

Auckland Centre President's Report 2023

Hi all,

This time last year I was writing about another fairly quiet year in terms of events, thanks to Covid, but was full of optimism for the coming year to be largely unaffected by Covid. This turned out to be the case, and we've had a more-or-less normal year in that regard – instead we've had to deal with a couple of extreme weather events. Cyclone Gabrielle delayed the Ellerslie Concours (among other events) to April, which was pretty chocka with events. We did well at Ellerslie, with second in the club display and John Hancock's TF also second in the Master's Class event – by a single point out of a total possible of 590 – that's less than 0.2%.

We also had our first Easter Rally in a couple of years, which went very well with a number of new faces and some regulars (although I would say that, as the organiser). We also had another successful track day, although tinged a bit with sadness as it was the last one we'll be able to hold at Pukekohe. There were a number of well-received and well-supported overnight/weekend social events, including the Spring Classic and Coromandel Weekend, to name but a couple. Darryl Bretherton organised a very successful day to celebrate 60 years of the MGB, which was supported by Tristram MG.

Rounding out our big events last year was the 50th anniversary Far North event. For many, this is one of the highlights of the club year, and last year's event was no exception – 60+ cars and 100+ people, with a number of those who were on the first event lured back. To recognise the fact that Far North has been organised for 50 years by the same person (although for the last 49 years he did have some help), the MG Car Club in the UK awarded Paul and Bronwyn Walbran the Marque of Friendship award, their highest honour, and the first time it's been awarded to anyone outside of the UK. Thanks to Helen and Clive Holloway for helping organise that under the radar.

Looking ahead, most will be aware that we are celebrating the centenary of the marque with an extra-special National Rally in January. This event is around twice as long as a regular National Rally, and we have a great team (led by Derek Liefing) working on making the event spectacular – as of writing, we have approximately 70 cars registered, including a number from Australia, the UK, USA and Canada.

We have also been offered centre stage at the Ellerslie Concours for 2024, to be the featured marque to continue the centenary celebrations, so it's shaping up to be a bumper year.

In other news, membership is fairly stable at just under 600 members. Renewals are coming in much quicker now with the electronic invoicing, which makes it a lot easier on membership secretary Tony Simmons.

The rest of the committee has worked very hard and is standing again, and Barry Fisher has done a great job in his first year as Secretary. However, the committee is really understrength, with a lot to be done by a small number of volunteers – so please consider giving back to your club and standing for committee.

Octagonally

Andrew