

## **MGCC SE Centre 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Run - East**

### **East Kent Windmill Run from Hampton, Herne Bay to Minnis Bay, Birchington**

By Richard Hamlyn

A cynic might say that the pleasure is all in the anticipation. However, they would have been hard pressed to support this adage on Sunday 18 October. It was a delight to wake to sunshine and head to the coastal starting point at the Hampton Inn, Herne Bay.

Entrants, arriving within pre-arranged time slots, were welcomed by marshals who saw everyone parked up safely. Around twenty five MGs took part. These included Mike and Helen Walcher's fine TC, several TDs and TFs, a selection of As including Chris and Janice Leigh's twin cam, John and Sheila Bennett's ex Piers Hubbard Mk 2, numerous Bs including Ian Steggle's well-travelled, smart black GT V8, Midgets, MGFs, TFs and ZRs and a duo-tone YA from Hertfordshire.

After refreshments and some catching up with friends, participants set out, at somewhat random Targa Florio/TT style intervals, on a forty six mile tour visiting the sites of eight Kentish Windmills. We were guided by excellent route directions with notes on each individual windmill passed. From these it was clear some were in perfect working order; some were running restorations and others were in more varying states of disrepair: all sounding familiar to some of us owning old cars.

Having left Hampton and Herne Bay, we looped by Herne and Chislet mills before joining the dual carriage way, A299, to blast further east in the sunshine across the marshes towards the Isle of Thanet; no longer truly an 'Island' owing to the silting up of the ancient Wasnum Channel.

Turning inland through the village of Sarre with its fine post windmill where once the MGCC started a similarly named Windmill Run in the 2000's, we were now driving on country lanes through undulating countryside to reach the water mill at Wickambreaux and then onwards to the restored post mill at Chillenden. Here, some MG owners will have been aware of the proximity of the Griffins Head pub where the VSCC and other classic car clubs meet informally on certain Sundays.

Now driving north east, still on narrow roads, we were bound for the Cinque port of Sandwich, but not before passing the smock mills at Eastry and Northbourne. On joining the Sandwich bypass, we could see the impressive 'White Mill' standing amongst the trees; open to the public in 'normal' times, it's now a KCC rural life centre.

So, with eight mills passed and A roads ahead, we were off up through the gears towards our lunch time destination, passing on the way the controversial Manston Airport and the modern technology 'glass' houses of 'Thanet Earth'.

Being a beautiful day by the sea, Minnis Bay was 'en fete'. On arrival we were welcomed by MGCC officials and parked our cars on the promenade and by the cafes. In the company

of likeminded people, many enjoyed either picnics or pre-booked meals at the eateries along the sea front: a fine ending to a grand day during which the pleasure was far greater than just in the anticipation.

Congratulations and thanks to John and Sheila Bennett for their efficient administration, liaising with the start and finish venues, preparing navigation and factual notes and conjuring up such an interesting tour. Also, thanks to other helpers who ensured everything ran smoothly. In all, an event worthy of any 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, especially - of the oldest one-make car club in the world.

If any members couldn't take part and fancy a day out exploring historic East Kent, please email; [rickhamlyn@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rickhamlyn@yahoo.co.uk) to obtain the route and accompanying notes. Failing that, dig out OS map 179 Canterbury and East Kent, find a couple of the places mentioned in this article, let your eyes roam across names such as Cop Street, Paramour Street, Plucks Gutter, Plum Pudding Island ..... enough to make you curious? One hopes so.