



Spark

Autumn
2026

The quarterly magazine of the MG Car Club South East Centre

7



THIS ISSUE INCLUDES...

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A Great Weekend | Philip's Family MGs | Ningde to Shepperton
MGFest Competition Winners | Parham House | Vintage Bentleys
Grand Prix 100 | On the Record Circuit | Gardner's MGTC

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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 Autumn 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 third quarter of 2026 and includes contributions from the Natters, Wanderers and Members

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 either go to the Members login area of MGCC web site, email mgcc@mgcc.co.uk or call 01235 555552.

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

Cover Picture: Philip and Rosemary Bayne-Powell at Lullingstone in their 14/40. See page 24 for Philips article on his family involvement in MGs



I attended the Brooklands Grand Prix 100 celebration in August which was a fantastic event as you'll see elsewhere in Spark. There were cars present from the Surtees team and this took me back to 2015 when I had the honour of meeting John himself.

I was involved with arranging the Brooklands talks and in those days was managing the bookings for the events. We had tried hard and managed to secure John Surtees for one of our talks which was a bit of a coup. The limit in the Chequered Flag Room (Napier Room today) was 200 people comfortably so we put the tickets out for sale. Now, normally that is not a problem on the room limit but this was John Surtees and tickets went flying off the website.

We were soon up to 300 before realising it – well over our limit – so the panic was as to what we were going to do!

After much fretting we received the offer of a larger room at Mercedes Benz World next door – it was going to cost us though, albeit at a discounted rate. We were certainly not going to cancel this once in a lifetime opportunity and took the plunge. We got Simon Taylor on board to interview him and in the end we had over 350 people in the room and it was a great success. We featured one of his bikes and a Surtees team F1 car in the room and my picture shows John sitting on the bike with me beside him. It was a great opportunity to meet a real legend of motorsport – the only man to achieve World Championships in F1 and Motorcycle racing in the same year.

It has been suggested that this chap may be the new South East Centre Chairman. I am hoping that was a tongue in cheek suggestion – but maybe not. Robotics are increasingly coming to the forefront of modern technology and they have even held the first robot Olympics recently. This one was at Goodwood Festival of Speed and was found dancing on the MG Motor UK stand – It is unlikely that your actual human chairman will be found dancing anywhere these days!

The accusation of “robotic driving” could be aimed at many human drivers let leash on our roads today.

Actual automatic driving aids are now at the forefront of modern cars of whatever type. My latest MG4 has all these including driving itself when stuck in traffic jams (although it tells you off if you take your hands off the wheel). Parking space to parking space autonomy is not far away, it is being explored by MG Motor currently, and we see robotic taxis around the World now. It won't be long before this facility is installed in our everyday cars.

As mentioned, I have my second MG EV, an upgraded MG4 – the interior has done away with the floating shelf that I used to bang my knee on and has the look of the MG S5, just like my daughter's new MG. I explored its journey to the UK and you can read about that on page 33.

We asked for your family connections to MGs in the last issue and Philip Bayne-Powell responded – you can see what he has to say on page 24.

I am quite sure he is not the only one with an MG family history so let's hear your MG story – it could be published in the next edition.

With DJ Lord Anthony at Lullingstone



The new South East Centre Chairman?

We had a great time at the MGFest '26 weekend which incorporated our own Summer Event and Run to Lullingstgone Castle. The South East Centre was solely responsible for organising the Lullingstone event and the California Cup autotest on Sunday at Brands Hatch. That meant it was a busy weekend for your committee. There were some teething problems which will be addressed if we go back to Brands again! There are reports on the combined events in this issue and Jon Glover's own personal view for the sake of balance.

So, we could do with a bit more help, particularly on large events. So, if you would like to help organise some events, shows, road runs beforehand or would just like to help with a spot of marshalling on the day then please get in touch as we would like to expand our fairly small team of helpers for next year.

Contact me at chair@mgccse.co.uk if you are interested.



BILLY COTTON & HIS BAND

Friends And Neighbours

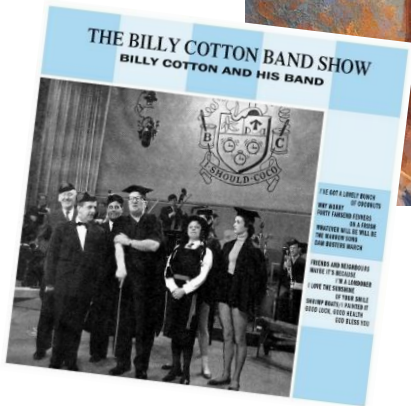


BILLY COTTON & HIS BAND

SING A NEW SONG



Billy Cotton captured shouting his catchphrase – Wakey Wakey!



Billy Cotton's famous catchphrase, Wakey Wakey, and his stint as Britain's No. 1 big band leader may be all that is remembered of him these days. But lesser known was the fact that he was a great sportsman as well, having played football for Brentford and Wimbledon FC, early boxing enthusiast and something of relevance to this article – a top-class motor racer. He didn't let it rest there either as he was also a pilot with his own Gypsy Moth aeroplane, a power boat racer and enjoyed his own luxury yacht which he kept moored at his seaside home in Sandbanks.

Cotton was born in 1899 in London and his first musical experience came when he was a choir boy and drummer. He enlisted when he was underage at the beginning of WW1 and saw service in Malta, Egypt and Gallipoli before gaining a commission into the Royal Flying Corps. He learnt to fly in a Bristol Fighter and took his first solo flight at the age of 19. He was always interested in music though and after the war he set up his first band, the London Savannah Band, in 1924. That was the start of his long career as band leader which led to over one hundred and fifty television "Billy Cotton Band Shows" in the 1950s and 60s. But let us return to motor racing.



Cotton's first experience of motor racing came in 1921 when he visited Brooklands and saw the mighty Chitty Bang Bang of Count Louis Zborowski. At that race meet he also saw Henry Segrave in his Bugatti Type 13, Kenelm Lee Guinness in the Sunbeam 350 and Malcolm Campbell in his Talbot – it was this occasion that gave him the “itch to drive fast”. And no wonder with such luminaries roaring around the concrete crucible in front of him. Cotton, though, was not a first-time visitor to Brooklands as, with his pilots experience he was already a member of the Brooklands Flying Club, but seeing these landlocked beasts careering around the track whetted his appetite for speed... and danger.

Cotton's first time behind the wheel came in 1935 at Southport sands, a mecca for speed trials in the 1920s. He had borrowed a Talbot from Jackie Field that had been driven by Henry Segrave and his first real race was therefore on sand – he would return here later with a much more powerful machine.

He returned to Brooklands and watched Malcom Campbell in the first Mountain Speed Handicap, a race in which he was not impressed with Campbell's racing abilities and thought he could do much better. The course had a tight hairpin leading to the Finishing Straight and cars could be doing 125mph before reaching it – a severe test of braking and control.

He obtained a rather beaten and “clapped out” Riley 9 in which to make his Brooklands debut. He had made friends with Charlie Martin of Byfleet Motors, a company he ran with Charlie Brackenbury and Charlie Querico as their mechanic – he supposed they were a “right load of Charlies”!

However, Querico weaved his magic over the Riley and with an abundance of overconfidence he entered it in 1935 BRDC 500 mile race. There were thirty-three starters including such experienced racers as Earl Howe, Freddie Dixon and John Cobb in the mighty Napier-Railton right at the back.

