

# **THE MGC REGISTER of NEW ZEALAND**



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## ***The Magical Grand Cruising Tour of NZ, celebrating the MGC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***



*The touring group in Wanaka  
l to r: Ross & Shona Osborne, Jack & Jenny Shuttleworth,  
Doug & Maureen Stanaway, Jock Burridge, Ian Grant, Ross & Chris Butler.  
Not at this photoshoot – Shirl Burridge*

The tour officially commenced with -

### ***The Mighty MGs Run.....Peter Dunlop***

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November saw us kick off the first stage of the Magical Grand Cruising Tour of New Zealand with The Mighty MGs Run to Matamata and then onward to Taupo. The Auckland group, comprising three MGCs and two V8s, had an early 8am start from BP Autobahn in Papakura. The Auckland contingent was privileged to be seen off by the president of the Austin Healey Car Club, Mark Donaldson, who had called in to wish us farewell at the start of this epic tour. Harvey Heath, accompanied by son Simon, led the field for an easy trip to Matamata where we met up with the cars from the Bay of Plenty and the Waikato. By now we had seven MGCs plus four V8s and Dennis Kenny from Rotorua in his MGA Twin Cam Coupe.

As Ian had invited the Austin Healey folk, Fred and Janet Fowler made the trip from Tauranga in their 3000 to join us. This stopover gave us time for a coffee, a chat and photographs before departing in convoy for Taupo. Ian Grant is famous for his meticulous route plotting and this run was no exception. It took us down through Tokoroa, Whakamaru,



*The seven MGCs on the village green in Matamata  
Grant & Michael Fitzpatrick's roadster, Raewyn & Peter Dunlop's GT. Dave Guy & Mischke  
Combrinck's GT, Harvey & Simon Heath's GT, Bob & Jill Sherman's GT,  
Ian & Shirley Finlayson's roadster, Ian & Joanna Grant's roadster*

over the dam and on past rolling hills and beautiful green paddocks. Raewyn and I had not driven these roads before and thoroughly enjoyed the ride. The weather was good with bright, sunny skies accompanying us all the way to the Taupo Vintage Car Club headquarters for lunch. There was a chance of adding five more MGCs to the group here to give us twelve, our best turn-out ever, but we did add four, making eleven in total.



*More Mighty MGs on the village green in Matamata  
Tad & Annette Piggin's RV8, John & Lynette Badham's BGT V8,  
Derrick Smith & Malcolm Dryden's BGT V8, Mike & Pauline McCowan's BGT V8,  
Dennis Kenny's MGA Twin Cam Coupe*

After lunch and having now been joined by Shaun Leahy and Stephanie McGreevy, who had driven up from the lower North Island in their C roadster, it was time to visit MGC owner, Morgan and Porsche enthusiast Barry Hoffman's car sheds which were just walking distance away. The first garage revealed a beautiful, vintage Model A Ford, a very impressive



aluminium-bodied, full-race Morgan and the ex-Lew Henry CGT. Then on to the second garage and I know I was not the only one to be surprised when the doors rolled up revealing a seriously impressive array of cars. A wonderful collection but the AC Bristol was, for me, the show-stealer with the beautiful Jaguar XK150 Coupe coming a very close second, or was it the Morgan Aero or the Escort Mexico or the.....the list goes on.

Our next stop was at John Barrett's workshop, John Barrett Motors Ltd, which specialises in the servicing, repair and rebuild of classic and performance cars, plus car and truck sales. John is a well-known club racer campaigning a very quick, rotary-engined Group C Mazda RX7. He also owns two CGTs and, with his brother Graeme, are great supporters of the MGC Register. Various road and race cars, including a lovely red Ferrari 308GTB, were on display plus the latest acquisition, a bright yellow 1999 JGTC Mazda RX-7 GT300. This car will be taking part in the Leadfoot Festival at Hahei in the Coromandel next year being piloted by John and his son, Aidan. Our thanks to John and his family for putting on such a great display of cars, many of which were brought from different locations on the day, especially for us to see.

It was then back to the Vintage Car Club for more photos including an emotional reunion opportunity for our intrepid leader, Ian Grant. It was 48 years ago that Ian had driven these two 1968 MGCGTs when the first owners had sold them and they were for sale at BL dealer Moncrieff Motors in Onehunga where Ian worked in the sales department.



