

January 2019

The

MAGazine



Ulster



Centre

Ulster Centre Magazine Editorial

Simon Johnston

Well, our Golden Jubilee year is finished and while I've taken the anniversary logo off the front cover, I couldn't resist one last picture of our Centre President, Mike Armstrong, (and Club President, John Day) and the Nuffield Gold Cup to sign off the year, even if it is January when this goes out.

I had intended to get this issue out in December last year but I managed to tear a muscle and a tendon in my upper arm at the beginning of December and was banned from keyboarding for over a month. But things are hopefully back to normal now thanks to the wonderful physio support of our NHS and once this issue hits the wires I can get back to the J2 to sort out what seems to be a leaking core plug that allowed copious amounts of water to pour into the sump. If it's not one thing

I think most of us would consider that our Golden Jubilee Year was a very successful year with a wide mix of social and competitive events even if most of the participants of one type of event rarely took part in the other. It's almost as though we are two different clubs – one competitive and one social – and I think that's something our new committee is going to have to address.

In this issue, Carol Willis, our Hon. Sec. has managed to pull a rabbit out of the hat by producing the minutes of the AGM, including her very comprehensive Ulster Centre report, less than a week after the AGM and I thoroughly recommend that you read them. In particular, please read the message from John Day, our Club President, which was read out at the AGM by Mike Armstrong. John takes a very personal interest in the Ulster Centre and we should not ignore the warnings he has sounded both at our Gala Dinner and at our AGM of the dangers of concentrating too much on just one aspect of club activities, namely autotesting, at the expense of the general membership. At least one other Centre ended up being closed after taking such a short-sighted view of how a Centre should be run.

In that context, I think there is something seriously wrong when, at the AutoSOLO in November, virtually half of our entry (17 out of 38) consisted of Mazda MX5s with only 5 MGs. We've

become the go-to club for MX5 owners to compete in without them having to bother setting up their own marque club and getting MSA approval, but we are obviously not appealing to our MG driving members.

However, I am optimistic that the new captain and crew of the committee (as John Day refers to them), led by (to continue the sailing analogy!) such an experienced old 'sea dog' as our new Chairman, Terry Ingles, will right the ship and sail us away from our Bermuda Triangle!

So what have we got in store for you in this issue? As well as the AGM minutes and Centre report already mentioned, Stephen Dawson and Gordon Buckley have provided reports and photos of both the last autotest of the season in October and the AutoSOLO in November. Many thanks to both of you. As you'll see, while other marques may predominate in the entry list, it's MGs only (with the occasional Sprite which is really an MG but with a 'foreign' badge!) as far as photos go. I do have some standards; not many, but some!

It was a nice surprise to get, completely unsolicited, a report from Brian and Liz Patterson on their trip in their MGB GT to the Ypres Rally Regularity at the end of November last year and I'm delighted to include it in this issue. On reading of their obvious relief at making it there and back more or less unscathed in the MGB GT, it made me feel less of a coward for giving up on driving the J2 to events in England and resorting to a trailer. Old age, and even older cars, do not a good mix make. Fifty years ago (aaagh...) as a student I thought nothing of heading off from Belfast to drive to London in my battered TC and never even considered the possibility of breaking down. Oh, the innocence of youth, although in fact I never did break down!

But back to this issue. Mike Armstrong winds up his My MGenes series which we've run since issue 1 in January 2017 while Chairman Terry Ingles takes us into the 70s with his personal account of MGs. Both articles are terrific reading and I know you'll all enjoy them. Thanks to all our contributors and anyone who would like to see their story in print, do please get in touch with me at simon.johnston@mgcculstercentre.co.uk

Dates for Your Diary

We've already got a packed programme in the coming months, and that's even before the new committee get to work.

Saturday 2 February - Autotest & Tutorial at Delamont Country Park

Info has already been sent out by email about this and entries must be made and paid for through www.rallyscore.net. No fee, no entry. There will be a tutorial beforehand, run by experienced drivers, and if you wish to take part in this it is important you let Carol Willis know beforehand so that she knows the level of interest. Sign-on for the tutorial will start at 9am and the cost is £10, payable on the day. You can contact Carol by phone (07831 345560), text or email (carol.mgulster@hotmail.co.uk).

If any of you can help marshal on the day, please let Carol know as soon as possible.

Wednesday 6 February - Film Night at the Tudor Cinema

The show kicks off at 7.30 pm and we're promised an eclectic mix of all types of motorsport – 30s, 80s and modern eras – lasting about two hours. A voluntary donation of £5 per person is suggested with the proceeds going to the preferred charity of Noel Spence who runs the Tudor cinema. If you haven't heard of the Tudor cinema it's a small private cinema just outside Comber owned and operated by the Spence brothers, Noel and Ray. You can see some comments about it on Facebook [here](#) (the inanity of some of the comments is incredible!) and its address is 22A Drumhirk Road, Comber BT23 5LY. Not easy to find on a dark, and possibly wet night, but Drumhirk Road is one mile out the Killyleagh Road from the roundabout on the Comber bypass. Turn right into Drumhirk Road and the Tudor Cinema is half a mile along on your left.

Saturday 9 March - Annual Dinner & Prizegiving in The Ivanhoe Hotel

Championship winners (see Centre Report in the AGM minutes for details) can put the date in their diary and come along and pick up their awards on the night. The perpetual awards aren't notified in advance, so you'll just have to come along in case you win one! Ticket details and menus will be sent out in good time by the Hon Sec.

Wednesday 13 March – Nosh 'n' Natter at Poacher's Pocket, Lisbane

These bi-monthly get togethers are proving to be more and more popular and while lunch time doesn't suit everyone, we found that an evening event was less popular, so lunch time it is. The Poacher's Pocket menu is really good, reasonably priced and the service is excellent. Why not come along and join the crack? You don't even have to come in your MG!

Saturday 23 March – ANICC Championship Autotest at TTS, Crumlin

Along with other clubs, the Ulster Centre runs a round of the ANICC Autotest Championship and our turn is on 23 March at our popular venue of TTS at Crumlin. More details will be circulated by email in due course.

Saturday 27 April – Derek Walker Trial

The Derek Walker Trial is one of our two premier events (the other being the Classic Trial in the autumn) and this year the date has been moved back a couple of months in the hope that the weather might be a bit better and also to give the new committee time to organise it. Once again, more info nearer the time.

Wednesday 8 May – Nosh 'n' Natter at Poacher's Pocket, Lisbane

Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the MG Car Club (Ulster Centre) held on Thursday, 17 January 2019 at 7.30 pm in Shandon Park Golf Club, Belfast

Mike Armstrong, President, welcomed and thanked everybody for coming along to the Meeting and read to all the following communication from John Day, President of the MG Car Club:

“Dear Ulster Centre Friends

I hope you have an excellent and fruitful AGM conducted in the spirit of the Marque of Friendship.

The main objective in holding an AGM is to discuss plans for the Centre and elect the right people to keep the Centre moving forward and relevant to your members. The good ship Ulster needs a good captain and crew or else it will cease to exist and nobody wants that as an outcome.

