

HIGHLAND MOTORING

Highland MGOC Yearbook 2018

www.mghighland.co.uk



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our 2018 Yearbook which I hope you will find interesting and informative. This is a new initiative partly to replace the monthly newsletters during the 'driving season' which have proven too hard to sustain. This Yearbook looks back over a very successful MG year. It also looks forward to the 2019 Spring Saunter and Autumn Amble (open for bookings). There are also 3 general MG articles of interest (I hope) and I'm grateful to Tim Moore and Jim Mould for taking their time to contribute.

The Highland MGOC is in a good state. We started the year with 34 'memberships' (a 'membership' can include 2 people residing at the same address) and finish the year with 40. With the noble exception of a 1952 MG TD, all the other new members own MG TFs (of the so called 'modern' variety) and it is good to see that the qualities of the last British produced MG sportscar are still appreciated and attracting new owners.

What next? First our AGM will be held early in 2019 as usual and Peter Poole will send out calling notices at the due time. Secondly, there will be a Start of Season Programme issued around 1 March 2019 and updated regularly on the website and via e-bulletins from April to October inclusive.

Richard

Our first article is by Tim Moore and is written to be thought provoking.

“To Use or Not to Use?”.....That is the Question.

Those members who know Christine and I will be aware that we live in Portree on the Island of Skye. (Where it almost constantly rains!). We’ve now lived here for over 30 years after living previously in Belgium and France during the 1970’s and 1980’s. Prior to mainland Europe we lived in London from the early 1970’s where we first met. In my case moving to London from Norfolk/Warwickshire and Christine from Wiltshire after she’d previously lived in Cyprus, Malta and Germany. Our Highland MG Owners Club is to a large extent Inverness and East Coast Centric, only six other members John and Mary; Jim and Moira; Hughie and Kathryn live towards the west coast but they do live within shorter distances from Inverness and club-matters classic car.

Christine and I have always been involved, since we met, in old car activities having entered, and organised countless events. Moving here to Skye from Brussels in 1988 meant we accepted de-facto a huge inhibiting climate change, in that although we **know** it rains almost everywhere, unlike the Hebrides and particularly “The Misty Isle” (Skye) it *stops* raining in most other places more than it *starts*.... You may want to argue the point with me but, be warned, we have kept and keep weather records! The Hebrides or as BBC call us “The Far North West” has a **totally different** climate than the North East, East, or Central Scotland and certainly the great bulk of inhabited UK. (Sad anorak fact I know!).

You will also know that we have a 50 year old Pale Primrose Yellow MGC GT as well as a 71 year old Rover 16 P2, which incidentally we drove to Skye from Belgium when we moved back to Britain.

We do our best to look after both our MGC and Rover in spite of the inclement dreary, murky, grey, dank, wet, salt-laden foreboding conditions that prevail here in our less populated (wonder why few folk live here!?) part of Scotland’s Highlands. Indeed apart from the paintwork and chromework we have done and continue to do all of the maintenance work. Christine has, as many of you will have seen, made both vehicles’ interior leather trims stand out having rebuilt or remade seat covers and in the Rover’s case made the carpets (back in 1986, but that is another story) from a large piece of Wilton, correctly edged in leathercloth; whilst I remade wooden floors and restored the ample woodwork - dashboard, roof, door cappings and door internal facings in the Rover.

Like all or most of you we drive modern everyday cars marvelling at their capability, reliability and performance; whilst at the same time being utterly outfoxed by their manufacturers who basically prevent us from doing any servicing or rectification work on their amazing electronic control systems - which quite honestly baffle me (even though I’m a Qualified Graduate Mechanical Engineer); I don’t know about you!?

Our MGC has now covered almost 23,000 miles of its 145,000 miles in our ownership and yes, whilst it was a total rusty “wreck”, probably worth more in parts value than a car, when uncovered from a 16 year lay up in a damp lock-up garage in Strathpeffer in 2002, it had a lot of money spent on its bodywork between 2002-2005 - which I covered in a previous article for our ‘Highland MG Members Newsletter’ a few years ago. I determined to do my best always to counteract Hebridean Degradations of its bodywork (we all know and have stories of how 1950’s/1960’s and 1970’s BMC cars rusted “within seconds of being made” don’t we?).

The great majority of UK classic car owners live nearby many local classic events. On Skye, we don’t!