As far as we know this was the first time that these two MGCs had been together since then. Ian told me that is was these two that started his interest in the MGC and he had dreamt, that maybe one day, he might just own one. Who said dreams don't come true! The current owners are Raewyn Dunlop and Barry Hoffman.

The day came to an end with the departure of Ian Grant, Shaun Leahy & Stephanie McGreevy for their overnight stop at Taihape before travelling on to Southwards Motor Museum on Monday. With Shaun & Stephanie heading home to the Wairarapa, Ian continued on to Wellington and then to the South Island for the main tour. We had a total of sixteen "Mighty MGs" on the day, a very respectable turnout, so thank you all for coming along and providing Ian with a great send off.

Those attending:

Ian & Joanna Grant	MGC	Ian & Shirley Finlayson	MGC
Grant & Michael Fitzpatrick	MGC	Peter & Raewyn Dunlop	MGCGT

Shaun Leahy & Stephanie McGreevy	MGC	Harvey & Simon Heath	MGCGT
Dave Guy & Mischke Combrinck	MGCGT	Bob & Jill Sherman	MGCGT
Barry Hoffman	MGCGT	Tad & Annette Piggin	MGRV8
John & Graeme Barrett	MGCGT x2	Alan & Maria Thorn	MG TF
Dennis Kenny	MGA Twin Cam	Paul Nagel	MG ZS
Mike & Pauline McCowan	MGBGTV8	Bruce & Jan Gerring	MGBGT
Derrick Smith & Malcolm Dryden	MGBGTV8	Kerry Young	MGBGT
John & Lynette Badham	MGBGTV8	Richard Still & Andy Lowe	MGBGT
Fred & Janet Fowler	Austin Healey 3000 MKII		
Graham Guy	Austin 3-Litre Van Den Plas Princess		
Gordon & Heather Rutherford	Jaguar X-Type		

### ***The Tour Continues.....Ian Grant***

Bob & Jill Sherman led the way out of Taupo with myself and Shaun & Stephanie following. Bob & Jill peeled off at Turangi while the two roadsters continued on for dinner and the overnight stay in Taihape. At dawn the two cars were a bit damp from some overnight rain which was clearing, and after breakfast in town, we set off for our planned arrival time of 11:30am at Southwards Motor Museum in Paraparaumu, north of Wellington.

The skies were pretty clear although the further south we went, the breeze was becoming stronger. A few miles north of Bulls I found I now had a couple of trucks between me and the following MGC, which raised cause for concern. I turned around and about a ½-mile back up the road, found Shaun and Stephanie with one very flat right-rear tyre. There was a traffic police officer parked a bit further down the road, so Stephanie walked to him to make him aware of our predicament. He drove up and parked behind us, lights flashing, to at least give us some protection from the busy highway. Shaun and I both noticed the officer hadn't offered Stephanie a lift back, she had to walk. The Age of Chivalry!!

He did give us some good information though as to where to get the puncture repaired in Bulls. It worked out well too as the tyre guy got on to it straight away and as we were about to leave I put a call through to Southwards to let John Belamore know, and to pass the message onto the folks waiting for us, that we had been delayed. We arrived at Southwards just after 12:30pm, so still had the opportunity to have lunch with our fellow enthusiasts from the MGCC Wellington and the local Austin Healey members.





While waiting for us to arrive, the others had used the time to have a look through the main exhibition hall, and after lunch John then gave us a tour through the workshop and the other sheds that house some very interesting old vehicles and lots and lots of parts. John used to own an MGC roadster and when he was working overseas in the 1980s and 1990s the car was on display at the museum. Interestingly, that very same roadster would take part in the "Southern Loop" of this celebratory tour.

Later in the day we said our goodbyes and my sincere thanks to John Belamore for giving his time as host and letting us have a look behind the scenes, all very interesting indeed. Thanks also to Ross Armstrong (wasn't driving today, hitched a ride), Richard Whitehead (MGF), Scott Stevenson (MGBGT), Mark Holman (MG Midget), Clive Cottle (Triumph Stag), Doug Fowler (AH3000 MKIII), Dennis Nisbet (AH3000 MKIII), Bill Cottle (AH Sprite), David Binning (AH3000 MKII), Peter Fleming and John Penlington (sorry guys, cars not recorded) for coming along and supporting the event.



