

HIGHLAND MOTORING

Highland MGOC Yearbook 2019
www.mghighland.co.uk



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our 2019 Yearbook which I hope you find interesting and informative. We have 3 MG related articles written by Highland MGOC members and, of course, a look back over a very enjoyable MG year. We also look forward to the 2020 Spring Saunter and Autumn Amble (open for bookings).

The Highland MGOC is in a good state. We started the year with 40 'memberships' (a 'membership' can include 2 people residing at the same address) and finished the year with 45.

What next? First our AGM will be held on 19 January 2020 at Chanonry Sailing Club, Fortrose, 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 2020 and updated regularly on the website and via e-bulletins from April to October inclusive.

Richard

COLOUR MY OCTAGON – BY RICHARD JENNER

The MG octagon is instantly recognizable by car enthusiasts the world over. It is a masterly example of good graphic design. The octagon outline, mirrored in the shape of the 2 letters, is simple, clear and classic. But what about the colours? This has fascinated me since I noticed in a long line-up of MGs a wide variety of letter and background colours and it is these that this article explores.

First, some background. The founding date for ‘MG’ is the subject of much heated debate among experts (take your pick from 1923, 1924 or even 1928 but probably not 1925 as used as the basis of the 1975 Golden Jubilee limited editions!). What we know about the octagon is that we think it first appears in a newspaper advertisement in The Oxford Times on 2 March 1923 as 6 MG octagons in the border – these were, of course, in black ink on a white background. This was a Morris Garages, Oxford advertisement and the garage was offering to supply Morris, Humber and Sunbeam. The design of the octagon is attributed to MG’s cost accountant Edmund (Ted) Lee (1903 – 1986). Ted Lee joined Morris Garages in the early ‘20s and Cecil Kimber arranged for the firm to pay half his accountancy tuition fees. He was a talented amateur artist and legend has it he used an old school notebook and ruler to knock-up the logo. The octagon starts appearing on cars in 1925, firstly on the door tread plates. At this time the radiator badge was based on the Morris design.



‘Old No 1’

A pre-Octagon M.G. radiator badge

The first appearance of the octagon radiator badge was on the MY 1928 14/40 (produced 1927 – 29). It was around this time that MG decided they had better register their trademark! The initial application was on 2 April 1928 (not 1 May 1924 as widely shared on the internet) to cover many of the parts found on the

car but not the radiator badge – this was added with a later application in January 1929.

As the issue of trademark dates keeps resurfacing, here are the facts. The first registration was UK00000490090 filed on 2 April 1928 to cover classes 6, 8 & 12. Class 6 was for tool boxes made of metal for motor cars, class 8 was for fitted tool boxes made of metal for motor cars and class 12 was for bonnet fasteners, wheel hub caps, guarantee plates, spare wheel carriers, spare wheel centre plates, foot ramps, accelerator pedals, brake drum drawers, brakes, and doors, all being parts of motor cars and made of ordinary metal. On the same day, UK00000490091 was filed for class 12 covering motor cars and motor chassis. From a radiator badge aspect, the important trademark registration was UK00000499386 (25 January 1929) which registered the octagon under class 7 for radiators for motor vehicles; being parts of machinery. This is how the trademark appears on the UK registration (trademarks.ipo.gov.uk)



The radiator badge was an enamelled badge with ‘chocolate brown’ coloured letters on a cream background with chrome outlines. This less than obvious choice of colours, was, according to legend, a favourite of Cecil Kimber and was inspired by the GWR livery on the trains that served the Oxford and Abingdon area.

The badge remained enamelled until 1962 (at least on the MGA), the basic composition of the badge is of course an octagonal outline containing the letter MG but over the years there are quite a few variations of how this executed. The letters can have a shiny outline with a coloured in-fill or just be a solid colour or indeed a solid shiny metal finish. The background colour of the octagon varies too. Some badges are mounted on a plinth and others on a shield.

1928 – 1953



This classic enamelled badge has the chocolate brown in-fill to raised shiny letters and a matching outline for the octagon with a cream background in-fill.

