



MGC NEWSLETTER

Autumn; Covid-19, Level One

Issue No.30, May 2021



THE MGC REGISTER of NEW ZEALAND



Editor's Report

Haere Mai, not too much MGC news to report this time guys, the days are closing in and things are starting to quieten down for the winter. Having said that the MG Car Club is busting at the seams with events almost every weekend. This issue includes an interesting variety of topics including Alan Krissansen's sump removal, event reports, Ian Grant's engine rebuild and other snippets from Aotearoa and overseas.

Our national fight to contain **COVID -19** continues to keep us safe and currently holding at **Level One nationwide**. Well done everyone. We are so lucky to be enjoying an almost normal life once again. Let's hope we can keep it that way. **PHD**

Photo: Harvey Heath's much-travelled MGC GT at the recent **Brits & Euro Classic Car Show**.

**Unite
against
COVID-19**

Harvey's doing well.....

Thought I'd let you know that our **Harvey Heath** has had a short spell in hospital and is now up and about moving fast towards a full recovery as seen at Brits & Euros.

Was good to see you Harvey, the Register and members send you their best wishes.



Brits & Euro, Auckland, April 2021



Even though the previous day's weather had been atrocious there was an excellent turn out by the **MG Car Club** at this year's **Brits & Euro**. This is one of those shows that's a real must for European car lovers with a wide variety of over 1000 cars on display to feast on. If you've not been before why not make a mental note for next year, I'm sure you'll find it worthwhile.



Harvey Heath and **Tony Barbarich** (photo above left) were in attendance with their GTs and of course myself and wife **Raewyn** with our white car. Raewyn's GT was at home, much to her disappointment, after "*spitting its dummy out*" with a leaking rear axle seal. **John Vevers**, the **Austin 3-Litre** aficionado, C roadster owner, roving reporter and constant supplier of internet jokes, was also in attendance bringing the register's contribution to three cars and five owners. **PHD**

Bob & Jill McMurray's GT finds a new home.....



There was a tinge of sadness in learning that Bob and Jill's family had decided to sell their GT. **Jill** has been able to ride in the car with her son **Michael** at the wheel but, sadly, **Bob** passed away before the extended rebuild was completed. Bob was one of the founding members of the MGC Register when it was established in 1985.



The **GOOD NEWS** is that the car is now with a very happy new owner **Marti Anderson** and her husband **Arden Miller**. Marti has agreed to share her email with us which confirms her passion for the car and the MG marque. Welcome to the world of MGC ownership and the MGC Register of New Zealand, Marti. We look forward to seeing you at a club meeting soon and wish you many years of happy motoring in your very special MG.

*"My name is **Marti Anderson** and I have been in love with MG cars since I was very small. I always wanted to purchase one, and I did in fact own a nineteen seventy-something MGB GT (burnt orange) when I first moved to New Zealand in 1999. I used it as my everyday car and absolutely adored it but didn't really know how to care for it. It was pretty unreliable and over time also became badly affected*



by rust, so I eventually just gave up on it. It was, however, a very good learning experience. I hoped that one day, when I had the means and also a garage, I would be able to find and purchase "the right one." I wanted it to be made in 1969 fully restored inside and out, in British Racing Green, and definitely a GT. Since that original wish (or was it a promise?), I uncovered the existence of the MGC as well, and learned a little about it – such an appealing car! So I broadened my scope to include it, too, in my heart.

*Well, the time in my life when it became "possible" eventually arrived (21 years after that original promise!), so I started to keep my eyes and ears open but being in no particular rush. I contacted **Paul Walbran**, and he*

mentioned that this special one, lovingly restored by a family of MG devotees over a period of many, many years, was actually about to be completed and would be coming up for sale. I was naturally very excited, over the moon at the thought of it actually, and decided to come and see it. Perhaps needless to say, it was love at first sight!

*My first real outing was to take it for a spin with my husband **Arden Miller** for his birthday in late April. We had a truly lovely day out! The photo (above) is from our first outing (taken up in **Puhoi**), and you can see what a lovely wee car it is. Now, I drive it almost every day, whenever possible, and with a perpetual smile of gratitude on my face!*

More North Island cars on the move....