This year (2018) we have joined many of you at Tain, again.... (Which although my journey to and from Tain was.....wet...!!, (no surprise; Tain this year was a nice dry day, in the park up and polish Links- area). That day-trip we’ve made to Tain (which for Christine and me is the nearest classic gathering to Skye) either in the Rover or the MGC, every year, to and from Portree involves me in almost 285 miles driving from home to Tain and back..... So if a rally field is wet once you arrive it makes for a pretty miserable day in an old car doesn’t it?

However because of where we live and logistics of kennelling animals and, until recently, arranging for our significant commercial laundry business on Skye to run without Christine and I present (but now sold since last April, so we are now *RETIRED*, at last! Hooray!) Any away trip has to be well planned and accounted for in advance. Once committed to and paid for, we still attended whatever the weather. As some reading this will know the September 2017 “Gathering of the MG Clans” at Doune, was an absolute washout with torrential rain all day, but such conditions I am afraid are “typical” for us, in that our long journey there most years at that early Autumn time of year are often in horrendous conditions plus the same on our drive back, meant as always our car looked more than a little travel stained on arrival. Of course many other MG owners living near Doune, as they probably correctly do elsewhere in Britain, don’t attend a wet forecasted event, usually a day trip away only for most attendees anyway; and by so doing keep their highly-prized and polished classic safely dry. To be perfectly honest, we would possibly do the same if we too lived near venues and had not committed £££ to attend an event, so I make an observation rather than make a criticism. Most of you and indeed most Classic Enthusiasts live in populated areas where there are many regular motoring events in “the summer” and thus when attending, arrive in their cars looking quite splendid, much like our two look like here in their winter heated garage hibernation, (polished, cleaned cossetted etc.).

Many of our fellow enthusiasts as you will know spend a lot of money getting their cars absolutely fabulous and keep them like that. To illustrate my point Look at these recent pictures of this MGC owned by Jaimie Winfield in England who has just proudly boasted of

his MGC, restored at huge expense, but will he/can he ever now use or enjoy it? *I am told he has now put the car up for sale offers over £45,000.00.* If it sells will its new owner use it or just trailer it to dry weather Concours events in England....



Jaimie Winfield's MGC - Just Restored. Look at the Chrome Wires "backsides"! Undersides CLEAN! Better than when new??



Jaimie Winfield's Remarkable MGC (many MGC's are now as clean as this underneath and thus little used)



Look, don't misunderstand me - as you know our MGC is a regular attendee at all the HMGOC Spring -Saunters, October-Ambles held since 2012; and we participated in the NC500 trip in 2016 as well as the Orkney Odyssey trip this year; plus attending ALL of the Doune-based "GotC" events since they started in 2014. Attending the **50th Anniversary Celebration of the MGB** in Blenheim Palace in 2012 saw us after a 640 mile journey just one-way going down to Blenheim, in torrential rain; and it was most unfortunately a washed-out event which almost **4000 MGB's** attended - but many left pretty soon so deep became the mud!! A shame for us having gone so far to attend, but a great tragedy for the MGCC/MGOC Organisers.

However, UK weather our 6 day trip down to the **MGC 50th Anniversary** Event at Chateau Impney was a bit kinder than the three years previously MGB Blenheim Celebrations, to join 217 other MGC's on the main prize-winning "Pride of Ownership" day. Rather less MGC's attended the three previous days really great road runs and planned festivities; why?? - Because the weather was a bit "damp"!! (In June!). Yes it seems to rarely rain in England!! (For that trip we "won" the "Farthest UK Travelled MGC Trophy". The winning cars that got the Concours Placings were unbelievable, the standards so high not a spot of dirt and every fastening gleaming. We watched their owners in awe, with their groundsheets out, overalls on gloves on to apply polish, tooth brushes used to clean every little nook and cranny, using solvents and all sorts of look-good cleaning to gleam finish products. WOW! What passion what disappointment when not winning trophies!

We have, within reason, also done our best to attend many of the regular HMGOC **day-outings** over the last 7 or so years all but two in the MGC, which pass towards us West or North West but these of course mean that most of you who attend have to look at longer journeys from your homes. We arranged the Club "October Amble" here on Skye in 2013

but sadly hotel costs have risen to such levels that no “deals” are available for the last few years and thus it isn’t currently viable as a base for HMGOC Ambles or Saunters until matters change and Skye tourism drops off.

