



MGC NEWSLETTER

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MGC Register of New Zealand





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NB: No calls after 9 pm, please.



Register website

Go to: www.mgclub.org.nz

Click on "Information"

Then click on the "MG Registers"

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

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Next MGC Newsletter closing date: Sunday 11th August 2025

Articles and photos always appreciated

Please email articles and photos to editor@mgclub.org.nz

Cover photo: Tony Barbarich 1969 Tartan Red MGC GT

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Market Place

News Flash

MGC REGISTER RUN

Sunday 25th May 2025

Please book this date in your diary

Full details to follow



Brit and Euro Classic Car Show

Brit & Euro, Lloyd Elsmore Park, Sunday 5th March 2025

What a great day, with over 1100 cars gleaming in the March sunshine. Probably the best show we've had for a long time and another really excellent display of five Cs. We also had Brent Hughes, Derrick Smith and John Vevers visit the stand which gave us a good chance to catch up. My apologies if I wasn't always on the stand but with so many superb vehicles on display, I couldn't resist the opportunity to explore. Another good turn-out for the register and we thank you all for coming along. Next year's event is Sunday 1st March 2026, so book the date in your diary now, you won't be disappointed.



Those attending.

- Ian Grant, '69 Tartan Red Roadster
- Tony Barbarich, '69 Tartan Red GT
- Harvey Heath, '69 Mineral Blue GT
- Harvey's mate Ricky, '69 Mineral Blue Roadster
- Peter & Raewyn Dunlop, '68 Snowberry White GT
- Brent Hughes, '68 Snowberry White GT (car currently in storage)
- Derrick Smith, '68 Black Roadster (car waiting compliance)
- John Vevers, '68 Tartan Red Roadster (car currently in storage)

Photos: Harvey Heath, Tony Barbarich, and Peter Dunlop, MGCC display.



Graham Standring's Collection

Graham Standring's Boutique Car Collection, 28th January 2025.

Graham Standring, the highly successful midget racer and speedway legend invited the MG Car Club to view his private collection of classic cars in Auckland. We were not disappointed.

The evening started at the Northcote Tavern for something to eat before before departing to the garage at around 7pm.

Graham and his pal Nik Brown of The Sound radio were are hosts and guides for the evening.



The garage was full of intriguing cars all of which had a special, and in many cases, amusing story to tell. Graham and Nik bounced off each other with the commentary which was often funny, always technical and, in some cases, quite personal. The whole evening was, without exception, the most entertaining I have ever had at a car collection. A really great evening that will be remembered by all lucky enough to be there.

Our sincere thanks goes to Graham and Nik for their hospitality, time and entertainment.

Cars in the collection included: an MGC GT, MGRV8, Corvette Stingray, Mercedes SL 250 Pagoda, Jaguar XK120, Ford Cosworth, 2 x Datsun 240Z, Mini Cooper S, Red Bull Renault Megane, plus many more.



Doug Stanaway Obituary

Maureen is heartbroken to announce the death of her beloved husband Doug, aged 80, at Dunstan Hospital in Clyde on Friday 14th March.

Doug was so loved and cherished by his family – son David (deceased) and Claire Stawaway in Sydney, daughter Donna and Steve Elkington in Nelson and youngest daughter Sharyn and Lee Woodhouse in Oamaru as well as his adored grandchildren Sarah and Lauren Stanaway, Oliver and James Elkington and Jordan, Matthew, Michael and Daniel Woodhouse.

Doug was widely known for his strong work ethic and exceptional DIY skills. He served as the manager of Great Southern in Oamaru for 35 years, the large timber merchant that has multiple sites in the Otago and Southland regions.

A true community-minded individual, Doug made significant contributions to the Oamaru and Alexandra Catholic churches and the Oamaru heritage area. His passions included music, tramping, camping, old-time sequence dancing and cruising out for a coffee in his cherished MGC.

Doug's funeral was held on Friday 21st March.

Ian Grant adds –

Although we lived at opposite ends of the country, I did get to meet Doug and Maureen on two occasions. The first time was in 2010 when I had made the trip south by plane to fulfil my official duties at the NZ Golf Open in Arrowtown near Queenstown. On the day I was due to make the northern journey home, I had all day to make the three-hour drive from Arrowtown to Dunedin Airport for my late-afternoon flight. With time on my hands, I put a call in to Doug and Maureen as I would be passing through their town on the trip.

I spent a couple of hours or so in their company and it gave me the opportunity to share the information with them that I had in the register about their MGC.

I was having such an enjoyable time that I lost track of it until Doug said, “You still have over two hours to drive to Dunedin so you had better get going or you will miss your flight”.

Reluctantly I bid farewell, and Doug was quite correct as I got to the airport with just twenty minutes to spare.

The second time we met was when I had organised the Magical Grand

Doug Stanaway Obituary

Cruising Tour, celebrating the MGC's 50th anniversary which took place in November 2018. Doug and Maureen joined the group in Cromwell and were with us for the southern leg of the tour, through to Invercargill, around the South Otago coast and then they made their way home from Dunedin. Great company and we had a lot of laughs on that tour.

The accompanying photograph is of Doug and his MGC, which he has owned since 2001, this one is on page 185 in MGCs Down Under, where we covered the story of 68MGC under The Voyage of Discovery. Doug was very pleased to see the story of his C when he purchased a copy of the book.

I was so very pleased that we did manage to meet and my sincere thanks to both of you for your company and hospitality.

RIP Doug.