With the cars waved away by Ebby Ebbelwhite the Riley lasted for a full three minutes before losing firstly a cylinder and secondly splitting the exhaust manifold. His first race had not been a great success, and he retired from the fray.

Leaving the field did mean that he could actually enjoy watching the racing. Cobb was right on the lip of the banking lapping at over 122mph closely followed by Oliver Bertram in the Barnato-Hassan ultimately exceeding 126mph. Cobb, injured by flying concrete, handed the Railton over to Tim Rose-Richards who powered it home to take the win at an average 121.8mph – a feat not beaten for 14 years anywhere in the World.



Billy in the MG K3



Billy with Wilkie Wilkinson after winning the JCC International Trophy at Brooklands



Billy Cotton's first band, the London Savannah Band, at Southport in 1925.

Billy with the London Savannah Band in 1925



Bill with sons Ted and Bill Jr and the Sunbeam 350

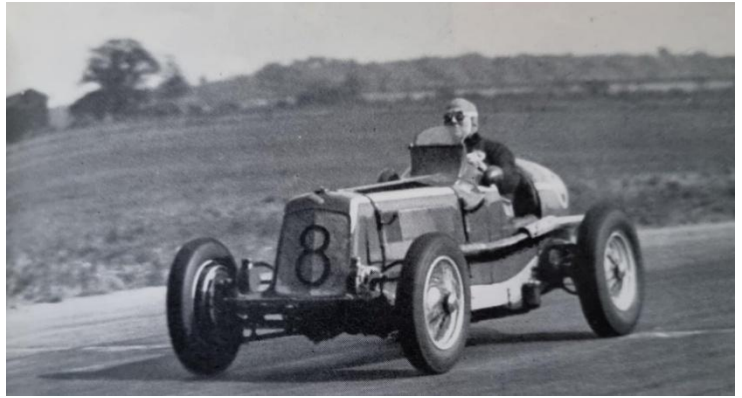
It was thrilling initiation into track racing and one of the cars that finished in the time was an MG Magnette.

That reliability led him to purchase an MG K3 of his own and he entered it for the 1936 Long Handicap at the Whitsun meeting. There was a reminder as to the danger in motor racing when Kenneth Carr perished in his car which came to rest beside the River Wey. There was no time to move the wreckage and so it was left throughout the meeting under covers as a grisly reminder of the peril that drivers faced.

The MG K3 ran well thought and Cotton chalked up his first placing coming second and happily beating Earl Howe into third place in his Grand Prix Bugatti.

Cotton was a contemporary of Prince Bira who had also entered an MG K3 at the same time but the K3 was prone to over revving and could cause problems. Cotton spun it at Donington and was not happy with the tuning. He recruited Wilkie Wilkinson to fettle the car. Wilkinson, of course, was a top-class mechanic working for the Evans family out of Bellevue Garage in Wandsworth.

The 1087cc K3 was entered for the First August Long Handicap at Brooklands and Billy won the race averaging 16.94mph. Despite the easy victory he wasn't satisfied and told Wilkie that they must go in "for the big one – the British Empire Trophy.



Billy testing the ERA R1B at Brooklands prior to purchase



Billy at the 1938 British Grand Prix at Donington shaking hands with the Duke of Kent and Dick Seaman on the left

They came third and took the Australia Trophy. Still not quite satisfied he entered the BRDC 500 mile race coming in fifth place overall and the Hepburn Trophy for his class – a result he was always very proud of. The 1936 season ended with a dusk race at Brooklands in October back in his Riley 9 described by Bill Boddy as "one of the best races seen for a long time". Billy came third out of the dozen runners just behind Reg Parnell in his MG – a drive described, again by Boddy, as being of "immense verve".

He became a member of the British Racing Drivers' Club that year which was only accessible on merit.

In 1936 he also took his Riley and another car to Southport - that "other" car was none other than the Sunbeam 350 "Bluebird" which Malcolm Campbell had taken to over 150mph. By this time, of course, Campbell had outgrown the Sunbeam and was campaigning the Rolls Royce Campbell Bluebird chasing 300mph so the Sunbeam was redundant in terms of land speed records.



The Sunbeam 350 at Brooklands in 2022 marking the centenary of its Lands Speed Record at the track – Billy was offered the car for £50 in 1935!

“Only a burke would have said yes. And Cotton said Yes.”

However, it was still a mighty car with an 18.3litre engine and twelve cylinders reaching 350hp. His friend, Jackie Field, had owned it and offered it to Billy for just £50 if he made an attempt on Campbell’s old record with the car. His response was “Only a burke would say yes. And Cotton said yes.” When he started it up “the whole outfit seemed to go on fire, the sensation was not funny.”

Southport Sands, September 1936 and the venerable old Sunbeam headed on to the beach – the tide had hardened the surface but the run in and out was loose and difficult. Cotton recalls “There were only two speeds on this car – fast and stop.” There was a strong wind coming off the sea and it was a struggle to compensate with the steering but the course was open and the spectators right beside the course. The Sunbeam careered off the end of the course with ineffectual brakes heading for the crowds and a rope inconveniently at head height. Just in time he ducked down and ploughed into the dunes beyond – he achieved 121.57mph, way below the car’s record but still earning a gold medal. He did the next run in the Riley achieving 104.52 mph so earning two Southport 100 Gold medals.

He was back at Brooklands in 1937 with the MG in the Easter Short Handicap which he won. The Whitsun JCC 200 mile race was exciting with Raymond Mays leading with Prince Bira and John Cobb on his tail and Cotton just behind. Bira’s Maserati expired, he was third but then passed by two others – with inimitable spirit he forced the MG back into third place for the finish winning two additional class trophies.

Seeing the success of the ERAs Cotton purchased ERA R1B- a car that had been driven previously by another musical star – jazz sax player Buddy Featherstonhaugh and initially owned by Dick Seaman.

He took the car to Phoenix Park in Dublin where he saw all the trophies on display in a shop window – seeing the large gold cup he pointed to it and said “I want that one” which, of course, he duly won.

He continued racing, slotting the races between his duties as leader of a big band, often arranging dates that would coincide with a race meeting around the country. He took the MG back to Brooklands and recorded his fastest ever time of 128.89mph earning a second 120mph badge.

He was respectful of the ERA which he owned for ten years and raced it at Donington and Silverstone often against Prince Bira again, who had also changed to an ERA. With the ERA his pinnacle came when he was selected to represent the British Team in the 1938 Grand Prix at Donington against the German Team (which included old friend Dick Seaman in one of the Mercedes). The Brits won the team prize but the Germans won the race.

He returned to Brooklands with the ERA for 1939 and took part in the last ever race meet at the circuit winning the last Mountain Handicap race. The war put paid to further racing but he did return for a few races afterwards and the last time he raced a car seriously was at Silverstone in 1948. His attention then turned to power boat racing and sailing his yacht.

His band shows transferred from radio to television and he became immensely popular with a mix of music, laughter, slapstick and guest stars including his motoring friends Donald Campbell and Mike Hawthorn.

Billy Cotton died in March 1969 whilst watching a boxing match at Wembley and was survived by his son Bill Cotton Jr who became BBC Director of Television. He is also the great-great uncle of TV presenter Fearne Cotton.