So superficially most classics, on the surface, shine but matters “underneath” a car are where issues in climates like ours go wrong; of course inside an engine compartment things can get a bit rusty, oily, midge-laden and unkempt too but that is the essence of using and enjoying one’s pride and joy.

I have just spent nearly 11 hours over 2 days removing our chrome wire wheels (I do it every lay –up, so this is the 9th time in my ownership) removing any and all grit, mud, dirt from, the VISIBLE, under wing areas which get paint chips and muck of all kinds in their crevices; and painstakingly cleaning – a soul destroying task – whilst off the car, the wire wheels (anyone, and there are only very few of us who use wire wheels in the club, knows this laborious effort). Result? I think they now look fabulous again.....But the sad fact is apart from Christine no-one ever sees them looking this good because by the time we even get to the Skye Bridge at Kyleakin/Kyle of Lochalsh in our cars on their first outings each year heading anywhere off the Island, they are filthy from road muck and spray and we’ve still usually got hundreds more miles to drive before we reach our destination.



One of four chrome wires from Tim’s MGC GT shining for its winter lay-up, by summer it’s mucky!

Compare these pictures of our MGC GT’s nether regions.....with Jaime Winfield’s newly restored MGC photographs earlier. I’m only jealous of the fact that he can use his car and not get it wet or mucky! It doesn’t mean I want to live where he does though in grid-locked England!



Replacing an anti-roll bar tie rod 2 weeks ago on our CGT. Not as clean as Jaimie Winfield's!!



Tim's MGC Removing a tie rod from a just cleaned (after 2870 miles of mucky use in 2018) front wing
October 2018



Tim's MGCCT at Dunure, 5 October 2018 - mucky chromes, travel stained but used and enjoyed!

Many classic enthusiasts are now using their “newer” classics a lot more in inclement weather and in the MG’s case until MGF and MGTF rise from their ridiculously-low current resale value they have become and will remain the classic of MG choice for regular use; especially for other than dry-day outings, rather than (if they have them) their MGB’s, 1960-1970’s Midgets, MGA’s and the older “vintage type TF/TD/TC/TB/TA/K and P series and Midgets

So in answer to my own often asked question? Use it or Not? In our case.....USE IT.

We do have a car trailer (see below) recently purchased, because of the really hard work **now** after over 34 years ownership and driving it many, many miles until now; getting our old Rover to events in the south of the Scotland or far down in England. FORTUNATELY, (apart from its fuel-thirst 22-26mpg at best, but often less than 20mpg) the MGC **does** keep up with 2018 traffic and even though now feeling “small” when surrounded on motorways by ultra large 2018 Cars, SUV’s and Trucks we will as long as we can drive it long distances and **enjoy** doing so....even road muck filthy...and in the rain!

We long ago since coming to the Hebrides, accept that it and the MGC’s now even older Rover P2 sibling, it doesn’t and cannot turn heads with its mucky-used-appearance with judges or the Concours brigade enthusiasts who get, and are entitled to get, after all their polishing efforts a different buzz from owning their cars than Christine and I get from ours. However, I cannot help thinking that **IF** there were many other old cars over here in the North West Coast they would sadly either rot away or be purchased by folk in drier climates for restoration and cossetting and for many aspiring silverware baggers the hope that their nether regions once restored and resplendent met the judge’s criteria!



Our 1947 Rover 16 tries out its new trailer! August 2018.

Jim Mould has written the next article on refurbishing the interior of his MGB Roadster.

1973 MGB Roadster – Interior Refurb

As the interior of our “B” roadster was looking decidedly scruffy and detracting from the rest of the car which is generally fairly tidy, we decided in 2017 to do something about it. The foam upholstery in the seats had lost most of its springiness and the webbing underneath was very weak so the seats sagged to the point where we were very nearly sitting on the floor! Being a 1973 model produced when BL were not exactly at their best, there were no carpets other than on the transmission tunnel and on the rear shelf and the seats were covered in vinyl rather than leather as on earlier models. The previous owners had obviously enjoyed a lot of top-down motoring, as a result of which the sun had caused the carpet to fade badly.

The photo below shows the interior after the refurb was complete – quite a transformation!