Ian Finlayson's Tartan Red Roadster

This lovely triple-SU carburettor example sold as soon as the advert appeared and is now living in the Art Deco world of **Napier** with its new owner. More information should be available in our next newsletter.



and John Dorking's Roadster

John's 1968 British Racing Green roadster is now residing on Auckland's North Shore. We look forward to meeting the new owner and welcoming him to the register.

Seen here below with rego HS3932 and Rostyle wheels in 1998.



Douglas & Laura Schirripa, Southern California



It was good to meet up with **Doug and Laura Schirripa** from Southern California at last month's club night. They have a long history of classic car ownership which currently includes a **Sandy Beige, wire wheeled, 1968 MCGT** seen in this photo sporting the New York plates "**NOTTAB**". This is an unmolested, original LHD car with only 58,460 miles on the clock. The good news is that we have another MGC owner on our register, the bad news is that the car is in the USA. However, Doug and Kiwi wife Laura spend a lot of time here in Auckland where they currently have an MGB roadster.

I will try to convince him of the huge benefits gained from also having an MGC in the shed.

E-mail received from Doug:

We had a great time. You have all made us so welcome – we just need to spend more time in NZ. But we will see what travel is allowed in the future. Our tentative plan is to be back before Christmas if the powers that be allow! I don't have a nicely composed picture of 'NOTTAB' but I've included one shot in the garage where it has been resting for the past 20 years. There are also two shots of the original floors that are still intact! Thought you would find these entertaining. I have pulled all the brake hydraulics and plan on a complete rebuild. I will do my best to document and keep you updated, Doug.



MAJOR engine work on Ian Grant's roadster, 69C

On returning home from **John Barrett's** funeral in Taupo on the 6th of March last year (incidentally 69C's 51st birthday), a check of the engine oil level revealed the oil consumption



issue was getting to the point where the situation had to be addressed. The following morning, on starting the car, it was quite clear it would not pass its next WOF emissions test. Then Covid-19 hit!! In September I made a start by stripping the engine bay and over Labour Weekend, with the very much appreciated assistance of fellow-MGC owner **James Smith**, the power unit came out. On the Tuesday morning, John and Paul from **Matamata Automotive** arrived and took the complete assembly to the machine shop, returning the gearbox to me later that day. It became clear that the engine and gearbox have been out before as both had been painted

dark green, nothing like the original factory colour. James has had his roadster converted to overdrive, so I decided to do the same, making contact with **Ian Priestley** in **Taumarunui** to set up a time to deliver the gearbox. This I did and two weeks later picked up the overhauled gearbox, the job done for \$1400. I had given the gearbox a thorough clean before delivering it and had found the inside of the bellhousing to be very dirty and oily. The front seal in the box was not doing its job and there was also some wear on the layshaft, so this overhaul was quite timely. I have since stripped all of the paint off the box and was able to answer the question that the gearboxes were also painted at the factory (mine certainly was) as the pieces of paint that came off are dark green on one side and light green on the other. John has a very, very busy

machine shop and does a lot of heavy commercial and farm work which, I can appreciate, takes priority over a recreational vehicle, so it was a while before my engine was stripped down.

In the meantime, I had taken a trip to Waihi to get John at **Harmonic Damper Rebuilds** in Waihi to overhaul the damper. The engine has been stripped and passed the crack test but an interesting finding was the 5thou runout on the centre main journals of the crankshaft. I have an A4 sheet full of jobs that I am working through so hope to have 69C looking pretty smart by the time she is back on the road in time for some springtime motoring.

Ian Grant

Yes, it is an MGC.....but not as we know it

This little beauty is somebody's dream machine but what do you think?..... do you **Love it or hate it?** If you fancy owning it you'll need deep pockets containing around \$80,000 plus shipping and compliance etc.

Ian Grant gives you the facts.....

