

October 2017

The

# Magazine



Photo by Ray Brown Photography

Ulster



Centre



# Ulster Centre Magazine Editorial

## Simon Johnston

Well, our MG Day went off really well, despite the dismal weather and as you'll read elsewhere we had over eighty MGs on display which is as many, if not more, than we've ever had at one of our events before. They ranged in age from the 1930 M Types of Sam Christie, and Carol and Roger Corry, to the current range of MG3 and MG GS displayed by two of the local MG dealers, [S S Logan & Sons Ltd](#) and [Mellons](#).

Everyone bringing their MG to the event was given a very informative booklet charting the history of MG with information about the various model ranges on display. Since not everyone was able to come along on the day we thought that Ulster Centre members might like to have an electronic copy of the booklet which is included along with this MaGazine. I'm sure many of you will not be in the slightest bit surprised to learn that most of the booklet was written by Mike

Armstrong – where does that man find the time to do so much?

As I said in my editorial in the July edition, I'm not really a 'car show' type of MG owner but shows like this do provide a great opportunity for MG owners to inspect other models that they might not ordinarily get to see very often. They also provide an opportunity for people with an interest in MGs, but not necessarily owners, to enjoy the cars, even in the rain. But what was unexpected for me was to find that our MG Day connected me with someone whom I'd never met but who, as I stood chatting to a fellow J2 owner, introduced himself as Ian Warrington and said "I have a photo of your car from the 1930s". And this is what he produced – a picture of my J2, with my father at the wheel, taken at the Ulster Grand Prix at Clady in August 1934 and which I had never seen before. Can you believe it?



It turned out that Ian was the son of one of my father's closest friends in the 1920s, 30s and 40s but our families had largely lost touch in the post war years. He had found this photo, and one or two others which I already had, amongst old family stuff, had Googled the registration number which came up with my name and the fact that we were having an MG Day, and he and his wife drove up from Dublin to find me. Happy days!

On to more general Club matters now, and the MGCC Council meeting and AGM takes place in Daventry, near Birmingham, on 21 October followed by the Annual Dinner. The Ulster Centre hasn't been represented at Council for a number of years but at Silverstone this year there was apparently a lot of discussion about how good the Ulster lads were at autotesting and as a result the Centre was specifically asked to send representation to the Council meeting to explain what this autotesting is all about.

Gordon Buckley, as our Competition Secretary and a leading autotester himself, is going to do this without, we hope, giving away too many secrets in advance of our planned assault on the California

Cup and Register Trophy next year. Our Chairman, John Clarke will also be contributing to this from his own experience, and yours truly will be going along to say a few words about how to create a Centre e-MaGazine. Wish us luck!

As we head into autumn we're still trying to ensure that there are events both competitive and social to keep everyone busy and as you'll see from our *Dates for Your Diary* we have quite a few things planned over the next couple of months. On the competitive side, there's an autotest, an autoSolo, and a car trial (formerly Production Car Trial or PCT) and on the social side there's an evening Nosh 'n' Natter on Wednesday 25 October (see the flyer enclosed with this email) and – can you believe it's nearly Christmas already – our Mince Pie Night on 6 December.

Preparations for our Golden Jubilee Tour next year are progressing well and we already have over 55 confirmed entries. With a limit of 70 entries, if you plan to join us and haven't already entered, you'd better do so quickly. Below you will find Mike Armstrong's update and as you'll see, it's going to be a great event. Get those entries in!

# Ulster Centre Golden Jubilee Tour, 20 – 24 May 2018

## Mike Armstrong

We have had a tremendous response to our Golden Jubilee Tour and entries are coming in at a rate of knots. However, we are now able to open entries to other than those who had pre-registered although an absolute limit of 70 cars has to be observed. The maximum is dictated by the hotel's dining room, where we will be eating, which holds a maximum of 140 people. We will be using this room for breakfast and evening buffet dinner.

### Route

We have been busy plotting interesting routes and a summary of what is in store follows.

