

MGCC SE Centre Events Secretary Report

As I write this, we are currently now in Lockdown 2.0 and another year has nearly come to an end on what, should have been another packed year in the MGCCSE events diary.

At our last committee meet in February, before we were forced to use Zoom, we had a large programme of events ahead of us to look forward too and not one of us predicted what this year would bring, when we planned out and published the events for 2020 at the end of last year.

Some highlights, for 2020, included the Battle of Britain Spring Run in April; A Rally to Guernsey in May; Silverstone in June; Tour of the Windmills in July and the European event to Germany in August – to name just a few.

Sadly; All of these were cancelled after we went into Lockdown, in March.

Up and down the country all car club events, runs and shows have been mainly cancelled, drastically downsized or moved to another date, next year. The MGCCSE has not been any different but has survived well, I feel, and has used this “down-time” wisely by having regular zoom committee meets and it has also given us a chance and encouraged us to modernise and improve on what we were already doing by using using Facebook more, for example, and also overhauling our website to publicise our future events and goings-on, going forward.

As you know, not all events were cancelled this year and I have listed some of the main event highlights that did go ahead this year, below :-

- **Valentines Treasure Hunt**
This was re-scheduled to May, but then had to be cancelled!
- **Leonardslee**

Our regular Autumn Gathering had been originally been planned to be at Newhaven Fort, East Sussex. But due to Covid-19 distancing, there would not have been enough room to accommodate many cars within it's walls and then there was the other small issue....Newhaven Fort was also shut, with no sign of when it would re-open, if at all?!

At our August Committee meet on Zoom and with only a few weeks away from when the Autumn Gathering would actually take place; Plans for a new venue were eagerly discussed.

Leonardslee Gardens was suggested by our Competitions committee member – John Morgan and as I was looking after the Autumn event, I agreed to visit the venue that very afternoon as time was running out to get a new venue that would accept us and also be acceptable to ourselves and our members.

Almost immediately, after I arrived, I could see the recent investments made in Leonardslee and with brand new carparks being constructed as I was actually there, this presented us with an excellent opportunity to do a hard standing, fairly large scale event, with over 100+ MG's and also have social distancing in place, too.

Conscious of the fact we were not allowed to “Gather” anymore under strict Government guidelines, the type of event became a (Socially distanced!) “Meeting”

And the Leonardslee Gardens “Autumn Meeting” was born..

After calling John Morgan from Leonardslee that afternoon; John worked tirelessly with Motorsport UK to come-up with a Covid compliant event. This was achieved with everything being done on-line, including entry forms, money taken, tickets and maps issued - meaning that nothing would be given out by hand on the day. This also meant the marshals had an easier time, on the day.

In addition; There would also be two organised runs entered by 75 MG's, from Denbies Wine Estate and another from Polhill Garden Centre, near Sevenoaks.

In the days leading up to the event, there were a few concerned voices as the UK talked about further lockdowns – But all went ahead on the day, as planned, and over 120 MG's attended.

These events don't transfer to the screen well and cannot be captured via Zoom. To see row after row of MG's from different ages in the sunshine and have small groups of people talking to each other, but at safe distances from each other, helped make it all a perfect day.

It was of great relief to the committee who had put in a lot of support and effort, so that we could deliver our first large scale event of 2020. And the immense success, on the day, was rewarded with a double page spread in the November issue of MGCC magazine - Safety Fast. Several members also emailed us to say what a great day they had, also.

Albeit from a safe distance and with the help from some brilliant weather; I hope we, as a club, reignited the passion for MG ownership during this depressing year, and also proved that a Covid-safe car event is both possible and enjoyable, going forward.

I cannot emphasise enough that this event was pulled off in such difficult times as well as at very short notice and this "Meeting" proved itself as being far more than just a "deputy" to our usual planned "Autumn Gathering" – But something we will grow-on next year, along with many more events planned and our enthusiasm within the committee has not been diminished.

- **Autumn Navisat**

Alex Lemon was thanked for organising this event on 4th October. There were 10 participants but in very poor weather. The Surrey Oaks were well organised in relation to Covid regulations.

- **90th Anniversary Runs**

This turned out to be a very successful event, and our last of the season. 50 cars registered for the West run and just 5 failed to attend. 25 cars registered for the East run and just 3 failed to attend. Unfortunately, it transpired that one of the participants on the West run was subsequently admitted to hospital with Covid 19 and subsequently passed away.

The Covid organisation put in place by John Morgan was effective and the members' contacts could be alerted. None of the contacts has experienced symptoms.

This issue highlighted the fact that there is a potential conflict with our registration systems and GDPR.

It was agreed that in future all participants will be required to give assent to their identity being disclosed to all other participants as a requirement of their taking part in a controlled event.

Andrew Mitchell