It is worth reminding ourselves that the Ulster Centre has achieved so much and you should take pride in being a well-respected and dynamic Centre within the MG Car Club. Your Centre is admired all over the UK for your enthusiasm and sense of fun and keeping our beloved MGs in use as Cecil Kimber intended. Your work in inspiring young drivers is an area where you have excelled whilst other Centres just talk about doing something similar.

I shall be thinking about you today and trusting that you can elect a new team to take you forward to even greater success.

Please be assured that the newly elected committee will have my full support and I look forward to hearing about your plans for the coming year.

Yours octagonally

John”

Apologies: John Clarke, David Girvin, Ralph Ewing, Valerie Heron, Trevor Faulkner, Fel Mcllroy, Mark Evans, George McMillan, Malcolm McQueen, Kenneth Irvine, Linda Wilson, Ruth Buckley, Zak Armstrong, Roger Dawson, Alan Cree, Lyn Cree

Present: Carol Willis, Mike Armstrong, Jenny Armstrong, Stephen Dawson, Trevor Reid, Terry Ingles, Linda Ingles, Gordon Buckley, Mike Wilson, Bryan Mutch, Kevin McNamee, Noel Cochrane, Mike Dowey, Des McDowell, Maureen Jelly, Fullerton Jelly, Richard McCracken, Will Thompson, Bailie Thompson, Brian Patterson, Liz Patterson

Approval of 2018 Minutes:

Proposal to accept the previous Minutes: Mike Armstrong

Seconded by: Gordon Buckley

Mike Armstrong thanked Carol Willis for producing very comprehensive Minutes.

Matters Arising from 2018 Minutes: None

Centre Report by the Hon Secretary for y/e 31 December 2018

This year I have produced an Ulster Centre Report instead of having individual reports from the Chairman, Secretary and Competition Secretary.

We had a very full and successful 50th Anniversary year which was made possible by all those who played a part in the organisation of the different events and our thanks go to all concerned.

The New Year's Day Treasure 2018 plotted by Roger and Angela Fynn started from Newtownards with 20 cars taking part and wending their way along a magical mystery tour to finish at The Wildfowler in Greyabbey. Brian Glenn and his team won with the Faulkners claiming the wooden spoon, and Brian and Liz Patterson were drawn to set the event for 2019.

This was followed on 31 January by a Film Show at The Tudor Cinema with Mike Armstrong and Gordon Buckley putting together footage for us all to enjoy.

The Derek Walker Trial took place on the first Saturday in February and was based in Ballymena Mart – weather-wise it was not a great day. With a 70 car entry it was the largest DWT we have ever undertaken and the committee had worked so hard to ensure the event would be one to remember. There were 21 tests of varying surfaces held between Ballymena, Ballyclare, Mallusk, Nutts Corner, Broughshane and Antrim. The DWT cannot be held without the help of the marshals and there are not adequate words in the English language to thank them properly. It was a great event and well done to all who made it so with its particularly demanding organisation.

The successful and very enjoyable lunchtime Nosh 'n' Natters began in February and were held bi-monthly. They generated an attendance between 10 and 20 people at The Poacher's Pocket, Lisbane and will continue bi-monthly during 2019; dates will be noted in Safety Fast.

The 2018 AGM took place towards the end of March and for 2019 we have brought it forward bringing it in line with the early years.

Our Annual Dinner and Prizegiving had been scheduled for March but had to be postponed until the following month owing to bad weather. It was again held in The Ivanhoe with 51 in attendance, unfortunately some couldn't come on the later date so we had fewer than anticipated. It was a good night all round and Richard Colston, from the main Club, joined us for the evening to assist with the presentation of prizes.

We are grateful to Gordon Buckley who gathered up a couple of teams to travel to MG Live at Silverstone to celebrate our 50th year. Competition was rife but the icing on the cake was taking the California Cup and various class wins in other events. What a coup!

In May the Jubilee team organised a splendiferous 4-day Jubilee Tour which was centred at the Roe Park Resort in Limavady with 60 cars entered, 45 of which came from the mainland. Mike Armstrong's tours sell themselves and a massive thank you to him and his team for giving us such a full and extremely enjoyable 4 days away, never mind the fantastic weather. On the final night dinner the Centre was presented with "The Marque of Friendship" which was a rare and great honour and it is on display this evening. Mike Armstrong was also presented with a Marque of Friendship Certificate by John Day for his never-ending contribution to the Centre since its inception.

At the beginning of September we co-hosted "MG Day" at Carrickfergus Sailing Club with the MG Owners' Club of Northern Ireland and there was a splendid turnout of MGs. Mike Dowey and I, with the Owners' Club, had gathered up quite a bit of auto jumble and with the assistance of Mike Armstrong and Mike Wilson on the day we raised over £800, and the total raised on MG Day was over £2,500 which was presented to the RVH Liver Support Group by MGOONI.

The Jubilee Team also organised another successful major highlight of the year, our Anniversary Gala Dinner which was held in the historic surroundings of the Titanic Hotel. We had 70 people who came along to celebrate our 50th, fewer than we had hoped for but nevertheless it was a memorable evening. After the meal the Martello Jazz Band entertained us with their music and many got up to dance. John Day, President of the MG Car Club, and Richard Colston, the Club Treasurer, with his wife Christa, were our main guests.

Our Sunday Run organised by Mike Dowey started with a tour of Whitehead Railway Museum and a car run up hills and down dales to Slemish and back by the lovely Gleno Waterfall to Whitehead Golf Club where we all enjoyed an excellent meal. Thank you, Mike.

We were only able to run 2 of our 3 PCTs and Grass Slaloms, one at Cunningburn and the other on Craigtantlet; both sites were terrific with fabulous views. As we were unable to run the third PCT it meant we couldn't have a tie break and so Mark Lemon and Bailie Thompson jointly win the PCT Championship with Bailie Thompson taking the Grass Slalom Championship yet again.

In 2018 our Autotest Championship comprised 4 events which were held at TTS in February and June, Carlisle's in May, and Delamont in October - all are popular sites with the drivers. Michael Reid won the Leslie Porter Award for MGs and Andrew Earney the Vivian Scott Award for non-MGs. Both competitors had terrific drives throughout the year. In addition to these autotests we held our round of the NI Championship at Bishopscourt in March.

The Ulster Classic Trial, affectionately known as Noel's event, achieved a 29 car entry with 17 members taking part in 20 A H Sprites and MGs. The tests all took place around Craigtantlet with Will Corry and Pete Moreland-Moore taking the honours. Yet again, Noel and his team excelled themselves and we extend our thanks to them and to all the marshals.

Our last competitive event was the AutoSOLO in November held at TTS with an entry of 41 competitors 17 of whom were MG Members. This differs from an autotest as it is an all forwards event suitable for all, especially those who are not expert autotesters. The highest placed member was Jack Brien who came 4th overall.

I must mention Simon Johnston, Editor of the bi-monthly MaGazine you have been receiving by email. It is a superb publication and I know members, and others, look forward to the very interesting and varied articles he includes. Simon has excelled himself in producing The MaGazine and our very sincere thanks to him for taking on this task. I believe this may continue in 2019 but will be on a less frequent basis.

