



# Spark

Spring  
2026

The quarterly magazine of the MG Car Club South East Centre

5



## THIS ISSUE INCLUDES...

**The Mad Dash | Spark Plug – 2026 Events | Concrete New Year  
Spring Naviscat | Helicoil Nightmares | PB to Rome  
Brands Hatch Memories | MG Sparks with New Battery | AGM  
Mary Goodnight's MGB | What Clarkson Really Thought**

# Spark 5

[www.mgccse.co.uk](http://www.mgccse.co.uk)



Spring 2026

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## THE EDITOR



*Will Opie has been a member of the MGCC SE for over 50 years and has been playing with MGs all that time. He currently co-leads the North Downs Natter as well as being a member of the Centre committee and editor of Spark.*

We welcome you to the Spring edition of your South East Centre magazine, Spark. It is full of interesting articles, competition results and many photos. Please circulate it to anyone with an interest in MGs as it highlights what our centre is all about. This edition covers the first quarter of 2026 and includes contributions from the Natters, Wanderers and Members.

### Please note below to keep your details updated!

If you or your fellow member are not receiving the quarterly SE newsletter via email it may be because your up-to-date email address is not held by the main administration at Abingdon or the South East Centre. To update your details or change details either go to the Members login area of MGCC web site, email [mgcc@mgcc.co.uk](mailto:mgcc@mgcc.co.uk) or call 01235 555552.

Email [chair@mgccse.co.uk](mailto:chair@mgccse.co.uk) to add your details for centres circulation

This is your magazine so contributions to the Editor always welcome! Please get in touch as below.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Do you have an article about your MG, or anything of interest, that you would like to share with the Centre? If so, then please get in touch with the editor and you could see it in the next edition.

Email [spark@mgccse.co.uk](mailto:spark@mgccse.co.uk)

*Cover Picture: Steve and Gary Goodwin in a lovely Midget arriving at Bewl water on last May's SE run.*



This quarter my byline photo shows me with Ian Pogson and Roger Parker at Gaydon for MGF15 in 2010.

Both Ian and Roger helped out at most of this period's MG Fests and MGF anniversary events by giving illuminating talks or being on discussion panels. I am grateful that they could take part particularly as Roger is an MG Owners Club man. However, those events were something of a collaboration and despite them being MG Car Club events the Owners Club were invited along as a show of cooperation.

Ian has been a lifelong MG Rover engineer who also has experience with the Chinese in training engineers in China with the K series engine. He has the unique experience of being made redundant whilst in China working for MG Rover in 2005.

Whilst working for SAIC he became the chief engineer on the MGF 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary project which is considered to be the pinnacle of the MGF/TF range with its advanced suspension system.

Ian has been a friend of the MG Car Club for a long time and has appeared at the shows mentioned as well as written behind the scenes stories for the club. He has appeared with the South East Centre at our annual lunch on two occasions and has become a friend of the Centre, despite living in the Midlands! MG truly is the marque of Friendship.

I started the year in the manner I am accustomed too – at Brooklands New Year's Day meet. It has been a regular for me for more than 20 years and despite a hiccup around 2020 for obvious reasons it has grown every year. 2026 was a bumper year with over 8000 people and 1200 classics on site including the South East's MGF and T-Type Registers. Both have been regular Brooklands supporters for many years as well. Despite introducing a 30 year cut off we persuaded them to keep the MG Car Club together and this year we were in the Campbell Car Park. The MGF now exceeds 30 years and that brings me to one of my bug bears – age limits on classic car shows. When I used to organise the Brooklands Classic Car Show & Jumble I intentionally did not have an age limit and happily welcomed modern sports cars including the MGFs of course. I argued that I wanted that show to express the wide interests of the Membership from vintage to modern classics. Now, of course, they have slapped that limit back on to that show!

I feel the same with our club. Our events are designed to show the wide interest of MG Car Club Members and once again that is from the Vintage through to the modern MG. The brand is a vibrant modern successful one that builds on its heritage – there is space for everyone whatever your MG interest.



Liz and I receiving a surprise award for last year's Spring Navisat at the AGM!



With my MGF and the South East flag at Brooklands NYD

We held the AGM in February, and I was honoured to be voted in as Chairman for a further year. It is pleasing that the current committee has remained largely unchanged during my tenure and a big thanks does go to them for all their work in keeping the centre running on an even keel.

In my Internet report I mentioned a serious problem that resulted in the website going down for a few days. It was something that I couldn't resolve so called upon our original webmaster Ben Hill, who now doesn't have an MG and lives in Scotland, to help. He did so happily and resolved the three issues that occurred swiftly – whereas I had spent many hours scratching my head. I am very grateful that Ben has said he will help out should further disaster befall the site. It is surprising how much of our Centre activities is now based around the website – it is from there that you leap off to events and booking, natter contacts, reports and anything that is Centre related. Without it we would have severe difficulty in communicating effectively with you, the member.

According to Bill Boddy, **George Papworth Harvey-Noble** gave up his business to live near the Brooklands track. He was an outright motoring enthusiast and spent most of his days at Brooklands testing racing cars on the track when not breaking his own records or racing.

His own racing began with a GE A7 and a 12/50 Alvis followed successfully by a Salmson. He had graduated to a 2litre Bugatti by 1935 and got a creditable 2<sup>nd</sup> place in 1936 by diving off the steep banking to overtake slower cars. He had certainly honed his track craft to become one of the best drivers on the circuit. He was no stranger to the larger cars as well, taking the very last BARC 130mph badge before the war in the Bentley-Jackson (aka Mother Gun).

We are concerned here, however with his development of the 746cc supercharged MG Q Type. He had already gained the Class H record at 122.4mph and in the second October Short Handicap he lapped at 120.8mph holding back a Talbot which was lapping slightly faster, at the finish by just one fifth of a second.

Later, Noble, spoke to the Brooklands expert and Motor Sport journalist Bill Boddy about the MG and it gives a great insight into motor racing in the 1930s - and we present what he said here:-



*George Harvey-Noble at the wheel of MG QA238*



*An overhead view of Noble's highly tuned MG*

The M.G. was purchased in 1936 in the form of a complete engine unit with a Zoller supercharger and a damaged chassis frame and rear axle from R.R.Jackson who sold it on behalf of Dudley Folland, who had crashed same at Donington.

New K3 front springs were fitted on the outside of the frame and a wider and heavy K3 axle beam was fitted, minus front brakes, giving a considerable crab track. This modification was carried out for two reasons: (a) I had always been used to crab track and (b) in my opinion the "Q" Type front axle assembly was rather light for outer circuit racing – also, I didn't mind what happened to the back end, so long as the front remained in one piece!

The engine was moved back in the frame 3 7/8 inches (which helped to lower the centre of gravity) as we knew, from Robin Jackson's experience, that this particular model was nose heavy. We then fitted the latest type Serek radiator (about 25% heavier than standard and with about 20% extra cooling efficiency), which allowed us to reduce the frontal area considerably. The petrol tank was designed to form the tail, but later had to be modified, as the C. of G. was too high and the surge upset the balance of the car. A detachable bonnet and scuttle (in one piece) and screen were fitted to blend with the small radiator cowl. The maximum width of the body, excluding the two driving mirrors, was only 17.5 inches, which compares very favourably with that of the "Razor Blade" Aston Martin.

The steering box was in the normal position (right side) but the column was set at an angle, placing the wheel in the centre of the body, and the gear lever was cranked slightly to the right, making right hand gear-changing very easy.

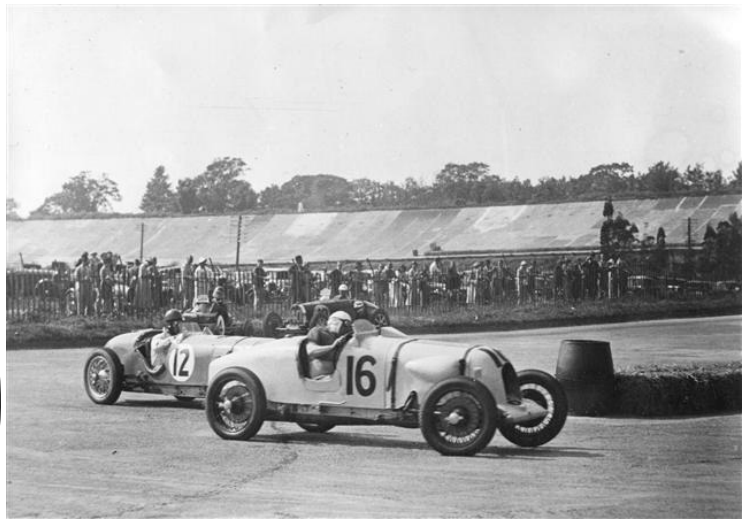
The car was finally tested and was immediately run in the Locke King Trophy race of 1936, where it lost one cylinder getting off the line and then retired.

A new induction manifold of Robin Jackson's design was fitted and the car was taken immediately to Southsea and run in the speed trials, where it gave the works OHC Austin of (Bert) Hadley a very good run, beating it on one run and securing first and second placings.

During the winter we decided to attack the 750cc outer circuit lap record the following Spring, and a special PB bronze cylinder head was put at our disposal by the M.G. Company. We developed this head, and in May we won a long handicap at 108.9mph.

We next commenced preparing for the 750CC outer-circuit lap record, the work chiefly consisting of cleaning up the streamlining by removing the mirrors and large screen and substituting a small celluloid screen, which was only the same size as my head. I, in turn, wore a very tight-fitting rugby jersey to improve the streamlining! The compression ratio was raised from 5.25 to 1 in 6.2 to 1 with a supercharger pressure of 28lb/sq.in. and 4.75-18 track tyres and 4.5 to 1 axle ratio were fitted, giving a theoretical speed of 133mph at 7,200rpm.

Some four weeks of practice and tuning were completed before making the "mad-dash" on the afternoon of August 6<sup>th</sup>.



