

MG CAR CLUB NORTHERN CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



**MG CAR CLUB
NORTHERN CENTRE
PO BOX 35765
MENLO PARK 0102**

**NEWSLETTER No. 330
FEBRUARY 2009**

85 YEARS OF MG MAGIC – 1924 TO 2009

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Other Portfolios: Website Manager

Ex Officio

Regalia Sales: Charles Thompson

Tel: 012 654 1284

Website: www.mgcc-north.co.za

Monthly Natter 'n Noggins - every first Monday of the month (except Public Holidays) at the Clubhouse, c/o Umgazi Road and 26th Ave, Menlo Park, Pretoria

An Entry Fee of R100 is applicable to all new Members
Annual Membership Fee: R180.00 -
Country Members: R90.00

The views, comments and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Club or Executive Committee

AFFILIATED TO
THE MG CAR CLUB
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
ENGLAND

COVER PHOTO

1924 MG 14/40 "Bullnose" Super Sports

MATTERS OF MOMENT

By Peter Noeth

Newsletter

As promised last month the front page has undergone an evolutionary revision. The picture on the left will change from month to month. This month the picture of the "Bullnose" 1924 14/40 MG Tourer announces the 85th Anniversary of the birth of the MG marque.

With the launch of the revised MG TFs that were assembled at the Longbridge works in Birmingham late last year, Derek Howes' article on page 9 gives a history of the works and recounts some of his experiences when he worked there. This will be followed by periodic articles of a technical nature that will solve various maintenance problems, in future Newsletters.

George Dehlens article on the Cullinan run last month is supplemented with an interesting article on the Zonderwater Italian Cemetery just outside Cullinan. When my late father joined up for the Second World War he went to Zonderwater Camp for prior training before being shipped out to Madagascar. What is now the M10 Hans Strydom Drive was originally built from Roberts Heights military camp to Zonderwater during the war and was previously known as the Old Military Road.

The list of service providers has been omitted from this issue pending a decision by Exco to charge for commercial ads or not

Future Events

We have two major events coming up in short succession; the Annual Awards Luncheon in February and the Annual General Meeting in March. Details on pages 5 and 6.

Also another mega-tour to celebrate the Johannesburg Centre's 40th Anniversary and their March run are noted on pages 7 and 8.

Number Plates

As from the 1st January 2009 Gauteng is intro-

ducing new number plates that cannot be easily changed - they will be permanently bolted to the bodywork of the vehicle and will have to be fitted exclusively by specially appointed fitment centres who will have the special equipment to fit the plates.

The plates may have a chip that will make them easily identifiable. The motivation for this move is to reduce theft and other crime - "mog 't treffe!!!"

Just before Xmas, the only fitment centre in Pretoria was McCarthy Volkswagen at Silver Lakes Crossing. More Centres will be added progressively. The expected cost has not been divulged, but we can expect to dig deep!

Northern Centre Web site

Our Web site is, if not the best, certainly a front runner. It is beautifully laid out with plenty of pictures and information on past and future events and application for membership procedures. Webmaster George Dehlen keeps it updated and the year's Newsletters (other than the current one) can be viewed and downloaded. Every member with access to the internet should visit the web site once a month - go on - try it : www.mgcc-north.co.za - you will be amazed!!!

Obituary

We are sad to be informed at this late stage that long-standing member Rod Conacher died at the Wilgers Hospital on the 7th July last year. A keen owner of several MG models, the latest of which is a beautifully restored Midget, Rod did not attend many events in latter years, but his untimely death will be a shock to all of us that knew him. Our heartfelt condolences go to Merle and the family.

FROM BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Ivan De Clerk

2009 - Broadly speaking

Finally 2009 arrived and with some good news to top it all. Can you believe the price of petrol at R5.82? Who would ever have guessed? And a decrease to nearly half of what it was. I drove past a filling station in Rubenstein Street and couldn't believe my eyes when I saw their electronic board displaying latest prices. It makes one want to fill the car and just drive around the block a couple of times.

Filling the tank at this price makes a big difference, and we can only hope that it stays as it is. It is also a pleasure to drive the MG TF160, which is now giving me 6,3Lt/100Km. This is less than half of what my Land Rover was using!

When planning Club Runs your executive members always consider distance. Fuel should be used sparingly and we realize that not all our members can afford to burn a tank or two on a Run.