1953 - 1962



This is the 2nd and last iteration of an enamelled badge with black replacing the chocolate in-fill and white replacing the cream of the background. It stems from the 1952 merger of the Nuffield Organisation and Austin Motors to form the British Motor Corporation. It remained in use until the MGA and Farina Magnette Mk IV were discontinued in 1962 but by then the Midget 'Mk1' was in production (1961) with badges that were not enamelled and the need for an in-fill was dispensed with although some later badges have the letters outlined in a shiny material with a contrasting 'in-fill' giving the appearance of an enamelled badge.

1961 – 1969

This metal badge has a red background colour with the octagon and letters in a solid shiny chrome finish.

This is the original MGB grille used from 1962 – 1969 with the red and chrome octagon on a black shield. A similar arrangement was used on the Midget and 1100/1300.



1969 – 1972

The 1960's were another period of mergers. Alvis and Rover merged in 1965, in 1966 Jaguar, Daimler and BMC merged to create British Motor Holdings and in 1968, BMH merged with Standard-Triumph Leyland to create the British Leyland Motor Corporation generally referred to as 'BL'. Cue another change to badges. Under BL both the Midget and the MGB received a recessed black grill in 1969 with the black shield reduced to an outline around the silver on red octagon. This grill was used on the MGB from 1969 to 1972 and from 1969 to 1974 on the Midget.



1972 - 1974

The honeycomb grille was used on the MGB from 1972 – 1974 and the shield was re-introduced but changed to red.



1975 - 1980

For 1975 there was a 50th anniversary version of the MGB (this assumed 1925 as the start of MG; later anniversary models of the F & TF date from 1924) which changed the chrome of the previous badge to a gold finish and the red background was changed to black. This was also the start of the 'rubber bumper' era affecting both the B and the Midget.

The black background was retained, and gold letters used until late in production when they reverted to chrome.



Much confusion can be created by 'rubber bumper' cars that have been converted to 'chrome' with a variety of earlier grills and badges.

1982 – 1991

Abingdon closed in 1980 and after a brief interlude the MG marque was carried forward in several 'souped-up' Austin saloons starting with the MG Metro in 1982. Red returned as the background colour with chrome lettering. By 1991 these had run their course and the MG marque disappeared from production for a couple of years.



1992 – 2010

With the advent of the RV8 in late 1992, MG was back in sports car business (even if the manufacturer was Rover). The octagon reverted to something like the original design although in resin rather than enamel. With 'raised' letters with a shiny bronze finish the letter in-fill was brown and the background in-fill was cream but with thin golden horizontal lines. There were also some very subtle changes to the shape of the letters (slightly rounded in places) to provide a sense of depth. This revision was the work of Don Wyatt.



This design was then carried forward to the *MGF* and the follow-on *TF*.

For the *MGF* the badge was mounted on a chrome plinth:



2011 onwards

Sadly, MG Rover collapsed in April 2005 although 'new old stock' was still being registered several years afterwards. MG Rover were entering collaborative deal with Shanghai Automobile Industrial Corporation (SAIC) of China and shortly prior to the collapse SAIC had bought the rights to most of the MG Rover cars but not the TF. Nanjing Automotive Corporation (NAC) acquired the TF and relaunched the car in 2007 before they in-turn merged with SAIC.

The first all new MG for 16 years was the MG6 GT introduced in 2011. With this era, continuing today, the octagon and letters are chrome with a black background and the octagon has become slightly rounded.



BO'NESS CLASSIC HILL CLIMB REVIVAL 2019 – BY CHRIS SILVER



The photograph is Copyright of *Paul Reynolds Photography*

The success of the Goodwood Historic events over the last 20 years or so has spawned a number of other **"revivals" or copycat events which are of** varying authenticity or provenance : anyone remember the Isle of Bute event a few years ago (horrendous logistics!) or the more recent attempt **at Kincardine o' Neil on Deeside which jumped on the band-wagon and promptly fell off again!**

However, the event at Bo'ness can claim genuine history and bragging rights as the first formal motor sporting venue in Scotland. Started in 1933 as a motor-cycle hill-climb, it used the main access drive to Kinneil House. Soon cars became involved and it became very popular for both competitors and spectators with large crowds turning out to see some spectacular performances on a challenging course. The Second World War stopped play for the duration but competition re-started in 1946. An International Licence was granted by the RAC with the first round of the **inaugural RAC British Hill Climb Championship being held at Bo'ness in** May 1947. Huge crowds of up to **10,000 spectators flocked to Bo'ness in the late 40's and early 50's to watch** the stars of British motor racing take on the daunting Courtyard and notorious Snake Bend. By 1954, however, crowds had started to dwindle and this, together with a lack of driver entries, resulted in a hiatus which lasted for five years.