*Noble in the Q-Type at Brooklands*



*Noble in the Salmson against an MG M Type in 1930*

We decided, with the time-keepers, who were situated opposite the Vickers sheds, that three laps should be completed:-

First lap – Warming Up; Second Lap – In which to get cracking; Third lap – to take the record.

However, this all went wrong a, just before the end of the second lap, the oil pressure dropped to almost zero. I decided to complete the lap just to satisfy my curiosity as to the speed. Having crossed the timing beam after this lap, the engine was immediately cut and, upon returning to the time-keepers, I found – much to my surprise – that the record had definitely fallen to us, at a speed of 122.4mph. Had the speed commencement of the second lap been as high as at the end, I think the record would have been pushed by another 5mph, as the fork would have been crossed at approximately 128mph, instead of approximately 118mph.

While the attempt was made the track was cleared, as I was in the habit of taking rather an unusual course at the Fork and coming off at the Members' banking.

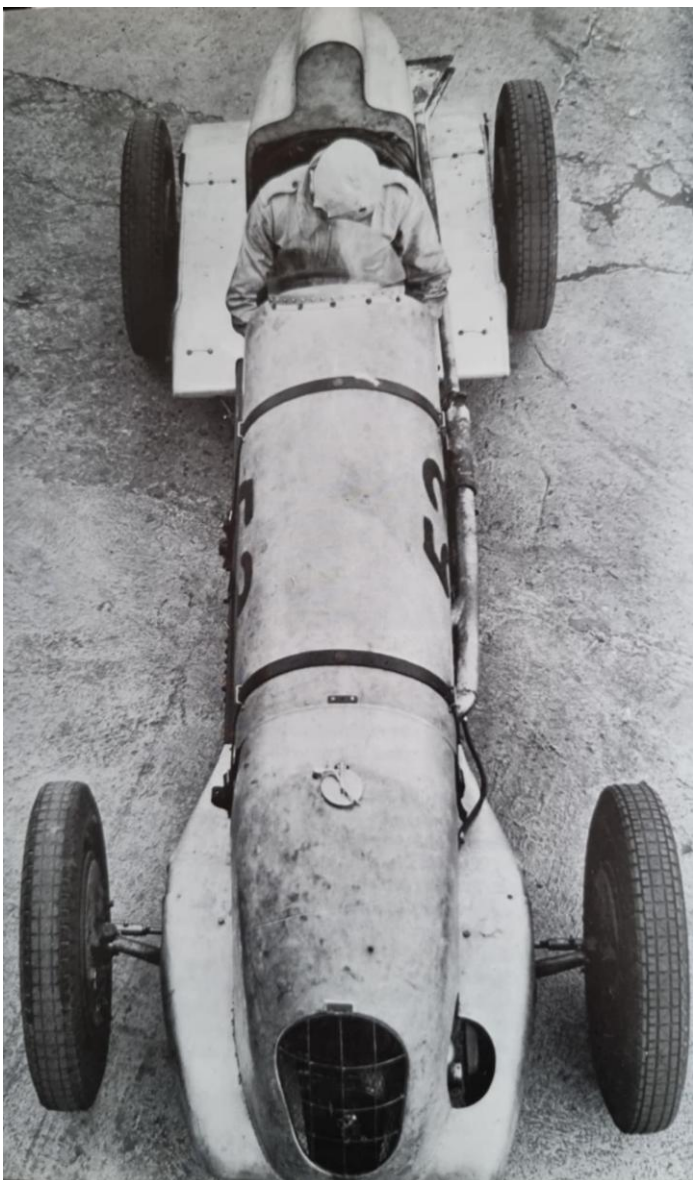
We now decided to attack the Class H hour record, which stood at some 113mph to the credit of the OHC Austin, and made the attempt about two weeks later – without much success. In the first place, we could not better approximately 99mph for the standing lap as against previous ones exceeding 103mph because we were using larger rear tyres. We then fitted smaller ones and shot up to approximately 103mph but on the second lap there was "one loud bang"; result, broken camshaft and the machinery completely wrecked, including the rear axle, as the second half of the crank had jammed up solid with two rods, pistons and block. This happened on the Byfleet banking in excess of 130mph, which caused the rear wheels to ounce like a ball, while I was trying to find the clutch pedal and get the thing out of gear.

The car had previously been entered for the BRDC "500", which was due to take place on September 18<sup>th</sup>, so we had to get our skates on as far as the rebuilding was concerned. This was completed satisfactorily and, at the same time, we bumped up the compression ratio to 6.6 to 1 to counteract a reduced (through normal wear) blower pressure of 26.5lb/sq.inch.

The results were as expected and a lap speed of 120mph (in the race) was attained. Our only trouble was excess oil in the engine, causing rapid oiling up; this was due to fitting an auxiliary oil tank on the right-hand side of the engine, which allowed too much oil to enter the sump when on the bankings. We lost some 20 to 30 minutes tracing this trouble, but at the end of the race the car was running perfectly, so much so that we ran in the October meeting without even touching the engine – result, first in a short handicap at 113.4mph.

The following year we reverted to a cast-iron head and fitted front brakes for road-circuit racing. After only about three laps previous practice, in 1938 we finished third in the First March Road Handicap and after a re-handicap won the Second March Handicap. This race was won because I was rapidly learning how to get round the corners, which proves how necessary it is for one to put in plenty of practice. From now onwards my handicap was just about “spent” so I concentrated on driving other people’s cars and only had a small amount of time left in which to drive the M.G., and finally I sold it at the end of the 1938 season to J.H.Samuel.

I might mention that before selling the car, I used it in the Will Hay Film “Ask a Policeman”, which was far less expensive to run and far more remunerative than racing!



*Noble in the streamlined and single seat Q Type*

George actually became good friends with Will Hay during the filming of Ask a Policeman and they would drink together in the Members’ Bar in the Clubhouse. He even persuaded Will to become a member of the BARC in order to do so and he was consequently a frequent visitor to the Brooklands bar.

In 1949 George married Vera Pocock and he later became a keen member of the Brooklands Society dedicated to saving what was left of the track. He collected badges from every car he had raced and attached them to his favourite steering wheel. In later years he suffered from failing eyesight and passed away in late December 1994 at his home in Rustington, he was survived by Vera. Bill Boddy paid tribute to him in the February 1995 edition of Motor Sport magazine and Noble’s words here were first published in Bill Boddy’s “The History or Brooklands Motor Course”.



*The Bentley-Jackson “Mother Gun” in which Noble earned his 130mph badge, seen here more recently back at Brooklands*

# Welcome to New Members

The Centre is notified of all new members joining us who live in the South East area. We would like to welcome you to the club and hope that you enjoy your time with us and your MG. As you can see in this magazine the club is very active and there is plenty for you to do from pub meets to Autosolos – whatever you fancy. Check out our Facebook page and website for all the information about the club that you need.

So, welcome to you all.

Tim Morris, Chairman

Roger	Bruton	East Sussex
Jeffrey	Taylor	Kent
Mark	Sims	Kent
Terry	Ender	West Sussex
Andrew	Martin	West Sussex
Tony	Locker - Lampson	West Sussex
Charles	Johnstone	West Sussex
Paul	Richardson	Kent
Phil	Rule	Surrey
Nick	Porter	East Sussex
Jonathan	Sweatman	Kent
Mike	O`Donoghue	West Sussex
Neil	Chawla	Surrey
Christopher	Eadon	East Sussex
Rosaria	Bellistri	London
Paul	Cordell	Kent
John	Leech	Hampshire

## Charity

The Centre's charity for 2026/7 was announced at the AGM. This year we will be supporting Pancreatic Cancer UK.

The charity is chosen from nominations put forward by the Natter leaders and members which are then voted for by the committee.

The Centre has a Just Giving donation page in order that all charity donations are visible to the members. Funds will be raised throughout the year through main events and locally too.

You can donate direct to this page:-

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/mgccse-fundraising-2026>



# SOUTH EAST RUN 2026

SUNDAY 17TH MAY



The 2nd South East Run begins at Leonardslee Gardens and meanders through the Sussex countryside to finish at the dramatic, moated Herstmonceux Castle



The run includes:- refreshments at the start, rally plate, route book, entrance to the castle

Car & Driver £25 Passengers £19

Book at: [www.mgccse.co.uk/2026/01/19/south-east-run-26/](http://www.mgccse.co.uk/2026/01/19/south-east-run-26/)

You may remember that the inaugural South East Run last year stumbled when we found out that the renovation works at Herstmonceux Castle had overrun and it would not be open by the time of our event. A quick fix was put in and we ended up with a nice drive to Bewl Water instead.

In 2026 Herstmonceux is back on the agenda again and we also have a new start point further south than Denbies.

Leonardslee Gardens will welcome you with an included bacon roll or sweet treat and a hot drink at the start. There is an optional visit to the gardens if you wish before you leave.

The scenic drive will head across the South Downs to arrive at the historic Herstmonceux Castle. The [picturesque moated castle is now an educational facility but we will have access to visit the interior and gardens as well as park on the lawns immediately in front where you can enjoy a picnic.

Your entry to the South East Run includes rally plate, route book, bacon roll/sweet treat & hot drink at Leonardslee, entry to Herstmonceux Castle, Carbon Offset and admin/payment fees.

An advertisement for a 'Drive it Day Double-Header' event. The background shows a classic car parked on a tarmac with several vintage aircraft. The text is in a stylized, serif font. The MGCCSE logo is in the top corners.

**Drive it Day  
Double-Header**

**Sunday 26th April**

**Gatwick Aviation  
Museum**

**Headcorn Aerodrome**

[www.mgccse.co.uk](http://www.mgccse.co.uk)

An aviation double-header for Drive it Day this year. A Kent run will head into Headcorn Aerodrome where there is a small Aviation Warfare museum and a classic car gathering.

Further west in Sussex there will be a run into Gatwick Aviation Museum with its new display hangar.