Ian Grant



Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)

I purchased this NZ-new MGC roadster in 1981, it had had a few owners but was still in very nice condition. I used the C for a couple of years before selling it along with a couple of other MGs to venture into the world of Ferrari ownership, but that's another story.

The MGC went to a local Christchurch guy who ran it for a few years before selling it to another local man who I believe took it home and proceeded to dismantle it with the intention to restore it to as new condition. Not only did he take it to pieces, but he also took all the pieces to pieces. He then proceeded to have the body stripped and sent out for any repairs required, "a completely rust-free body, I was told", and then mounted on a rotisserie for painting. On returning to its owner the car was covered up and went into storage for the next 30 years or so while all the bright work, bumpers, grille, etc were refurbished. The engine and gearbox were sent out for reconditioning, then were put into storage at another location. All of the remaining items, nuts and bolts, fixings, lights, windscreen and frame, suspension and brakes, etc were refurbished over the next few years and also went into storage. No assembly of the car took place during this time.

Fast forward to November 2022 when I received a phone call asking was I interested in an MGC that was disassembled. My first reaction was to ask, "Is it a roadster or a GT?"

Answer, "It's a roadster". Next question, "What colour?" Answer, "Green".

Now I'm interested. Could it be the MGC I owned all those years ago which had completely disappeared from the MG scene?

Next day off to Halswell to view the car. It didn't take long to identify it as being my old MGC, as it still had the boss I had made to mount a later MGB steering wheel to the earlier C column and there was the non-original centre console with the ugly stereo still fitted to it. C identified and I wanted it back.

What a project to undertake. A complete reassembly of an MGC roadster and all, well nearly all, of the hard work had been done but little did I know what lay ahead. The old saying "Never buy a car from your heart" should have caused me to walk away but something was pushing me to buy it.

Was everything there? Five hours later after a complete search and finding many missing parts stored in boxes on the shelves in the garage, I had located everything but the registration plates, the identification tags and the engine and gearbox, which I knew were stored elsewhere.

"I will call you tonight and make a time to go and see the engine", says Tony.

Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)

That night the telephone rings. “Its the MGC owner. I’ve got bad news. No engine or gearbox”. “What,” says I. “How could you lose a C engine. It weighs a ton!”

Then I’m told the owner passed away six months before and his wife sold up everything and went home to China after getting a scrap metal dealer in who took away everything that could be moved including two, yes two, MGC engines and gearboxes. Apparently he had another MGC stored out of town from which he had removed the engine and gearbox and it was being stored with the other engine.

So, renegotiate the deal on the C now less its running gear. I had found on the internet that all MGCs had the chassis number stamped into the body in the floor just in front of the driver’s seat so this fact gave me the confidence I needed to purchase the car knowing it could be identified as the NZ-new car which I once owned and would be able to be complied and registered in NZ. After finding this bit of information I rang the owner prepared to go and purchase the C only to be told when my call was answered “I have more bad news.”

What else could go wrong? “I’ve sold the MG”, he said. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing after all the time and effort I had put in. He said he had a mate come round and when he told him he was selling the C he said he would buy it. He wasn’t bothered about it having no tags or plates as he would turn it into a hot rod. Car sold, so end of story. Or so I thought.

Fast forward to May 2024 and looking at the MG ads on TradeMe, as you do each morning, there is was a green MGC rolling chassis, sitting on mag wheels, for sale in Darfield. I recognised it immediately, a quick phone call, and ten minutes later I’m on the way to Darfield to view the C.

A very quick negotiation and the C is mine, no messing around this time. The mag wheels and big Willwood brakes he had fitted were not included and I had just saved it from having a Rover V8 dropped in which was sitting in the corner of the garage.

Off to home and I purchased a set of new 15” chrome wire wheels and a set of Michelin Pilot tyres, fit them up and off to Darfield with the car trailer in tow to pick up the C. Loaded the C onto the trailer very easily without the weight of the engine and gearbox to deal with.

After loading the car, the job of loading the boxes and containers of parts began, the seats which came with the car were ‘71 MGB seats and not correct for the C. Spoke to Rod about them and he said I have another C in the shed

Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)

outside with the correct seats. On enquiring further about this car I found that it was a US import brought in many years ago and had no papers so couldn't be registered in NZ. It was also in very poor condition having been pretty much stripped out and I was also told that the engine and gearbox were with the engine and transmission from my C and they went missing together.

That told the story of the second C power train which was stored with my C's engine. I was able to purchase the seats from this car which really were frames only as the leather was shot and a really spooky thing about this C came when I checked the chassis number – guess what!! From the “Believe It or Not” file it was the very next chassis number after my C, mine being 2269G and the US white C is 2270G. It is an amazing coincidence that two MGCs were delivered to two different countries and finally come back together in a small town in NZ. I have a photo of the chassis number tag to prove it. Ian Grant's factory records register show 2270G was originally black.

I also picked up a spare brake booster from this car as they are getting hard to find and it may be needed one day.

Back home I unloaded the C and the parts into the workshop I had prepared for it. I spent the next day getting the parts into order and listing any missing parts and a further list of parts which would need replacing. As it was May the weather was not the warmest but with the gas heater fired up work was underway preparing the paintwork for assembly to start, nearly a full day cutting and polishing paint that, by deduction must be at least 30 years old, came up brilliantly. The assembly went well and with all of the chrome work being new, only polishing was needed before fitting. The list of parts that were required grew day by day and it is amazing what small items can be missed when assessing the collection of parts that make up a car and the total ended up being nine A4 pages to achieve the desired finish. In between assembly and work commitments was the task of tracking down an engine and gearbox.