Where to start? Well, apart from ordering new seats and a carpet set from MGOC, the first job was to remove the hood (3 large crosshead screws attaching the frame to the inside of each B-post) and strip out the interior completely by removing the seats (4 screw bolts attaching the runners to the floor) and the rubber floor mats; also the gear lever surround and gaiter (4 large chromed screws), the centre console (2 chromed screws either side, then disconnect any wiring, firstly ensuring that the batteries are disconnected and that the wires are carefully labelled); next the armrest assembly which is held in position by the 4 screws securing the gear lever gaiter (already removed) and one small screw inside the arm rest attaching it to the transmission tunnel. The carpet over the transmission tunnel can then be removed. The next job was to remove the interior trim panels, including those either side of the footwells which requires the removal of several self-tapping screws. It was at this point that I realised that my body is not quite as young and supple as it once was, as one has to

reach right into the far recesses of each footwell to reach some of the screws! There was then the matter of removing the old pieces of carpet from the toe board on each side, these being held in position partly by glue and partly by a screw (as well as the accelerator pedal stop on the driver's side. I must confess that I was sorely tempted to leave these in situ as they are very awkward to access (and not particularly noticeable), but I thought better of it: the new carpet set came with replacements of these and I figured that I shouldn't "spoil the ship", etc.! Next, it was a case of removing the rubber "carpet" covering the heelboard as well as the cup fasteners which hold the carpet in place on the rear shelf over the battery compartment; there are also stud fasteners for the tonneau near the top of the heel board. At this stage, do **not** discard the old carpet – you will need some of it as templates! Finally, the seat belts need to be removed, making a careful note of which bolts hold which parts of the belts, thus making the re-assembly process that little bit easier.

Then, it was a case of checking the condition of the floor – which, fortunately, was very sound with no signs of corrosion – a good start! In order to preserve the floor, we decided to give it a good covering of Hammerite, so the whole of the floor was painted with 2 coats of Hammerite No. 1 Rust Beater followed by 2 coats of Hammerite Smooth White which, as it happened, was quite a close match for the Glacier White of the car bodywork. This didn't particularly matter, however, as none of the painted area was going to be visible once the new carpets were fitted. As well as the floor, we also painted the heelboard, the rear wheel arches and the rear shelf over the battery compartment. The whole thing was then left for a week to allow the paint to dry fully and harden.

Here is the painted floor;



and the heelboard and rear shelf. Note the new blanking plugs over the filler holes for the shock absorbers.



Once the paint had hardened, the next job was to install the carpets. I'm not going to go into full details about this as the MGOC provide full instructions with the carpet set as well as producing a downloadable PDF -

http://www.mgocaccessories.co.uk/INSDOC/MG_carpet_fitting.pdf. The procedure was firstly to glue the sill carpets in place which was relatively easy – we left the original rubber sill covering in situ and glued the new carpet pieces to that. Next comes the heelboard carpet which again was relatively easy to glue in place as per the instructions. As I had taken the opportunity of re-painting the rear shelf, I had removed the cup washers to which the carpet on the rear shelf attaches, as well as the studs to which the full tonneau can be attached. It's very important that the latter are re-fitted in the same positions so we were careful to mark the positions of the mounting holes on the carpet before gluing it in position. As several of these original fixings were either damaged or missing, I decided to order new replacements – might as well do the job properly! There's a list of part numbers, etc., at the end of this article.

Then we came to the pieces of carpet which fit on the toe boards, a part of the job to which I was definitely not looking forward as it involves getting one's head and shoulders right into the footwells! The MGOC instructions tell you to use the old pieces of carpet as templates to mark the screw holes etc. on the new ones. This is good advice and the job actually proved a little easier than I was expecting – but not **that** much easier!

Next on the agenda are the rear wheel arch carpets. This was the part of the job which I found most difficult to get right because the impact adhesive gives no opportunity to adjust the fit – you have to get it right first time. Even by doing a couple of test fits (without the glue), I still didn't get a perfect finish, with some wrinkles in the finish, but fortunately they are not too noticeable.

We now come to the carpet for the transmission tunnel into which a suitable hole has to be cut to accommodate the gear lever. The MGOC instructions tell you to mark this out by

measuring the distance from the rear lower bulkhead (the heelboard) to the gear lever. I decided that it would be much easier and just as accurate to use the old transmission tunnel carpet as a template to mark out the location of the hole – but I did measure as well before cutting out the hole. Measure twice but cut once, as I think the old adage goes! Anyway, the transmission tunnel carpet was a perfect fit.