The new lower price of fuel showed just how big an influence it is on distances of Club Runs, because last Sunday's Run to Cullinan was exceptionally well supported. There must have been more than twenty-five MG's and a few plastics too. We flooded the little town of Cullinan and what a sight it was to see all those shiny MG's in the parking lot and under the trees. From Helgaards Bright Red TD and the sparkling TC of George, to Tony and Annette's Orange Midget to Marius' Platinum TF. A colorful bunch indeed. The MGCC NC banners were flying in the slight breeze. Any early morning concerns of cloudiness and cool weather was soon longed for as the sun beat down on the group looking for a bit of shelter to have brunch. Peter and Errol found us a table under some trees. Esra and Adri preferred the sun and some of the group, Dave and Rodger parked at a neighboring restaurant. An enjoyable day altogether.

We have some great Club Runs planned for this year, including the Cosmos Festival in April and a weekend in the Eastern Freestate in November being organized by Derek Howes. There will be a Gymkhana, of course the Icicle Rally and the Jacaranda Jaunt to look forward to. I would like to ask all our members to make an attempt, especially now that fuel is more affordable, to come along on these Runs. Come, have some fun, and meet each other on an informal basis. Show off you MG's and help encourage our younger members to do the same. Our Club has a strong social arm and it is wonderful to see our members just visiting and enjoying each other's company.

This year – let's have some FUN. We have the 60th anniversary of the MG TD's and are looking for a suitable venue. If members have any ideas and suggestion then why not let me know? I would appreciate your input.

Well, now its time again to go and work on the TD. The interior is now my priority and within the next week (or two) I intend to start her up. Cannot wait!

So until next time – Enjoy your MG and please drive safely.

Chairman – Ivan de Clerk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

| | | | | |
|--------|------------------------|-----|--|---|
| Mon 2 | Natter 'n Noggin | NC | 19h30 at the Clubhouse - Table Raffle - details on page 6 | C |
| Thur 5 | Natter 'n Noggin | JHB | 20H00 at Old Edwardians Club c/o 11th St. and 4th Ave., Houghton - Norman Ewing - 083 654 5433 | |
| Mon 9 | Exco Meeting | NC | 19h30 at the Clubhouse | |
| Sun 22 | Annual Awards Luncheon | NC | At eat@essense Moreletta Park - detailson page 6 | C |

MARCH

| | | | | |
|--------|-------------------------|-------|--|---|
| Sun 1 | Alfa Romeo Rally | SARRA | Joe Smith - 083 309 8632 | |
| Mon 2 | Annual General Meeting | NC | 20h00 at the Clubhouse - Notification on page 5 | C |
| Thur 5 | Natter 'n Noggin | JHB | 20H00 at Old Edwardians Club c/o 11th St. and 4th Ave., Houghton - Norman Ewing - 083 654 5433 | |
| Mon 9 | Exco Meeting | NC | 19h30 at the Clubhouse | |
| Sun 15 | Club Condition Concours | NC | Bring and Braai - details next month | C |

PLANNING AHEAD

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------|---|
| | | | |
| Apr 25-27 2009 | Gauteng Motor Show | Nedbank | To be held at Kyalamy - watch press for details |
| Sept 24-26 2009 | Cape Centres Gathering | Border | Port Alfred - Derek Graham - 082 811 6895 |
| Aug 2010 | Classic British Sports Car Tour | Steve Eden | See preliminary notice in August Newsletter |
| Sep 2010 | National Indaba | Cape Town | Oudshoorn |

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

| Member Number | Name | MG Model | Proposed By: |
|---------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 581 | Andy and Retha Goetsch | 1968 MGB GT | Ivan De Clerk |
| 582 | Ryan and Elaine Earle | 1972 MGB Roadster | Peter Noeth |

We welcome you to the MG Car Club Northern Centre and hope that you and your MG will enjoy many kilometers with

Notification of the Annual General Meeting

MG CAR CLUB NORTHERN CENTRE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

In terms of the Constitution of the MG Car Club Northern Centre, Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the MG Car Club Northern Centre will be held on the 2nd March 2009 at 20h00 at the Clubhouse, 26 Umgazi Road, Menlo Park, Pretoria.

Also in terms of the Constitution, the Executive Committee is required to nominate three of its existing members to carry over to serve on the new Committee in 2009. The names of the nominees will be published in the Match Newsletter. We really need some new blood to bring fresh ideas. Most of the current Committee members are holding down more than one portfolio - we need some additional help here, to share the load. Committee meetings are usually held on the second Monday of the month at the Clubhouse and normally finish around 10pm. If you feel you can make time to make a contribution, or know of someone whose arm can be twisted, please come forward.

Below is a nomination form for Committee membership. This must be signed by both the proposer and the nominee and must be handed in to the current Committee by 20h00 at the AGM.

