**Chairman’s Report - MGCC South East Centre - Annual General Meeting - 28th November 2022**

**I have great pleasure in welcoming you all to an AGM with a difference this year:** A congenial venue and a chance to meet face-to-face at last!

It is with a certain sense of achievement tinged with sadness that my term of office as the South East Centre Chairman is coming to an end. You may remember that I took over as temporary Chairman nearly three years ago at a time when Derek Edwards was desperately ill in hospital with a major stroke. I am pleased to reveal that Derek has now had his Centre Presidency officially ratified by the entire club Council Meeting at Abingdon!

During the past couple of years of Covid restrictions, most normal social activities have suffered badly. We must also sadly remember that the pandemic has affected many of our more vulnerable members and that an increasing number of the rest of us are also gaining first-hand experience of that disease.

During this same period, your South East Centre committees have been constantly busy with meetings on Zoom, making improvements to our Centre communications, websites and newsletters, performing creative wonders with virtual rallies and quizzes and then leading the way nationally with our more recent Covid-compliant **real** **car events!** Everyone has been understandably frustrated by the pandemic restrictions but it is gratifying to note that our Centre were always in the lead!

Until recently we have been indebted to Mick Breare for his regular work on email newsletter distribution. I would like to thank him for the sterling work that he has done for us and I must explain that he has now been replaced by a technological Mail Chimp! Similarly, my thanks go to our long-standing Treasurer Tony Atcheson who has been able to hang up his calculator after helping us find an experienced replacement in the shape of Ron Kemp.

My broader aim as chairman has always been to “future proof” what is the largest MGCC Centre anywhere with over 1,800 members.

**As I pass on the proverbial baton to my successor, I make these clear pleas to all of you:** ►**Our club’s future success depends upon thinking further ahead than the next ten years! ►Club policy from the top down is very clear – anything with an MG badge is an MG - Embrace it! ►Don’t forget that over 30% of our aged membership will never be I.T. literate - they need our help! ►Do everything you can to encourage younger members – they are our future! ►Make sure that all of our events and committees cater for all genders, tastes and also families! ►Recruit new members!**

Your Committees recognises these issues and have already approached the various new MG Motor showrooms who are now handing out old copies of **Safety Fast** and membership details to everyone who buys a new or used modern MG from them! Sales of all new cars of any make are currently on hold due to an international “chip” shortage (about 3,000 of these chips are in every new electric car!) These new MGs are selling really well and I am pleased to reveal that the Canterbury MG Motor Showroom now displays a superbly restored MG PB owned by committee member Will Opie and also that our Autumn Meeting at Lullingstone Castle with 90 MGs attending boasted three of these modern MGs amongst them. Our rationale is simple - these cars appeal on average to a younger age group and often young families who in turn will change the dynamics of our Centre and ensure our club’s success into the future.

I am keen to finish my final report by saying a large number of very well-deserved thanks: To our fastidious Secretary, Austin Banner, the unsung hero who is the glue that holds the Centre together. To the hard-working members of the South East Centre committee who have put in so much of their time and effort to ensure that our Centre is the national leader. To the Wander & Natter Leaders who have been meeting up on Zoom very regularly to keep us all well informed and to the great many members who quietly emerge from the background to help at events without ever being asked. I am grateful to you all for your help!

Please be assured that the South East Centre is still in very safe hands and is going from strength to strength!

**Chris Leigh Chairman November 2021**