The final part of the carpet fitting is probably the easiest – fitting the floor carpets – as these are simply placed in position on the floor. The MGOC instructions explain it fairly clearly but there is one tip I would give which relates to the fitting of the seats: because of the thickness and springiness of the pile in the new carpets, it's well-nigh



impossible to get the screw bolts for the seat runners to pass through the runners and the carpet and to reach the threaded holes in the car floor. The solution: use longer screw bolts! I bought some longer bolts online (details at the end of this article) and, having first cleaned out the threads in the floor of any paint using a suitable tap, I temporarily fixed the runners in place using the longer bolts, tightening these well down (see the photo above). After two or three days, the runners were then unbolted again and removed, by which time the carpet was quite well compressed where the runners fitted, thus making the subsequent fitting of the seats considerably easier than it would otherwise have been. It meant taking a little longer but saved a considerable amount of swearing!

The fitting of the new seats was thus relatively straightforward. The runners are attached to the seats, the runners with stops on them being placed to the outer sides of the seats with the stops to the rear. The seats are then placed in position on the floor using the compressed carpet as a guide and then bolted in place. I found that, once the seats were bolted in situ, it was actually possible to substitute the longer screw bolts with the factory fitted originals. This is probably not really necessary but it does have the advantage that the thread of the screw bolts does not protrude quite so far below the underside of the car floor. Even though I had replaced the original and shorter screw bolts, I still put some

Waxoyl over the ends of the threads to prevent corrosion – just in case I need to remove them again in the future. I would suggest that this would be even more important if the longer screw bolts are left in situ. A smear of copper grease on the threads prior to fitting is also a worthwhile precaution.

The access to the screw bolts for the seat runners is a bit restricted and it's not really feasible to use a socket on a ratchet. It's quite a bind using an ordinary spanner because there's quite a lot of spannering required for each bolt. Having previously experienced this in my B GT a good few years ago, I decided to invest in a set of ratchet spanners – and what a huge difference they made! Why I didn't buy a set years ago, I really do not know. Ratchet spanners in AF sizes are not that readily available but you can buy them from Machine Mart and from other places online. Halfords used to sell them but the only ones I have seen in there recently are all metric sizes.

The rest of the job, as it says in every good Haynes' manual, is a simple reversal of the dismantling procedure, namely to re-fit the trim pieces, the seat belts (I took the opportunity to replace mine as the old ones were past their best), and the hood.

So, this project involved quite a lot of work and took a good long time – about 4 – 5 weeks in all, although we didn't particularly hurry over it as we had decided to take our time and do it properly. It wasn't cheap either, with the carpets and new leather seats alone totalling some £1,560 without taking into account the other bits and pieces. Was it all worth it? Absolutely! The interior of the car now feels a quieter, cosier and more comfortable place to be – and the seats are *so much* better for long journeys. Added to that, the appearance is superb as I think the photo at the beginning of this article demonstrates.

There is one caveat, however. When Jane, a friend of ours, came to visit not long after the refurb was completed, we invited her to sit in the car to try out the new seats. Whilst she agreed that they are certainly much more comfortable, she said she wouldn't feel very confident driving the car because the increased height of the driver's seat meant that her view forward was restricted by the top rail of the windscreen which was just about at eye level for her. Jane is quite a tall lady and we are not, so this is not an issue for us (although we do sit noticeably higher in the car than previously – but then the old seats had sunk badly), but I would suggest that anyone thinking of upgrading from the standard MGB seats to the MGOC Club Sport Recliners or similar should first try them out, if possible, just to make sure that the increased height doesn't cause a problem. There is one bonus, though: it's much easier to climb out of the car, especially with the hood down! With the hood up, you have to duck down.

One additional item which is very well worth investing in is a set of MGOC Sports Recliner Seat Belt Guides. These are a quality item and make a really huge difference in terms of comfort, preventing the seat belts from chafing your neck, and they also prevent the belts from reeling back behind the seats when you take them off, which can be rather irritating.

My final piece of advice with this job is to make sure that the hood, windscreen, etc., are all water-tight before you install the carpets, otherwise you will end up with a soggy mess on the floor next time it rains! As already mentioned, we took the opportunity of repainting the floor, etc., with Hammerite as additional protection. Whilst the interior trim panels were off, I also took the opportunity of renewing the cavity wax on the inside of the front wing panels, likewise in the open cavity between the B-posts and the rear wings. Waxoyl will do the job although my preferred product for cavity protection nowadays is Bilt-Hamber Dynax S-50.