Anyone wishing to place an item for discussion on the AGM Agenda must submit a request in writing, with a suitable motivation, to the Committee no later than the 15th February 2009

NOMINATION FOR COMMITTEE MEMBER

I,being a member in good standing of the MG Car Club, Northern Centre, hereby nominate:

.....to stand for election to the Club's Executive Committee.

Signature.....Date.....

I accept the nomination and agree to serve on Executive Committee if elected

Signature.....Date.....

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 2008

Your annual Subscription Fee is now due. You should pay by the 1st of March. Please bear in mind that only fully paid up members may vote at the AGM!

EVENT DETAILS

Natter 'n Noggin Monday 2nd February Table Raffle

We want all your unwanted Xmas gifts, MG parts, books, memorabilia, garage items, household items - in fact almost anything that you no longer need or want. So start sorting out and bring your stuff to Tony Craddock at the Natter 'n Noggin

Annual Awards Luncheon - Sunday 22nd February 11h30 for 12h00

This is to be held at eat@essence, an exclusive cosy restaurant in Moreletta Park. We have the exclusive use of the venue. We have negotiated a three-course meal at R130.00 per person, and a cash bar will operate. Dress: Smart/casual.

Booking is essential, so contact Tony Craddock and make your reservation as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Payment with booking please. Payment may be made direct to the Club's savings account with ABSA Bank A/C No. 0-1877-9749, but please put your name as the reference. If a bank deposit is made, post a copy of the deposit slip to PO Box 35765, Menlo Park 0102, or phone Tony on 073 221 2610.

Directions to locate eat@essence

- Take the Rigel off ramp of the N1.
- Turn right into Rigel if you are coming from Johannesburg and left if you are coming from Polokwane.
- Drive in the direction of Delmas on the R50
- Straight over the traffic lights at the Old Erasmus Castle on your right
- Turn LEFT onto Hans Strijdom (the M10) at the second set of traffic lights
- Turn RIGHT into Rubenstein at the first set of traffic lights
- Follow Rubenstein down the dip and keep to the left.
- Pass Moreletta Park NG Church on your right
- Turn RIGHT onto Witdoring Street at the 3 way stop.
- Turn RIGHT into Spesbona Drive (the 3rd street to your right).
- You will find the Moreletta Centre on your right after about 300 meters
- Eat@essence is in the right hand side of the centre.

Eat@essence restaurant, 616 Spesbona Drive, Moreletta Park 012 997 6011

GPS Co-ordinates: S 25° 49.62' and E 28° 17.18'

Club Run to the Historic Village of Cullinan

By George Dehlen

Organised by Chairman Ivan de Clerk, the Northern Centre Club Run on Sunday 18th January was to Cullinan. There was a good turnout of members and their families and friends in 22 MGs, a Triumph and several moderns.

Most took brunch at one of the many restaurants in the village, and then strolled down the street visit to some of the numerous restaurants, art and antique shops and museums, a highlight being Jan Harmsgat se Agterplaas. There was not time for a tour of the big hole and the still-functioning diamond mine – perhaps another visit is called for.

There is far more to see of the 100-year old village than we were able to during the brief stop. The Premier Diamond Mine was established in 1902, followed soon by a recreation club, sports fields, churches, a school, corrugated steel housing, banks, an hotel, a hospital, and a railway spur and station, many of which are still to be seen today. One nostalgic stop along the route was at the Zonderwater POW Cemetery between Rayton and Cullinan – see the separate article.



Coming Event – MGCC Johannesburg Centre's 40th Anniversary Tour

Lordy Lordy We Are Forty

The Johannesburg Centre is celebrating its 40th birthday this year.

Part of the celebration will be a historic fun tour, in any MG, of the Transvaal as it was 40 years ago – including both Johannesburg and Northern Centres which were combined at that time.

The tour will include parts of the North West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Gauteng Provinces.

The full tour will be from Saturday 1st August to Monday 10th August 2009 (a Public Holiday). Persons who don't have sufficient leave may opt for a shorter tour, joining the others at Tzaneen on Friday 7th or Saturday 8th, ending together on Monday 10th.

The planning team need to gauge interest in the tour before starting the detailed planning, and would like interested persons to contact one of the names below before 13th February, indicating how many persons / type of MG / which tour (full or short) they would want to do. This is not a commitment, but purely a show of interest.