The Lothian Car Club (LCC) took over running the venue in 1959 and their first meeting featured the up-and-coming Jim Clark who drove both the big Border Reivers Jaguar and also his successful Le Mans Lotus Elite. The LCC meetings quickly gained popularity both with drivers and spectators and once again rounds of the British Championship came to the historic Kinneil track. However, **the writing was on the wall and in 1966 Bo'ness** Town Council agreed to sell the land at the top of the hill to a housing developer. The final meeting was held in June 1966 and LCC decided to decamp to Doune and establish the successful event there which is running to this day.

The glory days of Bo'ness became a hazy memory and the track reverted to its role as an internal access for the estate and the few original houses. However, Goodwood and the like re-kindled interest in the long-lost **Bo'ness venue and in the mid-2000s** a group of enthusiasts set about the monumental task of reviving the event. Since this was intended to be a competitive event and not just for demonstration runs, it had to comply with all the appropriate regulations as well persuading local bodies and residents that the benefits outweighed the problems.

Having overcome all the obstacles, the first revival was held in 2008 with considerable success. The hill-climb has been joined by a major classic car show (500 vehicles in 2019) and has proved popular once again with competitors and spectators. Costs are a thorny issue, however, and the bad weather on the Saturday this year affected the gate. The finances are not very robust and, without a main sponsor, the future is not assured.

After spectating for a couple of years, I was hooked on the atmosphere and decided that it was time to get involved as a competitor. In general, apart from an invited class, entries have to date from 1973 or before which, fortunately, the V8 does (actually it was one reason for buying that particular car). The competition is serious and cars include everything from pre-war Austin 7s, specials, road cars to full-house single-seaters, a lot of which have considerable history and pedigree. The track is quite challenging being narrow and damp in places due to overhanging trees with a couple of notorious bends mentioned above which have caught out many much better drivers than me over the years – and still do, as a couple of incidents proved in 2019, fortunately without serious injury.



My wife, Gill, attended for the first time this year and was heartened to see that much of the track was bordered by straw bales which she assumed (wrongly) would be quite yielding when precisely the opposite is true. One entrant in my class was unfortunate to rip a rear wing off his Caterham when he ventured too close to a bale. Since he had driven to the event, he was then left with the problem of how to get home since that also removed the rear lights on that side.

This year, to mark 60 years since Jim Clark took part, there was a special invitation Class of cars of the types he drove (although not the actual ones, sadly). There were also many MGs competing, particularly a separate Class for Spridgets, but also a TC, a PA/PB, other MGBs and the modified MGA entered by Lorraine Noble-Thompson.



2019 was my second attempt at the event and I was a bit disappointed not to better my times from the previous year although in mitigation, the conditions were more than damp on the Saturday – from the **photographs, you will appreciate why “mud-flaps” are so named!** And **Sunday’s runs were a bit disrupted by a couple of serious incidents** including one where a rather nice Lotus 23 was demolished and left some nasty residues on the track.

But did I have fun? – **absolutely!** And I’m already looking forward to next year.



“THE FASTEST MG’S - A COMMERCIALY SUCCESSFUL MARKETING PLOY?” BY TIM MOORE

Today in 2019 most new car “sales” seem to be made on the basis of a 4 door rear hatch “SUV” concept, all looking pretty much the same ranging in price from the Dacia Duster to the Rolls Royce Cullinan, (the current MG GS and ZS being examples), all similar types of vehicle concept that Manufacturers Marketing Departments have “decided” the 2019 customer requires. Pretty boring really and not dissimilar to say the VW Beetle or Model T Ford of their time, when little else was available. “If you want a car this is what we will sell you”. Leasing deals

and interest-free 100 % finance ensure most people just regard their car as a necessity of living today rather than something aspirational, desirable, different and ‘special’ that one saved-up for and hitherto cossetted keeping them roadworthy and polishing them whenever the opportunity arose, usually on a weekend!