*The two MGCs at Southwards as Stephanie & Shaun set off for home*

Although we had spoken on the phone a couple of times prior to the event, I had not met Shaun and Stephanie before and I thoroughly enjoyed their company for the two days we were together. Thanks to you both for your participation and doing the "Northern Loop".

As I was the only traveller crossing Cook Strait, I cancelled the previously organised accommodation overlooking the northern end of the harbour in Wellington and made other arrangements. It was during some correspondence with Bill Denize (MGCC Wellington Vice-President) regarding the upcoming visit to Southwards that prompted him and wife Rae (MGCC Wellington Membership Secretary) to offer me a bed at their place in Papakowhai. This offer was good to refuse, so I had a lovely meal and very enjoyable conversation, a really nice way to spend the evening. A tour of the garage downstairs was mandatory of course, having a good look over the RV8 and the TF 160. I had seen the TF before when I met Bill & Rae at the MGF Mangaweka weekend earlier this year, so it was great to catch up once again.

The following morning (Tuesday) was the ferry crossing, which was a very pleasant trip. The plan for today was to meet up with Ross & Chris Butler, who were to drive up from Christchurch to meet me in Picton. Originally, the tour itinerary was to see a stop in Blenheim at the Omaka Aviation Museum on the way home, but as I would be the only one doing that, I made the change and arranged to meet Ross & Chris at the museum today. Ross lives in Christchurch and, as well as the CGT, also owns a very nice TD. His brother

Chris, who is right into motorbikes as well as cars, made the trip from Western Australia to take part in the tour. As well as a number of bikes, Chris also owns a TC and an MGA.



*Ross Butler's GT and Mr Grant's roadster in the carpark at the Omaka Aviation Museum*

We had a very pleasant afternoon at the aviation museum, which is well worth a visit if you are in the area. Unfortunately, the doors of the car collection had just closed for the day, so we missed out on seeing that.

The next stop was Nelson where we had a two-night stay. The drive from Blenheim to Nelson takes about 90 minutes and makes its way through some forestry areas, very picturesque with some twisty bits to keep your mind on the job.

The relaxing day that was planned for Nelson saw us spend the morning at WOW (World of Wearable Art & Classic Car Museum) and it was here that we were joined by our two Nelson MGC owners Jack Shuttleworth and Jock Burridge.

There was plenty to see here and the time passed quite quickly to the point that we had better organise some lunch or we would miss out. Lunch at WOW seemed the obvious choice but Jock suggested a ½-hour drive to Mapua, a small settlement on the shores of Golden Bay. So, off we went, four MGCs in convoy for a very relaxing lunch in a very nice setting. Because of the volume of water that goes in and out with each tide, it was quite scary seeing how fast the water was going out to sea.

Jock had a mid-afternoon appointment, so he left us to make our own way back into town and we then spent the rest of the day at the Founders Heritage Park, looking at the history of the city of Nelson and the surrounding district. It was a very enjoyable and interesting way to finish off the sunshine hours of the day with Jack acting as both an informative and humorous host.

Jack & Jenny had extended an invitation for us to head to their place for a BBQ and eight of us tucked into excellent food with very enjoyable company. It was here that we met Jack's sister Jill and Jock's wife Shirley. Jill was in town for a school reunion that coming weekend that Jack was also attending, so he & Jenny would not be making the Greymouth / Arthur's Pass trip to Christchurch. Similarly, Jock & Shirley had upcoming commitments so both couples arranged to travel together and arrive in Christchurch to join the tour on Sunday



afternoon. So, the Greymouth/Arthur's Pass part of the tour would feature just the two MGCs, Ross & Chris's and mine.

The evening at Jack & Jenny's place was an absolute treat. We learned about Jack's hydroplane racing career and, for its time, his radical engine design and building. Jack's father was also into racing, both on the water and on the road, and he had documented his activities in some detail, so we were a captive audience as Jenny read out some of these stories. Fascinating stuff and in unison we urged Jenny to get all of these stories published.