The Start will be on Sunday 20 May 2018 at Carrickfergus. The timing is still to be finalised but will be around 10 am to 11 am.

From the Start it is about 80 miles to our headquarters for the event at the Roe Park Resort in Limavady. We will travel up part of the Antrim Coast Road, stop for lunch at Glenariffe (the "Queen of the Glens"). We will split into two groups for lunch – half at the lower end of the glen and the rest at the upper end. Hopefully people will take the opportunity to walk up – or down – this beautiful glen with its interesting boardwalks and sparkling waterfalls and perhaps the bluebells will still be out. From there we will cross country to go north along the Bann Valley



and then cross the river for a moorland and forest drive to our destination.

On Monday and Tuesday we will again split into two groups. One will take a dash past Derry/Londonderry and Letterkenny into County Donegal. It is a longish run of about 120 miles round trip but with at least 20 miles of good main road. The run will take four to five hours plus a lunch stop. The other group will take on a secret route through the beautiful Sperrin Mountains. The groups will swap routes on the second day. This is to avoid long tails of cars on sometime fairly narrow roads and to facilitate lunch stops.

On the Wednesday people will be free to go to one, or more, of the delights that are available on the North Antrim Coast. You could spend the day in the historic city of Derry/Londonderry and take a guided walk on the famous City walls, spend time shopping, visit the fabulous Guild Hall, walk over the River Foyle on the "Peace Bridge", visit the Railway Museum or return to the Roe Park for a walk in the 155 acre parkland, indulge in the luxury spa, or even have a quick round of golf (clubs available for hire) before getting ready for our Gala Dinner.

Alternatively you might like to visit the famous Bushmills whisky distillery, or the Giant's Causeway (bring your National Trust Card), or for the more adventurous go to the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge (actually steel hawser nowadays) or pop down to the many lovely little bays. For the even more adventurous there is the spectacular run over the Torr Head coast road bringing you down into the pretty little village of Cushendun (now run by the National Trust). Take the opportunity to visit the lava caves – a scene in "The Game of Thrones" – and then wend your way up the Dun River towards Ballycastle and take in a lovely Forest Drive on the way.

Whatever you choose – you will only get a taster and you can always come back for more. Wednesday evening will finish with a Gala Dinner.

## Entry Details

Please get your entry in as soon as possible by going to our online entry form at [www.mgcculstercentre.co.uk/tour-online-entry-form](http://www.mgcculstercentre.co.uk/tour-online-entry-form)

The entry fee for the Tour is £35 per car and driver and £20 per additional passenger. Just follow the instructions on each page. You will receive a confirmation email which is also automatically be sent to me and to our Treasurer Garth Maxwell. If you don't get it, check your spam folder and if you still can't find it get it touch with me (if I haven't already been in contact with you to give you details of the hotel booking arrangements!). The confirmation email will give you instructions on how to pay the entry fee.

The deal we have with the Roe Park is as follows:

Four nights dinner, bed and breakfast: £576 per double room for two people; £388 per single room for one person.

When you book your room at the Roe Park you will be asked for a £50 deposit which is non-refundable.

In the meantime – happy and safe motoring and take care over the Winter.

Best Wishes

Mike Armstrong

Jubilee Tour Co-ordinator

Mobile 07894 037215

Email: [mikejarm@btinternet.com](mailto:mikejarm@btinternet.com) if you have any questions

# Dates for Your Diary

**Mike Armstrong**

In our last issue I said not to idle your summer days away and now that summer has gone that's no excuse to start idling now. Our programme may have eased off a bit as we cruise into autumn but there's still lots happening on both the social and the competitive fronts.