All details are on [www.mgccse.co.uk](http://www.mgccse.co.uk)

The Centre's "Railway Itch" this year will be scratched with a visit to the private Fawley Hill Railway Museum. This is slightly off our patch near Henley-On-Thames but we are arranging a run into the Museum from Runnymede Pleasure Grounds in the morning.

The Railway is a full size steam setup in the grounds of the late Sir William McAlpine's Fawley estate and visitors ride in trucks and experience one of the steepest gradients on a steam railway anywhere.

Places are limited so book now £20 car and driver £16 each passenger



The Filching Autosolo is now an established part of our grassroots competition calendar and returns again on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

It is a Motorsports UK "Taster" event and can be entered by any car. There will be entrants from the Sevenoaks and District Motor Club who help organise the event as well as the MGs from our club.

It is an undulating former Go-Kart track and one car at a time drives around the carefully placed cones in up to three different tests during the day. There is a private vehicle museum on site which entrants are invited to view when not on the track – that includes a Campbell collection topped by Malcolm Campbell's K3 Water Speed record boat.

You will need an RS Clubman Licence which can be obtained from the Motorsport UK website and is free, after you've answered a few simple questions.

Entry £50 per entrant for members.



**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April**

The day before MG Fest'26 the South East Centre will be holding a road run to Lullingstone Castle. We will also be holding the South East Pride of Ownership/Concours at the Castle.

The run sets off from the Woodlands Garden Centre near Brands Hatch and will travel a circuitous route to Lullingstone where we park in front of the house. The house and World Garden will be open for those taking part.

Entry £27 for members to include rally plate, route book, Entry to Lullingstone, Carbon Offset & Admin/payment fees. Entry to PoO/Concours £2 extra. Book on our website now:-

[www.mgccse.co.uk](http://www.mgccse.co.uk)

Please note: entering this run does not admit you to MG Fest '26 Brands Hatch the following day



100  
BRANDS HATCH  
1926-2026

Racing with the MGCC Cockshoot Cup  
Autotesting with the California Cup

Fun Carkhana

Register Parking and Displays

Grid & Pit Lane Walks

MG Demonstration Laps

MG Display Cars

Pride of Ownership / Concours

BRSCC Summer Weekend

MG Record Breaking Attempt

Traders / Food

Entry to MG Fest '26 is £19 for Members car and driver and £16 for passengers. Parking will be by MGCC Register. Camping is available on site (basic).

Tickets are available from the Brands Hatch website at [www.brandshatch.co.uk](http://www.brandshatch.co.uk)

*Please note: This ticket does not give entry to the MG Fest 26 road run on Saturday.*

## MGCC SE Centre – Spring Competition Report

The 2026 season is swinging into action. The first even, namely the Spring Naviscat, was held on 22 March in West Sussex as reported in this copy of Spark.

Our next premier event is the Filching Manor AutoSOLO on 11<sup>th</sup> April. We have a full entry plus a couple of reserves and the largest MGCC entry so far, 14 drivers. It will follow the usual format using the ex-Go-Kart circuit and the venue's museum will be open during the day over lunch.

This will be followed by our two evening Autotests on Thursdays 18<sup>th</sup> June and 23<sup>rd</sup> July at our venue near Newdigate. As before, we will be retiring to the Dorking Brewery Taproom for the results.

With the Main MGCC Event for this year being MG Fest 26 based at Brands Hatch, the SE Centre is being tasked with running the Californian Cup Autotests on the 16<sup>th</sup> August. MG owners from the SE Centre would be very welcome to enter, and in addition, we need teams of three cars to take part in the competition for trophies such as the California Cup, BMC Trophy, etc.

Anyone who would like to assist with marshaling or timekeeping would also be welcome. In addition, the SE Centre is organising our main Summer Gathering at the adjacent Lullingstone Castle featuring a road run into the event via a scenic tour of North Kent. It is expected that this will be a large event with members from other Centres and Europe expected to make a weekend of MG activity.

More information available on the MGCC SE Centre Website.



Dave Smiths MGB at Filching last year

## WANTED

Teams of three cars to enter the California Cup

Marshals to help out on the day at MG Fest 26

Interested?

Contact John Morgan

[competitions@mgcse.co.uk](mailto:competitions@mgcse.co.uk)



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# Church Square Autos



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[www.churchsquareautos.com](http://www.churchsquareautos.com)



With the excitement building about the MG Car Club's return to Brands Hatch for MG Fest 26 it sparked some memories of my own. Now, anyone that knows me will know I am not a racer – although in 1999 I did have my first experience of Brands Hatch when I trained with the Nigel Mansell School of Racing. Sadly, Nigel was not my race tutor but I did get the chance to drive with a professional around the Indy circuit in a BMW. That was fun and taught me a lot of racing technique. Being a former Police driver I was used to high speed driver training but track work was definitely different.

With several sessions accompanied I was allowed out in a single seat Formula Ford race car – a different kettle of fish altogether but great fun nonetheless. I am sure I exceeded 30mph on occasion!

Nigel Mansell must have approved of my driving as I was awarded a certificate of competence. That was enough for me and I didn't darken the tarmac of a track again.



*Race car experience in 1999 – Mansell must be just out of shot!*



*Me with the Auto Glym judges at Brands 2003*



*The MGF at the end of the 2004 timeline*

My next brush with Brands came in 2003 when the MG Owners Club held their National Event at the circuit. I was very much into Concours at the time and had entered for a round of the Auto Glym Concours with my MGF. It was a very prestigious event and sadly I just missed out in the class win to my arch rival at the time, Elaine Osbourne.

However, that did lead me to be invited back in 2004 to display my MGF in the MG timeline in a large marquee with the MG Owners Club.

The final visit of the trio was in 2005 for the same event but we were in the MG ZR this time so avoided all that polishing!

I think this may have been the last occasion a large MG club event was held at Brands Hatch until this year. The MG Car Club are back with a full show day and the BRSCC race weekend. After twenty years my MGF won't be entering the concours again though!



*With my MGF in the MGOC Timeline 2004*



*Our last year at Brands - 2005 with the MG ZR*

*I am sure you have some great memories of Brands Hatch as well – so please send them in with a couple of pictures and we'll publish them in the next issue - Ed*

# The Centre's AGM



*The 2026 committee l to r: Andrew Mitchell, Austin Banner, John Davies, Tim Morris, Ian Russell, Philip Roussel-Smith, Will Opie, John Morgan, Ron Kemp (Diana Calvert, Lis Woolley and Gwen Davies were unable to attend)*

The Centre's AGM took place at St Nicholas Youth Centre in Godstone on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February. The AGM is a legal requirement of the MG Car Club Ltd but it is also a great opportunity for any member to find out what is going on with the club and to ask questions of committee members. That was put to good effect at this AGM with several points raised and suggestions made from those in attendance. The members heard from the committee members about the areas they concentrate on and, in all, 2025 was another good year with a large number of events for members to enjoy. Financially the club is sound but there is some concern that events are not being priced to reflect their true cost. If organisers were claiming full expenses then prices would be higher. It is thanks to organisers absorbing their own expenses that prices can be kept lower for all members. There have been some recent internet issues which have been resolved by Ben Hill, who originally set our website system and a debt of thanks was given to him. There will be a further "Review" day in April in which all the club's systems will be examined again following the successful "Reset" day last year. The 2026 committee remains unchanged and we are grateful for all that they do on a voluntary basis for the club. Of course, being the MG Car Club, the ensemble retired to the Bletchingley Arms for lunch following the meeting.



## MGCCSE Committee 2026

**Chair/ Internet: Tim Morris**

**Vice-Chair/ Competitions/ Regalia: John Morgan**

**Secretary: Austin Banner**

**Treasurer: Ron Kemp**

**Events: Andrew Mitchell**

**Spark/ Safety Fast: Will Opie**

**Membership: Daina Calvert**

**Archive/ Trophies: John Davies**

**General Assistant: Philip Roussel-Smith**

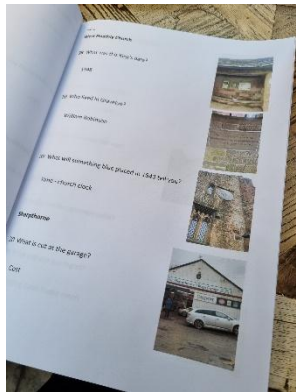
**Committee Members: Gwen Davies, Lis Woolley**

This was the second Naviscat to have been organised by the duo of Philip Roussel-Smith and Austin Banner. The style is a little different from other Naviscats with fewer overall locations to find but with 1-4 clues to be found at each of varying difficulty.

To ensure some entertainment the clues are not grouped with their locations on the question sheet.



Where it all begins, Austin Banner briefing the teams at the Jolly Tanners Staplefield



Clue and Answer book at the finish



Cars at the Jolly Tanners start - the Humber dwarfs the MG (but sadly did not finish)



Fourteen cars were entered but one sadly had to pull out before the event and two cars retired hurt and did not finish. The cars ranged from a beautiful very early Humber through four MGs right through to a very comfortable BMW.



Marc Hanson and his daughter, Alice, busy plotting at the start



Bob Bond and Lis Wooley enjoying some sunshine as well as plotting

## Preparation is everything!



Ron and Austin enjoying a beer whilst marking!



Thanks to Austin Banner & Philip Roussel Smith (seen above with Ron) for organising the event and Ron Kemp who kindly helped with the marking on the day.

**VIEW A VIDEO ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL OF THE SPRING NAVISCAT**

**[CLICK HERE](#)**



The weather was kind to us, not too cold, no rain and a lot of sunshine. Everyone seemed to have a really good time and most got back to the pub on time for excellent food provided by The Jolly Tanners. Here's to the second of the year on 20th September. If you haven't already - give it a go.



Several clues were in one location



Start and Finish at the Jolly Tanners



One set of clues were found at Horsted Keynes Station



Above 1st in class winners Steve Marchant and Drew Adams in class A/C MGBGT V8



Gary and Nina Kendall 1st overall with an amazing 34 points!



