the other didn't move at all. So dismantle the struck SU to discover the jet was not centred and struck against the

needle (Quality Control was thought to be some strange foreign concept used in Japan, but not then in the UK) After centring the jet correctly all was well and the motor started and ran easily but with a lot of choke required to keep it going, no wonder the plugs were so black and oily looking.

So after finding all the bits (passenger side wiper blade in with the tools etc.), picking up the spare keys and signing all the shipping forms I had my car. So off to the Public Weighbridge in Fortitude Valley then to the Motor Registration Department to register the car, it was issued with the registration plates "PFT-000". These three letters formed the name given by me, to the car. *"Pretty Fast Truck" after a few months driving experience with the car.* Everything was ready to go, so off home to fit the plates and registration sticker and my car was ready for the road. It was Pretty, it was Fast but it handled, accelerated and drove like a Truck, not as I expected a 3 litre Sports GT to be, nothing like my MGB.

A condition for warranty cover required the car going to Leyland Australia at Wacol, for inspection and pre-delivery. I arranged to take the car to Wacol and drove up the next day. Arriving at the gate a surly security guard told me "only staff can drive on to this site" and wouldn't let me in, suggesting I just leave the car with them. I made an excuse about

arranging a later time and drove away for a while. About morning tea-time I then changed into a pair of white overalls drove back saw a different security guard, so thinking at "Security Guard" level, I drove slowly up to the gate waved and drove through; then I had to find the workshop.

The mechanics were not aware that I was coming either and they were busy with a Mini gearbox so we had a little problem to solve. I suggested that if they told me what had to be done I would be happy to do it myself. This turned out to be very simple as I had already checked the car carefully before taking it to Wacol and so far everything worked as expected. So we put it on the hoist to inspect underneath. All was OK except for a couple of exhaust brackets which were bent and were easily fixed. So the staff gave me all the solvents and rags and I set to work removing the heavy very grimy shipping wax. Once that was done more paperwork was signed and all was mine. I just had to run the car in for 1,500 miles and take the car to Howards Motors for the first Service and any warranty work required. Two days later I lost the top layer of skin from my hands from the strong solvents, I never considered taking gloves. I hate working in gloves even today.

I ran the car in over 2000 miles and found that the car understeers badly on slow tight corners but gets better at highway speeds and steered quite well on fast open roads. One day on my way home, down the back road from Mt Cootha (I worked at 'TV Channel 0' on Mt Cootha), I forgot that I was driving the 'C' and turned into a tight right hand bend like I had for years in the 'B' and suddenly discovered chronic understeer, the only cure was to straighten up and brake hard luckily not hitting the bank, then proceed with much less haste.

All the myths about increasing power etc. do not work with the 'C', it just understeers even more and goes straight ahead. One early press comment said the *"The 'C' goes like a bullet and steers the same way."* This was an accurate description, with my car, after years in the 'B', it was a real and dangerous trap changing into a 'C'.

A drive to Mt. Buller (Victorian snowfields) followed the running in period and showed what an enigma the 'C' was compared with its smaller brother. The car was very smooth and quiet (except for the extremely noisy fan), flexible in traffic and able to purr away in 4th at 1000 RPM without fuss, but no low end torque or high end power. It was able to cruise effortlessly at 4,000 in O/D (speedo read 108 MPH), good high speed stability and cornering but terrible understeer at slower speeds where any lock was required. Maximum speed was 120 mph in both 4th and O/D, economy on trip of 22.5 MPG and around town 17.3 MPG. The first standing ¼ mile time (Lakeside, Qld) was 17.9 seconds not as good as my 'B' (17.58 at Lowood) not good considering the extra 1100 ccs. With a car the same shape as a 'B-GT' this said that the motor was not as efficient as the 'B' engine, the little extra power being used to overcome the greatly increased mass of the 'C'. The other strange thing about the car was that when O/D was engaged the car leapt forward but when O/D was disengaged the car physically slowed down then slowly built up revs again. In one of my books on the 'C' is a wonderful comment, "The engine must have been designed by an Ex-Naval Diesel Engineer who was transferred to a Tractor Factory, against his wishes.

*To be continued next month.....*