## **Autotest, 14 October at Delamont Country Park**

This is our last autotest of the season (excluding the Autosolo on 4 November) and takes place at Delamont Country Park. Regs and entry form are available on our website [here](#)

## **Car Trial (formerly known as Production Car Trial or PCT), 21 October at Cunningburn**

Regs and entry form are available on our website [here](#)

## **Nosh 'n' Natter, 25 October at the TT Lounge, Comber**

We had promised that our next Nosh 'n' Natter would be an evening one to make it easier for those who work during the day to come along. So our October one is at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 25 October in the TT Bistro (formerly the TT Lounge) in Comber. As always, we need to have an idea of numbers so that we can let those doing the cooking know how many to expect so please let me know either by phone at 9267 5023 or by email to [mikejarm@btinternet.com](mailto:mikejarm@btinternet.com) The cost is £15 per person for two courses and I hope to have a menu in a day or two and can send it to those interested.

## **AutoSolo, 4 November (venue tbc).**

Let Gordon Buckley or Carol Willis know if you'd like regs for this event.

## **Mince Pie Night, 6 December, Shandon Park Golf Club**

This is always a popular event and a great way to kick off the Christmas festivities. Put it in your diary NOW!

**Finally – don't forget the BIG ones next year.**

## **20-24 MAY 2018. GOLDEN JUBILEE TOUR**

Entries opened in early September for the Jubilee Tour for those who had registered their interest and as I write this we have over forty entries. So if you think you'll want to join the Tour you'd better get your entry in now by following this [link](#). The Tour will kick off on Sunday 20 May at Carrickfergus and then wend its way to our Tour HQ at the lovely Roe Park Resort in Limavady.

**Once the entry is full – that's it. Don't be disappointed.**

## **Saturday 29 September 2018**

**GOLDEN JUBILEE GALA DINNER AND DANCE** at the Stormont Hotel



A line up of 'Zeds' sheltering from the rain under the *Result*, and with the luxury of parking on tarmac as well!  
(Photo: Ray Brown)

# MG Day at Cultra, 3 September 2017

Mike Armstrong

Saturday, 2 September, was a lovely day but the weatherman had other ideas for the following day. So it was - Sunday, 3 September, dawned with lots of rain. Undaunted, Executive Marquees had a marquee erected before 10 am and the much-heralded event took off. MGs started arriving soon after and each received an envelope containing a booklet on MGs through ten decades, two admission tickets to the Transport Museum, a voting card for "The Car I Would Most Like To Take Home", a card to describe their own car and a felt tip pen to do it by. All by courtesy of several advertisers.

Cars were marshalled into model groups as far as was possible but some hasty reorganisation was required to save the very wet grass from damage. The marquee was reserved for the dealers S.S. Logan and Mellons

who displayed the new MG GS and MG3 models which created much interest.

The trickle of cars increased as members of the MGCC, the MG Owners Club NI, and the Rover and ZT group brought some really nice restored cars. A comprehensive range of models included M Types, J2, PA, T Types, a Y Type, MGAs, MGBs, an RV8 and some very fine examples of the ZR, ZS and ZT range and the more recent MGF/TF range. A truly comprehensive group of 85 cars.

Many sought shelter in the Transport Museum among fine steam engines of bygone days and refreshed themselves at the café.

Congratulations to everyone who came out with their cars – to the stalwart marshals, to the dealers, and thanks to the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum for having us and to Ray Brown for letting us use his photographs. Pity about the weather.





*Jack Gardner's 1934 PA is a lone Triple-M interloper among the As, Bs and T Types (Photo: Ray Brown)*



*Josef Connolly's TD and John Greer's J2 - strange that there's no takers for the picnic tables! (Photo: Ray Brown)*





*The editorial J2 looking slightly lonely.*



*Ten years of MG development – 1953 TD (centre), 1958 MGA Twin Cam (right) and 1963 MGB (left)  
(Photo: Ray Brown)*





*The range of new MGs on display courtesy of Mellons and S.S. Logan (Photo: Ray Brown)*



*M Type, PA, MGBs, Fs and TFs and a lone Y Type. (Photo: Ray Brown)*



# Competition Corner

## MG Ulster Classic Trial, 1 September 2017

Carol Willis

The MG Ulster Classic Trial was held on Friday, 1 September with the start and finish taking place at David Bryce's farm at Lisbane. All 19 tests were held on various properties in the Killinchy area between Castle Espie and Balloo. We had an entry of 28 cars, 13 of which were Midgets and Sprites, being the best for years. The other cars comprised two VW Beetles, a Ford Anglia, a Triumph Spitfire, a Wolseley Hornet, a BMW 2002 and nine Minis.