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



Kevin	Regan	NINFIELD
Ethan	Harris	WHITTON
Nicholas	Vine	MIDHURST
Maxwell	Kendall	ROTHERFIELD
John	Vickery	CAMBERLEY
Paul	Williams	PEVENSEY BAY
Mark	Southwood	HORSTED KEYNES
Samuel	Jones	TWICKENHAM
Alex	Brown	LONDON
Andrew	Mount	WHITSTABLE
James	Lugton	WEST CHILLINGTON
Victoria	Mitchell	MARGATE
Mark & Sean	Duffy	BOUGHTON UNDER
John	Rose	BLEAN
Tom	Webster	SITTINGBOURNE
David	Cumberland	THAMES DITTON
Julian	Ridgway	WIVELSFIELD GREEN
Conor	Tavener	HYTHE
Timothy & Suzanne	Cooper	BURGESS HILL
Jeremy	Clarke	EGHAM
Tim	Burt	STAINES UPON
Jeremy	Wilson	THAMES
Michael	Sullivan	FLEET
Jonathan	Hunt	GUILDFORD
Daniel	Jacobs	CHINGFORD
Kenneth	Young	SITTINGBOURNE
David	Carter RNR	REDHILL
Mark	Bellingham	GODALMING
Christopher	Kelly	FAREHAM
David	Hann	CHISELHURST
John	Briers	SEVENOAKS
Sue	Knowles	FELIXSTOWE
Edmund	Cheung	WEST MALLING
		MAIDSTONE
		KINGSTON

Spark Plug

IMPORTANT - We have a little bit of an issue in the club where members are not booking in time for events to happen. Two events have had to be cancelled and one was on the precipice this year due to insufficient numbers applying in time.

Many events do have minimum numbers to make them practical, particularly competitions, and we have to tell venues the number of people attending, sometimes several weeks in advance. We also often have to pay a "deposit" to venues which we need to be sure we can cover so it is important. That has proved to be a gamble recently.

It really does help your club, if you would like to join in an event, that you book in as soon as possible after it is announced.

So, the message is **BOOK EARLY** and **DON'T LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE** – you might find the event you wanted to attend has disappeared!

AUTUMN LEAVES SCAVENGER HUNT

Saturday 17th October

Venue TBC

This is a light-hearted photographic hunt around the villages on the Surrey & Sussex border. You'll be given a location and a series of photographs to be identified as you walk around the village.

Then back to a country pub for Sunday lunch and the prizegiving.

All queries to John

competitions@mgccse.co.uk

Monday 19th October 7.30pm

The Doghouse, Walton on the Hill

FROM GUN BOATS TO JELLO

Tim Morris tells the story of Sir Noel Macklin and his family. Sir Noel was a man of many talents from international hockey player, breaking the bank at Monte Carlo to building Invicta and Railton cars opposite The Fairmile in Cobham and, of course, gun boats.

His family are just as interesting from surreal art, Jello, ice skating, driving around the world and Formula One.

It is a fascinating tale

Let John & Austin know if you can make it by email – northsurrey@mgccse.co.uk

FAIRMILE DROP IN BRUNCH

Saturday 24th October

11am-1pm

An informal gathering at The Fairmile in Cobham – bring the family and an MG!

Contact Jon & Ian for more info or to let them know you can come.

fairmile@mgccse.co.uk



MG Car Club South East

Annual Lunch 2026



DATE
Sunday
22nd November

LOCATION
Hartsfield Manor,
Betchworth

Join fellow members and friends for an enjoyable afternoon of good food, great company and MG camaraderie.

Celebrating MGs and Friendship in the South East

For 2026 we return to Hartsfield Manor in Betchworth Surrey for our celebration of the year gone by.

The day will be in two parts with the Awards in the morning and then lunch followed by a guest speaker and two pre war monologues by member Simon Gray.

Morning

Tea/coffee | Cakes | Awards

Afternoon

Monologues | Lunch | Speaker

To book go to www.mgccse.co.uk

Grand Prix 100

Tim Morris

One hundred years of Grand Prix racing in Britain was an occasion duly celebrated at the track where the first one took place on August 7th 1926 – Brooklands. It was a sell out weeks before the event took place and on the day around 8000 people descended on Weybridge to see a unique collection of Grand Prix cars from 1926 to the modern F1 era.

It was sold on a slight misnomer as 1926 was not the first “British Grand Prix”, but it was the first Grand Prix held in Britain. It was actually called the “Grand Prix of the Royal Automobile Club” and two were held in 1926 and 1927. Delage had entered both and their cars won both as well.



Sunbeam Tiger and Tigress together again after 80 years

Robert Senechal and Louis Wagner won the 1926 race and Robert Benoist won the following year. Although there were no MGs in that race notable MG racer and Speed Record man George Eyston was one of the competitors. He was driving an Aston Martin and had to retire at a third distance when his head gasket blew - a familiar MG woe!

Britain did host another Grand Prix some eight years later in 1935 at the new Donington circuit for four years – this was called the Donington Grand Prix. After the war another RAC International Grand Prix was held at the new Silverstone circuit in 1948 and the following year was granted “Grande Epreuve” status meaning that it could be called the British Grand Prix. In 1950 the British Grand Prix became the first round of the new World Drivers Championship and was attended by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Now that the Drivers’ championship and British Grand Prix were established the BGP became a firm fixture on the F1 calendar.



Bugatti in front of the replica footbridge which was built for the 1926 Grand Prix

Silverstone was not alone at that time in hosting a Grand Prix and races were held at Aintree and Brands Hatch in some years up to 1971. In 1972 money became important the British Grand Prix was known as the John Player Grand Prix and alternated between Brands Hatch and Silverstone until the 1980s.

Silverstone won the right to hold the British Grand Prix in 1987 and is contracted to hold the event there until 2034.

However, MG has never taken part in a Grand Prix although it has featured in other major races, particularly Le Mans. In 2019 20 MGCC MGs were the parade cars at the British Grand Prix chauffeuring the F1 drivers around Silverstone prior to the race – including Lewis Hamilton in his Dad’s MGC.

Parry Thomas’s “Flatiron” Special straight out of restoration



Lewis Hamilton in his Dad’s MGC at Silverstone 2019

When is an MGF a Mini?

Tim Morris



ACV30 with an original Mini Cooper

Spark is an MG magazine so at first glance you may wonder what a Mini is doing here?

This is the ACV 30 or Anniversary Concept Vehicle revealed quietly in Monaco in 1997 and driven around the F1 circuit a few times before being surreptitiously load into the back of a truck and hidden from view. It was a high-profile drive with Paddy Hopkirk, Rauno Aaltonen and Timo Makinen at the wheel but a low-profile reveal – BMW didn't want It to confuse the public who were eagerly awaiting the actual new Mini.

The ACV 30 was designed as a “taste of things to come”, a concept with lots of new ideas but it was emphasised that this was not the new Mini and was unveiled as a 30 year tribute to the Mini's Monte Carlo Rally wins.

It was featured in the Daily Telegraph in January 1997 as a concept “full of whimsy and what if thinking” where elements of the next Mini were being explored. It was also the first new project from Rover after the BMW takeover in 1994.

The design took elements of the original Mini Cooper - the lamps, stripes and overall stance but added huge flared wheel arches, big wheels and a radical interior.

The MGF, as we know, was released officially in September 1995 to much fanfare and positive hopes for the British car industry, despite being under German ownership.