Kevin Loader 011 678 3762 kloader@worldonline.co.za

Mike Okeefe 083 449 5220 mok@asu.co.za

John Buttress jopie@iburst.co.za

Clive Winterstein 083 795 0000 pet@iafrica.com

Italian POWs at Zonderwater

By Gorge Dehlen

As part of the club run to Cullinan, a very interesting though sad stop was at the Zonderwater POW Cemetery between Rayton and Cullinan. Many of us remember with nostalgia some of the German and Italian detainees and prisoners of war who were part of life in South Africa and (the then) Southern Rhodesia during the early 1940s.

Some 90000 (yes, ninety thousand!) Italian prisoners of war were held at the Zonderwater POW camp during the Second World War. They had been captured in Libya and Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), but could not be transported to England because of the dangers to shipping in the Mediterranean, nor could they be kept at the bases in Egypt, which were under attack at the time.

In the camp the POWs were able to attend school – basic literacy for those who needed that, but also numeracy, foreign languages, arts and crafts. They were taught trades, and put these to use in making furniture, repairing vehicles, maintaining roads etc. Some were allowed to work outside the camp on nearby farms. For recreation, the POWs took part in sports on extensive sportsfields (80 bowling alleys, 16 soccer fields, tennis courts, boxing rings ...), put on elaborate plays in 17 theatres, gave music concerts, making the props, costumes and musical instruments themselves in the camp. They planted flower and vegetable gardens, and decorated them with statues. Some of them used their artistic skills to give art lessons and paint murals which are still to be seen in the Cullinan recreation centre. The Zonderwater camp became like an Italian village.



The camp functioned from 1941 to 1947. Unfortunately the buildings have disappeared with time though some ruins remain. The Cemetery with the graves of some 264 men who died in the camp is immaculately maintained, with continuing interest of Italians both local and from Italy.

Johannesburg Centre Treasure/ Fun run for Sunday 5th March.

This is a non speed event that will set off from the Parking area of the Hyperama at the 14th Avenue off Ramp from the N1 at 9am. It will wind its way to Magaliesburg for the first section, there we will stop for a braai and proceed back to the finish at the trade Centre Complex. There will be a prize giving at the finish for various categories where the prizes will be sponsored by the Club. Various disciplines will have to be mastered if you want to complete the run and to be in the running for a prize. The cost for the whole day's event including lunch is R100 per person. This event is limited to 30 cars so don't delay and book your place by contacting Clive Winterstein at pet@iafrica.com or at 083795000. First come first served. Non MGs will be penalized to such an extent they will wish they hadn't come – you have been warned!

Longbridge Assembly Plant

By Derek Howse

After reading the Editor's 'Open Road' in the December issue I wondered how many members know the history of Longbridge. I worked there in the early 1970's for Sir Alex Issigonis and was involved in car design, so let me tell you a little about the plant.

On March 1894 a factory for a Birmingham printing company, White & Pike Ltd, making and printing tin boxes started on the Longbridge site but was abandoned by 1901. Herbert Austin was looking for a site to build his new factory and found the disused printing factory on 4 November 1905. By 22 January 1906 the Austin Motor Co. owned the site. The first chassis rolled out of the factory in Feb 1906. Austin's vision for his company was high right from the start. Four 100hp cars were developed for the 1908 French Grand Prix. They featured 9.7 litres, six cylinder engines. Only one of these cars survived to become a star exhibit at the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon. During WW1 the Austin Cars Longbridge plant turned to the war effort and produced over 8 million shells, 650 guns, 2000 aeroplanes, 2500 aero engines and 2000 trucks. For a short time after the war the factory continued producing aeroplanes;



one was the Austin Whippet a single-seater biplane with folding wings. By 1921 the Austin Car production restarted with the famous Austin 7 and brought cheap motoring to the public. World War 2 saw Longbridge mobilized again making shells, depth charges, Bren guns, mortars and helmets. Nearly 36000 aircraft were built, mainly Hurricanes, Stirling and Lancaster Bombers (see Picture below). Many of these were flown directly from Longbridge's own runway. Following a daytime raid on Longbridge, Lord Austin attended the funeral of those killed. While there he caught double pneumonia from which he died on 23 May 1941.

In the picture of the Longbridge plant it can be seen in the fore ground that a railway line goes into a tunnel. Longbridge was a catacomb of tunnels, which were used to hide the war production from the enemy so enemy aircraft would not bomb the plant. I was lucky

one day to be allowed to go into the tunnels. No war production to be seen but lots of prototype cars and models. The Monte Carlo mini rally cars and others were stored there too.

In the foreground of the picture are two big buildings CAB 2 with CAB 1 behind. These are the main assembly lines. Beyond was a large grass area in front of the 'Kremlin' which was the name given to the Directors' offices. Sir Alec's office was in the basement of the Kremlin on the far left. To the right of the Kremlin is the Design office and the last window on the right was my office. I looked directly over CAB 1.