Will Corry and Peter Moreland-Moore were defending their title but their petrol pump gave up on Test 2 leaving the field open for a new overall winner. David McCausland caught a gate post and now has an orange wing on his green Midget and David Cochrane broke a half shaft. Other than those wee things there were no other incidents.

Wendy Faulkner, Sharon Carson, Maire McLaughlin and Aine McLaughlin slaved away over a hot and smoky bbq with tears in their eyes getting all ready for the competitors and marshals at the finish. Without the generosity of our land-owners, marshals and all helpers we could not run the event and our sincere thanks go to all.

The event charity this year was Cancer Research NI and we collected £275.02 on the night. This amount will be added to from the surplus we made from the entries. Thank you all.

Oh yes, James Wilson in his brother Sam's Mini won the event overall, ably assisted by Roisin Boyd. The full results are [here](#).

We are indebted to Leslie McMullan for these spectacular photographs

Michael and Anna Reid



Bryan Mutch







*David Cochrane and Ruth Steele*

## **Car Trial<sup>1</sup>, Paradise Walk, 9 September 2017**

### **Stephen Dawson**

Opening the curtains on the morning of Saturday, 9 September, the sun was shining – a good day for a Trial! But, driving up the M2 past Glengormley to the venue near Parkgate, the heavens opened. The organising team met at the Paradise Walk Trial site around 11am and immediately cleared off for a fry-up at Steamers in Templepatrick to deliberate on whether the event should run rather than get drenched setting up tests. The seaweed on the wall was consulted around noon, the rain was starting to clear and we headed back to the site. Even getting through the gate was ‘hit and miss’. But by 12.30pm the sun was out again, we had the gazebo up and the 21 competitors were starting to sign on. We had two tests set up a short time later and a grass slalom mapped out at the very bottom of the field.

We were a bit ambitious with the setting of the tests as the wet grass overlying a very wet clay soil made for very slippery conditions so penalty scores were high. Once initial runs on the grass had broken the surface down to the muddy subsoil, there was little traction and even the FWD cars were having difficulties. This was a complete contrast to last year’s bone-dry Trials and clear runs were totally unachievable. A score of five was the lowest on Test 1 and three on Test 2. After the four runs at the two tests, Harry Barr in his MX5 came out in 1st place closely followed by Dermot Johnston in his Austin Healey Sprite jointly entered with son Patrick, who came a very creditable 3rd place.

On to the grass slalom – a typical hourglass shape around the cones. The total lack of grip

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<sup>1</sup> Car Trial is the name now used by the Motor Sports Association for what used to be known as a Production Car Trial, or PCT – see [www.msa-cartrial.org.uk](http://www.msa-cartrial.org.uk)



made for slow times and the RWDs had tails out all the way round, opposite locking in slow motion!

Bailie Thompson won the day pipping son Will into 2nd place by almost five seconds over the two counting runs. Junior competitor Johnny

McNamee came in an excellent 3rd place only 0.1 seconds behind Will.

Thanks to all the competitors and marshals who persevered with the weather and helped extricate all the cars from the field at the end of the event.