BMW/Rover thoughts had already turned to the future though and they were busy developing ideas for a new Mini. Those ideas came to a head in October 1995 in what became known as the “Gaydon Shootout”.



Cut away image of the 1995 MGF showing the running gear used in the Mini



Iconic Mini instrumentation

Rover brought their Evolution, Revolution and the radical rear engined Spiritual ideas whilst BMW brought their own proposals, one of which was ACV 30.

It was here that BMW believed a new Mini could be radical in design as well as modern, not simply a retro exercise.

The design was by Adrian van Hooydonk, a BMW exterior designer, but was rejected at the shootout.

However, the idea was resurrected for the Monte Carlo Mini anniversary and a full-size running concept was built in 1997.

It had to be turned from a clay model into a working concept but what to run it on?

The choice was obvious as the MGF had just been released to great acclaim and was now part of the BMW group's new portfolio— so it had to have MGF running gear including the K-series 1.8 mid-engine layout.

The ACV30 was pretty radical in design terms for the time but it achieved the objective – a modern take on Mini's rallying soul. That demonstration by Paddy Hopkirk and the others at the start of the Monte Carlo Mini anniversary cemented that connection.

Of course, the ACV 30 did not make it to production – Frank Stephenson's design for what became the R50 Mini won that Gaydon shoot out - but the DNA of the ACV30 was still to be seen in the new production Mini.

The R50 was shown at the Frankfurt Motor Show in October 1997 to similar acclaim that the MGF received two years earlier.

However, the ACV 30 was not entirely forgotten and design cues reappeared in 2016 with the Mini Vision Next 100 concept – another radical idea with colour changing exterior panels! We've yet to see that but you never know!

So, this is the only time that an MGF had actually become a Mini.



Rear view of the hatchback ACV 30



Radical rally inspired interior



The Mini Vision Next 100 Concept

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A Great Weekend – MGFest & Lullingstone



The culmination of a great weekend – a World Record (unofficial)

Pic: Liz Morris

The MG Car Club has reconfigured its main national event since leaving Silverstone. Last year it took place in the north at Croft Circuit and this year it came down South to Brands Hatch. The general idea is to hold a national gathering at one of the MG Cockshoot Cup race meets and this year there was a last minute change to Brands Hatch – and here we are!

Of course, this is within the South East Centre's curtilage and the weekend coincided with our annual Summer Gathering – so why not combine them?

Lullingstone Castle was a good location and one we have visited favourably on previous occasions, so it was a natural choice being only a few miles from Brands Hatch itself for a "day before" event.



Waving the MGs away from Woodlands

Pic: Liz Morris



MGs waiting at the Woodlands Garden Centre

We couldn't start at the race track as the first day of the weekend's racing was taking place, so headed down the road to the Woodlands Garden Centre which also housed the Kent Fire Fighting Museum.

It was good to see MGs from all over the country and across the channel taking part in what was, essentially, the South East Centre's Summer Gathering. Now, Woodlands is about 7 miles away from Lullingstone but our route would take us 48 miles! The run began with some tiny lanes north of the Garden Centre before dropping down into Kent through West Malling and off to Penshurst (another SEC favourite location). From there the MGs headed north around Sevenoaks to arrive at Lullingstone through the impressive castellated gatehouse.

The approach to Lullingstone is via a ford, which was full of youngsters paddling and horses trotting. Luckily there was an alternative narrow ancient bridge and then a long pitted lane under an impressive railway viaduct, past a Roman Villa and finally through the aforementioned gatehouse.

The Lullingstone event was in many parts – first the actual run, then a Pride of Ownership competition, then the World Garden and house tours. It was added to by the late presence of music from vintage DJ Lord Anthony playing on decks in the back of his MGBGT Jubilee and two young guitarist/singers who were friends of the occupant – Tom Hart-Dyke.

Once cars had arrived there was the Pride of Ownership competition on the grass in front of the house and the house/ World Garden to explore.

Our thanks go to Tom Hart-Dyke and the team at Lullingstone for making us feel so welcome.



Grand entrance at Lullingstone through the Gatehouse



Lullingstone Castle with the PoO MGs



Tom Hart-Dyke with Eton Armand – Car of the Show owner

It was back up the road from Lullingstone the following day for the Brands Hatch MGFest26 extravaganza.

Somewhere in the region of 700 MGs turned out for a day at the races. There was MG interest with those competing for the Cockshoot Cup and the MG Metro Cup. It turned out that both series were on track at the same time which made for some great MG action.

At half time there were some demo laps by Jason Hughes in the MG ZS ex BTCC Touring car and also the ex-Colin McRae MG 6R4 providing some historic speedy action.

The Centre had its own stand next to Ancaster Dartford and for the amount of people that sat in Austin's MG HS we could have sold it ten times over! It was Will's beautiful Airline Coupe that stole the stand however and made it into many social media postings.

Just above the stand was the area set aside for the California Cup ably organised by John Morgan and his South East Team. Despite a small mishap with the Caledonian Centre's Midget there was plenty of skidding around cones all day. The California Cup itself was won by the team from the Lincolnshire Centre.

The Register's parking provided some good photo opportunities and we welcomed friends from the Rover Community and the Gay Classic Car Club.

The day rounded off with that World Record being smashed – in an unofficial way! 223 MGs moving together on track for two laps. It was a fitting way to end what was a fantastic weekend of MG fun.



*Record breaking track parade above
Pic: Liz Morris*



Left The fastest Estate car in the world!

The editor's MG Airline in front of the SE Stand



Reflections on MG Fest '26 , (a Strictly Personal view of the event!)

I was disappointed, to say the least, by our Brands Hatch outing, compared to attending many MGLive! events down the years at Silverstone. I should preface my remarks by saying that I am aware that much of my disappointment was engendered by the Brands Hatch management, rather than our Club officials, who did their very best to give us a good outing on limited resources.

My Beefs? No Regional Centre Displays apart from the South East Centre (cost of Marquees?) Poor display parking arrangements, everything needed to be more centralised (Brands fault?) No food outlets were open as promised. The Brands Café wasn't that great, but the only choice. Charging for the Grandstands to watch the superb racing, when we had already paid an entry fee on the confusing Brands Site. Only one or two traders, compared to past year's Trade Villages at Silverstone. I won't go on !

Suffice to say, I did enjoy the Cars!!

In particular - the Stirling Moss / Lindamood 1965 MGB that competed in the Pirelli Classic Marathon Rally over the Alps in 1989

The Paddy Hopkirk/ Andrew Hedges, Lightweight (Right), MGC GT, Sebring . As a C fan, it is always interesting to reflect on what might have been for the type if it hadn't been rushed to market.

Similarly, the Aston Martin MGB project car - another lack of finance sufferer.

I was mightily impressed by the MG Motors display. The cars are becoming more and more 'European' and the interiors in particular are very appealing. It is interesting to note that on a recent trip to Milan, many of the hire companies were offering MGs . We had one and it was lovely to drive and very economic and comfortable. But the touch screen menu needs a sort out. We had to stop on the Motorway to find and set the air Conditioning.!

Jon has a great passion for MG and his observations are welcome, as is all feedback, good or ... not so good.

It should be remembered that this was not intended as an MGLive! type event but a new style show. As a first event at Brands Hatch the club was aware that issues may arise and welcomed comments about the event - they will be addressed in a wash-up meeting with Brands Hatch. Editor.