1st in class E non MGs to Maxwell, Rosie and Laurie. Novices to boot!

## THE RESULTS

Entry No.	Driver	Navigator	Car	Class	Novice	Club	Score	Class Position	Overall
3	Martin Neal	Lesley Neal	MG TF	A		MGCC	15	2nd ABC	10th
8	Richard Stubberfield	John Stubberfield	Humber	A		IRC	DNF	X	X
9	Steve Marchant	Drew Adams	MGB GT V8	B	Yes	MGCC	20	1st ABC	7th=
1	Allan Jenkins	Helen Jenkins	MG RV8	C		MGCC	Cancel	X	X
2	Gary Kendall	Nina Kendall	MGA coupe	C		MGCC	34	Overall Winner	1st
10	Philip Bayne-Powell	Rosemarie Bayne-Powell	MGA	C		MGCC	DNF	X	X
11	Paul Lefevre	Leah Lefevre	MGA	C	Yes	MGCC	10	3rd ABC	11th
13	Gary Goodwin	Steve Goodwin	MX5	E		TWMC	28	1st E=	2nd=
6	Lis Woolley	Bob Bond	Honda	E		MGCC	25	2nd E=	4th=
4	Liz Morris	Tim Morris	Juke	E		MGCC	24	5th	6th
5	Janice Leigh	Chris Leigh	BMW	E		MGCC	19	7th	9th
7	Maxwell Kendall	Rosie Kendall	Panda	E	Yes	TWMC	28	1st E= & 1st Novice	2nd=
12	Tracey Philips	Andrew Ayling	Kia Rio	E		ESMGOC	20	6th	7th=
14	Alice Hanson	Marc Hanson	VW Up!	E	Yes	Cranleigh CC	25	2nd E=	4th=

Save the Date for the next one on 20<sup>th</sup> September!

If you are old enough to remember the days when most of the UK population smoked cigarettes, you would also be old enough to remember that empty cigarette packets could be found on every roadside. These contained the magic 'silver paper' which would be extremely useful when your car broke down and also became the standard cure for car ignition and lighting problems nationwide.

If you have owned an MG for any length of time, you will probably also recognise this type of scenario: In early June, I had cleaned, serviced and packed the Twin Cam ready to join the Ash Natter's week in Norfolk early the following morning. Before going to bed, I decided to replace the existing spark plugs with four brand new ones and all went well until the final plug simply refused to tighten! Had I made a terrible mistake or was this a stroke of luck? After a few choice words, the bags were transferred to the little ZR and I thanked my stars that this event had taken place in the relative comfort of my garage rather than on a level-crossing in rural Norfolk



Janet and Chris Leigh's lovely Twin Cam

**“The final Plug refused to Tighten!**

**Oh Bother or something stronger**

**@@\$#!”**



The Holiday was fantastic, we swam in the open-air pool every day, enjoyed too much good food, wine and company and explored every square inch of Norfolk by car, steam train and boat. The week was a tribute to the organisational skills of Ian, Paula and the rest of Ash Natter and I cannot thank them enough!

**“Dick’s bonnet never recovered from flying Spark Plugs- He recommended using a specialist”**



**“The Next bang was the plug just missing my eyes! Cigarette paper failure !”**

Once back at home again the Twin Cam problem still had to be addressed but I felt fortunate that I was a member of the South East Centre. A Centre justifiably renowned for having a helpful and knowledgeable membership and it didn't take long before I was given some sage advice by an old friend. Dick Gough is a very competent and experienced car mechanic who has owned no less than four MGA Twin Cams over the years and also publishes useful articles in the 'Twin Cam Gazette' at times. His advice was clear: "Best to avoid removing the aluminium cylinder head and cams. An insert will be needed, they look simple to fit but my own experience suggests that it is much safer to have one fitted by a specialist!" Dick went on to explain his rationale: "Years ago I was driving along in a Twin Cam when there was a loud bang and a bump appeared in the bonnet. I found the missing spark plug and a suitable old cigarette packet in the grass nearby and wound layers of the silver paper as tightly as possible around the thread before screwing it back into the worn socket and tightening it down really firmly with my plug spanner. I then cautiously started the engine to drive back home and went to check it all before closing the bonnet. The next bang was even louder than the first and the spark plug luckily just missed my eye as it made yet another dent in the bonnet! Having no breakdown cover, I repeated the procedure, drove the forty miles back home and even continued to drive the car like that for a few more years before I sold it!"

Dick continued: "Two of the four plug holes had already had inserts fitted when I bought the car and I was determined to carry out this repair myself. I borrowed an insert kit from a friend which had a specially shaped tap to enlarge the original thread in the cylinder head and some useful inserts. A special fitting tool enabled the insert to be wound down inside of the newly enlarged hole and I felt so pleased with my efforts that I decided to replace the thread on the remaining plug hole. This time the insert became stuck halfway in and refused to go any further or be removed. My only method now was to remove the whole cylinder head and camshafts which is something that I had been trying to avoid doing in the first place because of the time needed to set everything back up again!"



Taking Dick's heartfelt advice, I searched on the internet and discovered an experienced Helicoil fitter based in Essex who also routinely works in Kent. We discussed the issue of how to deal with the swarf that is left in the cylinder afterwards and when I felt convinced of his methods and experience booked him to do the job two days later and I am very pleased with the results.



Clint Herholdt of Threadworx is a South African based in Basildon and can be contacted on 07713 902011 or at [www.threadworx.co.uk](http://www.threadworx.co.uk) He is prompt, courteous and precise. He tells me that he normally fits Helicoils on any cars that he prepares for racing and that his own hobby is drag racing. He will definitely not restore your wife's eyebrows!



Thanks to Chris who originally produced this article with Dick Gough back in 2021 Ed.

## Award Photos – Catchup!

Will Opie



Here is Mick Breare being presented with the social Championship trophy at last November's awards. Awarded for best overall attendance.

I missed this in the last issue !

Well done Mick. Ed.

We managed to catch up with three previous award winners at the Spring Navisat. Due to costs, we no longer post trophies out so you can collect them at the Annual Awards in November or we'll try and catch up with you at a later event if we know you are coming – as in this case.



Left above: Martin Neal with a trophy for the Summer Autotest

Right above: Andrew Ayling with a trophy from last year's Spring Navisat

Left: Nina and Gary Kendal with a trophy from last year's Spring Navisat

Brooklands New Year's Day has always been popular but 2026 proved to be a record-breaker. The weather was cold but dry with blueish skies, enough to draw in 1,200 classic vehicles and 8,150 people. This makes it one of the largest events held at Brooklands, alongside Auto Italia in the Summer.

The South East T-Type and MGF Registers have supported this event for many years now led by Alan Wakefield and Tim Morris. They can remember when the numbers were much lower and there were no queues for a cup of coffee or an overflowing toilet!

Was it better in the old days with smaller numbers or is it better now? A matter for conjecture but there was certainly a lot to see to launch us into 2026.

As well as the thirty or so cars from the two registers there were plenty of other MGs around the site and, once again, quite a lot of MGCs almost outnumbering the MGBs which is unusual. Are these models becoming more popular amongst club enthusiasts? The numbers here have certainly been increasing.

A racing Metro could be found on the Finishing Straight and another MG Metro in the Heights – or was it? Well, no it wasn't, it was a standard Metro with an MG front put on it!

Modern MGs were represented by club member, Alan Dolby's MG Cyberster which despite an attempt to smuggle it on to the infield was thwarted by the Brooklands authorities and he was ignominiously escorted to The Heights. Nonetheless it was in good company there with the Ferraris, Lamborghinis and McLarens also deemed too "modern" to join in on the inside.

Elsewhere there was a full "Vintage" paddock in front of the Clubhouse with a beautiful Cadillac and a row of Bentleys. A genuine GT40 and couple of replicas, a Bond Bug in vibrant orange, a nice red TR7 left hand drive for sale (I was tempted!), a tractor on a classic lorry and many more vehicles of interest tucked into every corner.

We'll be back on April 4<sup>th</sup> for the Easter Gathering – should we have an MGCCSE stand I wonder at future similar events?



T-Type Register and the MGF Register in the Campbell Car Park



MGF Register with the MGCCSE flag



Beautiful Cadillac in the Vintage Paddock



An MGBGT LE joins the three-lane queue to get in



MG Metro Cup Car was unusual



Original Autocar magazine April 1956

## Mr and Mrs Hinks Travels in 1955 published in the Autocar.

Mrs Sylvia Hinks along with her husband, an ex WW2 Submariner, were seasoned European travellers on a motorbike until 1955 when this intrepid duo took a 20 year old PB to Rome and back. Before leaving they checked everything including having performed a de-coke earlier, dropped the sump to check for big-end play, cleaned the oil filter, fresh oil and checked the points. Brakes adjusted, half shaft seals replaced and two new tyres with spare tubes and they were off in June 55.

## They dropped the Sump to check the big-ends

The tour route of Italy -right

The couple were both nearly 6ft so cosy in the cockpit!