Mike Armstrong and I attended the MG Council Meeting and AGM at Longbridge in October where, on behalf of The Ulster Centre, we were presented with the prestigious Nuffield Gold Cup. This is awarded to the most meritorious Home Centre or Register; sadly we weren't able to bring it home as the £50,000 value prohibits it leaving Abingdon. Wow, what a day that was!

The Mince Pie Night in December again attracted over 30 to join in chat, table quizzes and of course mince pies. There was so much chat and hilarity we didn't even get to play the "Spark Plug Game".

Thanks must go to the other members of Committee – John Clarke, Stephen Dawson, George McMillan, and Kevin McNamee who had a challenging year organising and marshalling our events. Stephen our Treasurer also played a large part in getting the autotests and PCTs organised as did Gordon Buckley and thanks must go to them. I thank all for their support during the busy year.

Thanks also to the Jubilee Sub Committee who stood down at the end of December – Mike Wilson, Mike Armstrong, Simon Johnston, Gordon Buckley, Noel Cochrane and Mike Dowey - for the contribution they have made to the Centre especially over the past year or so.

This year we raised £840 for Air Ambulance NI which was our charity for the year and we are continuing with that for 2019.

Sadly I have to report, John Clarke decided to stand down as Chairman during November. On behalf of all I wish to thank him for the contribution he has made to the Ulster Centre. In spite of travelling a lot for his company, John has been building a Midget over the past couple of years and so wasn't able to compete but he always found time to marshal, collect and return the trailer and in fact always willing to do anything he was asked. Always cheerful and willing John didn't mind chipping in and getting his hands dirty! Thank you, John, for taking on the role and leading us over the past 3 years and we wish you all the best for the future.

Well, that's it folks. What a wonderful year we have had and, on behalf of the Committee, I would thank you all for supporting our events and the Ulster Centre.

Carol Willis
Hon Secretary

Hon Treasurer's Report on the Accounts – y/e 31 December 2018

Stephen Dawson comprehensively took us through all aspects of the accounts putting them into context with what we had done during the year. Stephen explained that in using Rallyscore and Stripe it had made the accounting so much easier and it meant our money was more secure as we were not holding on to cheques and cash for each event. After the DWT it was thought we were owed approximately £400 by Stripe but in effect they had not put our competitor refunds through until we had run other events putting our account into credit with them again. He thanked Kevin McNamee, an accountant, for running his eye over the accounts before they were finalised and confirmed we are currently in a very healthy place financially.

Proposal to accept the accounts: Des McDowell
Seconded by: Jenny Armstrong

Election of Officers

The Secretary invited Mike Armstrong to chair the meeting for the Election of Officers and Committee.

| | | | |
|------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chairman: | Terry Ingles | Proposed by: Mike Armstrong | Seconded by: Gordon Buckley |
| Treasurer: | Stephen Dawson | Proposed by: Jenny Armstrong | Seconded by: Bryan Mutch |
| Secretary: | Carol Willis | Proposed by: Gordon Buckley | Seconded by: Terry Ingles |

Election of Committee

Competition Secretary:

It was agreed by all present that we would continue, as over the past year, with the committee taking on the role of Comp Sec as it had worked very successfully and if the situation changes it can be re-assessed by committee.

Committee:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Gordon Buckley | Proposed by: Carol Willis | Seconded by: Kevin McNamee |
| Brian Patterson | Proposed by: Terry Ingles | Seconded by: Carol Willis |
| Liz Patterson | Proposed by: Terry Ingles | Seconded by: Carol Willis |
| Mike Dowey | Proposed by: Mike Armstrong | Seconded by: Mike Wilson |
| Richard McCracken | Proposed by: Noel Cochrane | Seconded by: Gordon Buckley |

No other proposals were made.

Any Other Business

Mike Armstrong asked if there was insurance for the trophies or trailers as no mention of that was shown in the accounts. Stephen said he would look into it.

Des McDowell brought up the subject of communication with members and pointed out not everybody used Facebook. The Secretary advised all she endeavoured to contact members by email and Facebook would be used mainly to remind competitors about events but was not the main means of communication. Gordon Buckley, our webmaster, said information about all our events was shown not only on Facebook but in more detail on our website: www.mgcculstercentre.co.uk.

Terry Ingles, our new Chairman, thanked everybody for coming along and supporting the Centre. He said he was looking forward to working with his committee and learning the ropes.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm and those present were invited to the bar for refreshments.

From the archives: Oops, going the wrong way! Who, When and Where?





Andy Johnson in action in his Midget

Competition Corner

Reports

Autotest at Delamont, 20 October 2018

Stephen Dawson

Our final Ulster Centre autotest of the season took place at Delamont Country Park, Killyleagh on 20 October. An oversubscribed entry of 36 and a dry day made for excellent competition and much rubber laid down on Delamont's carparks. Prior to the event, Shane from Delamont had ensured the area was safely taped off and thanks must go to him for his enthusiasm for our events there. With Carol being away at the MGCC AGM, the Centre thanks Elaine Lynn who stepped in to do the results and all ran like clockwork in this respect.

We ran the common theme of two separate tests three times each and then joined

them for two runs of a longer test. A comment received was, "forget the first two tests, can we just have several runs of the third one?!"

On to the results, Jeremy Tomalin in his Special took first overall, a clear 16 seconds ahead of David Jenkins in the Stryker. Third was Will Corry sharing Jay Colville's Cosworth engined Midget as his own had succumbed to clutch problems getting to the event. Jay's poor car lay down on the final run of Test 3 with possible crown wheel failure.

The Midget & Sprite brigade were out in abundance but had their fair share of problems with Mark Brien's car damaging a kingpin beyond repair on his first test. Then Mark

Lemon hit a kerb bursting the two nearside tyres. The MG Marque of Friendship was at hand though, and he was up and running in no time, presented with a matching set of Minilites/tyres from fellow competitors to

ensure he completed his runs. Thanks also to Goff Evans, Nigel McCutcheon, Sam Baird, Bronach Meehan and John McNamee for stepping in to marshal while others were away.

Class Winners were:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Class 3 | Peter Mann |
| Class 4 | Angus Johnston |
| Class 5 | Andrew Earney |
| Class 6 | Jack Brien |
| Class 7 | David Jenkins (Jeremy Tomalin winning overall) |
| Class 8 | Willie Skelly |
| Class 9 | Kevin McNamee |

Full results are available [here](#)



David Cochrane, Midget

Below: Jay Colville, Midget





Gordon Buckley's Class winning Midget at the TTS AutoSOLO

AutoSOLO at TTS, 3 November 2018

Gordon Buckley

The weather forecasts coming up to our annual AutoSolo event were all over the place, showing frost and low temperatures and a sheet of rain passing eastbound over Ireland. Happily most of this didn't occur and we enjoyed a mild, rain-free day, albeit extremely windy, knocking over all the pylons.