I hope the foregoing is useful and will be pleased to hear from anyone who would like more information on how we did this job. Please feel free to contact me at:-

james.mould@btinternet.com.

Suppliers and Part Numbers, Etc.

Part	Supplier	Number/Reference
Ultimate Club Carpet Set	MGOC Spares	N031AA
Club Sports Recliner Seats	MGOC Spares	R062AW
Rubber Mats	MGOC Spares	N060
Club Inertia Seat Belts **	MGOC Spares	M061
Seat Belt Guide Kit	MGOC Spares	M096X
Durable Dot Fixings (for carpets)	MGOC Spares	ADB4811
Stud – Lift the Dot (for tonneau)	MGOC Spares	7H9964
Blanking Plug - rear shock absorber filler holes	Moss Europe	BHA4536
Dynax S-50 Cavity Wax	Bilt-Hamber	www.bilthamber.com
¼ x 1½ Hex Set Screws UNF ***	Westfield Fasteners	www.westfieldfasteners.co.uk

** If replacing your belts with Club Inertia Seat Belts, it's important to purchase the associated fitting kit. I initially decided not to bother because there was already a fitting kit installed for the old seat belts (which I had purchased a good few years previously from MGOC Spares) and I assumed, therefore, that a fitting kit would be surplus to requirements. However, I quickly found that the nearside belt housing would not locate properly as the side of the housing fouled the inner rear wheel arch, thus meaning that the belt housing could only be mounted at an angle to the line of the belt – which was obviously most unsatisfactory. The belts currently supplied by the Club have larger housings than previous ones and the correct fitting kit sets the belt housing slightly further away from the wheel arch, thus enabling the housing to be aligned correctly with the belt itself. Lesson learned: don't try to take shortcuts!

*** For seat runners

Our last general interest article is one that I wrote for the August newsletter, but I think it is worth repeating. Since written, several members have had John Westwater do work on their cars and I've heard consistently good reports. *Richard*

BODY WORKS

As most of you know, the F required a sill repair for its MOT this year and I had the work done neatly & swiftly by John Westwater who is based just outside Kiltarlity. I booked the car back in for some cosmetic work to both wheel arches and rear quarter panels which had various dints and some missing metal. The driver's side proved to be a real swine and needed all of John's 20 years' experience. Here are some pictures:





Finished! Furthermore, John works quickly. I dropped the car Tuesday late morning and it was ready the following Monday. I'd give him



<https://www.jwautobody.com/>

jwautobody@hotmail.com

Tel: 07900 314962 (recommended contact method)

THE HIGHLAND MGOC YEAR AS SEEN IN THE ROSE-TINTED REAR-VIEW MIRROR

APRIL

Tim Moore has kindly provided this report on the **Spring Saunter** (20/21 April):

Well, for the 9 of us that did the Spring Saunter, (although 4 of us were in 2 "honorary" "MG's!! and 5 were in three real MG's, - B Roadster, BGT and MGF), it proved to be a remarkable trip taking in arguably some of Scotland's remotest and least driven roads in the far North-West. We were based for two nights in Lairg (Self Appointed "Gateway to the Highlands") a sprawling village where we were informed people have lived for over 5000 years. Although its Post Office and Bank have recently been closed (as prevailing in many remoter rural communities in Scotland these days) it still boasts a really nice hotel which meant we couldn't have been provided better hospitality food and attention. Even though Lairg is not on the "official" North Coast 500 route they do get many bikers and visitors throughout the year, so always book beforehand if headed this way.



On the first day the group all met up for Lunch in Ullapool [*Joined by Ray & Sarah in their MGF – Ed*] before setting off for Lairg via part of the NC500 route along Assynt but then taking the quiet A837 along beautiful Strath Oykel calling in at the Falls of Shin just south of Lairg. There were plenty of rave reviews during dinner that evening about the route taken.

Wonderful dry sunny weather meant open tops for the B and F on Saturday as we headed from Lairg along the remote and wild, desolate, but captivating wilderness along the A838 via Loch Shin, Loch Merkland and Loch More claimed as 'Clan Mackay Country' with mighty Arkle, Ben Stac and Foinaven increasingly dominating the skyline. Some of us drove after Laxford Bridge to Kinlochbervie and on for stunning walks along the crystal white fine sandy beaches at road-end

at Oldshoremore. The azure blue sea making the Bahamas look strictly second-class that day!