Enter Ian Grant, a man of total knowledge of everything MGC. After the phone call to Ian I had several leads to follow up. The first contact was Ian Cunningham of Austin 3-Litre fame, who resides in Cambridge, and he had an engine and overdrive gearbox from a 1970 Austin 3-Litre that he had recently removed from a body shell that was beyond saving. I couldn't believe my luck, exactly what I required.

After a bit of negotiating and payment, the power unit was on its way to Christchurch. It was a bit of a sorry sight on arrival with years of dirt and grime covering it but after a strip down and assessment it was off to ERS

Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)

Reconditioners in TaiTapu for a complete overhaul which involved a crankshaft regrind, rebore, cam grind, lightened flywheel, a head job to make new oversize inlet valves and a full engine balance. The gearbox and overdrive were stripped down and rebuilt with new bearings, etc. The bonus was that this power unit was from a late Austin 3-Litre with the close ratio gearbox. It also had high compression 9.0:1 flat top pistons although these were replaced with .020 oversize units with the rebore. Numerous second hand parts had to be obtained from the UK to allow the Austin 3-Litre engine to be fitted into the C chassis namely a different sump, oil pump and pipes, relocation of the dipstick, steel engine mounts to the block, a rear side plate breather, throttle linkage, exhaust manifolds, carburettor back plates and the air filter housing. All of these parts were obtained from Stephen Curtis in the UK, an excellent guy to deal with. There aren't many suppliers of new MGC parts in the UK but Moss Motors, Brown & Gammons and the MG Owners Club are the main ones. The rebuild progressed well, the suspension was removed and reassembled with polly-pro bushes, shock absorbers were replaced with adjustable Gaz units which were recommended by several MGC owners both here and overseas. Those on the car were way too hard on the softest setting, totally unsuitable for a road car.

With the engine back from being reconditioned, assembly was completed with the gearbox attached and the power unit installed. All went together very well.

The new stainless-steel sports exhaust that arrived from Moss UK fitted up very well only needing clearance around the lower Gaz shock absorber mount as this was not a standard fitting. The radiator had been re-cored by the previous owner and only needed a fresh coat of paint before fitting. Fuel, oil and water were added, the battery connected and all spark plus were out to turn the engine over to raise the oil pressure. The spark plugs were re-fitted and the engine fired up on the first try. Checked the timing and ran the engine for twenty minutes at 3000rpm to break in the new cam.

Back to the assembly and new brake rotors were fitted but the calipers were seized. There was a bit of an effort required here to get the pistons out. I nearly went for new calipers, which are available, but I got them apart by connecting them to the front caliper hose on my MG Midget and pumping the brake pedal to push the pistons out one at a time. The calipers then cleaned up well and were reassembled with new seal kits and pistons (new calipers would have been cheaper but I have original C calipers). The rear brakes had been assembled with all new parts so they just needed checking but I did have the drums skimmed as they were not true. There was a small leak from the differential back plate so I drained it and removed the cover and while it was off I checked the ratio

Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)

to find it was now 3.3:1, so this had been changed at some time as this was originally an early non-overdrive car with the 3.07:1 ratio but now perfect for the close ratio transmission with overdrive, you have to have a win sometimes.

Moving on to the interior, I had fitted the dash earlier as the electrics needed to be checked. A new wiring loom had been provided with the car but I discovered it was a later loom which meant the alternator had to be changed to one with an internal regulator, otherwise everything else was fine. A generous amount of sound deadening was installed on the floor and centre tunnel, both to reduce noise and keep it cool as MGC interiors can get very hot. A new premium carpet set was ordered from Moss UK, (a six week wait for them to be made) as C carpets are different from MGBs as the floor is raised 1½ inches to allow for the suspension torsion bars underneath the floor. A new trim kit was fitted after the carpets were installed, a new speaker console had been ordered and then fitted as the old one was the wrong model. A new leather seat kit including foam sets and webbing arrived, the seat frames were sandblasted and painted, the seats then assembled and fitted.

I discarded the old-style folding hood frame in favor of the later MGB folding frame which is so much easier to raise and lower, a new hood was then fitted and I chose the one with the zip-out rear window which is a real bonus on very hot days. New inertia type seat belts were fitted with long stalks which are so much easier to use than the old static belts.

With the car close to being completed the brakes were bled and all fluids checked and adjusted as necessary and with the engine running up on the hoist the gearbox and overdrive performance were confirmed to be working well. Now it was time for a road test.

A short test to check everything was functioning as it should, then back into the workshop to do a recheck on the hoist for leaks, etc. All was looking good so then it was a 50-mile run to settle everything in. Back to the workshop to re-torque the head, set the valve clearances, check all of the fluids, re-adjust the brakes and check all of the suspension nuts and bolts. Delivered the car to the compliance centre for that process as lapsed registration requires this to be done and the C went through with no problems. No questions were raised regarding the new, freshly stamped chassis number tag and the original GQ6106 registration plates that had now been found.

In summary, the C has now completed 800 miles and has settled in very well. The engine has freed up and starts and idles very happily at around 800rpm and pulls like a train on the road. I am very happy with the modifications I have done

Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)

to the engine, i.e. lightened flywheel, modified cam grind, larger inlet valves and raised compression. These mods have really helped the C engine to overcome its reluctance to rev freely. It really is a different driver to the MGCs I have owned in the past which had stock standard engines, including this one around forty years ago.

Would I do it again? Yes, but only if the right car came along. It's an expensive exercise on a C and needs a strong commitment to see it through and do the job correctly.