It certainly wasn’t like this in the 20th century when as the decades passed particularly in the 1930’s-1970’s people aspired to own a car and if fortunate to have the financial means to secure a car (few did) and we were sought after by Britain’s manufacturers keen to impress us that their particular automobile was more desirable and aspirational than those of their competitors.

Racing (predominantly at Brooklands Racetrack in Surrey), Hill Climbs, Time Trials all preceded Rallying as means by which manufacturers used Radio and Newspapers to advertise their products as being faster and more desirable than others. Britain in particular, then still a world manufacturing and engineering power, became obsessed with world speed records personified by efforts of brave men such as Malcolm Campbell, Henry Seagrave, George Eyston and John Cobb racing behemoths with huge engines driving over measured miles on beaches and later salt lakes, broke land speed records with ever increasing streamlined and powerful “cars” which bore little, indeed no, resemblance to how concurrent production cars looked. However, Austin and Bentley amongst others had excelled with modified production, often supercharged, cars racing at Brooklands in the 1920’s and early 1930’s, and MG had begun to make an impact on the public too.

When MG merged with Morris in 1935, the usually conservative William Morris (Later Lord Nuffield) decreed that MG’s racing activities should come to an end. Motorsport was expensive and not a luxury his firm could afford. But it was not long before MG embarked on the ultimate in machine against nature – record breaking. It was then seen as a powerful marketing tool and one that Morris seemingly came to endorse.

All of MG’s record cars were based on models from its production range at the time. So, in marketing terms MG could boast to its existing and potential customers that the production models they purchased had the same technology as that used in “the quickest cars on earth!”

In 1998 Christine and I took my parents to visit the Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon - a visit I well recalled as time passed with pleasure. Brought up in a family involved with engineering and cars and myself after sixth form having been part of Jaguar/British Leyland between 1967-1978, I was thrilled at BL’s CEO Alex Park’s foresight, first with a Syon Park based display, and then at Gaydon where a collective home was set up in the 1980’s to house under one roof

the historic, production and development vehicles, that constituent parts of BLMC had retained. In 2019 Gaydon is now known as The British Motor Museum and this year, in April and later in July, Christine and I took advantage of being in the vicinity of Gaydon, Warwickshire to revisit (www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk). Huge improvements have been made in the 21 years since we last were there in 1998 and if you haven't ever visited, or even if you have, a journey to spend a day or two amongst this mecca of British Automobile History now devoted to ALL British marques, not just those which comprised the BLMC amalgamation debacle, won't be regretted. It is FABULOUS!

MG's first record car was EX135 and was based on a 1930's K3 racer and made its first record run on the new German autobahn near Frankfurt in 1938. MG's programme of record attempts continued over 20 years with increasingly sophisticated machines. The pinnacle came in 1959 when American Phil Hill drove EX181 to almost 255mph. Its engine was based on the same unit fitted to the new MGA Twin Cam sports car. Under very different (you might say terminal with MG-Rover demise in 2005) circumstances in 1998, MG-Rover returned to Bonneville in USA with an MGF based record breaker, EX255, attempting to break that 255mph 1959 record set by EX181. Sadly, it was not to be and "technical issues" thwarted the project's goal of speeds over 255mph.

At Gaydon today, visitors can see and get close and personal to EX135; EX179; EX181 and EX255. They make for absorbing reflection and if you are an engineer like myself, considerable respect for their creators and then bravery of their drivers.

EX135





When in 1938 MG acquired a conventionally bodied K3 Magnette they had sold some years before to Captain George Eyston, a renowned motor sport driver, they commenced modifying it commissioning a state-of-the-art streamlined body from Reid Railton and in its last guise fitting a highly tuned 1250cc 4 cylinder engine which developed 220bhp! They employed Lieutenant Colonel “Goldie” Gardner to drive EX135. With EX135 and an 1100cc engine Gardner was able to raise the 1100cc class record to 203.5mph (!!) in 1939 on the Dessau autobahn in Germany, a remarkable accomplishment for just 1100cc. After WWII Gardner, still driving EX135, set many more records in different classes using a variety of MG engines within its streamlined bodywork and on one occasion with a then experimental prototype Jaguar XK engine! As shown at Gaydon EX135 is fitted with the supercharged 1250cc MG XPAG engine fitted in 1952 for Gardner’s last record runs on the salt flats in Utah. Unfortunately, on one of those runs the wet salt surface of the salt lake meant that Gardner could not control the wheel spin and only reached 190mph. He even lost control, spun and hit a marker post, which smashed through the Perspex cockpit and hit him on his head.....he kept driving.