Then doubling back for lunch at Inshegra before a captivating return drive passing near Cape Wrath to Lairg via Durness, Loch Eriboll, Ben Hope and Ben Loyal finally southwards along the beautiful but empty region between Tongue and Lairg via Achnaharra, (often the coldest place temperature wise in Britain, but this day in late afternoon it was a balmy 14 degrees C!!).

Of course, the NC500 coastal route which formed about 40 per cent of this magical 130 mile circuit was "busy" with supercars, motorcycles tearing around in convoy and trundling mobile homes etc; once we left the remarkable sea seascapes at Tongue and entered the vast empty Highland wilderness again, we all felt as if we were the only vehicles on the earth.

Truly in Highland Region the MG Highland Owners Club has arguably the finest grandest scenery in the British Isles on our "doorstep", but ensure you have full fuel tanks before venturing this way!!

Tim

And Michael Fraser has provided this on the **Drive it Day** (22 April):

A Personal Perspective

My plans to have the MGB GT up and running a couple of weeks before Drive It Day were overtaken by other events to the extent that I found myself with the MGB still in its winter hibernation mode with less than 24 hours to the departure time for Drive It day. What could possibly go wrong with getting the car ready to go in the short timescale?

Having kept the batteries fully trickle charged over the winter and having done the usual pre-start checks, and found everything OK, I cleaned the battery connections and connected them up. I turned the key to the first stop and the fuel pump clicked away, unfortunately it didn't stop clicking and as I switched it

off the aroma of freshly spilt petrol filled the garage. It was the short spur of fuel line to the first SU which must have perished over the winter time, it had three holes, one pointing to the bulkhead, one pointing down to the exhaust manifold and one pointing to the radiation. A lot of spilt fuel but a simple fix.

Having cleaned up the mess and left the car for a while to allow any remaining spilt fuel to have evaporated, I rechecked the fuel lines. I turned the key to the second stage to engage the starter motor but only heard a click. Thinking the starter may be jammed I rocked the car back and forth in 4th gear but to no avail. I rechecked the batteries to ensure everything was Ok there and obtained varying readings on the level of charge. I put the batteries back on charge overnight and went back out to the garage early on Sunday morning. At about 6.30 on Sunday morning the car eventually came to life. I can only think that the battery trickle chargers are not as accurate as they are made out to be as the additional charge time is the only difference between what happened on Saturday and the car eventually going on Sunday.



Arriving at the V8 café there was a good number of MGs, and club members with other cars, on the run. There was a real mix of vehicles including a standard looking Morris Minor which was actually running modern Ford engine and running gear – a real wolf in sheep's clothing!



After the coffee stop at the Old North Inn the route took us up over roads I never knew existed. Thankfully I was following someone who knew where they were going at all of the various junctions we encountered. Perhaps a route map would have been helpful. Although having lived in this area for almost all of my life, I found roads I didn't know existed and it was a real enjoyable drive.

On the run into Muir of Ord a very helpful tractor driver took the space between me and 'my leader' so that I ended up leading a convoy of vehicles and I didn't know the route. Thankfully when I missed the junction outside Muir of Ord, the car behind knew the correct route to take and having turned I followed on. On the way to the Storehouse of Foulis I met a string of Porsches heading in the opposite direction. It was a shame there was such a queue for food at the restaurant before we arrived as in the event most cars just returned home.

Despite the challenge of getting the car back into life it was an enjoyable run and a route we may wish to consider for an afternoon or evening jaunt.

Michael

MAY

The day run on **8 May** was organized by Peter Poole as a Fish & Chips event at the famous La Mirage in Helmsdale. Four MGs made the run including Ray & Sarah's latest acquisition – an immaculate and very low mileage MG TF 1.6.



The weather was kind for the early part over the Struie (where we mixed it with a set of Lamborghini & Ferraris with Dubai registrations driving like idiots) but while having a coffee at Lairg, it started to rain. Lunch was excellent and La Mirage now has 'small portion' options which were still very generous! If you are going that way on a Tuesday, booking is

essential as not long after we arrived, the weekly coach trip also arrived and some were turned away.

Richard

The **Orkney Odyssey** (18 – 21 May) was a great success with 6 MGs and 10 members having a memorable trip which started with a rendezvous at John O' Groats with 7 MGs and a Jowett from the Chichester MGOC (who then were joined in Inverness for dinner by Peter & Jean and Michael).