Jacques Coune MGB Berlinetta



Paddy Hopkirk /Andrew Hedges MG above

Nardi MGA Project Left

Finally, an honorable mention to the NARDI MGA project, which turned out not to be a Nardi at all, but one man's vision of what the Nardi Italian design house might have done with the A Coupe back in the day .

A real charmer along the lines of the Jacques Coune MGB Berlinetta, also on display.

The MGFest26 Competitions

PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP



Nigel Scutt polishes his prize-winning MGF

Other than the racing there were two competitions held over the weekend – the first was a Pride of Ownership at Lullingstone Castle and the second was the California Cup Autotest at Brands Hatch.

Both organised by the South East Centre, in particular John & Jenny Morgan.

WINNERS

Car of the Show – Eton Armand – MG TD (Chosen by Tom Hart-Dyke)

Premier PoO Winner – Nigel & Helen Scutt – MGF

Premier PoO Runner-Up – Dan Adams – MGC Roadster

Premier PoO 3rd – John Langford – MG Magnette Mk IV

PoO Class A Winner – Chris Nicholls – MGC GT

PoO Class A Runner-Up – Christian Lissott – MGA

PoO Class A 3rd – David Elborne – MG Midget

PoO Class B Winner – Peter Jones – MGTF LE500

PoO Class B Runner-Up – Martin Barker – MGF Trophy 160

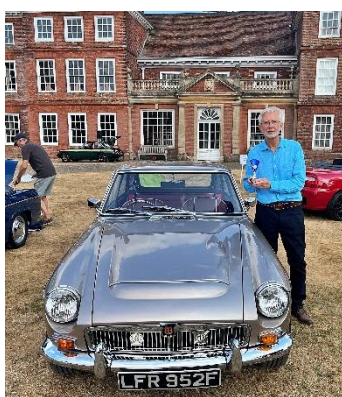
PoO Class B 3rd – Martin Selwyn – MG RV8



Eton Armand with his MG TD – Car of the Show



Christian Lissott's MGA from France



Martin & Timothy Barker polishing their MGF Trophy

Far left: The Chairman hands out the Premier PoO Trophy to Nigel & Helen Scutt

Left: Chirs Nicholls – winner ClassA

CALIFORNIA CUP AUTOTEST



WINNERS

California Cup – Lincolnshire Centre

Best Placed MGCC Member – Malcolm Clark – MG Midget

Fastest Time of the Day – Ruurd Ottens – Mazda MX5

Fastest Lady – Susan Gibbard – Mazda MX5

Class D Winner – Matthew Fibee – MGBGT

Class E Winner – Jesse Billington – MG Midget

Class E Runner-Up – Chris Edwards – MG Midget

Class E 3rd – Ken Brown – MG Midget

Class F Winner – Paul Batho – MG Magnette ZA

Class G Winner – Timothy Barker – MGF Trophy 160

Class G Runner-Up – Robert Taylor – MGTF

Class G 3rd – Martin Barker – MGF Trophy 160

Class I Winner – Malcolm Clark – MG Midget

Class K Winner – Paul Hebden – Mazda MX5

Class K Runner-Up – Stephen Watts – Mazda MX5

Class K 3rd – John Massey – Mazda MX5



Club Chair Lorraine presents the Lincolnshire Team with the California Cup



Paul Batho gives it all in his MG Magnette

Parham House - Autumn Gathering

Located at the foot of the South Downs in West Sussex Parham House is one of the finest Elizabethan houses in the country with its lovely walled gardens and pleasure grounds. The house welcomed 30 MGs and 22 Porsches to this combined event, with an opportunity to explore both the house and gardens.



Above: Door to the Walled Garden

Left: MGs in front of the house with the PoO entries in front.

Below: Porsches on the lawn



Left: The SEC base at Parham

Below left: A pleasant pathway in the Walled Garden

Below: View from the back row



Nigel Scutt collecting the rosette for his and Helens Premier PoO winning MGF from Tim Morris

With just the October Autumn leaves and Scavenger event remaining for this year, I thought it would be worth just reflecting what has been achieved by our 2026 grassroots motorsport events.

The SE Centre competition events this year included:

- The Spring Naviscat on the 22nd March Run by Austin Banner and Philip Roussel-Smith took place in West Sussex.
- The Filching Manor AutoSOLO on 11th April with a full entry including 17 MG entrants. Photograph shows Jason Caille in his MGCGT on his first competitive AutoSOLO event.
- Summer BBQ and Pride of Ownership in Markbeeche, Kent on 25th July.
- One evening Autotest on 30th July in the usual Newdigate field followed by results in the Dorking Brewery Taproom. Photograph below shows James Steele in the MGB, Car was entered by Father and Son in their first Autotest.
- The Summer Gathering with MG Run through Kent and Pride of Ownership at Lullingstone Castle on 14th August.
- A Scenic Road Run and Pride of Ownership at the Parham House and Gardens Autumn Gathering on 13th September.



Pictures from the Filching Manor AutoSolo and the Newdigate grass autotest

The plan is to continue next year with this formula of the Spring AutoSOLO and two Summer Evening Autotests plus Naviscats, Road Runs and Pride of Ownership events. Our AutoSOLO and Autotest events have been made successful by the excellent support from SDMC along with some of the other SE motor clubs.



I would like to thank Austin Banner, John Davies, Andrew Mitchell, Philip Roussel-Smith, Ron Kemp and Jenny Morgan who have helped me run the events and in particular the more onerous Filching event.

Forthcoming competitive events include:

- **Autumn Leaves Run and Scavenger 17th October.** This takes place between Limpsfield and Sevenoaks and follows the North Downs and Kent High Wealds. More information and entry on <https://www.mgccse.co.uk/2026/09/15/autumn-leaves-scavenger-hunt/>

More information on the SE Centre website or contact John Morgan competitions@MGCCSE.co.uk or 07802770025.

MGs at Mark Beech

We returned to a parched field on the 25th July behind the Kentish Horse Pub for the Summer BBQ and Concours. After lunch Judging commenced of the different MG classes.



Kevin Abbott's personalised MG Cyberster

The point sheets handed in to Jenny for marking were soon tallied up and the winners announced in the marquee – despite John being stung by a wasp who went for an unauthorised dip in his beer!



Class C Modern MGs section



The premier PoO entrants

Points are awarded in various categories including bodywork, under bonnet, boot, wheels, interior and overall presentation of the car. The Premier PoO was judged by John and Philip who took much time studying the intricacies of each of the four MGs entered.



Class A entrants



Class B entrants

The winners' rosettes were handed out by the Chairman, Tim Morris and were awarded to:-

Car of the Show – MG M -Type – Jerry Salaman

Premier PoO – MGA – Adrian Malthouse

Class A Pre 1956 – MG ZA Magnette – Peter Downing

Class B Post 1956 – MGC GT – Steve Fletcher

Class C – Moderns – MG Cyberster – Kevin Abbott



Jerry Salaman's M-Type Car of the Show



The Chairman handing out the winning rosettes after the Barbecue (style) lunch!



Philip's Family MGs

Philip Bayne-Powell



Philip & Rosemary plotting points in the Autumn Navisat 2010

Philip & Rosemary Bayne-Powell are well known on the vintage MG scene and have been members of the MG Car Club for too long to remember! However, the MG bug was also passed down to their children, Annette and Jeremy as Philip explains here...