I started this reassembly the day I purchased the C on the 15th May 2024 and it was completed with the WOF and registered on 15th August 2024, so just four months from start to finish.

I concede that much of the work required to complete the rebuild, i.e. the body and paintwork, plating of parts, etc, was done before my purchase of GQ6106.

Lawrie Steere

The photographs in this article show GQ6106 in Lawrie's driveway back in 1982, the completed engine bay and back on the road under the Canterbury blossoms.



Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)

Ian Grant adds the following:

Congratulations Lawrie, on a job very well done and we hope you are enjoying having that roadster back in your garage and enjoying some MGC driving.

We have now found all ten of those New Zealand new roadsters, eight being 1968 model year cars and two from 1969. So, where are they?

GCN1 1939G – the family of the late Jim O’Leary in Canterbury;

GCN1 1941G – Doug and Maureen Stanaway in Otago;

GCN1 1942G – Nick Wilcox in the Bay of Plenty;

GCN1 2066G – the ex-Brett Robinson C that we have unfortunately lost to Queensland;

GCN1 2251G – Kerry Stone in the Hawkes Bay;

GCN1 2258G – John Bertenshaw in Northland;

GCN1 2269G – Lawrie Steere in Canterbury;

GCN1 3312G – Shaun Leahy and Stephanie McGreevy in the Wairarapa;

GCN1 4269G – James Smith in the Bay of Plenty;

GCN1 6162G – Ian Grant in the Waikato.

Two of these roadsters were PED cars – PED meaning Personal Export Delivery, so the owners took delivery of them from the factory.

GCN1 1939G had a despatch date of the 22nd of March 1968 and the copy of the original ownership papers that we have on file show it was first registered in New Zealand to Philip and Gwendoline Hickford in Wellington on the 15th of May 1969, the odometer reading 12,088 miles.

Similarly, with GCN1 3312G. This roadster had a despatch date of the 29th of August 1968 and the original ownership papers show it was registered here to Ferrars Townshend in Auckland on the 23rd of December 1969 with 8,500 miles on the odo. Presumably these owners enjoying touring the UK and Europe before shipping their MGCs home.



Re-Birth of MGC – GQ6106 (GCN1 2269G)



The Rebuild begins May 2024



Daughter Maria dismantling engine



New late hood bows fitted



View of engine from other side

The Lightweights Have New Owners

The story of the factory racing MGCs is well known amongst MGC enthusiasts and it was very pleasing to find motoring scribe David Morys had produced, through Veloce Publishing in 2019, a beautiful, detailed history of Abingdon's last racers in MGC GTS Lightweights.

Although there were six bodysells produced, two were the official factory cars affectionately known as Mabel and Romeo, taken from the respective registration numbers, MBL546E and RMO699F.

For most of this century, Mabel has been in Southern California in the custodianship of Henry Camisasca, to whom we send our register newsletters. One of the trips Henry made in Mabel was to Sebring where he received a great response from a number of racing enthusiasts who had seen the car perform there back in the late-1960s.

Henry told me in an e-mail some time ago that Mabel was up for sale and recent correspondence with him has confirmed a sale was made and the car is back in England, now owned by Martin Block. Henry reported that Martin took Mabel to the Hampton Court Concours d'Elegance where the car won an award.

And so to Romeo. This racer was on display in the foyer of Chateau Impney at the UK MGC50 celebrations along with Tim Hodgkinson's prototype and the royal CGT when we attended the event in 2017. At that time Romeo was owned by Dave Saunders and was part of Dave's collection. Dave could not attend this UK event as his wife was very ill and sadly passed away soon afterwards. Since then, we have lost Dave too and Romeo was put up for sale at auction and is now owned by Paul Mount, an MG enthusiast.



The Lightweights Have New Owners

If you would like to take a closer look at Romeo, just key MGC GTS into your Google browser and on the first page the heading Romeo – the original MGC GTS – YouTube appears. This 11-minute video covers some GTS history, an interview with Paul Mount and a lap or two of Castle Coomb in Wiltshire. Well worth a look.

With both GTSs back in the England a piece of motoring history could well occur, that being both Mabel and Romeo seen together once again, over 50 years after they originally raced.

Whereabouts? How about MGLive at Silverstone.

Ian Grant



Safety  *fast!*

MGCC Christmas Concours, December 2024

MGCC (Auckland) Christmas Concours
Report, Sunday 8th Dec 2024

What a great way to end our MG100 celebrations with Vellenoweth Green, once again, providing the space to show case an impressive array of eighty-nine cars. Our thanks must go to all those involved in organising this first-class event. The weather gods smiled, the rain stayed away, and a good day was had

by all. The MGC Register's contribution included a stunning selection of NINE pristine cars which attracted much interest and compliments. Thank you all for coming and supporting the register, it is very much appreciated. It was also apparent that the MGC continues to attract potential buyers even though some cars are currently finding it difficult to find new owners.

The event provided the chance to catch up with everyone including Ian Grant, who drove up



from Matamata, and Nick Wilcox from Taupo. There were a couple of owner modifications visible since our last meeting that are worth recording. Brian Young's roadster is now sporting a new Manifold twin-pipe exhaust system, my car now has triple SUs supplied and installed courtesy of Harvey Heath and Ian's 69C is back on the road with a recently rebuilt engine and overdrive fitted.