Firstly, a thank you to **John Vevers** for finding this and passing it on. This C roadster was recently seen for sale online at **Hexagon Classics** for

£39,995 – has an AC Cobra-like stance from the rear three-quarter view. According to the advertising, this roadster has been named “The Monster” by its creators with Sebring specification wheel arches, Daytona chrome wire wheels, a bespoke leather interior and Riviera Blue Metallic paintwork. It is powered by the six-cylinder 2912cc engine with the upgraded performance provided by triple carburettors, a **Downton** twin-pipe exhaust system, electronic ignition and overdrive for open road

touring. The low mileage of 50,850 is believed to be genuine. The advertisement showed the chassis number so a check of the factory records show it was built between the 11th and 14th of October 1968 and finished in British Racing Green with automatic transmission and

despatched to North America on the 1st of November. So, it has returned to the UK and been converted to right-hand drive for a new lease of life. A quick trip to the shops, anyone!!!



Ever taken the **SUMP OFF** with the **ENGINE** still in the car?

Alan Krissansen has and yes, it's a challenge! It all started with Alan finding a bolt lying in the sump during a routine oil change. This is his story.....

How a SIMPLE OIL CHANGE can turn into a MAJOR job.

Changing the oil in my MGC the other day I received quite a surprise. When draining the oil I poked my finger in the sump hole and felt a loose bolt sitting inside the sump! After having to sit down to get over finding the bolt, and contemplating the problem, I examined the bolt and felt because of its size it was probably off the oil pump.

My next move was to take the bolt down to **Paul Walbran** to see what he thought. Paul also thought it was probably off the oil pump as well and advised it would be best to investigate before driving the car again.

Dropping the sump off an MGC is no easy task as there is a cross member in the way. The only way to do it is to raise the engine so you can clear the cross-member.



To raise the engine I used a block of wood under the front main pulley. In hindsight, I would not really recommend this method as the jack gets in the way and I also worried about the weight on the front pulley. The best method would be to borrow an engine lifter. To raise the

engine you have to remove the engine mounting bolts and radiator. I managed to lift it about two inches before it touched the gearbox tunnel. Once the sump was off I could see straight away that the bolt was off the oil pump. There are three main bolts that hold the oil pump and then a smaller one to the side. It was the smaller bolt to the side that had dropped out (see photos). I went to see an engine rebuilder with photos and bolt. The engine rebuilder advised that if the three main bolts were still tight then the pump would still be working fine. He did recommend using **Locktight** on the bolt when putting it back.

I found it very difficult on my own to put the sump back on and ended up ringing my friend **Graeme** to give me a hand. We discovered that the only way to get the sump on with ease was to remove the four front cover studs which luckily came out easily. A gasket sealer was used on the sump to hold the gasket in place while lifting it into position and on the engine block mating face.

I have now reassembled it all and taken it for a drive and all seems well. The oil pressure is good and exactly the same as before I removed the sump.

Alan Krissansen, 1969 MGC Roadster

PS: The errant bolt was a minor fastening on the oil pump and appears to have no significant purpose. If anyone knows more, please drop me an email. **PHD**



MG3000 is alive and kicking in Queenstown

This Sebring replica (based on a 1968, BRG, NZ new, GT) has been spotted on **Facebook** by our trusted reporter **John Vevers**. Good stuff John, another scoop for the newsletter! **Ian Grant's** response: *There are two CGTs with similar plates - **MG3000** (that's three zeros, black and silver plates) which was blue and then repainted gold, had the registration cancelled in 2014. The last I heard about this C was that it was garaged under a house in **Ellerslie**. It has been in the same family since 1974.*



MG3000 (three-letter Os) is the GT in **Queenstown** that is on the **Facebook** post and has been owned by the Bell family since 1998. It's good to learn that the car is on the road and in the hands of Martin's son David.....lucky man.

Have you lightened your FLYWHEEL?