The main thing, of course, about AutoSolos is that they are designed to be driven by road going cars without the need for a hydraulic handbrake. The tests are forwards-only and all circled cones have a minimum 5 metre diameter.

We had a full entry of 40 on Rallyscore and very few drop outs, such is the popularity of this format.

We started on time with the tests devised by Kevin McNamee. Test 1 in front of the main building had a familiar look about it from previous events, with a fast wiggle-woggle to a series of cones to circle between long stretches. With the tarmac drying out fast, this was a power test and the raw power of the K Series & Zetec Midgets and many MX5s was evident. The big Skoda Octavia estate of Jonathan McDonald looked amazing, a lot of horsepower scrabbling for grip. Visibly quick too was the Fiesta ST of Michael Beattie.

Having the engine weight over the driven wheels was the way to go, particularly on the very greasy Tests 2 & 3. Test 2 was a brain teaser with approximately 15% of competitors picking up a fail, mostly by turning away too

soon at the second set of pylons. In addition, as the day went on, the final 360 round the cones became so slippery that the cars seemed to take an eternity to complete the manoeuvre. Times for most competitors on this test got progressively slower as the day went on.

Test 3 was just slippery all day. Moving into a higher gear might have resulted in an improved time but there was no complete answer to the lack of grip. However, the tests were undoubtedly fun, if continually challenging.

It was decided that the three tests would be run four times each and that lunch could be snatched in between. The Food Wagon ("Born & Bread") was excellent and the hot food very welcome.

So how did everyone do? Well, the results turned up some real surprises. Aaron Annett in a black Ford Puma took second place overall and Jonathan in the huge Skoda Octavia came 3rd, proving that AutoSolo is a different discipline to autotesting where size, as they say, doesn't seem to matter.

Winner overall was Matthew Mason in the white Micra, sacrificing some power with a different engine to the one normally used in lanes rallies.

A stellar drive was that of Jimmy Dougan in the delightful sounding Mini. Jimmy was an excellent 5th overall.

First MG home and 7th was Gordon Buckley in the A Series Midget.

Failed tests by several front runners certainly mixed things up. That, unfortunately, is part of the competition.

So, a very well done to our overall and class winners who were as follows:

Winner overall- Matthew Mason

Class 3 – Peter Mann

Class 4 – Gordon Buckley

Class 5 (in lieu of overall winner)- Aaron Annett

Class 6 – Jack Brien

Class 7 – Simon Brien

Full results can be found [here](#)

Great to see Michael Beattie's daughter Emma out in the Fiesta.

Terrific also to see Robert McGimpsey in a new vehicle- a Reliant Scimitar. Suffering today from a nonexistent handbrake (didn't need it, Robert) and unexpected surges of turbo power, we can nonetheless expect to see him climb the results in due course.

Good to see another Midget in the fold, a nice blaze colour, chrome bumper model owned and nicely driven by Peter Mann

Finally, sorry to see John Gardner in his Midget retire with engine gremlins.

A really good day out and well organised.

Our thanks to all the marshals, in particular Kevin McNamee (COC), Colin & Laura Earney, Trevor Reid, Mervyn Williamson, John Clarke and our friends Brian and Robert who travelled all the way from Enniskillen to help us out. Thanks to Carol as always for taking our entries and doing results.

Finally, a huge thank you to Martin Hutchinson who permitted the Ulster Centre to use his magnificent facilities at TTS. We are enormously grateful.

Paul Beardmore in his Austin Healey Sprite (well, it's almost a Midget!)





Ypres Rally Regularity

30 November – 2 December 2018

Brian and Liz Patterson

Storm Diane threatened to put the kibosh on the trip, but following a couple of cancellations, the P&O Larne to Cairnryan ferry resumed and our late November trip to Belgium in the MGB GT was on. It seemed a good idea at the time, something different, to enter the 24 Heures de Ypres Regularity. Battling down the semi-flooded and storm blasted A75, the forty-foot trucks throwing up bow waves that practically engulfed the MGB, we were really questioning our sanity.

The plan was to go through Carlisle, down the M6 to Penrith, across the A66 to Scotch Corner, down the A1/M1 towards Leeds and then swing left onto the M62 into Hull for the Zeebrugge overnight ferry. Simple. Except for the weather and the A66 being closed. So, no problem, the A69 and then the A68 was the answer, the MG was singing along and the world became a much happier place. There was some consternation when, following a brief tea stop the MG's ignition switch didn't play ball. We knew it felt a bit woolly before we set off, and should really have done something about it, but didn't. Procrastination!

Anyway, we managed to keep the MG going and made the P&O ferry out of Hull with a little time to spare: very little. We weren't on

the ferry, the Pride of Bruges, very long before we were wondering if our efforts were worth the trouble. In fairness, the staff members were very nice, but otherwise it was a case of *nul points*.

Matters cheered up considerably when we landed in Belgium. It wasn't raining, and the town of Bruges was a short hop down the road for a coffee stop. We would also have liked to buy a few things, but we hadn't pre-arranged a mortgage, so even a pair of shoes, which were beautiful, was out of the question.

From Bruges it was a handy cruise down to the town of Ypres, one of our most favourite places in the world, and our hotel, the Ariane, is just such a beautiful place – a real jewel. It was a Friday afternoon when we arrived, and the main Ypres Regularity was starting that evening. The ramp was positioned between two very beautiful historic buildings, the Cloth Hall and the Cathedral. There was such a line-up of classic cars: simply iconic in that setting. There were Porsches, Mini Coopers, Lancias, Saabs, BMWs, Fords, Opels, Simcas, Mercedes and some makes we didn't even recognise.

There were just a few other MGs. This was the first ever Ypres Historic Regularity, and the entry was a reflection of just how popular this

branch of the sport has become in Europe, and how seriously the competitors treat it. To us the route and format looked very tough and long. We were very glad that we had entered the light-hearted bit, the Targa Florio, or 'Ballade'. This was just one day, the Sunday, and followed the route of Ypres 24 Heures stages over the past years.

So, on the Friday evening we were able to see the 150 or so cars in the main Regularity set off into the darkness with their timepieces and Haldas clicking, and we were able to go and enjoy the world renowned frites and then attend the evening 'Last Post' at the Menin Gate. This is an unforgettable experience and definitely not to be missed. It is very special. Not a dry eye in the house.

On Saturday we were able to re-acquaint ourselves with the countryside around Ypres, visit some war grave sites, get the MGB ready for Sunday and enjoy a good meal in lovely Ypres Town Square with friends and family. It is not a town you would go hungry in.



Liz wordt geïnterviewd voor de lokale Vlaamse radio!

The Sunday 'sign-on' was extremely friendly, perhaps especially so as we were the only crew from Ireland. The day consisted of following the road book through stages, no great speed or anything, just enjoyable motoring. Thankfully the MGB went like a dream. There was even the chance of a touch of lunatic driving over cobblestones on a closed slalom/stage. That was great fun.

The organisers laid on a very tasty buffet lunch for every competitor in the middle of a village called Elverdinge. A measure of the thoroughness of the organisation was that

every car received a bag of yellow tokens, with which you could buy drinks. We saved the most of ours for the after-event party. All in all, it was a most enjoyable day.