Peter Dunlop

Ian Grant

Harvey Heath & Jane Howarth

Alan Krissansen and Graeme de Jongh

Nick & Sharon Wilcox

Tony Barbarich

Brian Young

Graeme Standring and Nik Brown

Christian Lambon and daughter Moana

Peter & Raewyn Dunlop

1969 Tartan Red Roadster

1969 Mineral Blue GT

1969 Tartan Red Roadster

1968 Mineral Blue Roadster

1969 Tartan Red GT

1968 British Racing Green Roadster

1968 White GT

1969 Mineral Blue Roadster

1968 Snowberry White GT

MGCC Christmas Concours, December 2024



Ian Grant's 69C has a rebuilt engine and overdrive fitted.

MGC50 Chateau Impney UK 2017, Peter, Raewyn, Ian, Jane & Harvey



St Heliers Concours 2024, (and we don't look a day older)



Nik Brown of The Sound radio station and 24hr Lemons events, loves MGCs!

Speedometers

While 69C was off the road from 2020 through to 2023 having the engine overhauled to rectify the excessive oil usage, I decided to have the gearbox converted to overdrive. I had done this myself with my 1967 MGB roadster back in 1977 with very pleasing results.

Ian Priestley in Taumarunui had been importing gearboxes from the UK for many years so I called him to find out if it was possible and received an affirmative answer.

Before taking the gearbox to Ian I gave the casing a thorough clean, the inside of the bellhousing was very dirty as something had been leaking, perhaps it was the rear crankshaft seal.

On arriving at Ian's place, after the 2½-hour trip, he placed the gearbox in his garage standing up on a couple of blocks, nose down.

Three weeks later I received a call with the news that the gearbox was ready to collect. On arriving Ian informed me that when he went to start work on it the day after I delivered it, there was a pool of oil on the floor with a trace line of oil down the input shaft, so it wasn't the crankshaft seal that had been leaking, but the gearbox input shaft seal. Well worth getting the gearbox done.

This work was done in late-2020 and it wasn't until late-2023 that the gearbox was mated with the now overhauled engine and we slipped it back into the bodysell.

In checking to make sure these changes would work I did my usual research through the books I have and made an interesting discovery in the parts catalogue.

It is common knowledge that the MGC had three different differential ratios during its two-year production run. The high-ratio 3.071:1 crown wheels and pinions were fitted to the 1968 production year non-overdrive cars while the overdrive cars from 1968 had a 3.307:1 ratio. With the standardisation of the closer ratio gearbox cluster (laygear), the 3.307:1 ratio was carried over to the non-overdrive 1969 cars. This lower ratio giving the car a bit more punch from a standing start. The 1969 overdrive cars had an even lower ratio at 3.7:1.

The 3.307:1 crown wheel and pinion is the most widely used as it was fitted throughout MGC production.

The discovery I made from my parts catalogue was that even with these two ratios in 1968, the speedometer head was the same, overdrive or not. This speedometer was also fitted to all non-overdrive cars in 1969, but it was a different speedometer for 1969 overdrive cars.

Speedometers

The face of your speedometer will show the serial number and the revolutions per mile that the speedometer turns at. If your C is either a 1968 car or a non-overdrive 1969 car, the serial number will be SN 6144/10 with 1020 revolutions per mile. If you have a 1969 overdrive car your speedometer will have SN 6144/31 with 1120rpm.

During my ownership both the speedometer and tachometer have been overhauled, so both were working well. Having discovered this difference in the 1969 cars' speedometers my thoughts were, "Have I created a problem for myself?" as my 1020rpm speedometer might not be getting the correct message from my overdrive gearbox which is expecting to connect to an 1120rpm speedo head.

On my first drive with the new engine, an indicated 30mph felt a bit quicker than the urban 50kph speed limit.

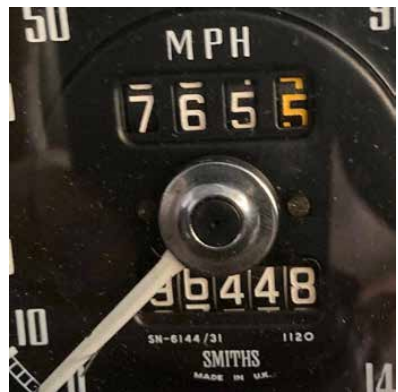
I downloaded a speedometer app to my phone and, with the phone lying on the transmission tunnel, took 69C for a drive. Sure enough, my speedometer is under-reading as it is turning slower than it should be. 50kph on the phone app had the speedometer reading 25mph instead of 31mph. Further up the scale, with the speedometer needle sitting steady at 50mph (80kph), the phone app was showing 98kph (60mph).

So, what to do from here? Get the speedometer re-calibrated or install a conversion box? I'm thinking about it, no decision as yet.

Ian Grant



1968 -1969 Speedo



1969 OD Speedo

"Letter from the UK", Summer 2024

Just quick note to update you on the happenings over here, in the beautiful countryside of Stroud in Worcestershire, South-West England.

The weather has been quite changeable but not bad enough to stop us attending one or two great classic car events.

Inter-Marque Sports Car Show

The first was the Inter-Marque Sports Car Show featuring MGs and Triumphs held at the **Malvern Showgrounds** which, by coincidence, was one of the shows you mentioned in your last email, and I had already bought tickets. The only fine day for a week turned up as if somebody had ordered it, and we arrived early finding a good car park close to the action. The Malvern Showgrounds are huge, about twice the size of the Eilerslie Racecourse, and laid out with markers for numerous makes and models of every British sports car imaginable. The event was organised by the **Triumph Sports Car Club**, is held annually at this venue, and was the biggest yet. The various stalls including second-hand and new parts, was massive, spreading inside and out. There were many suppliers of aftermarket parts and upgrades including an MGC with a fuel injection system that attracted my attention. I also spoke to a gentleman from Luxembourg, **Ed Leyden** who owns an MGC and very kindly swapped an MG Luxembourg club badge with me.