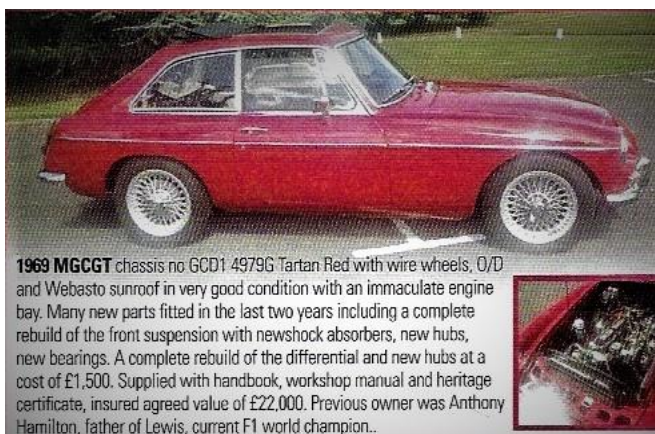
There has been a lot written about the heavy flywheel that was fitted to the MGC and a large number of owners over the years have had them lightened when engine work was being carried out.

So, just how much does a C flywheel weigh? I asked the guys at my engine shop to put mine on the scales and, with ring gear still fitted, it came in at **15kgs** (33lbs).

We are interested to hear from any owners who have lightened their flywheels regarding the weight reduction made and the difference, good or bad, to the engine's performance. There are some schools of thought that doing this has a detrimental effect on low-down torque, so we would like to know what you have experienced. **Ian Grant**



Has Lewis Hamilton's father owned two MGCs?



1969 MGCGT chassis no. GCD1 4979G Tartan Red with wire wheels, O/D and Webasto sunroof in very good condition with an immaculate engine bay. Many new parts fitted in the last two years including a complete rebuild of the front suspension with new shock absorbers, new hubs, new bearings. A complete rebuild of the differential and new hubs at a cost of £1,500. Supplied with handbook, workshop manual and heritage certificate, insured agreed value of £22,000. Previous owner was Anthony Hamilton, father of Lewis, current F1 world champion..

I saw this advert in the current **MGCC Safety Fast** magazine prompting the question "Has Anthony Hamilton also owned a **Tartan Red GT**?"

The last time we reported on this subject was in 2019 when Anthony drove his **Riviera Blue MGC roadster** in the British Grand Prix driver parade at Silverstone.

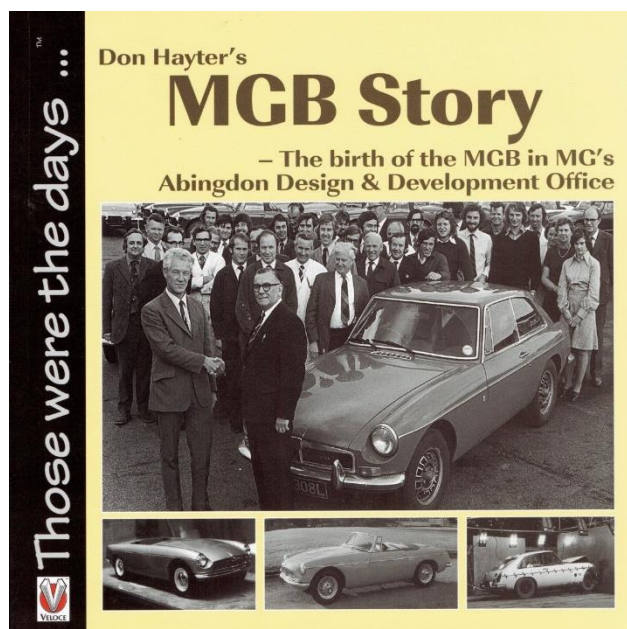
Don Hayter, 1926-2020, Engineer and Designer

Don Hayter, the highly respected designer who was an important member of the team that created the MGB, passed away in October last year at the age of 94. His career in design began with the **Pressed Steel Company** in



Cowley where he served his apprenticeship in aircraft design, which included work on the **Avro Lancaster** during the war years. Post-war he moved to car production, creating body panels for the **Jaguar XK120** and the **MG ZA Magnette** and by 1952 he was at **Aston Martin** before taking his draughtsman's skills to MG. He arrived at Abingdon during the early years of **MGA** production and was involved in some of the design work on the **Twin Cam** but it was the **MGB** that was his greatest achievement where the monocoque construction was developed, a totally different concept from the MGA, which had a separate chassis. Once the MGB project was approved, Don was instrumental in making the production ready as well as specific work on the design of the hood, the dashboard and the windscreen, all three of which are the same as on the MGC. Several projects followed the MGB success including the **SSV-1** safety car (an interesting looking MGBGT) and the shell of the MGC GT racer before he was promoted in 1973 to the position of Chief Design & Development Engineer. By the time the factory was closed by British Leyland in 1980, Don had been at MG for 24 years. Two years at Pressed Steel followed where Don was involved in the development of the **Honda Ballade** into what became the **Triumph Acclaim**. After retiring from motor vehicle design in 1982, Don moved