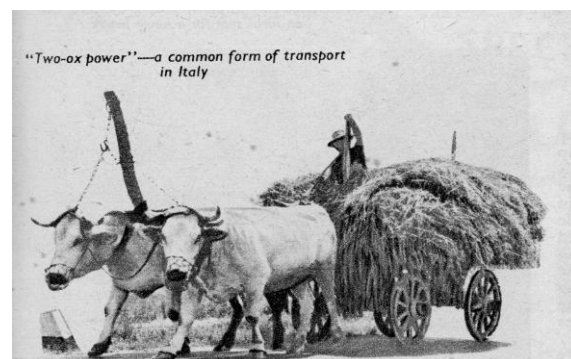


The 4 page article as published in the Autocar

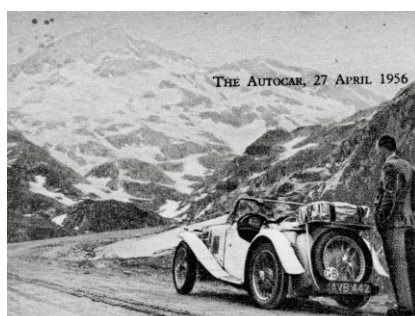


They spent many hours over the previous winter browsing maps and with Mr Hinks armed with two words Quanto and Troppo took their sellotaped map with a plan to go to Rome. On a June morning after the ferry to Dunkirk they set off at 5am treating the locals to the sight of a PB bouncing along the cobbles. Driving all day they had a well-earned dinner and hotel in Dijon overnight. The route would take them over the Great St Bernard pass, down to tour the Italian lakes onto Rome and back along the Adriatic coast.

## The PB Bounced along the Cobbles all the way to Dijon in a day!

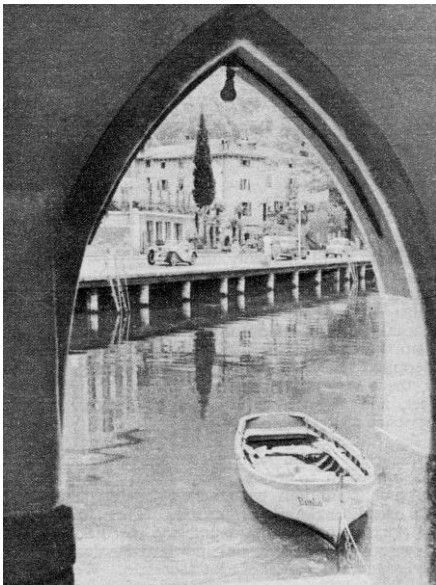


Ox Transport a common sight in Italy a the time!



On the Great St Bernard Pass still with snow, they topped up the radiator from a local stream . Not surprising after 12 miles uphill in second gear!

This pass is 2469M the third highest in Europe



Left: the car on the side of lake Garda at the Hotel Geier in Torbole

Right: the same view thanks to some kind people on the Lake Garda FB page!

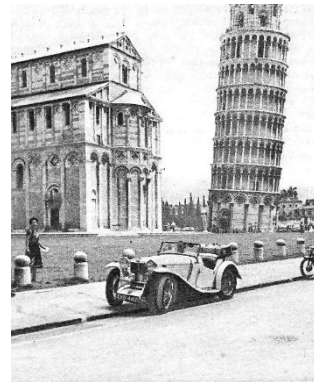
By now oil was topped up!



## Facebook came to the rescue!

Right: Google maps, now a pedestrian area where the car was parked! Going to be a challenge to recreate this shot!

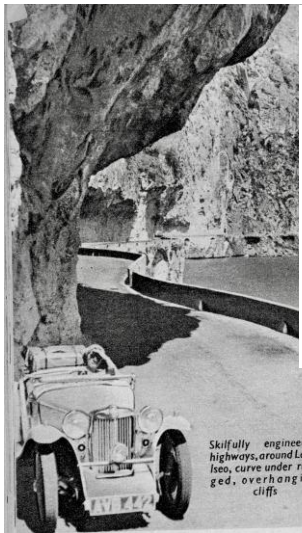
## Is the tower really leaning more today on this Google shot?



Pisa as in 1955.

We parked here ourselves in a B in 1981!

The Tower of Pisa, leaning frigidly away from the superb structure of Pisa Cathedral!



Skilfully engines highways, around Lake Iseo, curve under red, overhanging cliffs



## The overhanging Rock now gone in the recent photo.

Left: Lake Iseo today and in 1955. The same spot found by my daughter Katie and husband Simon when on holiday. Simon standing in the same spot as Mr Hinks in 1955.

Sylvia wrote this was their happiest holiday covering 3046 miles in a fortnight. 42 MPG and 3 pints of oil.

In Bresica after shopping there was a crowd of Italians around the car. One person felt the thickness of the wings steel or was it the many coats of paint!

## The Engine sounded sweeter at the end of the journey than at the start

Right The barn find MG as Bought at Auction in 1990 Still covered in white paint. The car had a lead pipe Exhaust section.



AVB 442 today now supercharged and restored over a 16 year period on a Cotswolds rally

My plan is to recreate this journey one day, I did contact Autocar but sadly no response hoping at least to secure some Benzina! I would also like to trace the Hinks family, no luck so far.

# Mary Goodnight's MGB

Tim "Bond"

Having recently attended a talk on two of the vehicles of James Bond - the ubiquitous DB5 and Little Nellie, the Gyrocopter, I wondered - were there any MGs in the James Bond films?

Well, the answer is, yes there was one. An MGB roadster.

It appeared in the 1972 movie "The Man with the Golden Gun" and was a Hong Kong registered right hand drive MGB in what registered (in the film) as AL8083 in what looks like Harvest Gold, although I have seen it described as mustard yellow!

The car, referred to as a "Bedpan" by Mr Bond was driven by one of his famous femme fatales - Mary Goodnight played by Britt Ekland.



*The MGB arrives at the Peninsular Hotel - from the wrong side*

It was seen briefly in a car chase from the Star Ferry Pier to the Peninsular Hotel. Typically, as in many movies, the chase went on for some time considering that the Ferry terminal is actually in sight of the Peninsular Hotel! They were following Andrea Anders in her green Rolls Royce - seen in the above still from the movie.

Bond and Goodnight also arrive from the "wrong side" so that Bond can be seen getting out of the MG on to the kerb - the arrival road was reversed.

Nestled in my MG model collection was a 1:43 scale model created by GE Fabbri Ltd, who were magazine partwork publishers, and this car comes from the James Bond Collection issue #19. It is licensed for production by Eon Productions Ltd although can be found under other licenced names - Ixo and Altaya. The James Bond Collection Partwork was published from 2006 to 2012 and consisted of 134 magazines and model vehicles. They ranged from a milk float to a Lamborghini Diablo as well as the more obvious Aston Martins

It is a die cast model and comes complete with plastic model figures of Bond and Goodnight with his suitcase in the back. It is one of the 1974 James Bond collection of model cars and is presented in a nice box with a road and kerb base and a backdrop of a Hong Kong street scene. If you want one then a quick look on ebay shows a lot of them are available priced around £10-£20.



*Mary Goodnight, aka Britt Ekland driving the car in Hong Kong*



*Above: this view clearly shows Britt Ekland and Roger Moore in the car.*

*Left: The cover of issue #19 which featured the MGB*

*Right: The car on its base and Hong Kong street scene*



# What Clarkson Really Thought!

Tim Morris

A yellowed, dog-eared copy of The Sunday Times Motoring section dated 17<sup>th</sup> September 1995 handed to me by our editor, Will Opie, prompted recollections of a visit to watch Top Gear being made. It was a select group of MGF Register members who made their way to the airfield at Dunsfold on a warm and sunny July day twenty two years ago. Meeting up at a local pub beforehand for lunch and then a joint drive the short distance to Dunsfold meant we all arrived together. The highlight of the show, recorded in a large and hot aircraft hangar was the De Lorean from Back to the Future. Members of the De Lorean club with their cars were also there to support this.

Those were the days when they had a “cool” wall and when we looked at this we spotted an MGTf in the “Uncool” section! Now, that probably set the tone for a bit of a banter with Jeremy Clarkson who, by then, was deriding our little MGs. To be fair to him Jeremy was the only one of the trio who really engaged with the audience in the breaks between filming whilst James and Richard disappeared into their caravans.

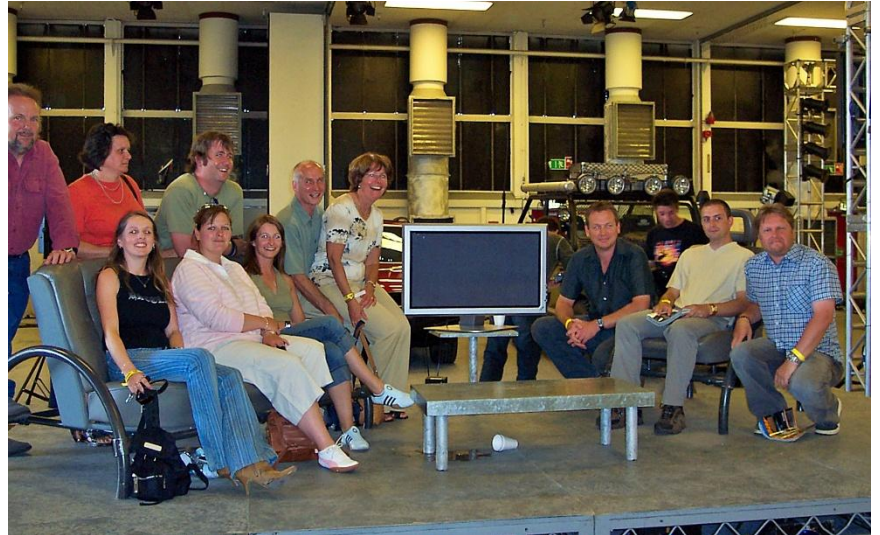
Bob Larcombe was trying to persuade Jeremy that the use of an RAF Chinook in a forthcoming potential episode would be a good idea (Bob was working Chinooks with the RAF at the time) but then Jeremy found out he was driving an MGF. However, he did say that he “quite liked” them in the end. Needless to say Bob did not hear anything back from the production team and a Chinook was never used in Top Gear, but the offer was there!

The day was exceptionally hot and the heat in the hangar kept rising, particularly with all the lighting. That meant audience members kept popping outside for some respite in the shade and fresh air.

The experience was great nonetheless and there was some comment about the MGF group made during the show.

The question is though, what did Jeremy really think about the MGF?

The answer came in that Sunday Times newspaper article.



The MGF group on the top Gear stage



Clarkson selfie with Lorna



The TF on the Cool Wall...in the Uncool section!