Annette autotesting in the M Type



Annette in Jarvis at Silverstone with the Bayne-Powell seniors just behind



The grandchildren getting a taste of MG in 2009 – Annette's son Toby at the wheel



Rosemary autotesting in the NA Allingham at Nescott in 2006



Jeremy and Annette at Beltring in 1993

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MGCC SE Centre – North Surrey Natter Visit To Vintage Bentley in June 2026

Each Year, the MGCC SE Centre North Surrey Natter arranges museum, factory and works visits. In the past, these have included:

- Wings Aviation Museum, near Haywards Heath
- Farnborough Air Sciences Museum
- Hardy Engineering, Leatherhead.
- Crosthwaite and Gardner, Uckfield.

This year, we had heard impressive reports about Vintage Bentley and their amazing restorations and support of Vintage Bentley cars and 12 MGCC Members plus three friends from other local clubs visited in June. The visit started with lunch in a local pub before arriving at the showroom early afternoon. The visit started with Coffee and an introduction by Chris about Vintage Bentley. The showroom contained some interesting cars and displays including:

- Various cars on display including the e fuel race car.
- An 8-litre saloon reunited with its original body having been converted at one point to an open bodied tourer. At one time belonged to William's father.
- Various other open bodied 4 and 6 cylinder cars built within the 1920's



The tour then proceeded into the engine room and engineering workshop where we saw engine blocks and CNC machining taking place. Next workshop was the general engineering assemble and restoration workshop. Amongst the 12 to 15 cars all being worked on were the 1923 and 1925 LeMans Team cars. Moving to the top floor we saw the upper workshop and car storage space with at least 20 Bentleys. Some coachwork and trim is undertaken in this space. Finally, we saw their extensive parts storage.

Summarised below are more in depth details of their operations and expertise:

Vintage Bentley is an advanced automotive engineering business that has been more or less 40 years in the making. Their Founder, William Metcalf, was a mere five years old when he experienced a 28,000 mile trip of a lifetime across the US and Canada in the family vintage Bentley. Subsequent teaching by his toolmaker father in all traditional engineering practices, together with numerous opportunities to work on the family 3/4.5 litre and subsequent Speed Six, resulted in their Founder's lifelong passion for vintage Bentley models and the almost inevitable decision, to devote a life to maintaining and preserving these automotive legends.



First established in some spare workshop space at the family engineering business in North London, as Vintage Bentley's client base expanded, more space was needed to become the definitive vintage Bentley specialist. To this end, the move in 2011 to the current premises in Hill Brow, Liss, West Sussex provides the space to more or less undertake every facet of vintage Bentley preservation and restoration in-house.

Today the business has grown to a thriving enterprise, run by an experienced management team employing over 30 highly skilled staff. The establishment of a staff apprenticeship training system, knowledge transfer programs and a substantial investment in state-of-the-art CNC machining, prototyping and manufacturing facilities, means the business is well positioned to look after Vintage Bentley models for today's, as well as tomorrow's custodians - a state of affairs that we believe is a fitting tribute to what is the genesis of the modern-day supercar!

They have strived to become the world's leading Vintage Bentley specialists under the premise that it is better to do one thing well, rather than many things less well and therefore they work exclusively, on the W.O Bentley's made between 1922 and 1932. Some of the areas they specialise in are:

Chassis - They are clearly focused on the preservation of existing items and employ traditional techniques to repair even the most tired Bentley chassis. However, the fact remains that originally in period, a chassis was a service item and was frequently replaced as a cost-effective solution to accident damage and when a client wished to fit a more sporting touring body on a shorter chassis. They hold all the tooling to repair, straighten, align and hot rivet chassis frames. They have the experience from small repairs to major insurance work. They can even provide a new chassis from scratch with all associated brackets and bolt on parts from stock. All their vintage Bentley rebuilds start with the chassis and getting that true and tight is fundamental. Forged wing irons, step brackets and body iron work are made in house in the traditional way. They hold an extensive range of chassis parts in stock and make to order complete chassis for 3 litre, 4.5 litre, Speed Six and 8 litre models.

Coachwork - When Bentley's were sold new - they were sold as a rolling chassis for the client to choose their coachbuilder. There were typically 3 styles of body type:

- Saloons and Limousines
- Cabriolets, Drophead Coupes and Landaulets
- Tourers and all-weathers

The list of coachbuilders is too extensive to be covered here and the reality is that many of the more complex and elaborate saloon bodies have long since been replaced by Le Mans replica 3 door Vanden Plas style bodies(!), but every so often totally original cars still turn up and they relish the opportunity to preserve the coachwork.

Mindful of the fact that most of the original coachbuilders are defunct, they apply their experience to preserve and restore bodywork to original condition or replace sub-standard replica work, where repairs at some stage in the car's life were undertaken with expedience in mind! Their extensive practical experience from completed cars and a pool of original drawings to ensure that their coachbuilding output reflects a sensitive and accurate rendition of work that was undertaken nearly 100 years ago. The coachwork skills they offer using traditional methods and techniques include:

- Coachbuilding and panel work
- Sensitive preservation of existing panel work, bonnets, wings etc
- Bespoke coachwork design to your specification
- Creation of tanks and storage boxes for event us
- Expert welding services for aluminium, steel and iron repairs and fabrication

Preservation - In purist terms a car can only be original once - the day upon which it leaves the factory. The endless debates over what constitutes an original car are further complicated when discussing Vintage Bentley, when cars are evaluated that have been running for 90-100 years and subject to a more relaxed approach to maintenance procedures decades ago. The Bentley factory in period deemed a chassis frame to be a replacement item, especially after accident damage, probably as much for economic reasons, as well as a lack of concern for retaining original components. The respected Bentley historian Dr Clare Hay has put forward the concept of a car's continuous history as perhaps a more reliable measure and not the pre-occupation today with "matching numbers", which has led to interesting interpretations of an original car, more so as they have become as sought after and valuable as they are today. (Sounds like pre-war factory MG cars!)



They have undertaken preservation activity on some genuine matching number cars which are entirely original, but they have also preserved cars which have come to them after illustrious active competition use, where key components such as engines and gearboxes have been replaced over the years. Coachwork is even more of an interesting issue, as so many of the early cars with saloon bodies were retrospectively replaced with more sporting open Touring bodies in period. They judge each car on its merits after a thorough evaluation and always make the greatest effort to ensure any Cricklewood part can be preserved and put back into service using modern techniques, but equally if it is required to have the original engine from a car on a stand in the office - they can build an identical unit to use enthusiastically with impunity.

Driving Tuition - All sorts of myths exist when it comes to the challenges of driving a Vintage Bentley. Yes - it has a non-synchromesh gearbox, yes - it has a centre throttle pedal and yes there are some adjustments to be made to the car in respect of ignition and carburation which impact on the car's performance behind the wheel. The reality is that after a weekend of relaxed tuition with one their team, they can have you changing gear like an old hand, quickly adapting to the pedal arrangement and adjusting elements of the engine running to ensure optimum performance. They can provide tuition ranging from mastering the basics, to competitive driving skills enabling competition to be undertaken at the sharp end in the most prestigious historic events.

Engineering - Their team of dedicated toolmakers and engineers use both traditional and toolmaking skills and the latest technology. This includes CNC mills, lathes, CAD with Solid works and in-house CMM inspection. This enables them to not only undertake any engineering service associated with preservation, restoration and repair work on a Vintage Bentley but also to manufacture in-house 1800 product lines - so that typically they hold over 50,000 parts in stock.