into working on medical equipment, designing mobility solutions for sufferers of cerebral palsy and motor neurone disease. Don retained his passion for MG, regularly attending events in his own MGBV8 and he became Honorary Vice-President of the **MG Car Club** in 2001. In 2012, after much prompting, he produced his book "**Don Hayter's MGB Story**" which gives a great insight into workings at the factory and includes a section on the MGC. In the story of the MGC's development, Don recalls the incident involving **Roy Brocklehurst** and **Tom Haig** when they took out what looked like an MGB for a road test. This particular car had the lightweight, 2.6-litre Australian six-cylinder engine under the bonnet, but there was nothing outwardly to show it wasn't a standard MGB. Road testing went well with a top speed of just under 130mph (the MGB is around 105mph). Using the new bypass on the southern outskirts of Oxford, Roy and Tom were timed by the Oxford constabulary who were testing new speed recording equipment. When stopped they were asked, "What have you got under the bonnet? That was 127mph. Please be careful". No maximum speed limit in those days!!



R.I.P. Don – you have touched the lives of so many people, a large number of whom still get a great deal of pleasure from what you produced. **Ian Grant**

“Our Roving Reporter” John Vevers

A nice pic of **John Vevers** and his favourite **1972 Austin 3 Litre Deluxe** taken at the recent Brits & Euros. This is one of the last bunch built in March/April 1971, factory fitted with the **MGC-spec black-painted engine**. Registered in **Taihape** with two farmer owners. It was bought from the second owner's estate in 2005 after 20 years barn storage. Has 77,000 miles currently and still wears a 1985 registration label.

John also owns this **1968 LHD (ex-Denmark) Tartan Red MGC** roadster which he purchased in 1985.



Soaring MGC prices in Aussie

We were recently copied this e-mail as received by our good Aussie mate **Bruce Ibbotson**. Bruce has owned a 1968 CGT from new and has significantly improved the all-round performance of his car during this time. Prices quoted below are in Australian dollars.

*“Just like to bring to your attention the soaring prices of the **MGC** in Australia. Which will be music to your ears. A roadster has just gone on Car Sales for **\$69,500**. I have been driven around the block in this one and it is a spot-on car. Another roadster was sold in **New South Wales** a few weeks ago on Car Sales for **\$55,000** it was highly enhanced, 3 Webers, etc. It is good to know that we can all have fun with our cars, and not lose money”.*

A beautiful US roadster rebuild

Thought you may like to see this stunning rebuild. The car is a LHD automatic Tartan Red roadster owned by a **Terry Looft** from **Wilmington, Ohio**.

Photos and details courtesy of the **MGC Facebook** page spotted, once again, by **John Vevers**.