Tim by the Top Gear logo looking a little hot! (...and a fair bit younger!)

The title says it all – The Bulldog Breed. Clarkson was one of the first journalists to drive the new MGF and gave a surprisingly positive review whilst at the same time being a little negative!

So, let's start with some quotes from the first paragraphs:-

*“What you see here is a British designed, British build, two-seater sports car, and that is enough to tickle anyone’s erogenous zones.*

*But there is more: it is suspended not on conventional dampers but by a sophisticated hydragas system. The engine is in the middle, too, for perfect weight distribution. It is rear wheel drive and costs less than £16,000.*

*Pretty good stuff.”*

But then comes the bad bits – he condemns the MGB as “Godawful” and “old MGs were underpowered hairdresser’s cars that are now driven by people who actually want them to break down a lot!”

A good start soon descended into insulting MG enthusiasts as “weird beards who practice the art of facial topiary”

It’s not looking good. But back to the MGF, it gets better “despite my wariness of underpowered sports cars, especially MGs, I can report it is a very nice little car indeed. In places it is even better than that”.

Praising the modern styling of the car and criticising the MG heritage image he moves on “the Brits, almost as though they knew the 1990s MG could not rely on heritage for sales, decided to eschew the past and concentrate on what a sports car should be today. The is why they opted for a mid-engined layout, sophisticated electronic power steering and that is why it has anti-squat and anti-dive suspension.”

He is also complimentary about the actual drive of the car “In the countryside, once you have learned to get around the gearing, it is fabulous fun. I tried most things to unstick the driven rear end, but short of being mad it was just about impossible, which gives you the confidence really to fly.”

The only criticism’s came with the stereo which sounded like “Pinky and Perky” and a “bland” interior



The conclusion then from Jeremy Clarkson, who put the MGF on the Uncool wall in 2004 some nine years after this article, was that it was a pretty good car:-

***“I have developed a huge soft spot for the MGF. It is nothing like any MG that has gone before, which is a good thing, and it is truly wonderful to drive”***

If you have an MGF/TF in the South East there are two groups specialising in them. The first meets on the third Wednesday of the month at the Rose & Crown in Thorpe, Surrey (or someone close) and the second meets at The Forge, Shedfield, Sussex on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month.

You'll find all the contact details on page 35 and in the printed calendar which you received in the March Safety Fast.



MGFs in the pub car park at Shalford prior to Top Gear in 2004

The end of year stats showed that the new car market had breached the 2 million mark - the first time since the pandemic and is showing signs of picking up further. MG are still doing well with the MG HS coming in 8<sup>th</sup> place in the top ten best sellers list with 30,191 sales. In December the ZS took 4<sup>th</sup> place and the HS 7<sup>th</sup> – again encouraging but these are petrol or hybrid models. There was no sign of an electric MG in the top ten overall or for EVs alone. This may be something that MG Motor UK need to address for 2026 with no sign that the UK government is weakening its net zero target. That has been weakened in Europe by a little but still requires manufacturers to make 90% net zero vehicles with a little bit of leeway beyond 2035 for Hybrid vehicles.

It is reported that MG are addressing this by introducing 13 new energy vehicles in the next two years. These will be full electric and hybrid. In order to do this they are investing 10 billion yuan in new energy technology (about 1.4 billion GBP)

In Australia the big MG7 saloon has been released with a 2.0 litre petrol engine. It is a good looking car and has already been on sale in the Middle East and Vietnam with a 1.5 litre option. The first edition MG7 was based on the Rover 75 and ZT and this second edition is an all new progression from that. There is still some old MG rover DNA around!

Despite that we are unlikely to see it on sale in the European or UK markets in that form although there are whispers that it could appear with an electric powertrain. It will be interesting to see how it fares in Australia.

Another MG we are unlikely to see is the facelifted Eastern market MG5. It was released last Summer and features a turbo and non turbo version of SAIC's 1.5l petrol engine. Starting at the equivalent of £6248 in China. If it did come here than you would probably be looking at a 2 in front of that!



*The MG7 is now on sale in Australia*



*The facelift 2026 model MG5 was released in the eastern market last Summer and is still only available in petrol modes – a 1.5l turbo or non turbo option.*

MG Motor have announced that they have sold 1 million MGs in Europe since the launch of the MG6 in 2011. There are now 1300 dealer outlets across the continent in 34 markets of which the UK is the leading one with 386,000 MG sales.

MG's Commercial Director Guy Pigounakis says "MG has successfully returned to Europe's motoring mainstream with its one millionth customer delivery. The underlying affection for MG, the iconic British sportscar brand, which includes a flourishing classic car culture and many passionate owner groups, is valuable and greatly appreciated. This heritage continues to shape our strategy direction and reinforces our commitment to electric performance cars"

It is good to see that MG Motor recognise the roles that clubs and heritage plays in MG's UK success and the MG Car Club has a very healthy relationship with them.

The further big MG Motor news in the UK is MG4 related with the release of the MG4 Urban and a facelift for the original MG4. The MG4 is the biggest selling Electric MG for MG Motor and with the addition of a stable mate that is expected to grow. See more on the MG4s in [Electric2Spark](#) on the next page.



*The MG4 Urban and an updated original MG4 have both been released in the UK.*

The end of year stats showed that 24% of all new cars sold or registered were electric in 2025 – that is up on the 19% for 2024 and boosts the total parc up by 35% on 2024. Whilst not quite reaching the 28% government target it is not far off and expected to grow even more in 2026 – 580,000 or 29% of total sales are estimated. December stats were particularly encouraging and point in that direction with 1 in 3 cars sold being electric.

Charging infrastructure has also improved with 14,097 new public charging points installed bring the total to 87,796. In addition there are estimated to be 1.3million home chargers now installed. That figure will increase again in 2026 with new multi point hubs being built at rate of nearly 40% increase yearly.

There are more electric MG models being released in 2026 and we wait with interest to see them - the MG4 Urban is already here and there is a strong rumour about an MG2 – will we also see the release of the Cyberster GTS which was rumoured to come out at the end of 2025 – perhaps it will appear in 2026?

A report from MG Brand manager Chen Chui states that MG will be releasing 13 new energy vehicles over the next two years. This means not only pure electric but also PHEV and HEV vehicles. It is worth bearing in mind that parent company SAIC are also developing electric cars for Audi and Huawei and are heavily investing in new technology including semi solid-state batteries and new connectivity.

It is perhaps worth mentioning price – for instance the new MG4 in China starts at the equivalent of £7,600 rising to £10,957 - In this country they start at £23,495 rising to £27,995.

## MG4 News

The MG4 is the best-selling MG EV with over 50,000 sales to its name currently. So, it was some surprise when a totally different MG4 was announced and, indeed, is now on sale in the UK. There is a suffix, MG4 Urban, which helps differentiate it from its namesake.

To make it more confusing, at the same time an updated MG4 was announced. Whilst outwardly it is similar to the original with the exception of a one-piece rear spoiler the interior has had a significant makeover with more luxury finishes, a different colour, larger screens, enclosed binnacle, a larger central console and the “floating” shelf has gone.



*The MG GTS seen at Goodwood in 2024 – will we see it released this year?*



*New shape MG4 is went on sale in China last year and is now in the UK badged as an MGF Urban. A Semi Solid State battery option is thought to be coming later this year.*

## MG4 Urban

So, with the new MG4s the SE and Trophy monikers have gone and have been replaced with Comfort and Premium. The Urban has no DNA with the original MG4 and is built on a completely different platform and is actually larger than the original despite its “city” car name.

The Urban comes in three formats – Comfort Standard, Comfort Long Range and Premium Long Range. Two battery sizes at 43kwh for the standard and 54kwh for the long range giving around 201 and 258 miles range respectively.

In China this car is replacing the old MG4, which has not been selling well, but in Europe and the UK is an additional model – with the same name! I suspect we’ll be calling this one the Urban and the MG4 the – well, MG4!

Back to the spec – it’s roomy, has a 577 litre boot, front wheel drive and advanced battery technology with the cobalt free LFP cells bolted directly to the body so saving weight. Power is 149bhp for the smaller battery and 160bhp for the larger with 0-60mph around 9.2 secs for both.



*The MG4 Urban is significantly different from the original MG4*

The interior is roomy with plenty of leg space for rear seat passengers. The central console is large with plenty of storage and the drive selector has moved to the right hand steering wheel stalk instead of a knob. Two drivers info screens and, this is a good one, MG Pilot settings that can retain their customisation. Something that has not been possible before. Wireless Android/Car Play connections mean no more dangling wires to your phone and tidies everything up. Price is where the Urban wins, with an MG Grant you can get the base one of these for just over £21k – one of the cheapest EVs on the market – and it is a good car, in the VW Id4 range but bucketloads cheaper.

### Original MG4 Facelifted

Let's move on to the original MG4 and its new iteration. There were some tweaks previously to the MG4 but nothing of significance but the 2026 MY completely revamps the interior of the car. This means that the old SE level has been discontinued and the car is only available in Premium trim with the range beginning at the Premium LR with a 64kwh battery giving some 280 miles. The Extended Range gets a 77kwh battery and 338 miles range whilst the crazy X-Power has the same battery but with a shortened range to cope with its manic 429bhp and 0-60mph in 3.8 seconds. The only real outward change is that the 4 now has a one piece rear spoiler on all models. It is on the inside that the biggest changes appear.

Lighter colours and better quality soft touch materials inform the inside with a larger 12.8inch infotainment screen and a contained drivers info screen similar to the MG S6. The floating shelf has gone replaced with a more usual central cubby and cupholders. The drive selector knob is still there along with the wireless phone charger. Wireless Android/Car play also feature as on the Urban. Ambient lighting is added and the ability to remember MG Pilot settings will be a boon. The drive remains rear wheel and the power outputs remain impressive at 201bhp for the Premiums and that 429bhp for the X-Power. Price wise it is no longer one of the cheaper EVs starting at £29,995 and rising to £33,995, this separates it from the Urban and puts it into a more premium area with the ID3/4 and Cupra as rivals. It is an interesting position for MG with a dual-model strategy for the MG4 and not one that has been seen previously – will it work? Time will tell but it looks promising and increases MGs pure electric output.