Research & Development - You might think cars that are nearly a century old have nothing left in development terms to produce more performance, reliability and driving pleasure. They disagree! When you have sampled 200 reliable BHP in a taught chassis optimised for a particular driving application, they believe that you might agree. They are currently undertaking a number of R&D projects using state of the art technology platforms ranging from universal wiring looms to a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Surrey University modelling a complete 4.5 litre engine to see what the limits of reliable power production are. They already build crankshafts and rods that are safe to 7000 rpm - even when they are employed in engines which produce peak power at 3500 rpm. They look forward to finding out the answer to how a 4.5 litre engine might rev to 5500 rpm and produce 250 bhp! They also have an 8 litre supercharged unit in development - specifically to power a contender for the fastest Vintage Bentley in the world. The current record is 157 mph, so we are aiming for a power output in excess of 500 bhp and vast reserves of torque.

Event Preparation - A significant proportion of their customers use their cars actively in competition, an activity they wholeheartedly endorse! They would assert that in the last decade, their track record in endurance events on and off-road is second to none. They have run many cars in the Peking to Paris, Le Mans Classic, Benjafield 100 at Silverstone, the Goodwood Revival, Brooklands Trophy, 1000 Mile Trial and countless other historic and owner club events and their trophy cabinet bears testament to their success. By experience, they produce a detailed preparation check list for specific events for component wear and likely areas to be addressed so that a Vintage Bentley has the best possible chance of performing strongly and crucially reliably for the duration of the event. For all major overseas events where customer support is required, they have staff correctly vaccinated on standby, ready to fly out should any service requirement arise and their experience includes event support in remote locations all over the world including Russia, Mongolia, South America and numerous deserts far from traditional support infrastructure. The engines they build on their dynamometer are tested for 8 hours and supplied with guaranteed power outputs. Competition improves the breed and certainly presents the definitive test of whether a part is fit for purpose.

Engine Room - W. O. Bentley employed sophisticated pioneering technology in the engines, such as monoblocks with block and head as one casting removing the potential for any head gasket problems. Using contemporary technology from the aircraft industry, aluminium pistons were introduced, as well as an overhead camshaft driving 4 valves per cylinder, pent-roof combustion chambers, twin spark plugs per cylinders and dual-carburettors. When these innovations were combined with very long stroke, large capacity engines, this resulted in good power, with vast reserves of torque at low revs. The engines which were low stressed, immensely strong, reliable and enduring which enabled Bentley to offer a 5 year warranty on his cars - a car industry first.

It is fair to say that engine builds are their speciality! They have a dedicated engine room with a dynamometer specifically geared for testing Vintage Bentley engines. A full engine build takes 200 hours and after completion an engine is tested for 8 to 12 hours on the dyno, ensuring all components are running smoothly and correctly adjusted to deliver power outputs which are measured for the client to review.

The engine shop has built just about every type of engine with 3 litre, 4.5 litre, 5.3 litre, 6.5 litre to 8 litre capacities, naturally aspirated and supercharged, from completely original specification to those modified for demanding endurance competition applications. Some of the cars they build run on arduous terrain and have top speed capabilities well in excess of 100 mph and therefore with their extensive experience, they have built a knowledge bank that is second to none on identifying which components are susceptible to failure. Whether a customer wants a rebuild of a 3 litre to original specification or a supercharged 8 litre producing circa 500 bhp - a unit can be supplied that will exceed expectations, with dyno figures to match.



Coach Trimming - The combination of access to extensive photo archives and practical experience on working on so many different Vintage Bentleys, means they have a strong understanding of the period techniques and materials to ensure the provision of coach trimming work authentic to the trim options offered when the cars were new. Where practical, original upholstery is preserved on the basis that many of the cars worked on are actively used, they are delighted that the trend today errs towards preservation and a more authentic presentation, than purely "better than new" finishes we see on some "restorations" geared towards lesser Concours events.

There are instances that 100 years of active use or even more recent active competition participation in hostile environments, results in trim which simply needs replacement and, in these situations, original trim can be re-created in an original period style.

Returning to the MGCC SE Centre tour, summarised below are some specific points mentioned during our tour round the premises by Chris:

Nearly 50% of the different models built during the 1920's still exist of an approximate total of just over 3000 cars which are now residing across the world.

Vintage Bentley supply cars and parts throughout the world and claim to be the biggest provider of quality products. If they do not have it in stock, they can make it (at a cost) and usually make further for stock. During the Club's visit, we were shown nine axle casings in the stores part of a batch of ten which it was reckoned would be the worldwide needs for the next ten years.

Vintage Bentley have the original Bentley factory engineering drawings which have now been transferred to computer. Whilst originality is kept to wherever possible, upgrades are also made where modern day materials/processes are better. An example was shown of a differential cage that had exploded during track day use. (One of our members had this happen on his car (he was not driving it at the time!)). The new version is made with modern day steels and is recommended for race and rally applications.

Vintage Bentley indicated most cars are nowadays held solely in private use for track/rally or show events. Naturally some are held in private collections and are never seen in public.

Brief reference was made to the 'Bentley Boys' namely Woolf 'Babe' Barnato (who bought Bentley to save the company), Sir Tim Burkin, J. D. Benjafield (who helped found the BRDC), Glen Kidson, S.C.H. 'Sammy Davis', Jack Barclay (who went over the edge of the Brooklands banking and survived by ducking under the dashboard!).

All the cars viewed were fitted with straight cut gears and crash gearboxes which necessitated double de-clutching. Expert drivers, like the Bentley Boys could change gear without using the clutch.

W.O. Bentley first started by making first world war aircraft more reliable by modifying existing designs. He then moved into car design and manufacture.

Vintage Bentleys various performance specifications were identified by different coloured backgrounds to the grille badge, namely:

- Red – after 1924 indicated additional power etc from standard.
- Black- ultimate high performance, generally saloon or coupe bodies. specification.
- Green – tuned specifically to suit particular race circuit performance i.e., Brooklands.
- Blue – often 8 litre cars bodied for ultimate luxury and enjoyment.

Value wise, the cars range from 100K upwards and can exceed 4/5 million pounds with a good provenance i.e., famous ownership and race history.

William Metcalfe is very competition minded with these vintage cars and regularly competes on the track as well as long distance rallies. William Metcalfe's race car is currently running in conjunction with Goodwood solely on e-fuel as a pilot to satisfy racing needs and so far, very successfully.

Whilst cars are generally kept as original as possible when rebuilt certain non - period items are available on the grounds of safety namely hydraulic braking with servo (rod linkage was the original method). Steering and suspension and electrics tweaks are also carried out to make them more suitable to modern day traffic. Super chargers are fitted to both original and modern-day design when requested by customers.

Overall, the company is very successful in what it does and is heavily committed to keeping these icons on the road or track. Vintage Bentley accept it is a specialized area of motoring and through dedicated families there are younger generation drivers coming along particular reference was made to a young female who having just passed her driving test has mastered one of these cars.

The lasting memory of this fascinating company is the sight of so many vintage Bentleys throughout the premises

John Morgan and John Davies plus information about Vintage Bentley from their website <https://vintagebentley.com/>

Alternative PoO Winners



The final round of the Alternative PoO took place at the Fairmile on the 10th July in scorching weather. Rounds 1 and 2 were featured in the last edition of Spark so this is the BIG finale!