A very special **University Motors** "one off" MGC GT with square headlights, was there making a rare appearance. I worked at the Kingston-on-Thames UM premises in 1969 when I bought my blue GT, brand-new! This square headlight C along with various other makes that I haven't seen since I was here in the '70s, made the event a great day outand without a single drop of rain, heaven!

I also met **Mike Houghton** (UK MGC Register) who was all hyped up about the MGC

60th Anniversary event in 2027. He is hoping that we will provide a strong Kiwi contingent, as we did for the 50-year celebration in 2017 at Chateau Impney. However, I wasn't too surprised when he didn't reply to my suggestion of airfare contributions! It would be good if we could get a group together Peter, maybe you can put a note in the next newsletter?

MG Owners Club, "Cotswold Caper"

We also attended the "Cotswold Caper" organised by the MG Owners Club. This was a lovely run through the Worcester countryside taking in various interesting sites on the way. The attendance was down on last year, but it was still a good event and YES, it was raining. The day started with a thunderstorm proving there are very



"Letter from the UK", Summer 2024

few convertibles that don't leak. It comes in places that you would not dream of, and I was pleased to be in a modern car with a hard roof. We didn't partake this year as, unfortunately, the MG borrowed last time was not available. This event gave us the opportunity to meet up with the many friends made during our time with the Gloucestershire MG Owners Club including, **Tim and Jenny Murray** who were driving their tartan red **MGC roadster** (photo right). The MGC was well represented with three attending out of a total of eighty cars, which is a good showing. Fortunately, the weather brightened around lunch time and the sun managed to show itself, absorbing some of the moisture gained. The midday meeting point was at one of the many garden centres here in the Cotswold where they have huge car parks, or paddocks, for the likes of us and large well set-up cafes supplying a wide range of food.



Next week we are off to the **MGC Register** gathering in **Derby** and will send you another update for the MaG and newsletter.

I understand the winter weather in NZ is similar to the summer weather here. Not, exactly what I was hoping for but it's still very nice to be over here!

Harvey Heath



Inter-Marque Show, Malvern.



Bruce Ibbotson Sells "The Truck"

When I was at Chateau Impney for the UK MGC50 celebrations, there was a roadster in the big line-up on the Saturday that had a notice on its windscreen stating, "This could be the only one-owner MGC in the world".

Apparently, it had been in the same family since new. I took it on myself to mention to the owner that there is another one-owner MGC, this one a CGT in Brisbane, Australia.

Bruce Ibbotson took delivery of his CGT in August 1968, collecting the car himself from the Brisbane wharf. Bruce originally liked Pale Primrose as his colour of choice, but the only interior trim offered with yellow was black leather, not the ideal choice for Queensland summers. So, Sandy Beige it was as red leather was a trim option with this colour.

Bruce was a major contributor to MGCs Down Under, giving a detailed explanation of his disappointment in the new MG from Abingdon right through all of the modifications that turned his CGT into a very desirable car. When the car was first registered it was given PFT-000 plates. The way the car performed caused Bruce to soon christen it the "Pretty Fast Truck".

There is no doubt that if the factory had been given the time and resources to develop the MGC into what Bruce developed, the car would have been a winner.

As Bruce is now in his late-80s, he had been thinking about passing "The Truck" onto someone else. A sale arose purely by accident.

Do you remember, in previous newsletters, we have written about a blue, NZ-new CGT that spent most of its life in the South Island but was sold by its Auckland owner to an Australian buyer in 2000. We shared a picture of this CGT when it was for sale at Barry Brown Car Sales in Christchurch back in 1972.

David Dart in Victoria is the current owner of that blue CGT. As Bruce is highly respected in all things MGC, David called Bruce for some advice regarding an intermittent ignition problem in the blue car. Bruce suggested a few things to try, and the problem was solved, it being a fractured wire in the ignition circuit. While talking about this problem, Bruce mentioned that his much-loved CGT needed to find a second owner who could maintain it himself and drive it properly. After many e-mails and a couple of phone calls, David made an offer which Bruce accepted.

Bruce Ibbotson Sells "The Truck"

David was well aware of the time and money Bruce had put into PFT as David had bought a copy of MGCs Down Under and read all about the car, so Bruce finalised the sale without it being advertised and to exactly the owner he had been looking for.

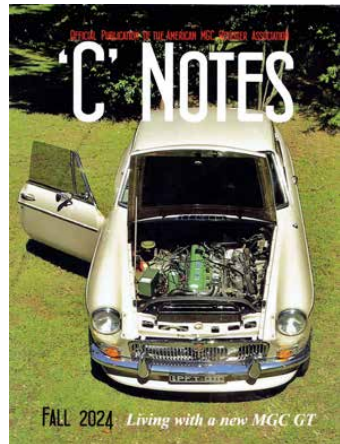
A few weeks ago, Bruce reported PFT was still in his garage waiting for more reasonable weather, not as hot but they have had plenty of rain too, as David has a long return trip towing his special MGC GT trailer to take the car home to the north-eastern region of Victoria.

We will keep you posted as to further developments.

To Bruce and Tip – on behalf of our NZ owners I wish you all the best and pass on sincere thanks for sharing your extensive knowledge of the MGC, both in our part of the world and internationally too as a regular contributor to the American MG Experience MGC forum.

Pictured is PFT gracing the cover of the 2024 Fall issue of the American MGC Register Association's 'C' Notes magazine.