As displayed today EX135 shows, through perspex side panels on its bodywork, that Gardner sat (lay down) on one side of the propeller shaft in very confined conditions.

EX179

Captain George Eyston, a well-known British land speed record driver, had raised the world land-speed record in a huge car with a 27-litre engine - "Thunderbolt" - to 345.5mph in 1938. MG saw clear competitive advantage in contracting him to drive a new MG racer - EX179 - built in Abingdon from a spare chassis frame from the early 1950's MGA sports car project but initially fitted with a prototype 1466cc XPEG 4 cylinder engine being fitted in the last of the TF models.



The bodywork for EX179 was based on that used on EX135. Once built it was shipped to Utah and Eyston and another driver, Ken Miles, in 1954 enabled MG to break long-distance records up to 121 mph and did a 10-mile sprint at 153.69mph. In 1956 EX179 was fitted with a new 1489cc BMC B Series engine block modified with a prototype twin cam head, the driving position changed from left to right hand side and like this EX179 raised previous records for 12 hours up to 141.86mph and did a flying 10 mile record run to 170.15mph, driven by Ken Miles and also Johnny Lockett.



Fitted with different engines until 1959 EX179 continued to break various records until 1959 when it was re-badged as the Austin Healey (!!) EX219; and made its final appearance in honour of the new Sprite fitted then with a supercharged 948cc BMC A-Series engine taking several Class G records at speeds up to 147mph. MG certainly got its money-worth out of EX179!

EX181

Without doubt, Abingdon MG's most spectacular and fastest record breaker, driven by Stirling Moss and later Phil Hill with a record breaking 255mph from its mid-mounted MGA twin cam supercharged engine. The driver unlike in

EX135 and Ex179 sat in front of the engine with his feet in front of the wheels.
EX181 had a Riley RM gearbox tubular chassis and de-Dion rear suspension.



To this day Phil Hill's speed of 255mph in EX181 in 1959 remains unbeaten in terms of speed for the amount of power produced. The Twin Cam engine used had 1506cc, 73.4mm bore and 88.9mm stroke, a Shorrock Supercharger and produced 300bhp at 7300 rpm.



When, and if, you see the car at Gaydon, it is diminutive. A lasting legacy of EX181 was that its teardrop streamlined shape was inspirational in the design at

Abingdon of the MGB roadster launched in 1962. History records that on the final record-breaking run to 254.9mph by Phil Hill, he was almost suffocated by petrol fumes which were being sucked into the confined cockpit.

EX255

So the remarkable accomplishments of EX181 really was the end of this story..... however those MGF enthusiasts amongst you will know that MG-Rover, possibly, more likely probably, saw marketing advantage to the MG brand once again in the late 1990's; because, to coincide with the 50th Speed Week at Bonneville in 1998 MG-Rover, (MG, no longer based at Abingdon of course since that factory was closed in 1981), set a goal to break the 255mph record set by EX181 in 1959 which hadn't been beaten in nearly 40 years (and as mentioned above, still hasn't).

Based on the MGF shape but with a steel tube spaceframe engineers designed EX255, it had special bodywork by Mayflower in Coventry with standard MGF doors and front wings but with all other panels made from carbon fibre. A Janspeed modified Rover V8 engine mounted behind the driver was coupled to a sequential 6 speed gearbox. Up-rated special unique tyres, large cooled disc brakes and two parachutes were incorporated.