So many times in the early 70's I saw the assembly lines stopped I knew British Leyland as it was then was not going to survive for much long and was part of the reason we left the UK for South Africa. I was a little out with my date but as we now know finally MG-Rover and the Longbridge Plant closed in 2005. A lot of the Plant has been sold off but the assembly lines and offices have been bought by the Chinese automobile corporation Hanjing and the first new MG- TF has been built at Longbridge. Currently only 200 people are employed at Longbridge but it is hoped this will rise and the MG production gets on stream soon. We all wish MG-Rover great success for the future.



MG MART

Please note that advertisements must reach the Editor by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Adverts may be faxed to Peter Noeth on (012) 998 0361 (office hours only) or E-Mail to noethj@telkomsa.net. Also note that the asterisks in the adverts indicate the number of insertions. Ads will be removed after 3 insertions unless renewed by the advertiser

FOR SALE

MGB Roadster 1972* - Malard Green, good all-round condition - Dirk on 012 361 2752, Cell: 084 837 3765

MGB-GT 1966*** - For sale or swop for a modern MG-TF, was the second GT to come into South Africa., red, wire wheels, new tyres. Good condition with overdrive and upgraded 2 litre engine, gas flowed head. Price reduced to R58000. Contact Derek on 012 9931072 or 084 587 3388 or dfhowes@iburst.co.za

MGTF135*** - owner emigrating. Car based in Potchefstroom. Price negotiable R120k. Contact Johan van der Walt on tel. (082) 735-4986."

MGB GT 1967*** - "beauty", in daily use, full service record from EMGEE WORKSHOP since purchase in April 1997. Mileage 83,000, perfect technical condition and appearance - R65,000 - Gero Ekman Tel 011 706 4070 (h)- 011 314 1354 (w)- Cell 083 626 8270

MGC*** - Contact Kim Thomas - 0843012830 / 044 5334863

MG Midget 1973*** - one of the best examples in the country. Red with black upholstery, Rrostyl wheels, open to offers - Mike Beaumont 082 828 4925

1960 MGA*** roadster-1800 cc Marina engine, recently overhauled. car totally rebuild and re-sprayed. New wire wheels, upholstery, carpets, electrical wiring, plus more. Hood available but not fitted. Price R95,000.00 negotiable. car is in Lydenburg. Call Dirk. 013 2353096 or 082 8565114.

1969 MGB GT** - Very good condition - Owner relocating -R62,000-00 neg - Phone: Dietmar - 0826519450

MGTF 160 2002** - Silver, Black soft top, all the trimmings, mechanically sound, great sound system, soft top zip needs attention and the electronics need to be reset - photographs on request-

R96 000 -Caera O'shaughnessy - 083 285 7168
- kisscaera@hotmail.com

MGTF 160 2003**- dark metallic blue, black leather interior, 94000km, year and 3 month warranty left, new tyres on the rear, fronts still very good, new bushes on the front, soft top in good condition, good clean car, full service history Johannesburg car presently in PE - R105000 - Etienne Potgieter – 084 800 0604

etiennepotgieter@gmail.com

MGB Roaster (V8)* – Urgent sale: red, runs beautifully, but needs new electrics. Spoke wheels with chrome bumpers. Price R60k. Contact Marilyn tel. (082) 332 0477."

Obsolete Plastic Car Kits * - new still in original box 1:32 scale for sale all at R65 each. Now not available in the shops.

Airfix kits- 1933 Alfa Romeo(1); 1933 MG Magnette(4);Aston Martin DB5(1);Jaguar 'E' Type(1); MGB Roadster(1)

Matchbox kits – MG-TC Sports(1) Aston Martin Ulster(1);Auto Union type D(1);Jaguar SS100(1); Mercedes-Benz SSKL(1) - Contact Derek on 012 9931072

WANTED

MGA Knock-On***- right hand spinner, we have 1 right hand one and 3 left ones. Glaudina Loots - Tel: 012 843 6851 - Fax: 086 681 0052 - Cellphone: 082 448 1686

FOR MG TD*** 1 x Right side headlight bracket, 2 x Headlights, Gauges and Switches - Rajesh Thul-sie Tel Home: 011 8520403, Tel Work: 012 3113441, Cell: 0824513507 or 0716715103

MGTD * - seats, and a complete TD motor please call Acton, Elgin W.P. - 0825720979

National For Sale & Wanted List compiled by Gus Heinze of Natal Centre is available from the Editor.