*Four MGCs parked for lunch at Mapua  
l to r: Jock Burridge's GT, Ross & Chris Butler's GT, Jack Shuttleworth's GT,  
Mr Grant's roadster*

Thursday morning dawned overcast and the weather maps indicated wet weather was moving in from the Tasman Sea so we expected to have some windscreen wiper activity on our trip through the Buller Gorge to our overnight stay in Westport. Friday's leg of the tour was to head south through Arthur's Pass and on to Christchurch. About an hour out of Nelson the two red MGCs encountered rain, rain and more rain. After arriving in Westport (or should that be Wetport) in the early afternoon, any planned sight-seeing in and around town was abandoned and we spent the afternoon in the motel unit watching the Discovery Channel and learning about the history of torpedos and other interesting topics while the rain



just kept coming down. We were brave enough to venture out to find a nice place in town for dinner before settling back in the motel for the night. Fortunately, I knew of a web site that provided up-to-date road conditions and because of the amount of rain that hit the West Coast that day, the main highway that goes through the centre of the South Island and Arthur's Pass had been washed away at a bridge approach, so the highway was closed. This left us with no alternative on Friday morning but

to go back through the Buller Gorge and use the Lewis Pass to get to Christchurch.

When we woke up on Friday it was still hosing down and trying to put our gear into our cars in the pouring rain wasn't much fun. One place on the West Coast had recorded 652mm of rain in 24 hours, that's over 25". Our windscreen wipers were working overtime again and the height of the Buller River flowing through the gorge was simply scary, how much it had risen in under 24 hours reflected just how much water had fallen out of the sky.

We encountered a road works gang out in the back of beyond and certainly didn't envy the Stop/Go guys standing out there all day in that weather.

It was still raining when we arrived in Christchurch in the late afternoon, Ross & Chris made tracks for Ross's home while I settled in at the motel. I took a short trip down the road to fuel up in preparation for the weekend and, on returning to the motel, I phoned John & Mary Hutton to arrange to go their place to cover anything that would be required for the following afternoon as they would be hosting us at their home.

It was a short drive from the motel to the Hutton's and I arrived at around 7pm and as I turned into their driveway I depressed the clutch pedal, slipped the gear lever into 1<sup>st</sup> gear and BANG, the clutch pedal went straight to the floor. A check of the clutch master cylinder reservoir revealed no fluid, it was empty. First impression was the clutch slave cylinder had come apart – pretty disappointing as it had been reconditioned around 10,000 miles ago.

The ground was too wet to be crawling around on and, after a long driving day, it was the last thing I wanted to do, so I walked down the long driveway and, using John's Range Rover, we towed the C to the house and left it there overnight. After having a chat about tomorrow's activity, John gave me a lift back to the motel.

The sun was shining on Saturday morning as the awful weather of the last two days had moved on. The day's activities I had planned were to meet up with members of the Canterbury Austin Healey Club and then take a drive inland to Darfield to meet up with long-time MGC owners Philip & Alida Pickard and have lunch at the Darfield Bakery. As it was obvious I wasn't going to participate on this trip, I volunteered Ross & Shona Osborne to take over as they had now joined the tour having driven up from Dunedin in their recently restored CGT. After lunch the drive back into Christchurch would culminate at John & Mary's place for an afternoon of refreshments and good conversation.

At 7am I called AA Roadside Assistance and walked the three or four kilometres to John & Mary's place to meet up with the AA technician at 8am. He was expecting a quick fix until he found out it was an hydraulic problem not a cable operated clutch, so he organised a flat-deck truck to take the C to wherever it could be repaired. Acting on advice from an Austin Healey-owner friend of John's, I called a brake specialist company and was told they could look at the problem but not until Monday morning, as their Saturday was full – not quite what I was looking for as we would be leaving Christchurch then for a day's driving south to Cromwell.