Andy Green well know today for his world land speed record breaking drive of 763.035mph in Thrust SSC was selected to drive EX255. A supercharger fitted to the Rover V8 proved unreliable and the record attempt at Bonneville abandoned until 1999. MG-Rover, Andy Green and EX255 returned to Bonneville in 1999 with a twin-turbocharged engine 4797cc developing 960 bhp and high hopes.....but clutch problems meant the team ran out of time again and so EX181's amazing record from 1959 still stands! Now just over 20 years old, EX255 certainly is stunning to see close-up at Gaydon today, but nowhere near as awe-inspiring as its three older hugely successful and influential MG Record- Breaking 'Siblings'. *[editor's note, EX255 did achieve a record of sorts at DERA, Boscombe Down, on 16 October 1999. It was a speed of 131 MPH which doesn't sound that fast until you realize the unaccompanied driver, Ken Moss, was totally blind!]*.

So, let's leave history and statistics to inform us if MG's record-breaking supercars was a Marketing ploy which increased production car MG sales and pride of ownership for their customers. As for me, I feel pride that the genes within our own Abingdon-made 1969 MG have connection with those sensational small-in-stature huge-in-accomplishment racers which survive in all their engineering glory for us to enjoy at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon.



Tim and Christine's 1969 MGC GT at Gaydon 6 July 2019 alongside a fellow MGA Twin-Cam (the latter with genes from EX181??!) both visiting the British Motor Museum.

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

APRIL

12 – 13 April – the Spring Saunter (6 cars, 11 members)

The Highland MGOC Spring Saunter was based at Killin routing via Fortingall to see the yew and church on the way down.



We then a quite full main day with a trip on the Sir Walter Scott on Loch Katrine.



(engine fit for an MGC?)

This was followed a circular drive (taking-in much of the Heart 200 route announced after we had been) with an optional stop at Cultybraggan to see the POW camp.



On the last day, 4 cars joined 20 others for the MGCC Caledonian Centre satellite run to Pitlochry. A totally dry (rain wise) weekend although there was a very chilly wind.



28 April – Drive it Day (6 cars, 9 members)

The annual Drive it Day had a good turn-out, meeting at the Rollerbowl in Inverness.



Choose your favourite shade of red

We then had a gentle drive in bright conditions to Strathpeffer for a coffee stop before going on to Dingwall. The official route finished at Alness but we ducked-out to have an excellent lunch in the fresh air at the Highland Café at Mount Gerald.

MAY

21 May – Morayvia (13 cars, 22 members, 1 guest)

The centre piece of this run was the aviation museum 'Morayvia' near Kinloss which very kindly opened especially for us. Lunch before the museum was at Aroma, Covesea. We were a party of 23 (Peter Long from the MG Caledonian Centre joined-us by train) which is a great result for a weekday. Some MGs were still being fettled but we managed a B Roadster, 3 BGTs, an F, a ZT, a ZT-T

and a MG3. No photos of cars this time but a few taken in the museum which is well worth a visit.



JUNE

23 June – Tain Rally (18 cars, 19 members, 4 guests)

The turn-out at Tain was really good and we had a nicely varied stand and quite a bit of interest in the cars. We were joined by Tony Smith from the Caledonian Centre who had driven-up from East Kilbride in his 85th Anniversary TF.



Tony Smith in the 85th





Richard's MGF with the engine cover removed – had to be a dry day!

JULY

21 July – Skye (9 cars, 13 members, 1 guest)

The July drive was a treat organized by Tim & Chris Moore to show off the Sleat Peninsula on Skye. We met-up on the Skye Bridge approach and the line-up of MGs caused a few people to stop (including an Italian family) and to come over for a chat and to take some photos.





As you can see from the photo, there was a risk of the odd shower.

Tim led us in the CGT for a gentle drive to lunch at The Inn @ Àird a' Bhàsair. After lunch we visited Armadale Castle & Gardens before undertaking an optional and quite challenging single-track drive.



Lorraine Noble-Thompson from the MG Caledonian Centre joined-us on the run in her delightful (and valuable) Midget based WSM. After the run she drove directly back home which is near Biggar!

AUGUST

20 August – Macallan (9 cars, 15 members)

A really nice drive out organized thoroughly by Chris & Gill Silver. Eight MGs plus a Z4. We routed via Lochindorb to Grantown-on-Spey.



Photo by Karen Blessington, owner Grantown East

We visited the new Grantown East railway for lunch and then the new Macallan visitor centre - it is simply awesome! (not a word I use very often).



Chris had arranged parking in front of Easter Elchies House – great for a photo shoot.



The wall of whisky.

