

Chairman's Report 2024

I would like to begin by remembering two of our members who have contributed a lot to the MGCCSE and sadly passed away.

Derek Edwards, our President who for decades has helped steer the MGCCSE in various roles including Chairman and latterly as our President.

David Griffiths, our Sussex Wanderers and Black Horse Natter leader who has been at the helm of both groups for over ten years.

Both will be sadly missed.

I am pleased that David's wife, Ursula will be keeping the Sussex Wanderers running in 2024. It is a large group and they have some great runs and outings usually ending up at a country pub for lunch. They were jointly awarded the Club Member of the year trophy (actually a painting) in 2023.

The Natters and Wanderers groups are the arms and legs of the club organising regular meetings and days out for local members. The Centre is large - stretching from West London down to Dover and cannot hope to cover it all with just a central committee. That is where the local groups come in keeping the MGCC active in three counties and London itself.

In 2023 the Centre got back on track after the pandemic changed the way we operated and Zoom took over our lives. We held two awards ceremonies to get us back to giving out awards in the year they were won. It seemed odd at the time but this year will be back to normality with an awards lunch in October.

Our events were many and varied ranging from days out to runs, PoO and Concours competitions plus a successful Autosolo at Filching Manor. We return there in a month for another stab on the Go Kart track.

Sadly, we had to cancel the Autumn Naviscat due to lack of entries – is this type of competition going out of fashion or are members not aware of what one actually is? Other events were down a little on pre-pandemic numbers which you will see in the events and treasurers' reports.

There is a very full programme again this year and we hope that members in the South East will turn out to support them. There are around 1,400 memberships in the Centre of which around 350 are Joint – so about 1750 people in the club in the South East. If just 10% came to an event that would be 140 MGs or 20% 280 – let's make that a target for 2024!

The Centre is the largest in the MG Car Club and the oldest so we have a lot of heritage to live up to.

The events and competition secretaries will run through the details of what we have achieved this year for our members. All of which has been organised by a relatively small team so I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in some way in the organisation of the club this year.

We have been moving forward in bringing the Centre into the modern age. Sustainability is becoming more of a hot topic, and we are taking steps in that direction. Paper is slowly disappearing, and we are moving towards online bookings and payments. The first example is the booking for the MG100SE event in May and registration for the Autosolo in March. We hope to introduce this for all events by the end of the year.

We are also looking to offset some of our carbon emissions by signing up to the V Tree sustainability programme. The bottom line is that this will cost around 50p extra on all our motoring events this year. Old cars are attractive, perhaps more so to us enthusiasts, and there have been some issues with finding venues willing to take over a 100 MGs – which is a reason you won't see many, if any, National Trust properties on our events list. The Carbon offset will go some way to proving we are a responsible organisation and fully aware of climate and pollution issues.

We move forward though, and the MG Car Club has been very open to modern MGs. As Net Zero approaches one wonders where the classic car scene will be in twenty years time. Will we be the last generation enjoying classic motoring? By embracing the modern MG the club can continue by future-proofing itself – you will see some modern MGs here today including at least one EV.

It is no secret that the Club has experienced some financial difficulties in the last couple of years resulting in the cancellation of the racing programme and MGLive! plus the digitisation of the club's magazine Safety Fast. Racing has always been an important part of the Club's DNA, incidentally begun by the South Eastern Centre, and it still supports the championships through publicity in the magazine. It was a wrench felt hard amongst our racing community but that phrase "Fiscal Responsibility" comes to the forefront. At grass roots there are still autotests, speed championships, hill climbs, naviscats, treasure hunts, condition contests and autosolos being organised by the Centre's around the country under the club's banner. We will continue to add to that tally in the South East for many years to come.

The Centre is a member of MotorsportUK and the Association of South Eastern Motor Clubs and Sevenoaks & District plus Maidstone & Mid Kent Motor Club in particular which allows us to receive invitations to motoring events throughout the South East. John Morgan is our lynchpin in liaising with them.

One area the Centre has been successful is on the internet – website, social media and more recently its own YouTube channel achieved over 60,000 views. The webmaster's report will explain more. Our online activity and communications is becoming more important and whilst we recognise that some members do not embrace digital life we will still have alternatives available when booking events....for the time being. To that end we are looking to expand the digital team.

Finally, a word about charity fundraising. For the last 18 months the Centre has been raising funds for the Brain Tumour Charity and I am delighted to say that we have raised a total of £1232. The committee and natter/wanderer leaders have suggested several possible charities to support this year and they have been voted on... the winner is....going to be announced at the AGM.

So, the future? MG100SE is our big event this year and once that is concluded we can get to our normal programme which is indeed full again; We will be looking to the natters to widen their scope to other members when putting on local talks etc at their meetings; We will be expanding our digital presence with more videos, posts etc to engage members and attract new ones; We will be encouraging people to join the MGCC whenever we can. We will become more sustainable; We will try and simplify our procedures.

A lot to be getting on with as well as enjoying our MGs throughout the year of course.

Tim Morris

Chair, MGCCSE