Taking a chance and really just looking for further advice, I put a call into Lawrie Steere who, along with his wife Jenny, have been long-time MG owners and operate the MG Service Centre near Kaiapoi, north of Christchurch. Lawrie's advice was to get the C on the truck and bring it to his place. This we did and on arriving he put some fluid in the master cylinder before putting the car on the hoist. An under-car inspection revealed the slave cylinder was perfectly alright with no trace of a fluid leak anywhere. Lawrie depressed the slave cylinder pushrod and fluid came out of the banjo – had the banjo bolt come loose? Tried it, but the bolt wouldn't tighten. Removing the bolt revealed the first part of the thread in the body of the cylinder was stripped, but there was still plenty of good thread. Lawrie measured the bolt and found it was a metric bolt that had been screwed into an imperial thread. When putting the C on the road back in 2011 I had purchased from England a new clutch hose, new banjo, new



banjo bolt and washers, so this all pointed to the bolt being the wrong part. Interestingly, Lawrie commented that the banjo itself was a bit wider than the original would have been, meaning the bolt wouldn't have screwed all the way into the body of the cylinder. Lawrie successfully resolved the problem by using a brake bolt he had in stock that was the correct thread and a bit longer than the wrong one, so was able to use all of the good thread in the cylinder. Job done, thanks Lawrie, very much appreciated.

Before I left he asked me if I would like to have a look at his MGs. Yes please. A BGT V8, a Dove Grey MGA Twin Cam (there's those Mighty MGs again!!), a very nicely restored Midget, a very low mileage Trophy Yellow *TF160*, amongst others, all in top condition. With the C now roadworthy, I made tracks for Christchurch and the Hutton's place. I arrived before the group returned from Darfield and when they arrived it was a very nice line-up to look over and chat about. It was a very enjoyable way to spend a Saturday afternoon and a very special thank you goes to John and Mary for hosting us.



*Seven Austin Healeys with four MGs, with another Healey out of shot to the left, at John & Mary Hutton's on a sunny Christchurch Saturday afternoon*



*Ross & Chris Butler's CGT, Ross & Shona Osborne's CGT, John & Mary Hutton's CGT, Mr Grant's roadster*

The event for Sunday was a get-together with MGCC Canterbury. I can't thank Paul & Serena McWilliam enough for their assistance and the effort they put in to make the day the success that it was. I made some suggestions and Paul & Serena made it a reality. A great group of over 20 MGs met up in Cashmere and the McWilliams had plotted the route up through the Heathcote Valley for a morning tea stop at the Valley Inn Tavern, a stylish,

new, triangular building that rose from the ruins of the pub that was destroyed in the earthquake in September 2010. From there it was a drive through the Lyttelton Tunnel to the harbourside town, then a stunning harbour drive to Orton Bradley Park for a picnic lunch. The collection of MGs on a beautiful Sunday was made up of four MGAs, two Midgets, four MGB roadsters which included a V8 conversion, five BGTs, one BGT V8, one ZT, one RV8, my C roadster, the Osborne's CGT, Ross Butler's CGT and his TD. This was wonderful support for the event from the MGCC Canterbury members, thanks folks.



*MGs at Orton Bradley Park*



*Sunday evening's dinner in the setting sun at the Clearwater Resort  
l to r: Stephen & Janet Harris, Shirl & Jock Burridge, Jack & Jenny Shuttleworth,  
Shona & Ross Osborne*



The only organised dinner for the tour was held on this Sunday evening at the Clearwater Resort, where the restaurant overlooks the golf course. Instead of having the dinner on Saturday evening, holding it on Sunday meant the Burridges and the Shuttleworths could attend as they weren't arriving in Christchurch from Nelson until that afternoon. Also joining us were Stephen & Janet Harris in their 1969 CGT whom I had met on a previous trip to Christchurch and they were great company once again.

The weather forecast for the next few days was good and so it proved as we set off from Christchurch after breakfast under blue skies so I could drop the top and enjoy the breeze. Because of the close connection with the MGC and the Austin 3-Litre saloon, I had contacted Invercargill residents Neil & Karen Hogg to invite them to join us when we were in that city. Neil had mentioned a car collection that was worth a look in Ashburton, so I



followed that up before leaving home and had organised a stop at Colin Sweetman's place. It was well worth it too as we spent over an hour there looking over the wide variety of different makes and models including the Mercedes Benz, Leyland P76 and the Rover P5B (pictured) to a couple of Ford Mustangs from 1967 and 1997, an Austin Kimberley, a Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, a Ford Anglia, a Triumph Herald, an Austin Healey Sprite and a number of

others as well as a few much later models.