31 August – Fortrose & Rosemarkie Rally (3 cars, 3 members)

The Fortrose Rally will probably go down as the wettest on record – it certainly was very wet and a few people decided to duck out at the Dingwall Mart rather than drive to Fortrose. But despite the weather, it was a strangely enjoyable event even if much of it was spent blethering over tea & cake in the community centre.

A special mention should be made of Stefan & Beatrix Kroll who were holidaying at Ullapool with their MGB and spotted the rally on Facebook and decided to join-in. Stefan has converted the B to a V8 and it was driven all the way (apart from the sea crossing) to Berlin & back. This is a photo from the P&J:



Beatrix and Stefan Kroll got the Long Haul Award for taking their MGB V8 all the way from Berlin to the Black Isle. Picture: James MacKenzie.

SEPTEMBER

24 September – Black Isle Bimble (7 cars, 10 members)

The 24 September run was organized at the last minute to be a gentle drive from North Kessock to Strathpeffer via Kirkmichael Church and lunch (again) at the Highland Café. It was great weather after a slightly damp start.



People came & went but we were all together for lunch (10 people). We had 1 BGT, 2 x F, 1 X ZT-T & 1 X MG3 plus two other cars of a non-MG persuasion plus 2 dogs.



OCTOBER

1 – 3 October – the Autumn Amble (8 cars, 15 members, 1 guest) – with contributions by Tim Moore

Day One of the Autumn Amble. Lunch stop just after Tomintoul with Treasurer Stuart and Margaret's new MG3 covering for their Midget "AVA" which elected to remain in Latheron.

Photo by Tim Moore



Our esteemed Secretary and Jean in their B Roadster followed by Hughie and Katherine in their BMW Z4 on their way to Glen Shee.