Monday morning arrived all too soon. Rather than re-board the dreaded 'Pride of Bruges' we had phoned back to Nutt Travel in NI on the Friday afternoon and the lovely lady there was able to rebook us with P&O on the Calais-Dover route. Calais is a short jaunt from Ypres (head north west out of Ypres, past Poperinge, aiming for Veurne or Dunkirk, turn left on the A18/E40) and we managed to board a slightly earlier ferry than planned. And a very nice ferry it was too.

Happy days, the earlier sailing meant a better chance of a clean run up the M20. No, it didn't work out like that. Instead we got a close-up of Ashford. But at least the Dartford tunnels were quite clear. We knew going this route in the MG would be hard work. What with accidents, road-works and detours it was quite a challenge. Somewhere in the mayhem we had another detour round the back lanes around Woburn Abbey.

The original idea then was to head for Cairnryan by the M1/M6 etc, but the traffic news indicated the M6 was blocked so we kept heading straight north for Scotch Corner and then A66. This at least gave us the excuse to head for Appleby and the Tufton Arms Hotel: one of our little favourite places. It was a long trek, but we made it to Appleby, giving the MG no respite over the A66 in the darkness and at last a clear road.

In contrast to the welcoming warmth of the hotel, there was a big frost the next morning. We bought some de-icer in a grocery shop down the street, and while we were in the butchers (Dowdings) next door to the hotel (fabulous beef there from their own farm), the de-icer we had sprayed on the MG windscreen froze over! This was obviously a quality product.

Anyway, the MG started first turn of the key and we were away, back on to the A66. There were a few worrying moments when, just a couple of miles down the very frosty road, the 'B' lapsed onto three or maybe two cylinders. In

a flash there was a Scania grill seemingly coming through the back window. We nursed the car along and into the first lay-by we could. Happily, a squirt or two of WD40 restored all the sparks to the right places at the correct intervals. Was it condensation? Who knows?

Then, following a good blast up the M6, curving left after Carlisle onto the A75, we had enough confidence to turn off at Crocketford to

take the scenic route up through New Galloway, past Clatteringshaws and the Goat Park, down to Newton Stewart and on to Cairnryan. With the MG then safely tucked up in the bowels of the European Causeway, we were as good as home. It was quite a weekend and the MG was still in one piece!



Tackling the infamous Belgian pavé



MTE 651C at Craigtantlet Hill Climb, August 1972

A Personal MG Saga

Terry Ingles

[At the end of the last episode, Terry had just sold one Midget (1879 PZ) and bought another one (MTE 651C). The story continues ...]

MTE 651C was autotested in Ulster Centre events, taken to Silverstone in 1972 to try and defend the California Cup, the team coming second that year, and later entered for my first speed event at Craigtantlet hill climb.

The somewhat unusual Reece Fish carburettor was like a single choke Weber with the "jet", a hole in the throttle butterfly spindle, the angle of which to the barrel determined the amount of fuel which bled into the choke, all according to the venturi principle! I remember (before the days of the internet and Google) trying to find car magazine articles and instructions on this device. I still have two books on tuning the Mini by Clive Trickey which describe in detail the totally alien method of setting up and tuning the carburettor. Clive was a demon tuner of A Series engines at the

time who also wrote for *Cars and Car Conversions* magazine.

Linda, who was secretary of the Ulster Centre in 1972 and '73, and I had a glorious



A long line up of Spridgets at Craigtantlet, August 1972

holiday in the west of Scotland in July 1972 in the Midget and never had the hood up – we had to stop on the first day and buy hats as we had burnt our faces without realising!

Later in 1972 having been involved in rallying with the UAC, and especially the Circuit of Ireland, I decided I wanted to be a rally driver! Serious mistake! We sold the Midget and bought a rally prepared Cooper S – its last rally had been the Scottish, which should have been a warning as it was the roughest forest based special stage rally in the UK at that time. However, the Abingdon registered NRX 407F was a vaguely “works” associated car with one of its previous owners a BMC works mechanic. It was reputed to have been a practice car for the Marathon de la Route at Spa – never proven however. Certainly, it came with all the works preparation, Halda Twinmaster; interior map lights; 4 point seat belts; full roll cage, twin fuel tanks, Minilite wheels, underbody protection, sump guard, 4 Cibie spot and driving lamps, halogen head lamps, 1293cc engine with straight cut drop gears, gearbox and LSD – what we had to do was use this uncivilised, temperamental, noisy, somewhat unreliable beast as our everyday car, commuting to the RVH in a cacophony of screaming, whining gears, leaping from side to side as the diff gripped one way or the other seeking traction through its tiny 10 inch wheels!

My brother-in-law, Ronnie, was also keen to do some navigating and we did several night rallies. In those days, road rallies usually started on a Friday, sometimes Saturday late evening

and went on all night to finish in the early morning at a hotel that would provide a breakfast while waiting for results to be declared. They included very tight navigation which had to be prepared from instructions received only a short time before the start and included fast “selectives” which were timed to the second on a mixture of normal country roads and barely surfaced farm lanes. Clubs would alter the timing clocks (against all regulations!) to ensure cars would be penalised as the events became faster and faster and cars could otherwise complete a timed stage without penalty. They were almost special stages on the open public road and eventually became condemned as dangerous and anti-social by the RAC – now MSA, in favour of closed road special stage events, mostly in the forests. Road rallies eventually returned as purely navigation events on the public road with strictly controlled timing at much lower average speeds designed for quite basic road cars.

Forest road special stages were very expensive for clubs to organise as the Forestry Commission in GB and equivalent Forest Service in Northern Ireland charged high rates to allow events to take place, charging for the repair work and re-grading of the unsurfaced roads after rallies had used them even though the roads were often not prepared properly again before another rally would use them, resulting in some forests becoming notorious car breakers.

In 1972 the Dungannon, Omagh and Enniskillen motor clubs came together to organise the DunOmEn forest special stage Rally. We entered in the Mini with friends of Ronnie and Linda manning the service car – our first special stage event. And our last! Our lowly seeded position resulted in the car tobogganing along on its sump guard through many of the stages, which became rutted and torn up by Escorts, Triumph Dolomites and other beefier cars more suited to the terrain. We spent a long period of time extricating the car from its resulting position on its side across a ditch well off the road at a 90 right that we failed to negotiate as the wheels failed to brake or steer



Cooper S on its side on the DunOmEn Rally 1972 – reportedly Robert McGimpsey to the rescue!

round the corner. Another rough stage resulted in a rear brake pipe breakage at the top of a short steep hill with a 90 right at the bottom through a gateway. Luckily my autotesting practice came to the fore and we managed to get through the gate and round the corner on the hand brake to the finish of the stage. We managed to limp on to the lunch halt in Omagh, which was spent under the car fitting a new brake pipe and bleeding the system for the afternoon stages. Linda can remember sitting in the driver's seat eating her sandwiches being shouted at to "pump, pump" as we tried to clear the air from the brake lines!