*The new MY2026 MG4 interior*



*The new original MG4 is on sale now – this one is at Richmond MG in Guildford - with two new colours – this one is Ealing Green and you can also get Picadilly Blue now along with the original colours*

No sooner than we had almost put this edition of Spark to bed than more news came from MG Motor. With a vibrant and energetic company, it is sometimes hard to keep up to date!

The headlines are a new semi-solid state “Solidcore” battery, another version of the MG4 and the 7-seater MG S9. The latter should be in your local MG showroom any moment.

## MG 4X

Let’s start with the one we know the least about – the MG 4X. This was teased as the third in the MG4 “family”. It will be based on the modular scalable platform as per the current MG4 but will be an SUV size vehicle to compete with the BYD Atto 2 and Leapmotor B10. It will also feature a 53.95kWh semi-solid manganese-based lithium-ion battery which delivers a claimed 330 mile range. At the moment it is not confirmed that it will be coming to the UK but seems likely to do so being marketed as an SUV below the MG S5.

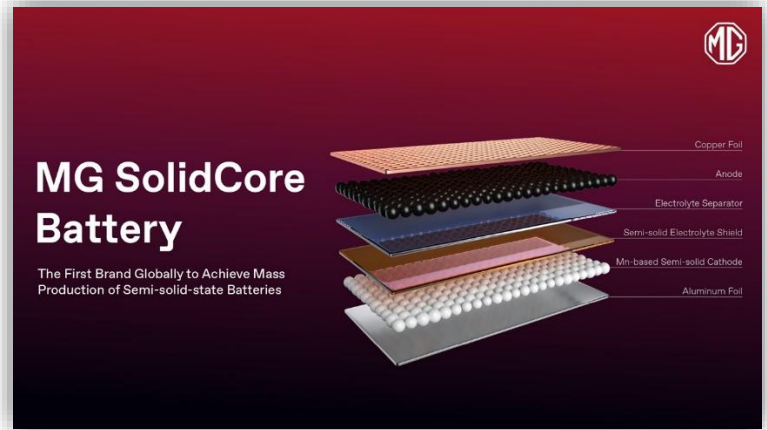


## MG S9

The latest in the “S” series was announced in March with it expected to be in the showrooms around now. The S9 is the largest in the range and will feature a 7-seat layout. It is powered by a 1.5litre turbo petrol engine paired with a plug in hybrid 24.7kwh battery giving 62 miles of electric only range.

It comes in two models – the Comfort and Premium, so we have lost the old SE and Trophy designations as seen previously.

The RRP on the Comfort is £34,205 and the Premium £36,945 but you can expect discounts once they get out to the dealers. The Premium adds massaging front seats, smart tailgate, 4-way lumbar support, Bose sound system and more.



## SOLIDCORE BATTERY

Semi-solid batteries have been on the drawing board for a while but now MG have announced that the first ones (from any manufacturer) will be appearing in a production MG by the end of this year. MG Motor held a “Tech Day” livestream on social media at the end of April to explain the new battery and at the same time announced improvements in the Hybrid + technology. Unfortunately, the timezones got mixed up and I missed it... and it was only on Tik Tok – perhaps showing the direction of MG Motor’s worldwide marketing!

However, the battery will make a difference with improved range, faster charging, better low temperature performance and greater safety. This will be the first such battery to appear in any production car and will pave the way for future technology. It is likely to be offered first in the MG4 Urban and the MG4X.

Solid-state electrolytes within each cell form a protective barrier, extending battery lifespan and ensuring full compliance with future regulatory standards. They perform exceptionally well in low-temperature conditions, providing improved acceleration compared with conventional EVs under similar conditions.

It has been designed specifically for the European market, to accommodate regional road conditions, climate variations and regulatory requirements, reflecting MG’s long-term commitment to delivering advanced, reliable and accessible electric mobility across Europe. To demonstrate their European commitment MG Motor are also opening a new engineering centre in Frankfurt.

# The Natters & Wanderers

## FAIRMILE NATTER

IAN AILES & JON GLOVER

### Film Night at the Fairmile!

And so to our Monthly Meet at The Fairmile Hotel , Cobham .

For our February gathering the Pub Meeting Room was transformed into a local , 'Flea Pit' thanks to the efforts of our projectionist, Neil Mears.

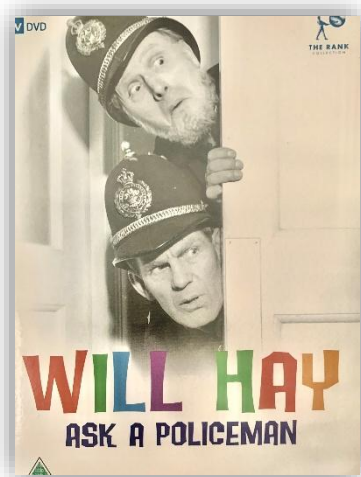
Firstly our 30 odd attendees, and I use the word, 'odd' advisedly, munched their way through the excellent Fairmile Fare, as we enjoyed a nostalgic look at our 'B Feature' of filmed Variety acts of 1939, to get us in the mood for our main film, 'Ask a Policeman ', starring Will Hay, the third most popular British Film Star in the '30's, behind George, ' turned out nice again ', Formby and, 'Our Gracie ', Gracie Fields .



*"Ask a Policeman" was shown in February*

Why this particular film and not our usual programme of MG documentaries of all vintages? Well we, (Ailes and Glover, leaders ), felt that perhaps a freshen up might be in order. But why 'Ask a Policeman '? Well, the film which was made in January 1939 and released in August of that year, just before something else happened, (I can't remember what), features scenes depicting Surrey in a more leisurely age of motoring. Locations include Hare Lane in Claygate, Dorking and most importantly Brooklands Filmed just before the track permanently closed for racing. Our love for MG certainly includes an element of nostalgia.

Driving Pre- War cars, or riding in them, takes some of our Natterers back to their childhood. For me the MGs of the '50' and 60's started my own love affair with the breed and seeing familiar places like Brooklands in black and white really brings to life the thrill of motor racing and MGs between the wars .



Will Hay was an extraordinary gentleman.

In his early life he worked as an interpreter, being fluent in Italian, French and German as well as Afrikaans. However, having seen W.C .Fields, decided that Show Biz was where he really wanted to be, not as a comedy juggler, like Bill Fields, but as a drag act! Will's stage career began as his depiction of a friend of his sister's, a lady schoolmistress, portrayed in severe female clothing, pearls and pince-nez glasses. Drag didn't last long and the schoolmistress became a schoolmaster complete with cloak and mortar board. Hay continued to portray bumbling versions of this character for the rest of his career breaking into films, firstly, as the Headmaster of St Michaels, an imaginary prep school. In 'Ask a Policeman ', the bumbler is in charge of the police force of coastal village called Turnbotham Round . The climax of the film features a race at Brooklands, interrupted by a bus ( you had to be there !).

The race was staged for the film by Brooklands Tuning specialist Robin Jackson and is composed of 10 racing cars , including the MG of George Harvey Noble, holder of the track lap record for 750 C.C. cars (see article on page 4).

Hay and George became firm friends after the racing driver invited the comedian to join him in the circuit Members Bar. He even persuaded Hay to become a member of The BARC .

Harvey Noble may also have persuaded Will to buy a Midget Sportsman's Coupe – see picture on the right.

'Ask A Policeman' features Hay's regular stooges - Graham Moffat and the toothless Moore Marriot .



Hay later dispensed with his sidekicks as Tony Hancock did with Sid James and Kenneth Williams. In both cases perhaps the star was fearful that the stooges were getting too many laughs? Also, in the cast as 'The Headless Horseman' (you definitely had to be there!) was a very young Desmond Llewelyn, later 'Q' in the early Bond films. Aside from work Hay was a keen Astronomer and a Fellow of The Royal Astronomical Society.

Apart from driving his MG, Will also enjoyed flying and was reputed to have given lessons to Amy Johnson. Some of our Fairmile audience were perhaps sceptical about this old Black and White offering, but maybe mollified by our provision of film essential Pop Corn. Within five minutes people were laughing along at the road side sequences and spotting the numerous cars featured. In particular, the Police Car was a Morris Oxford 'Flatnose' drophead with wooden cartwheels, a Classic even in 1939 and the basis for the first MG. Other cars included a Talbot, a Canadian McLaughlin Buick, and a Chrysler Wimbledon Drophead Coupe bodied by Carlton, the name still associated with posher Vauxhalls. The Bus was an AEC Renown.

And so, our audience stumbled out into the damp night, full of Cinema joi de vivre... and popcorn.

Next year we hope to provide a lady with an illuminated tray, strolling the aisle with a selection of Kia -Ora and tubs of vanilla ice cream with that little wooden spoon!

JON GLOVER

Ian Aisles reports on future events at the Fairmile:-

The **University Motors Reunion** is on **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April** with a talk by Nick Butler on building one off cars for clients. Breakfast 9.30 am. Talk at 11am. Donations to Pancreatic Cancer UK invited

Our tune up morning is confirmed for **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May** 9am-12.30 in Pirbright at Gordon Stanley's home where mechanical magic can be witnessed. Please contact me for further details, It's a fun morning, bring some cake!

## NORTH SURREY NATTER

John Morgan & Austin Banner

Our Spring programme of activities started in March with a film evening featuring a mixture of MG works films - supercharged race cars from 1924 onwards, a short film of a Ferrari at high speed through Paris and a look back to the SE Centre 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in 2020 and Penuhurst Place and Gardens.