Ian Grant



Safety  *fast!*

THE MGC

& Safety Fast!



*A Collection of Technical Tips and Articles
previously printed in Safety Fast!*

MG Safety Fast!

Articles by John Bolster



John Bolster tries a Downton modified MGC

(Safety Fast, November 1968)

The conscientious motoring writer tends to fight shy of modified cars. Too often they are noisy, almost unstartable, have an accelerator action as rough as a badger's backside, and a thirst even greater than my own. I have driven out in such cars and walked back, so I am delighted that the manufacturers tear up your warranty and jump on the pieces if you patronise the go-faster specialists in rusty tin sheds.

But almost any popular car can be greatly improved if it is modified and hand-built by real experts. The manufacturers recognise this, and in the case of the Stage 1 conversions by Downton there is no loss of warranty. Indeed, these kits are manufactured by Downton and marketed at Abingdon by BMC themselves. If you want a Stage 1 conversion you can only get it through Abingdon, which is fair enough as it is their warranty, and anyway it saves the tuning specialist a lot of shopkeeping and paper work.

For anything more elaborate than a Stage 1 job you can go direct to Downton Engineering and this I did when I borrowed Daniel Richmond's MGC. I was most interested to see the very elaborate equipment possessed by this firm, where about 60 people are employed. In addition to tuning work, much research is undertaken, and it will be understood that one cannot write of all that here. Suffice it to say that the special parts for the engines of the BMC works rally cars were developed at this small works near Salisbury, and various way-out projects are being investigated now.

In the case of the MGC which I tested, the cylinder head modifications are

complementary to the double exhaust system, and neither would work effectively without the other. Unlike the four-cylinder engine, which goes best when all the pipes are eventually brought into one, the six must have two entirely separate manifolds, and it cannot be made to give real power without this provision. The length of the pipes is somewhat critical and so is their diameter, and it must be mentioned that these problems are intensified when efficient silencing is required. In this case, the engine is both quieter and smoother than that of the standard car.

Daniel Richmond specialises in improving the low-speed flexibility when he tunes an engine and this again comes largely from a correctly designed exhaust manifold. He maintains that an improved engine should also have better specific fuel consumption and this comes about by more efficient burning of the charge.

Unfortunately, the week during which I tested the MGC was cursed with poor weather. I attained approximately 130 mph under bad conditions, but I would expect a little more with everything in the car's favour. The road was wet when the acceleration figures were taken, but with the very high bottom gear this at least had the merit of letting the wheels spin instead of punishing the clutch. When really in its stride the engine give a lot of power, though test bench figures are not yet available. Nevertheless, any car which will cover the standing quarter-mile in 16.5 s, or accelerate from a standstill to 100 mph in 22.1 s, is a pretty hot performer.

Though work can be done on the suspension, the basic fact remains that a

MG Safety Fast!

Articles by John Bolster

heavy, cast-iron engine is mounted very far forward in the chassis. The Downton car has adjustable dampers, and these certainly hold the real axle down if one is prepared to accept a harder ride. However, the car remains a notable understeerer and, if the rear end ever does break away the steering is too slow to catch it. The high-speed stability is exceptional and the car rides easily at over 120 mph, but it is best not to throw it into corners.

Perhaps the MGC is best regarded as a fast touring car rather than a sports car, and there are evidently many drivers who prefer the massive stability of an understeering car to the more nervous behaviour of a typical sports machine. For them the choice of the MGC as a tuning exercise is well justified, and the improved flexibility and torque are valuable. The rugged seven-bearing crankshaft forms a good basis for high power production and the unit remains smooth in spite of its greatly improved performance. In standard trim the car averages 17 to 20 mpg and may approach 25 mpg which is not bad for a fairly heavy 3-litre car. The brakes are well up to the extra speed for normal fast road work.



Downton operate on all Austin and Morris models and associated makes. There are perhaps other cars in the range which are

even more rewarding subjects for tuning, but the high maximum speed potential of the MGC renders it an exciting car to take abroad. The cooling fan of the test car had been doctored and was much quieter in consequence – a very worthwhile modification.

For a fairly advanced tuning job such as this, contact Downton Engineering, Downton, Wilts. For normal Stage 1 tuning and kits the BLMC Special Tuning Department at Abingdon Berks. is the place.

MGC with Downton conversion

Modified cylinder head, giving 9.5:1 compression ratio (exchange)	£57 10s 0d
Polished and matched inlet manifold (exchange)	£5 0s 0d
Two extractor exhaust manifolds	£30 0s 0d
Exhaust system	£20 0s 0d
Gaskets	£5 17s 6d
Sparking plugs	£1 16s 0d
Fitting and testing	£20 0s 0d
Total	£140 3s 6d

Performance

Maximum speed	130 mph plus
Standing quarter-mile	16.5 secs
Acceleration: 0-30 mph	3.4 secs
0-50 mph	6.5 secs
0-60 mph	8.2 secs
0-80 mph	13.9 secs
0-100 mph	22.1 secs

Fuel consumption: 22.5 mpg (driven hard)

MG Safety Fast!
Articles by John Bolster



DOWNTON

KOOLMG Triple SU Carb Installation

Some of you may remember my article on replacing the triple Webers with triple SUs. Well, after many months of deliberation it has finally taken place. All the work was done by our incredible technical adviser, **Harvey Heath**. Harvey not only fitted the carbs but designed and manufactured the inlet manifold, all linkages, fuel lines, engine breathing system and bespoke alloy heat shield.