I still have the finishers' award somewhere in the filing system of motoring memorabilia in the roof space, comprising a slice of tree with the DunOmEn name burnt in to it.

The Cooper S was sold early in 1973 ending its life on a bridge parapet in the new owner's hands and a three year sojourn with a Renault 4 followed – don't laugh! The Renault 4 was a serious work horse which was as fast laden as it was empty. Once you got used to scraping the door handles on the road, the car could be driven relatively fast without the use of the brakes, relying on its superb road holding to get round the bends. While laying out a Circuit of Ireland Special stage we were entreated by a Ford Mexico driving member of our team to please slow down as he could not keep up and did not know the way!

Linda was secretary of the Ulster Centre in 1972 and 1973 and we still enjoyed our involvement with the Club and our interest in MGs. It was Linda and I who persuaded Gamble Simms to donate two galvanised dustbins for the Ulster Centre tombola at the Ulster Centre Dinner Dance already well described in a previous edition of the MaGazine! Linda can remember members continuing to buy tickets in the hope of taking a "dusty bin" home complete with bow tied ribbon!

I became more involved with the UAC and especially the Circuit and worked on committees and ran the Marshals' Club with Linda and others during Malcolm Neill's years. Malcolm reluctantly gave up the post of Clerk of

the Course after three years in 1975 due to pressure of work, but partly because the UAC would not agree to appoint a full time C of C in recognition of the increasing status of the event and ambitions towards higher European Championship ranking and possibly World Championship status. This need for a full time official, but reluctance to appoint was to become a recurring theme over the next few years. In 1976, I took on the position of Secretary of the Meeting on the Benson and Hedges Circuit of Ireland Rally with Peter Allen as Clerk of the Course. I needed a more suitable set of wheels.

Gordon Harvey was Press Officer and drove a Lancia Fulvia, EOI 3783 and out of the blue suggested a part exchange deal for the Renault. Deal done.

The next year, 1977 I was thrust into the position of Clerk of the Course. David Mitchell took on the role of Rally Director and had grand ideas to bring pace notes to the Circuit. The Circuit of Ireland and nearly all other special stage rallies in Ireland, unlike European events at the time were supposed to be secret special stage route events, with the number of stages between the halts being the only guide in the regulations. Pace notes and marked maps were not allowed and there were controls and searches carried out during the event, especially on the Sunday run as the stages were so well known to regular competitors. The routes over roads to be closed could be discovered by the very serious competitor by scouring the official notices and newspaper advertisements which were required under the Road Closing Order requirements, but the roads in those days were not named, only entered under their coded road number. It took a very serious co-driver to decipher the route, but it was known that some did so.

The regulations for 1977 were published with the intention of allowing controlled reconnaissance of the special stages with the cooperation of car clubs in the areas concerned. Not many people realise that the somewhat new route, with many new special stages – for a Circuit of Ireland Rally - with stages repeated on

the way back from Killarney, was designed with reconnaissance in mind. As Rodney McComb's book, *Ireland Stage by Stage*, shows, however, there is no such thing as a "new" Irish rally special stage! At the Press Conference for the publication of the 1977 regulations at The Royal Irish Automobile Club HQ in Dublin, despite supposed previous discussion and agreement, reconnaissance was embarrassingly forbidden at the last minute by the RIAC in whose jurisdiction most of the Circuit ran. The regulations were re-written, but the route remained.

Motivated by the failure of the big ends in the Lancia on the way down to Dublin on one of the many recesses for the rally and by the car my deputy, Marshall Allen, drove - a Ford RS 2000 - I bought a matching car, BIB 2310. I had it for the two years I was Clerk of the Course. It did

becoming a major Northern Ireland face in the organisation of motor sport.

Also in 1979 I co-drove for a number of better and faster rally drivers than me: Will Corry sr in his HSR Chevette on the Ulster Rally and Donald Grieve and Richard Young in their Sunbeam Imp. On the Hills of Donegal Rally Richard did a somewhat elegant barrel roll into a ditch and back on its wheels to continue on the road, after he took the brow of a hill, flat, on our second run through the stage – it wasn't! However we finished, shaken, but not stirred.

Over the years, like most enthusiasts, I had built up a library of MG books concentrating on the preparation and tuning of the factory cars sent to race and break records round the world in the pre-war years. My interest was mainly on the mechanical side, but I also became increasingly interested and involved in hill climbs and sprints, the specialised nature of engine and car preparation and the need for immediacy and error free driving appealed to me.

An anecdote I enjoyed was the tale of record breaking with one of the 6 cylinder cars: first they would break records with the car, then disconnect two of the con-rods and break the records again with what was now a four cylinder engine, then overnight they would bore out the cylinders with a portable boring bar, rebuild the engine and go out and break the records for the next engine capacity!

Another story is of preparing the modified EX127 for racing by a new owner in Germany when the engine suffered overheating of the exhaust valves due to overshort guides – so they pressed out the guides, cut them in two and inserted a plain piece of guide in the middle, replacing all three parts. Job done. The story continues with the observation that the mechanic would love to see the face of the engineers eventually stripping the head when the three pieces of valve guide fell out on to the bench.

[Next: 1980s Hill Climb and Sprint MG Midget]



BIB 2310 - two years' service on the Benson and Hedges Circuit of Ireland Rally, 1977 and 1978

26,000 miles round Ireland - never raced or rallied!

In 1979 I stood down as Clerk of the Course on the Circuit as a result of being delivered an ultimatum by my employer – either work for the UAC, or the RVH! No choice really, so I agreed to be Secretary of the Meeting again for Donald Grieve who took over as Clerk of the Course, a post in which he excelled over the next number of years, developing the Circuit of Ireland and



Mike Armstrong in his favourite MG, his 1953 TD2

My MGenes

Mike Armstrong

Part 10: Where Have They Gone and Where To Now?

I have enjoyed reminiscing about my MG experiences over the past 60 years or so and hope that you have too. As this is the final month of the Jubilee 50th Anniversary year for the Centre it is time to put the lid on the pen and close the computer for the final time,

Recently I counted up the MGs that I have owned – or still have - and was somewhat stunned when the total came to 25 as far as I can remember. These were made up as follows:

1 M Type; 1 J2; 2 TAs; 1 TB; 3 TCs; 2 TDs; 1 MGA Coupe; 2 (or perhaps 3) Midgets; 1 MGB Roadster; 2 MGB GTs; 2 MGCs; 1 MGB GT V8; 3 MG/TFs; 1 Metro; 1 MG3 and 1 MGZS .

Where Have they Gone?

The M Type - owned for some 40 years or more - is still undergoing “long term” restoration. Would be nice to have it finished for the 90th Anniversary next year (2019) of the M Type.

The J2 which was built from many J2 parts and which originally had a Ford engine, and later a proper J2 engine, was sold to MG Dealer Terry Bone for £10,000 and is still thriving.



The J2, resplendent in period duo-tone Oxford and Cambridge blue

The first TA was my first MG (FZ 1835) and was swapped in exchange for my 1934 Morris Minor about 1964. It was partially restored and used as my every day car. After a couple of years it was sold and had an MG ZA engine inserted and was painted yellow. It was later bought locally and was fully restored and sold at auction – whereabouts now unknown.