*Vincent Rodgers driving Alistar Browne's Midget*

*David McCausland's Midget, showing the after effects of clipping a gate post on the Ulster Classic trial.*







*Father and son team of John and Max Woods in their first event*

## Championship Placings

We have four competitive championships, namely the Leslie Ardill, which is awarded to the MG car, not the driver; the Leslie Porter autotest drivers' championship for MGs only; and the Vivian Scott autotest drivers' championship for non-MGs, and the Car Trial Championship. Details of eligibility and scoring were in the May edition of the MaGazine. The results of events to date, and the scores for these various championships, can be found [here](#) **Please take a look and if you think we've missed one of your scores, get in touch and let us know.** The provisional situation at the end of September was as follows:

### Leslie Ardill

Gordon Buckley's Midget (JRB 829D) has moved into the number one spot with 52 points by virtue of some very impressive autotest Class wins in Gordon's hands. The runner-up spot is closely contested between the Midgets of Michael Reid (AIL 2596) and Bryan Mutch (EIA 3354), and the MGB of Stephen Dawson (GIJ 5942), all within one point of each other, albeit fifteen points down from Gordon's Midget. And good to see Des

McDowell's TF (LMR 148) leading the best of the rest with 24 points with Mike Armstrong's TD (PZ 1167) close behind on 23.

With no Ulster Centre autotests since the last MaGazine, the position at the top of our two autotest championships remains the same.

### Leslie Porter

Michael Reid in his Midget maintains his lead in the MG only, Leslie Porter autotest championship with a score of 13, well ahead of the Midgets of Gordon Buckley with 6 points, Alex Little with 2 points and Mark Lemon with 1 point.

### Vivian Scott

The Vivian Scott autotest championship for non-MGs is led by Richard Earney with 55 points ahead of Andrew Earney with 50 points and Paul Lowther with 27 points.

### Car Trials

After one round, the leader is Vincent Rodgers (Midget) with David McCausland (Midget), Kevin McNamee (Corsa) and Johnny McNamee (Corsa) sharing the second spot.



# My MGenes

Mike Armstrong

## Part 5: Rebuild, Restore or Buy New?

At the end of Part 4 was a photograph of 'the stable' showing a 1933 J2, a 1947 TC, a 1953 TD, a 1974 Midget, and a 1980 rubber bumper MGB. The J2 and TC were 'Rebuilds' – in other words they were made up, essentially, from factory produced original parts, such as the chassis, front and rear axles and engine. On the other hand, the TD and Midget were 'Restorations' where there was basically a complete car but not in fit running condition for the road and with worn or broken parts which had to be restored or replaced. The MGB was 'New' and was as it was when it left the factory.

In this part of 'My MGenes' I would like to delve into 'Rebuilds' and look at some of the problems. I have spent many, many hours in pursuit of this

achievement starting when I was 15 with the 'Restoration' of a 1934 Morris Minor (See Part 1). By the time it was finished I was aged 20! A greater challenge lies in the 'Rebuild' of an incomplete car.

As far as the J2 was concerned it started sometime in the mid to late 1970s when I came across a J2 chassis for sale. From the photographs you can gather that it was basically a 'pile of bits'. You can make out the chassis and a back axle and handbrake and there was also a front axle (not shown). Missing were: an engine, a body, steering, seats, windscreen, lights, etc., etc. These all had to be acquired later from various sources and in various condition and all requiring restoration to as near new condition as possible over a period of about three years.



Both 'Rebuilds' and 'Restorations' require a certain degree of mechanical ability, as well as a considerable amount of time and patience, a space in which to work and store parts, and a very understanding wife or partner. Not least of the requirements is a reasonable amount of cash, and some good books to study as to what the original car should look like and, more importantly, how to achieve your aim by those who have done it before. Rebuilding the J2 was followed by the TC and later a TB and currently a TA. All of these cars have basically the same construction with a "ladder" chassis frame, underslung at the rear,

with the back axle supported on leaf springs and a front beam axle, also supported on leaf springs, with swivel pins which have specific castor and camber angles, depending on the model.

The steering gear also varied with the models and they ran on spoked wheels. The bodies were basically all similar with ash wood frames clad in sheet steel. An overhead camshaft engine was used in the Triple-M models such as the J2, and simpler, overhead valve engines in the T Types. For the J2 and TC a start was made by making an inventory of what was actually there and in what condition - this was a short list. Much longer was the list of parts required.