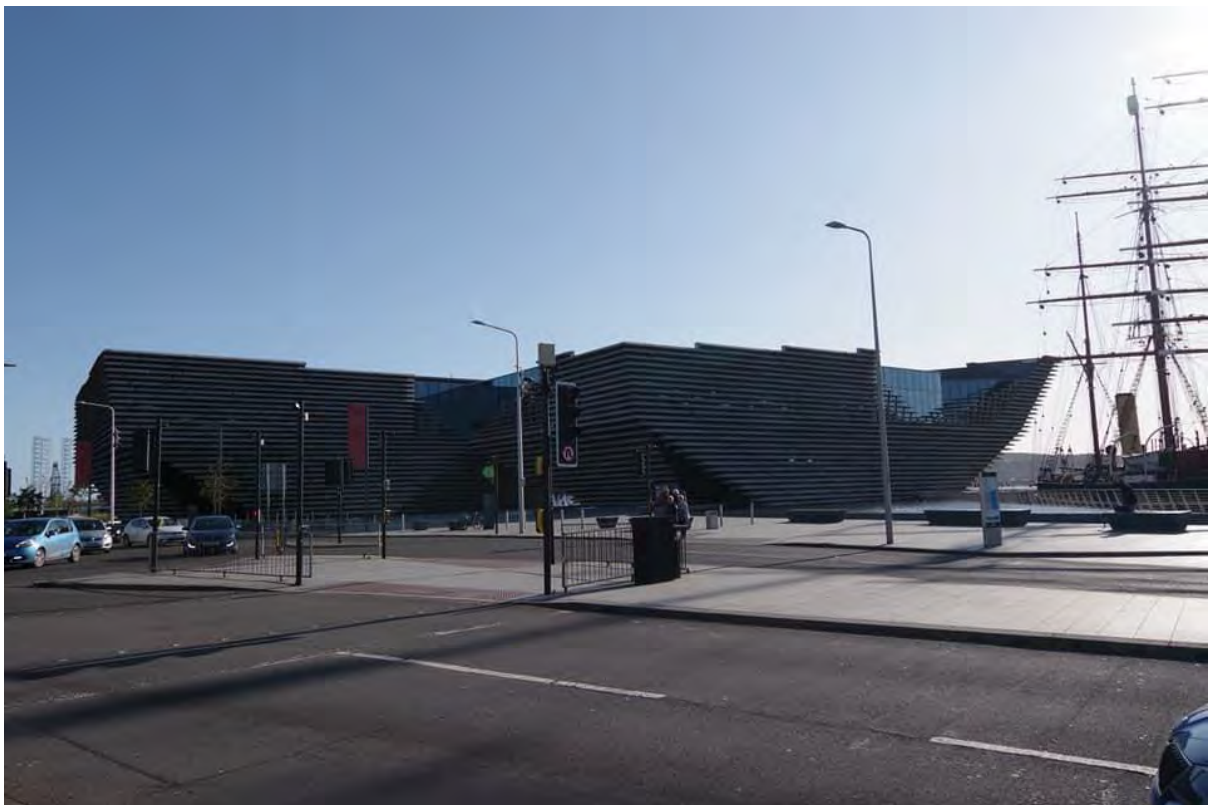


Photo by Tim Moore



Glen Shee

Day 2 of the Autumn Amble. Lovely sunny day in Dundee. Various visit options, V&A, Discovery, Verdant Works and Transport Museum.





Day 3 of the Autumn Amble. Dry again apart from a very brief and light shower at midday. The itinerary was into Fife briefly to do homage to Jim Clark at his birthplace at Kilmany then back over the Tay Road Bridge to visit the new Airedale memorial at East Haven.



We then went on to the wonderful Montrose Air Heritage Museum via lunch at Charleton Fruit Farm. Our Caledonian Centre friend Peter Long joined us with his magnificent MGA 1600 Mk2.



Last day of a terrific 2019 October Amble saw four MGs - a new MG3, MGBGT, MGF and MGCGT - spend a very informative time at Cameron Gilmour Engine Services at Muirhouses near Perth on our way to lunch at Blair Atholl before we said goodbyes.



Photo by Tim More

19 October – Winter Craft Fare (6 cars, 7 members)

Six MGs supported the Marie Curie nurses for the Highlands at the Black Isle Showground.





The cars were popular with youngsters especially when they found the horn button! A total of £6000 was raised at the event.

NOVEMBER

19 November – end of Season Luncheon

This new initiative was very well supported and 19 Highland MG Owners' Club members, some of whom had travelled a significant distance, enjoyed a very convivial end-of-season luncheon at the North Kessock Hotel. Sadly, Peter Poole had to miss the event to attend the funeral of an old friend in Edinburgh.





LOOKING FORWARD...

The **Spring Saunter** will be based at the Lairg Highland Hotel for Friday, 24 April & Saturday, 25 April. We have taken our room allocation but if you would like to be on a reserve list in case of a cancelation, please contact either Stuart or Richard. As always, members would be welcome to join-in for the day - more details in March.

The **Autumn Amble** will be based at the Inveraray Inn Hotel, Inveraray, from the 1st to 4th October 2020 (3 nights). The price is £450 per couple in a twin or double room and £330 for single – these rates include dinner, bed & breakfast. We have reserved 8 rooms so please contact Stuart to reserve yours!

MGF @ 25

The year 2020 will see the 25th Anniversary of the launch of the MGF at the Geneva Salon de l'Auto in March 1995. The anticipation was enormous; the first all new MG sports car for mass production since the MGB launched in 1962. The MGF, and its successor TF, proved to be very popular and was still selling well with MG Rover's sad demise in 2005. **It would be really great if we could maximise the numbers of Fs & TFs on the Highland MGOC stand at the 2020 Tain Rally on 21 June.**



THE NEW AGE OF MG

The designers of the MGF felt that it was critically important to know what its future customers wanted from an MG built for today. So, long before the first prototypes emerged, they invited sports car enthusiasts to give their views and expectations.

These potential customers were quite clear about what was needed. The new car had to offer all the glorious fun and affordability of its illustrious

predecessors. But it also had to be a sports car for the 1990s. Able to compete with the best of its rivals, and prove itself to be better. A true class leader, in every respect.

So the MGF engineering team went back to first principles, and asked the fiercely-debated question. Which design delivers the best sports car handling and performance? Side by side, the prototypes were evaluated; front-engine, rear wheel drive; front-engine, front wheel drive; and mid-engine, rear wheel drive.



The third option emerged a clear winner. Which is why the MGF, unlike its production forebears (but like a Ferrari), has a mid-engined, rear wheel drive layout.

And why it means Fun with a capital F.