The second TA (AFS 866) is undergoing a complete rebuild over the last 3 years and has been NEARLY finished for months!

The first TC (ZH 914) was bought just before I sold the first TA about 1966 and was mostly rebuilt. It was my daily car for years and also my competition car. I sold it to a Ballymena man for £800 to pay for school fees. With its new home outside Ballymena it had a number change from a Southern Irish number to GZ something! It had a further restoration and is, I believe, residing in Switzerland.

The second TC (GZ 7853) was given to Mike Wilson and myself in the late 70's and was lying in pieces in Newtownards. It was totally rebuilt as a racer and competed in the 80s. It then lay for about 15 years before being stripped to bare chassis and rebuilt as a road going car. It was sold to Barry Carter, MG Dealer, for £18,000 and passed through a few more hands and was being sold by Beech Hill Garage at Silverstone in 2017 for £29,500. It had lost its roll-over bar and had been re-registered as YVL 780 but was otherwise as I rebuilt it.

The 1939 TB (GKL 64) was bought in 2011 on a whim from an MG Forum for £12,000 and was reputedly almost completely rebuilt. One of only 379 built in 1939 before the outbreak of WW2 after the TA ceased, it turned out to have been a Kent Police car in 1939. Following this is it had a chequered history. It had lain in a barn for over 40 years. The only good thing about it when I got it was the body tub and mudguards which were in good order and very nicely painted red. Under the skin it was awful and, apart from the body, had to be stripped to bare chassis and completely restored. Bought with the intention of selling on it, was auctioned at Coys for £31,000 in 2013 and now resides in Brescia in the ownership of a very nice man from Argentina.

Following the sale of the TC (ZH 914) in about 1976, I bought a 1968 MGCGT (4838 WZ) as my everyday car. It had to have the sills replaced and later had the engine rebuilt with new bearings, a rebore and new pistons. Lifting the engine out with a string stranded Haltrac hoist was rather brave. It served well as everyday transport and was a delightful fast cruiser with 6 cylinders and just under 3 litres on tap. It blew a head gasket in a dice with a Jaguar. It was useless for autotests as it tended to go straight on when rounding pylons. It was sold to someone in Yorkshire. On a much later occasion I heard of an MGCGT languishing in a field near Ballyclare. I went to see it and it looked not too bad – as long as you could imagine it without the chicken shit and dead hens inside. As far as I remember it cost nothing.

Registration No, UZ something, it was collected with a trailer and rolled into my garage. Removal of the front wings and doors and engine revealed an horrendous amount of rust. As I already had too many cars I sold it on and it eventually went to a local man



The racing TC

who claimed to be a welder and seemed unfazed with the amount of work required. I know not if it survived but I doubt it.

Eventually in 1980 it was apparent that the MG Abingdon factory was about to close so I sold the MGC and replaced it with a new MGB Roaster (HAV 921W). This was my first NEW MG and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was even quite useful for autotests and I even once came 9th overall in the California Cup at Silverstone in the days of big entries. Eventually it was passed down the family – lived in London for a while and then Warwickshire before going back to London where it was sold for several hundred pounds in around 2002. It had its problems – mainly rust in the sills – and had the engine out a few times for oil leaks.

In 1997 I moved house to my current abode and the next year I retired and found a 1959 MGA Coupe a few hundred yards away in a second hand car dealers. It was a LHD American export model and had lived all of its life in sunny climes. It was rather sad looking with deteriorating interior trim and was painted a horrible pea green which had suffered in the sun. For about £4000 it was mine. It was moved into my newly built garage and completely dismantled. There was one area of rust about the size of a playing card and the chassis was sound. Three years later it surfaced in its original black colour and had been converted to RHD and given an age-related number of 3872 OI. As with the other cars (except the racing TC which was shared with Mike Wilson) I did all of the work myself. Retrimmed in red and with a 1600cc MG engine it looked and sounded good.

Not very long afterwards I saw an advert for a desirable 1622cc MG engine which was in Derbyshire.



The MGA which now resides in the sunnier climes of Barcelona

For £700 and a ferry fare I brought it back in an estate car. The cylinder head had been worked on by Burgess and was very smooth. I put it straight into the car together with a 5-speed Ford gearbox and apart from changing the oil it had no further work on it while in my possession. It was a great touring car and good for Classic Rallies. It was also very driveable in autotests. With my increasing age, entry and egress became more difficult and in September 2017 I sold it to the Argentinian man who had the TB. Bought sight unseen it sold for £28,000 and was eventually collected in September 2018 and now resides in Barcelona.

Before I moved house and was living in Drumbeg, I had the J2, the racing TC and the new MGB, all mentioned above, and also a 1953 MG TD2 (PZ 1167). This car has been mentioned in previous episodes of My MGenes. It was handed down to me after a complete rebuild by my father in Yorkshire. This is my favourite MG and has been very hard used in all sorts of competition. I don't think I will ever sell it and it will hopefully be passed down to a younger generation. I'm not sure for how long he or she will be able to get petrol to put in it.

Also while living in Drumbeg I had an MG Midget (OSD 519L). This was a Mark III model with round wheel arches. It was purchase for £200 from a small garage in Dunmurry. It was in a basically sound state but was rebuilt. A slightly tuned and rebored 1250cc engine was fitted – the new wishbones gave a negative camber – a rollover cage was fitted and 'Hey Presto' we had a race car and an autotest car.

Previous episodes in this MaGazine exploited some of its history aside from the racing. This included a head on collision with a telegraph pole and an off-driveway excursion with a tree. "Ahem". Papa



OSD 519L before its rebuild with a new shell

was away when these antics took place but I think some lessons were learned. Tremendous fun was had with this car by myself and sons and gave us a great taste of serious competition. This was in the 80s.

Eventually, when new Midget bodies were available and sons had moved away, I put a new shell on it, repainted it and retrimmed it, removed the roll cage and VERY smart she looked. For £6,000 she went to live in Dublin and as far as I know still is there.

While on the subject of Midgets, at one stage I had a red Mark II (BIJ 6007) which was completely rebuilt, spent some years in London, was tarted up again and sold locally to a young lady for a bargain price. I don't know if it has survived. There was also another Midget (EIA 1355) – a bit of a wreck - which was cannibalised and I believe some of the body survives somewhere in County Down.

Somewhere about 1998 my father passed on a red TD which he had been rebuilding for some time and then no longer had the energy to finish it. Most of the hard work had been done and really it just had to be finished: rewiring, trimming, MGBV8 front suspension bushes, MGBGT front coil springs and MGB anti-roll bar. It was my father's third TD rebuild . The car was registered ONY 151 which is a Glamorgan registration and had been bought by my father from my brother-in-law who had rescued it after it had been involved in a rear side-on crash. The car had been owned in NI by a Mr Kelly McQuaid. I finished the car in 2001 and sold it for only £11,000 to an estate agent from southern Spain.