Looking forward to the Spring, our April talk will be presented by Will Opie on the subject of MMM Cars and, in particular, his restoration of a P Type Airline Coupe. This will be followed in May by a topical talk, in these times of being green and sustainable, given by one of our Natter members, Martin Atkins, who is the CEO of "Green Lizard Technologies". His subject will be on the company's work on sustainable and synthetic fuels. This may well become very topical as we move into the 2030 decade.

In addition to the monthly Natter night our members will be supporting:-

- **Filching Manor Autosolo** on **11<sup>th</sup> April**
- **Drive it Day Run to the Gatwick Aviation Museum** on **26<sup>th</sup> April**. The run starts from Bocketts Farm, Leatherhead but members can go direct if preferred.
- The Natter will be providing an MG display for the **Walton on the Hill Pageant** on **May 16<sup>th</sup>** and partake in the May Queen Parade through the village.
- Looking ahead to June our Natter lunch/run/visit on **the 11<sup>th</sup> June** will be to the **Vintage Bentley Specialists** in Liss who undertake complete restorations of 1930 and earlier Bentley cars. Reservation will be necessary.



MMM cars talk on 20<sup>th</sup> April by Will Opie including Airlines



## SUSSEX WANDERERS

URSULA GRIFFITHS & ANDREW RATCLIFFE

Sussex Wanderers took a break from wandering in Jan and Feb except for presenting a cheque to Riding for the Disabled which continues as our chosen charity. They provide equestrian therapy, challenges and fun to over 2,000 riders nationally of all ages with varying disabilities. We support the East Park Group branch participants to experience horse activities including carriage driving, riding, competitions and dressage whilst learning new skills. Our cheque for £2500 will be grossed up to £3125 with the gift aid it qualifies for.

We start our wanders in March with 57 joining us for lunch and many doing a spring drive in their MGs



Ursula Griffiths of Sussex Wanderers presented the cheque with other Wanderers watching on.

**£2500 was raised for Riding for the Disabled by the Sussex Wanderers - an excellent result**



Participants enjoying the experience thanks to the charity.



## NORTH DOWNS NATTER

WILL OPIE & RAY RUFFELS

The North Downs Natter are organising a Drive it Day meet up at Headcorn Aerodrome with an opportunity to visit the Lashenden Air museum and watch aircraft coming in and taking off from this popular grass aerodrome. We will be part of a classic car event with many different marques to see.

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April is the day!**



## SE MGF REGISTER NATTER

TIM MORRIS

We always start the year off with one of our regular visits to Brooklands. It has become traditional now to support the New Year's Day event along with the T-Type Register and we have recently been promoted to the Campbell Car Park area which is one solely MGs on these occasions. That's not without controversy as the Brooklands authorities have put a 30 year age limit on cars parking inside and whilst our MGFs are now exceeding that age our range in age is 15 – 30years. Whilst we had a special dispensation we did try and sneak in a modern Cyberster – that didn't go down too well and poor Alan was escorted to the "moderns" area in The Heights!

It was a fantastic record-breaking day nonetheless and there is a report elsewhere in Spark.

We'll be back in April for the Easter Gathering and will be good and stick to just Fs and TFs this time – unless we are thrown back to the "moderns" as well!

We continue with our monthly pub meets at the Rose & Crown on Thorpe Green and the South Coast group will be starting their meetings again soon at The Forge in Shedfield. Th next meet will be a different location – the **Oatlands Chaser** in Weybridge in **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April**.

We held a joint breakfast meet in February at the **Bells of Ouzeley in Old Windsor**, it was raining so it was only the MGFs and MG Motor cars that came out – others were in disparate moderns. We'll be back there on **19<sup>th</sup> April** as well with the Pinner bunch.

David took his 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary TF to Stoneleigh where it appeared on the MGF Register stand and they helped out on the stall. It was a busy show and they helped point members in the direction of the Centre and MGF Register.

Some members also attended the "Chairman's Weekend" which is held at the New Inn in Heckfield – not far from our border in Hampshire.

### Grasshopper

We were saddened to see the state of the Grasshopper pub in Westerham which is now virtually derelict. Urban Explorers recently visited and took several photos which appeared on social media – indeed it is in a very sorry state.

*Why does this bother us?*

Well, The Grasshopper has a place in MGF Register history as being the pub where the South East Region was first formed way back in 2003. The inaugural meeting and a follow-up meeting were both held here and the venue has been used a few times since to start road runs from. It has been closed for several years and there seems to be no hope of it re-opening as a pub again, we wait and see what will eventually become of the site.



*The sun came out at Brooklands NYD meet*



*MGF and MG Motor Register cars braved the weather at the breakfast meet*



*David's 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary TF on the MGF register stand at Stoneleigh*



*The Grasshopper in Westerham has become a sorry sight*

# For Sale and Wanted

## TD / Y Type Parts for Sale

Y-type Distributor DKYH4 type DA36 anticlockwise £20  
TD bulkhead support brackets black powder coated £15  
TD/TF/Y steering rack gaiters new £15 pair  
TD used rear springs £18 pair  
TD brake and clutch pedal on shaft £15  
TD starter motor £20  
TD anti roll bar rubbers £12  
TD front hub spacers £5  
Y-type exhaust manifold £20  
Y-type inlet manifold £15  
Y-type air cleaner manifold £15  
Y-type accelerator pedal £8  
Pair 7" stoneguards £15

Engine side water jacket plate £12  
Lucas windtone horn £10  
Altette horn (working) £20  
12volt coils (checked OK) £18 each  
Bonnet hinge rear support bracket £5  
Gearbox support bracket £12  
Engine fan belt pulley £15  
Wheel hub covers 3NO. £8  
A steering column support plate £4  
4.00 x 19 Dunlop tyre 5mm tread £18  
4.50x 19 Dunlop tyre (4mm tread) and wheel £25  
4.75/5.00 x 17 tyre (5mm tread) on centre spoked wheel £25  
4.00x 19 Firestone tyre (6mm tread) £18

Contact Philip Bayne-Powell on 01483 811428 or e-mail  
1942mgman@gmail.com



## 1978 MGBGT FOR SALE

**£4000**

Fully serviced and  
new front brake  
callipers.

Contact Village  
Garage , details  
below right.



Excellent sills and castle  
sections, webasto sunroof and  
good history.

Deck chair seats in excellent  
condition as is the rest of the  
interior.



## MGC Parts for Sale

MGCC MEMBER has a large quantity of C and  
B spares for sale – surplus to requirements  
after C GT rebuild .

Many new and boxed .

Many original used but serviceable .

Too numerous to mention but include-  
Fibre Glass Sebring valances front and rear.

Original C steering wheel – leather intact.

Chrome rocker cover.

Chrome sill covers – Chrome C door treads.

Passenger side quarter light .

Useable drop glass and rear GT glass-  
including tail gate .

Unused red seat belt kit.

New Headlights Various .

Original Sunroof wind deflectors .

Boxed C flywheel .

Offers invited – for you to inspect at and  
collect from –

**THE VILLAGE GARAGE , East Grinstead .'**

**RH19 2HG,**

Where the items are securely stored .

01342318080- ask for Adam

Or email – enquiries@the-village-garage.com

OPEN TO REASONABLE OFFERS .

# For Sale and Wanted

## 1972 MGBGT



My ownership since 2020 but now need to reduce the fleet. History available back to 2000

Working sunroof | Power steering | Electronic ignition | 5 speed 'box | Alloys 2012 | New Blockley tyres 2020 | Revotec electronic fan 2022 | New wiring loom 2022 | New battery 2023

**REDUCED** - Now only **£5,250 ono**

Contact [austin.banner@gmail.com](mailto:austin.banner@gmail.com)



## MGB parts for sale.....Prefer to sell everything as a "job lot"

**Offers Invited contact John Clark on 07940769225 Canterbury area**

14" woodrim steering wheel, ally spokes, no boss used but good/Pair Halogen fog lamps, horizontal type new/Pair Lucas Silver Sabre driving lamps with covers. New old stock/Smiths RVI Tacho 4", 0-7000 used but good/Smiths speedo 4", 0-120mph used but good/Smiths vacuum gauge with coloured segments used but good/Smiths oil pressure gauge 0-100psi. used but good/Yazaki ammeter -30 to +30 used but good/Smiths oil pressure gauge 0-100 psi New old stock/Smiths Dual oil/ temp gauge used but good /Twin SU inlet manifold used but good/Pair HS4 1.5 inch Carbs...suitable for refurbishing used but good/Overrider with rubber pad X2 New old stock/Overrider with number plate lamp X2.used/Overrider (plain) X2 used/Lucas rear lamp units...PAIR....Good Chrome used but good/Set MGB/ MGBGT Carpets used but good/Hub Bearing Kit....Unipart GHK 1005 New/Universal Joint....Unipart GUJ 101New/Choke Cable....Austin Rover...CHA 288 New

## CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

I hope you enjoyed this edition!

Your contributions are invaluable from all directions, and I want to thank contributors for their input. We welcome any comments on this magazine and any articles.

If you wish to contribute for the Summer 2026 edition, then please get in touch with the editorial team at:-

[Spark@mgccse.co.uk](mailto:Spark@mgccse.co.uk)

Many Thanks - **Will Opie** , Editor Spark Magazine

**SPARK Issue 5 Spring 2026**

**Editor : Will Opie**

**Deputy : Tim Morris**

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MG Car Club South East Centre web site – <http://www.mgccse.co.uk>

# Retro Spark

Spark keeps you up to date with the modern world of the MG Car Club, but the club's history goes back much further so each quarter we'll end up with a look back at the South East Centre... in the past.



Brands Hatch Register race 1966. Racing at Brands in this period was organised by the South Eastern Centre. We'll be returning to Brands Hatch in August for the MG Fest 26 event which will once again feature MG Car Club racing with the Cockshoot Cup.



Wealdon Weekend Concours Judging in the late 1970s- This was a popular event at Egerton Kent. If anyone has more memories and photos please send them in for this retro page.