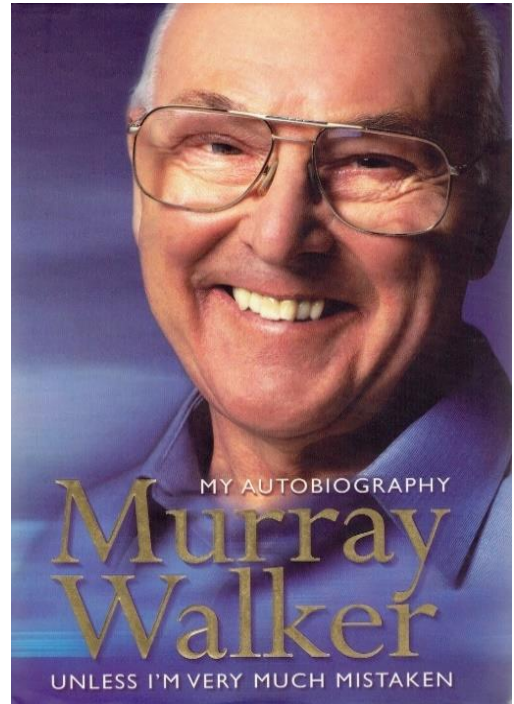
Terry Looft

Murray Walker – 1923-2021

A couple of years ago, while browsing in a second-hand bookshop, I came across Murray Walker's autobiography that was published in 2002, a year after he officially retired from his broadcasting career. The book sat on the shelf and I had the best intentions of getting to it at some stage but it was hearing that Murray passed away at the age of 97 in March that prompted me to read it – and what a great read it was too. He was born in Birmingham in 1923 and his father Graham was a motorcycle racing champion and Murray saw his first race at the age of two. After active service in World War II, he forged a successful career as an advertising executive, handling major blue-chip companies such as Esso and Mars. His debut as a sports commentator came in 1949 when he covered the British Grand Prix at Silverstone for BBC Radio. Since then he entertained the listening and viewing audiences with his commentaries on car and motorcycle racing, in particular Formula 1 where he played a key role in shaping this top-level sports' television image. In the book, he describes his relationships with many of the key personalities of his era from Geoff Duke to Mike Hailwood, Stirling Moss to John Surtees, Nigel Mansell to Ayrton Senna, and Damon Hill to the world champion at the time of writing the book, Michael Schumacher.

He also recalls his celebrated commentary partnerships, initially with the late James Hunt (now there are two different characters that made for an interesting working relationship) and later with his great friend, former Formula 1 driver, Martin Brundle, who took Murray for a race-speed trip around Silverstone in a two-seater F1 car.

Murray has driven the Grand Prix track at Silverstone in an F1 car, ridden the Isle of Man TT circuit at speed (he was a competent motorcycle rider himself) and received numerous awards such as the OBE in 1996, The Royal Television Society Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000, a BAFTA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001 and an Australian Grand Prix Corporation Lifetime Achievement Award, also in 2001, to name just a few. One of the things that made Murray popular were his race commentary "Murrayisms" which is where the title of the book, "Unless I'm Very Much Mistaken", comes from. A very interesting read which I can highly recommend. R.I.P. Murray. **Ian Grant**



Not what I was expecting.....

Removing the hub from the back axle on Raewyn's GT, during the replacement of a leaking oil seal, proved to be easier said than done. Once removed it was obvious that the damaged spline was to blame (see photo). How this was done remains a mystery but with a lot of careful filing it was cleaned up, ready for reassembly. The bearing retaining collar had also been damaged taking a similar amount of time and effort to remove. I can only assume that someone, at some time, had seriously run out patience! **PHD**



James Smith, an MGC “Good Sort”

James has been a supporter of the register ever since it's resurrection, by **Peter Dunlop** and **Ian Grant**. He has owned his **New Zealand-new 1969 Tartan Red roadster** since 2005 and regularly drives up from **Rotorua** to attend our meetings. This guy is another genuine enthusiast taking part in his local **“Drive It Day”** at weekends with a wide variety of other classic performance cars. **James** is nominated as this issue's **“Good Sort”** for his support of the register and helping Ian remove his engine and gearbox prior to the current rebuild.

Good on you James!

(photo: J1M1E before the current 69MGC)



and finally.....

Two cool MGC owners..... try to impress

Some people will do anything to get their pic in our newsletter. Such as these two, the 1968 MGC roadster owner **Derrick Smith** and, of course, **Peter Dunlop**.

Seen here on the aft deck of the classic wooden launch **“JAN”** at the **Lake Rotoiti** regatta.



Drive safely and enjoy, C-ing is believing...

Peter Dunlop & Ian Grant

Register website



Go to: www.mgclub.org.nz

Click on "Information"

Then click on the word "Registers"

Then click on "MGC Register" and you are there!

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Your MGC Register Team



Left to Right.....Peter & Raewyn, Ian, Jane & Harvey

NB: No calls after 9 pm, please.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MGCC, the MGC Register or its Editor. Readers should exercise their own judgement when considering technical or other matters, information and advice.