Another MG off to Spain, this time it's the TD ONY 151

I had not rebuilt the engine and unfortunately it spewed oil at quite a rate. Mike Wilson and I flew to Spain – removed and dismantled the engine – put it together properly and after 2 days came home. The

owner thought we had forgotten to put oil in as there was no leak! As far as I know it is the most Southerly TD in Europe. The new owner put chrome wire wheels on it and a “go-faster” leather strap over the bonnet. Sometime later I was in Gibraltar on holiday and picked up a holiday brochure and there was ONY 151 in a Classic Car Parade!

In 2000 my father died and I inherited his MGB GT V8 (PKT 644M). The car was in Yorkshire and, at the time, my garage was very full. I took the car to Syd Beer in Cambridgeshire from where the car had been bought years previously. It was regularly serviced by him and they posted an MOT certificate to my Dad each year! The car lay in Syd's garage and nobody seemed to want it so I paid £1,000 for storage after a year and brought it home. It was foolishly sold locally for only £3,000 and really should have been kept as it was a good car. It had toured widely and been to Europe on more than one occasion. Oh well!

Somewhere in the 90s I bought an MG Metro from a colleague. It was mainly used by my son Patrick for running about. I drove it quite often and it was certainly an entertaining wee car. The rust bug chewed away a lot of the sills and it was sold on.

In the meantime, I also had purchased 2 MGB GTs. The first was bought off eBay unseen – not a good idea. I collected it in England and drove it home. The engine was very sweet and pulled well. The body looked reasonable externally but there was the usual rust underneath. I kept it for most of a year.

Registered HJC 630H it was sold locally for what I paid for it. The next MGB GT was seen when on holiday in Yorkshire. It was being sold by a garage – had a full history and documented body rebuild. Registered YON 617J, I paid £5,000 for it and still have it and it remains in good condition.

Much more recently I have had 3 MGF/TFs. The first was a red 1996 MGFVVC (Reg L5 MGF). This was the first VVC MGF into Northern Ireland. My everyday car for a number of years it was passed on a few years ago to my son Patrick in Guernsey and now lies in Jersey with a new number. I replaced it for £1500 with a silver MGTF 160 Sprint. This is a very quick motor car and I loved it BUT then in 2017 I saw a Concours winning low mileage 2003 Le Mans Green MGTF135 Sprint. This car is too good for every day driving so is garaged and usually only used in the dry. We toured for a few weeks in France this year and it is a delight to drive. For £3,500 it was to me a bargain. It carries

the L5 MGF Registration. The silver MGTF 160 sits alongside the red MGF in Jersey.

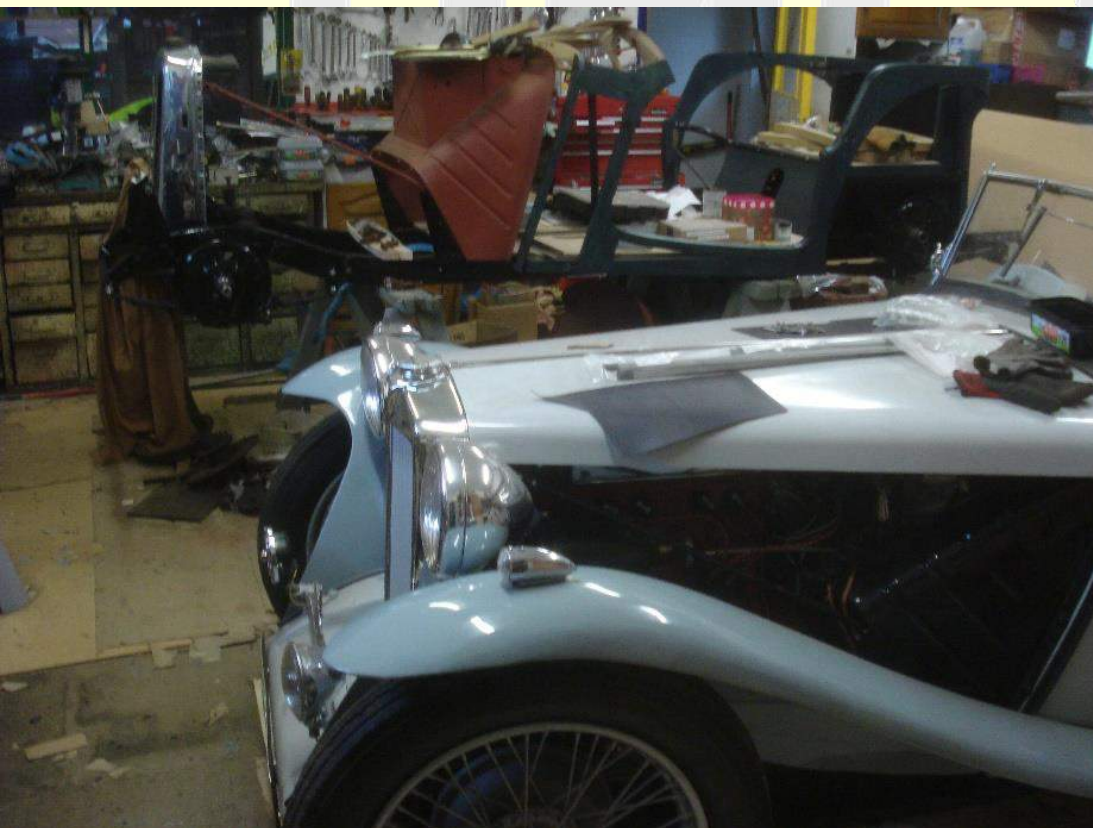
After I sold the MGA Coupe and having bought the MGTF135 I fancied a runabout. Hence a low mileage yellow 2013 MG3 was purchased which fulfils the job nicely. It is easy to get in and out of – goes quite fast enough and suits me fine. Later this year we purchased an MG ZS which Jenny mainly drives. It is petrol driven manual and is very roomy and easy to get in and out of.

So, finally, we are an all MG family. The last car to mention is a TC which has been lying around in bits in several garages for years. Zak, my number 5 grandson has taken a shine to it and is now rebuilding it with me. It is a 1949 American Export model TC 8827EXU which left the factory on 26th May 1949. It was registered KXH 861 when reimported in early 1963.

My five favourite cars were the J2, the TCs, the Midget, and of course I still have the TD.

Where To Now?

In this uncertain world which seems to be changing ever faster it is hardly possible to see where we are going. We are certainly suffering from “global warming” and fossil fuels are going to be phased out. Before that we are likely not to be allowed to drive our old cars on the road except for prescribed events. Already one sees in the press attempts at putting electric motors into not very old MGs such as an MGA and a MGB. Hopefully we won't ever have our present cars being converted to “driverless” but then we may only be limited to certain specific roads. All I can say is that at the age of almost 81 I am unlikely to see these changes. I can but look back at the fun I have had driving my MGs. Looking immediately forward, I hope that I am given the time to finish the TA and the TC.



Grandson Zak's TC lurks behind the TA which is 'nearly' finished

Over the next two pages there's a montage of Armstrong MGs – see if you can recognise which is which.