Next stop was lunch in Geraldine before heading inland through Fairlie, Tekapo, the Lindis Pass and on to Cromwell where we would stay for the next three nights.



The inland trip on State Highway 8 is one of several spectacular drives in the South Island, passing the glacier blue waters of Lake Tekapo and Lake Pukaki with the snow-covered peaks as the backdrop.

All was going well with the group but as we got further into this drive I started to feel a little uncomfortable with the performance of my brake pedal, as it felt like it was starting to travel just a little further before any braking was felt. A couple of pumps on the pedal brought it back to very firm, but it was still of concern. When we stopped for an afternoon tea break I

checked the cylinder reservoir and found the fluid was at the level it was supposed to be. By the time we arrived in Cromwell I was anticipating any braking action and was able to stop effectively with three sharp pumps of the pedal. But, there was definitely a problem. Up until now I was happy with the fuel consumption, the C returning over 28mpg on the touring legs, but on this latest run it gave me 32mpg, a very satisfactory result. So, what to do about the brakes? Well, you will have to wait to find out as all will be revealed in Part 2 of the **M**agical **G**rand **C**ruising Tour which will arrive in your inbox next month.

### ***Tour Photo Gallery***



*The tour group – l to r: Ian Grant, Ross & Shona Osborne, Jack Shuttleworth, Chris Butler, Shirl Burrridge, Jenny Shuttleworth, Ross Butler, Maureen & Doug Stanaway  
Photographer: Jock Burrridge*

*You couldn't pick a better group of people to go touring with!!*



*The other cars on the Mighty MGs Run*



*Barry Hoffman's Morgan Aero*





*7 MGCs in Taupo – l to r: Raewyn & Peter Dunlop's GT, Shaun Leahy & Stephanie McGreevy's roadster, Barry Hoffman's GT, Mr Grant's roadster, Bob & Jill Sherman's GT, Grant & Michael Fitzpatrick's roadster, John Barrett's GT*



*John Barrett's CGT project car*



*John's Ferrari & Mazda RX-7 race car*



*Barry Hoffman's Morgan Plus8 with his CGT in the background*



*Ross Butler contemplating if the Plymouth Prowler would fit in his garage*





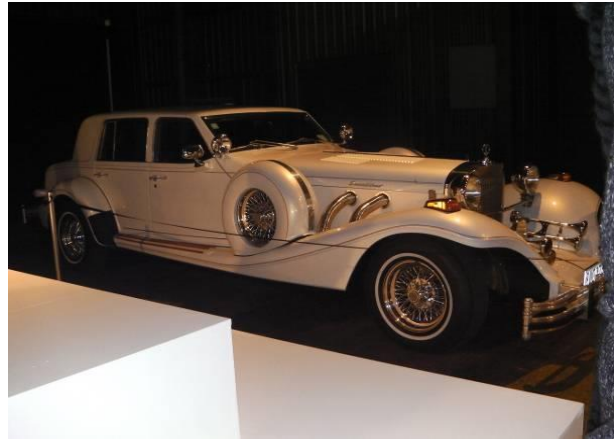
*Some of the many WOW exhibits*



*3 Triumphs, an MGTC & a Volvo at WOW*



*2 Studebakers at WOW*



*Excalibur as made for Studebaker*



*The private collection attached to WOW*



*Another Mighty MG – Lawrie & Jenny Steere's BGT V8 at Orton Bradley Park*





*Jaguar E-Type & Porsche 911 at John & Mary Hutton's in Christchurch*



*Colin Sweetman's Ford Cougar with the Rolls Royce Silver Shadow in front*



*The Sweetman's Austin 3-Litre*



*2 Ford Mustangs & a Ford Falcon in the Sweetman collection*



*A neighbour of Colin's came along to join us in his MGA – Jock Burridge looks on*

***and finally.....***



***Drive safely, enjoy your MGC and remember C-ing is believing.....***

***Ian Grant***



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**[NB: No calls after 9pm please](#)**

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