Parts for Sale

Harvey Heath's rebuilt MGC water pumps

I have a number of repair kits in stock and can offer EXCHANGE WATER PUMPS with new bearings and seals fitted for the princely sum of **\$70.00** plus post and packaging.



For more information please contact:
Home: 09 8342552; Mobile: 021 1721033;
E-mail: harvey.w.heath@gmail.com

Harvey Heath's MGC king pin service

I can now offer a service of fitting, reaming and setting up the king pin end float.

There are a number of options available:

You can send me your stub axle assembly and I will refurbish it and send it back to you ready for fitting onto your car.

You supply all, or some of the parts, and I will assemble your stub axle correctly and return to you for fitting on your car.

You bring your car to me and I will do the complete job including removal, refurbishing and refitting.

I have a full selection of shims and bushes and king pins in stock.

COST Option (1) \$80.00 per side labour, plus parts, packaging and delivery (courier or postage).



Please call me for further information on the above options, the work you require and the total price.

Home: 09 8342552; Mobile: 021 1721033

E-mail: harvey.w.heath@gmail.com

Photo Gallery



US spec engine, auto box and oil pressure sender unit, **Terry Looft, Wilmington, Ohio.**



The steering wheel of **Tim Hodgkinson's MGC prototype, FRX**, engraved to acknowledge the men who were involved in the MGC's development and production including **Don Hayter**.

“An MGC but not as we know it”.....with Cobra styled tail



UK MGC Register Report courtesy of “Safety Fast”

MGC

Mike Haughton
mgc_mike@btinternet.com
www.mgcc.co.uk/mgc-register/

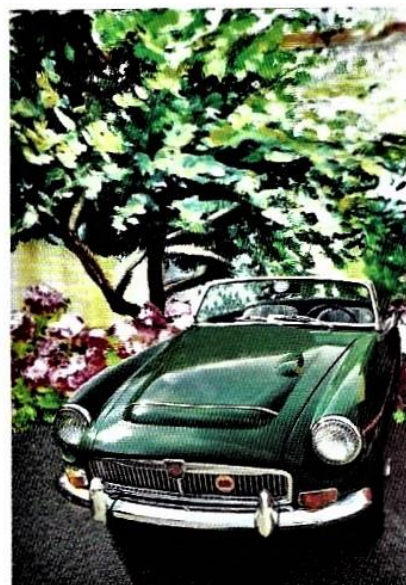


March is nearly here, and we would usually be planning which events to attend, booking tickets, and getting our cars ready. At the moment, this year looks like being a bit quiet – but let's hope we can get out and about sooner rather than later. As soon as we have any events to attend we will let you know – both here in *Safety Fast!* and on the MGC Register Facebook page

My own tinkering has involved adding relays for the headlights (had a short in one of the lamp connectors), trying to work out how to wire in an intermittent wiper control – and the usual greasing and oil change.

Have a good look at your tyres, too – if the car has been standing a fair time there could be cracks in the side walls. Manufacturers recommend that tyres should be replaced after 10 years regardless of tread depth, as the rubber can harden and crack – and you won't be able to corner or brake too well! Date codes are on the sidewall. You should find four digits in an 'oval' marking indicating the month and year of manufacture – e.g. 0416 – meaning fourth month of 2016. If you can only find three digits your tyres are pre-2000 and should be changed!

I will leave you with this thought:
Little Jimmy and his



A couple more great photos that didn't quite make the calendar

dad were at Oulton Park watching the MG racers doing their stuff.

Jimmy looks up to his Dad and says: “Dad, when I grow up, I want to be an MG driver.”

His Dad looks down at him and says: “You can't do both, son.”





Derrick Smith's (see Lake Rotoiti photo) **1968 MGC** black roadster brought with him from South Africa.

And, as can be the case with we MG enthusiasts, one MG is just not enough. Derrick brought several with him including this stunning **MG WA Tickford**, pictured here with the trophies won at yet another classic car event. Derrick on the left with Peter Van Harselaar, MG Car Club's Bay of Plenty group event organiser.