Before starting to dismantle, and during the process, you cannot take too many photographs. This is easy nowadays with digital photography. Once stripped to a bare chassis you have the option of laborious scraping, wire brushing and then painting, but, if you can, it is worth having the cleaning done by shot-blasting. It is doubtful if it is worth getting the chassis stove-enamelled. I believe that a good zinc primer carefully applied to all the nooks and crannies is better, followed by at least two coats of a good chassis paint. I have found that *Hammerite* is too brittle and prone to chipping.

Here is an example of a chassis stripped and primed ready for chassis paint. In this case a TB chassis which in many respects is similar to that of a J2



The chassis must not be twisted nor skewed out of parallel otherwise the steering will be severely affected. It is essential to have proper location of the back axle onto the chassis and for front and rear springs to be properly located. On the J2, TA and TB the rear end of the springs slide in bronze trunnions. Neglect, and old botched repairs, have to be corrected, such as this rear chassis cross-tube for the sliding spring trunnions (*opposite, top*). Having worn through the tube a plate had been welded over the top and no bronze trunnions were fitted. This was from my TB which supposedly had been restored, but the chassis work was a disaster. The second photo (*opposite, middle*) show the replacement part for the chassis cross-tube above the severely worn tube before

replacement. The third photo (*bottom*) shows the repair completed and the central lubrication pipe fitted.





Below are two shots of the bodged repair for the rear axle pedestal and the correct pedestal after repair.



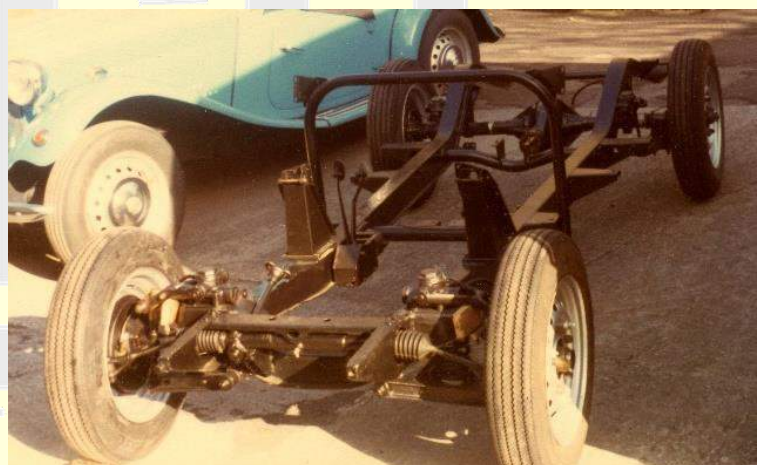
I merely show these as a warning to the pitfalls that abound when buying old chassis'.

Once the chassis is cleaned and refurbished the fitting of the axles comes next, along with their hubs so that slave wheels can be fitted allowing the chassis to be more easily moved. At this stage the shock absorbers can be fitted. Also the braking system is more easily done before a body is mounted. In this photo of the TC rebuild (*opposite, top*), it can be seen that the copper brake and petrol lines have been added. Also note that, in this instance, the engine is in place. One disadvantage of this practice is that a rebuilt engine may be sitting in the chassis for a considerable time,

maybe years, before it can be started up. Perhaps better to put it in after the body has been fitted.



The TD chassis (*below*) is much more robust with deep box sections and a cross bracing hoop. Also note the independent front suspension. Once the chassis is more or less finished we can concentrate next on the body.



On all T Types, and all pre-war MGs, the body has a wooden frame (usually ash) which is structurally very rigid and then clad in steel (originally) but often nowadays in aluminium as shown in the TC rebuild overleaf.



Once the main body shell has been painted and reunited with engine and chassis we have something that begins to look like motor car.

Door making and mounting has to be carefully done to get close fitting. Mudguards are next and may require a lot of fettling if buying new is out of the question and will be dealt with next time.





# From the Archives ...

Patrick Johnston (the editor's older brother) driving his TD (PZ 1167) in a Production Car Trial in December 1969. This car has been owned and campaigned by Mike Armstrong for many, many years.

CAR