The outward-bound ferry crossing was smooth.



The list of places visited in great weather is long and probably not of interest to those who weren't there. The road surfaces were great (Tim found the only pot hole on Orkney) and the hotel food was superb.



All 6 MGs were well behaved (as were the owners). There is so much to see on Orkney and with short distances between attractions we were able to pack-in lots in each day. A trip to remember!

Richard

JUNE

The June one-day run (10th) was to the **Logie Steading** for lunch. It was a 7car event (5 MGs) and 12 of us sat down to a good lunch.



The big June event was of course the **Tain Rally** (17 June). We were joined on our stand by 7 MGs from the MGCC Caledonian Centre (including 3 RV8s and a BGT V8) and at one point there were 23 MGs on stand (one non-member was directed to us as a late entry – he went away with a membership form but no

news so far). Of course, while our first allegiance is to the Highland MGOC, at least 4 of us on the stand also belong to the Caledonian Centre (and with John Cuthbert, at least one Caledonian Centre member has joined the Highland MGOC). We are all better together.



The weather was so nice, the gazebo stayed in the boot.



(space left for the gazebo that wasn't)

Richard

JULY

On **12 July**, 6 MGs met at Attadale Gardens (recommended) and were invited to line-up in front of the house for photos. Lunch was enjoyed in the fresh air at the Carron Restaurant.



AUGUST

The **August run** was also on the 12th with a meet at the new Cars & Coffee venue in Inverness (Roller Bowl) before heading off via Culloden & Cawdor (6 MGs, 1 BMW) to the Old Mill Inn at Brodie. Some then went on to the Historic Wheels Rally where we meet-up with 5 other members who had entered MGs. There were some nice MGs at Brodie – this was the oldest (1937 TA – count the strips on the running board! – just visible here).



SEPTEMBER

We had a good day out on **7 September** courtesy of Patsy & Nick with a look around the Highland Wildlife Park then a drive to Glenshero & Garva Bridge. Only 3 MGs but this included new member Eamonn Doyle with his immaculate CCHL B V8 Roadster.



23 September was the **Gathering of the Clans**; Highland MGOC supported this event with 4 cars.



Great photo thanks to Tayside MGOC. The 4 Highland MGOC cars are almost opposite Chic Doig's green roofed tent starting with Tim's Primrose yellow CGT then Richard's red F, Peter's blue B & John's white BGT Turbo with the closed sun roof and open bonnet.

OCTOBER

Some **Autumn Amble** recollections from Tim:

A few pictures from an excellent October Amble 3-6 October 2018 during which our MCGT was joined by Richard and Willie/Margaret in their MGF's, Dave and Dawn in their BGT and Peter/Jean, Stuart/Margaret, Hughie/Katherine in their "honorary MG's" - a Volvo Estate, BMW Mini Coupe, and a BMW Z coupe.

In the CGT's case 676 mile round trip which consumed almost 30 gallons of fuel to accomplish....The others all "boasted" about their steeds far superior fuel economy.....!

Based in Ayr at the excellent Western House Hotel - Visits were undertaken to Riverside Transport Museum Glasgow, New Lanark Heritage Centre, Dunure, Culzean (via the strange "Electric Brae"). Some of us went to the Maritime Museum.



And finally, many thanks to the Highland MGOC members who provided 6 MGs (including Angus Bethune who arrived after everyone else had left) to the **Marie Curie fund raiser** on 27 October at the Black Isle Showground. Good to see a few other members there too including our Chairman, Michael. Thanks too to Hughie & Katherine who had to be elsewhere but who made a generous financial donation. A total of £6574.23 was raised for this so worthwhile charity.



LOOKING FORWARD...

We're heading for **Killin** for 2 nights on Friday, 12 April. The hotel (<https://www.killinhotel.com/>) - thanks to Stuart - represents excellent value at only £190 **total** for 2 sharing for 2 nights on a Dinner, Bed & Breakfast basis. A single occupancy on the same deal is £170.



The **Autumn Amble** is going to Dundee on 1 October for 3 nights and the rates (for a very nice hotel - Best Western, Invercarse) are £360 **total** for a couple (DBB basis) or £225 for a single.

Both events will have an interesting programme and if you want to reserve a place (we have 8 rooms for each event) please contact Stuart (badger188@btinternet.com).