Harvey had manufactured the inlet manifold back in 1970 soon after he purchased his Mineral Blue GT and while working at University Motors in Kingston-on-Thames. This arrangement stayed on the car during its export to NZ and the following thirteen years. The inlet manifold now fitted to my car is Harvey's original but now fitted with HS6 1¾ inch carburetors, with self-centering needles, a closed circuit breathing system, all new linkages, adjusters and fuel lines.

The car is now once again a pleasure to drive with quiet, smooth power at all speeds. The fuel consumption should also be considerably less, which shouldn't be too hard to achieve.

The 45s were lovely but completely different, which of course they would be. We were still in the UK when originally fitted and had planned to use the car in the **MGCC** Speed Series. In the meantime, a **Formula Ford** had caught my eye which proved to be a far better tool for the job allowing the family C to remain as our trusty club cruiser.

Peter Dunlop



Check Out These Current TradeMe Adverts



1969 MG Roadster, Buy Now \$60,000.
Closes: Sun 30th Mar, 8:00pm,
84,700km, Convertible, Petrol, 2912cc,
Manual, Number plate: GGL61, Year:
1969, Green, 6 Cylinder, 2 owners,
Imported, Rego expires: Apr 2025



1969 MGC GT, Asking Price \$35,000.
Mileage 48,500km, GT, Petrol, 2912cc,
Manual, Number plate: GMZ611 Year:
1969, Exterior colour: Red, Cylinders:
6 Cylinder, Imported, Registration
expires this month. WoF Expired



1968 MGC GT, Starting Price \$40,000
Closes: Sun 30th Mar, 7:00pm,
75,000km, Hatchback, Petrol, 2912cc,
Manual, FHA339, 1968, Red, 2 door,
6 cylinder, 3 owners, NZ New, Rego
expires: May 2025, WoF expired



1968 MGC GT, \$58,250 ono
180,000km, Petrol, 3000cc, Manual,
1968, Green, 2 door, 6 cylinder, 2
owners, NZ New, Rego expires: Jun
2025, WoF Expired

"MGCs Down Under" by Ian Hobbs

This book is written by enthusiasts for enthusiasts, not by motoring journalists, and is 285mm x 217mm with 208 pages and many high-quality photographs.

The chapters cover a range of topics from the creation of the MGC, with a particular focus on the Australian connection (remember the possibility of the Blue Streak engine being used after testing at the Abingdon factory), personal stories from MGC owners – Dennis Hendsby (roadster, Queensland), Bruce Ibbotson (GT, Queensland), Peter Dunlop (GT, Auckland), John Sheppard (supercharged roadster, Victoria), Gary Julian (GT, "The Blue Beast" Sebring replica, South Australia), Michael Marzi (GT, Victoria), Allan Fabry (roadster, Victoria), Ian Grant (roadster, Matamata) and the late John Caffin (supercharged roadster, Victoria).

Bruce Ibbotson details all of the modifications he has carried out over the years to his GT which are complimented by Richard Mixture's technical ramblings.

Also covered are how the MGC ended up in Australia, New Zealand and Papua.

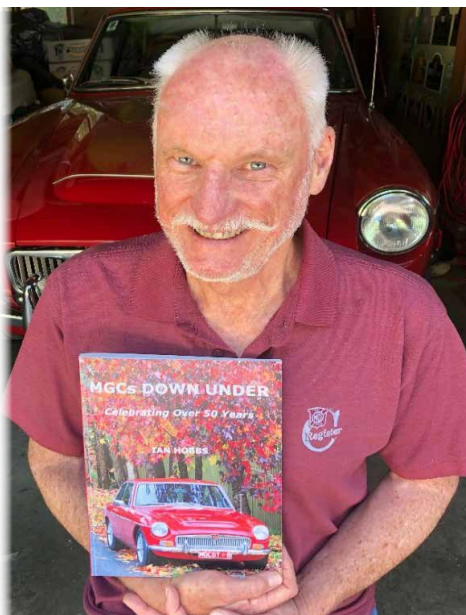
Brett Robinson has outlined the early days of the New Zealand register with Ian Grant covering the register revival and the Magical Grand Cruising Tour of NZ, celebrating the car's 50th anniversary.

Included are lists, with thumbnail photographs, of the MGCs that are known in both Australia and New Zealand.

At the UK's MGC55 a copy of "MGCs Down Under" was the major raffle prize.

Soft cover copies are still available at \$AUD79, plus post and packaging, from author Ian Hobbs in South Australia, who can be contacted at: - mgcgt@optusnet.com.au.

Ian Grant



Market Place

MGC Water Pump. 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

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

There are a number of options available:

1) 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.

2) 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.

3) 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 \$80.00 per side labour, plus parts, packaging and delivery (courier or postage). Please call me, **Harvey Heath** 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



Market Place

As a result of the major work on 69C, I have some parts for sale.

The overdrive conversion has rendered the original gearbox mainshaft surplus to requirements. The BMC part number is 22B373 and my parts catalogues and microfiche show this shaft was fitted to all non-overdrive MGCs and all full-synchromesh, non-overdrive MGBs with the engine number prefixes 18GD, 18GF, 18GG, 18GH, 18GJ, 18GK and 18V, so it was a widely used mainshaft in production. This one I have has done just 64,000 miles so is in very good condition.

When 69C's engine was stripped and measured there was about 0.005" ovality in a couple of the bores so the engine was taken out to 0.020" oversize and new pistons purchased. I have, therefore, a set of STD pistons for sale. As with the mainshaft, the pistons have done 64,000 miles. If I can be of assistance, just let me know and we can discuss a price.

Phone: 027 6787923;

Ian Grant