Overall Winner Roger Gasson's MG Magnette

The final Alternative PoO at The Fairmile always draws the largest crowd and, in the brilliant sunshine that this year provided, there was no exception with over 40 MGs on the thatched grass.

With so many cars the self-judging (and the marking) takes a little longer plus all the marks from the previous rounds had to be added in. All the mathematics revealed the overall winner of the entire competition with 42 points was Roger Gasson and his effervescent MG Magnette. Roger kindly dedicated the win to the late Mick Breare who sadly passed away following round one. A moment's silence was held in his memory.

The Alternative PoO is a light-hearted self-judged competition and will be returning in 2027 – we'll see you there!

Alternative PoO Round 3 winners

Car of the Show – John Langford MG Magnette Mk IV

Best restored – Neil Woolhouse MGB Roadster

Most Used – Roger Gasson MG ZB Magnette

Best All-rounder – Alan Dolby MG ZS

Alternative PoO Overall Winners (all 3 rounds)

Overall Winner – Roger Gasson MG ZB Magnette

Best Restored – Dan Adams MGC Roadster

Most Used – Vic Young MGCGT

Best All Rounder – Philip Roussel-Smith MGB Roadster



Line of T types on the lawn in the sun



The winner on the night was John Langford's superb Magnette



Modern Gentleman/ Electric Spark

MG Motor have been out and about at a couple of big shows this Summer. Firstly, the Goodwood Festival of Speed back in July and then at CarFest, which has now moved to Silverstone, in August.

Goodwood revealed two new concept MGs – the MG Go! and the MG Cyber, along with half a dozen all singing and dancing robots! The idea was to show off current and future technology which it did in abundance. The GO! in particular gained a lot of interest and is being slated for release next year (possibly badged as an MG2, a model much whispered about over the past couple of years)

The GO! was designed in London under MG's Design Director Carl Gotham. He was responsible for the Cyberster and the same "out there" flair is evident in his latest design, which is said to be inspired by the MGBGT. Themes from the GT such as simplicity, elegance and approachability have been enhanced in the new car. The bottom end is that it will be a stylish and sporty everyday hatchback in the lines of earlier MGs including the MGBGT, MG Metro and MGZR

The MG Cyber was a different car altogether – an upmarket large SUV under the "Cyber" thread, not too different from the MG 07 which has been seen in China. This one, however, remains a concept at this stage.

Also on the stand were some of the current production MGs – the MG HS PHEV, the new MG S9 PHEV, the MG4 Urban EV, the MG ZS Hybrid+, the MG IM5 EV and the Cyberster.

At Car Fest they were demonstrating the Cyberster out on the track supported by static displays of the MG S9, MG IM6 and MG S6 models. Apart from the S9 (which is sold here in only the plug-in hybrid form) all are battery models as the company progresses its electrification strategy – 91.2% of sales in the UK are now of electrified cars.



MG GO! designer Carl Gotham at the MG Motor Tech Day in London this Summer with a model of the car. Pic: MG Motor UK



The MG Cyber on the stand at Goodwood Pic: Andrew Mitchell



The MG GO! on the stand at Goodwood

Pic: Andrew Mitchell



The MG GO! is said to be influenced by the MGBGT

Pic: MG Motor UK



In China the MG 07 was debuted at the Chengdu Motor show – and took a stunning 10,000 orders in just under two minutes! Another SAIC vehicle, a Roewe AI SUV took over 11,000 orders without anyone seeing it! The take away from this is that vehicles with a high level of assisted driving and pure electric powertrains are leading the way at price levels previously reserved for budget cars. The design style favoured in China was for boxy SUV type vehicles. There are plenty of those in the UK but will we see more from SAIC? Take a look at the MG Hector Tomahawk in India – typical of the style - and remember the Cyber X from last year's Goodwood (now slated for a 2028 release in the UK).

Nice marketing on the MG07 at Chengdu showing the heritage influences on the new car including the "Buttcks" and "haunch" from a 1955 MGA – zoom in!



The MG Hector Tomahawk – a boxy SUV

In India JSW MG Motor have just unveiled the MG Hector Tomahawk EV with prices starting at just 1,949,000 Rupees. That's not as scary as it looks as the UK GBP equivalent is just a tad over £15,000! In India they have a battery hire scheme which brings that price down even further to just under £11k.

The car is a more rugged version of the Hector already on sale in India and features a 69.2kwh battery and a range of around 517km and is available in five and seven seat configurations. We have vehicle to load in the UK but we don't see Vehicle to Vehicle charging meaning that your car can actually charge another as featured on the Tomahawk!

In the UK we have the IM5 and 6 with a discreet MG badge on the tail. In China IM have just revealed the IM L6 - a sleek sedan with "fly by wire" technology. A couple of years ago the spec on this would have put it in the Supercar category but now here it is - full drive-by-wire steering across every trim, bidirectional 18-degree rear-wheel steering, an 800-volt architecture with 396 kW peak charging, and a 500 kW all-wheel-drive halo model that reaches 100 km/h in 2.74 seconds!

Pricing in China is astounding with the top dual motor version at just under £27,000 – the sedan market in China has been declining over the last couple of years and this reflects that – but, it is still a supercar at a UK hatchback price!

There are also two designer specials from the brand Jimmy Choo which feature blue interior trim with crystal trim pieces, mother-of-pearl door inlays, co-branding embroidery and, for early reservation holders, matching footwear from the designer. Clearly the market they are aiming for with these specials is that of the younger female driver. The first 1000 sold out straight away and another run is in production. Will we see this version as an MG in the UK? My guess is – probably not!



The IM L6 upgraded version with no steering column



The interior of the Jimmy Choo Special edition L6

Having upgraded my MG4 to the latest version I called in to the Ancaster, Shepperton dealership with my number plate retention certificate as I was having my personal plate transferred to the new car. By chance my new Ealing Green MG4 (Irises Cyan in China) has arrived and was sitting, looking a little dusty, in the corner of their yard awaiting PDI and preparation.

As it had not had its PDI, I noticed the shipping slip on the dashboard and this got me thinking about my MG's journey to Shepperton



Our new MG4 – 2026 Model Year in Ealing Green



The shipping slip still on the car's dashboard!

This is where the main clues come from. Starting at the top is a bar code giving the car's identity and VIN number, Underneath are the words Anji Prestige V. APRO8W. What did that mean?

A quick trip to Google reveals that the Anji Prestige is a ship. Here is where it connects into SAIC as Anji is the name of the company's transport arm. The ship was launched in 2024 and is flying under the flag of Liberia, it is the latest in SAIC's fleet of vehicle transporters and carries up to 7,800 vehicles on board.

The Anji Prestige is 200 meters long, 38 meters wide and stands as high as a 13-storey block of flats. It runs on LNG dual-fuel clean energy technology reducing carbon emissions by 30%.

SAIC own China's largest carmaker owned shipping fleet, Anji, which consists of 33 vessels – 11 river ships, 9 domestic trade sea ships and 13 international trade ships and has established routes to eight destinations including South East Asia, Mexico, South America, Europe and Oceania. SAIC are expanding the international fleet to 22 by this year. It's main route is China to Mexico but in our case it headed to Europe.

So, now we know the ship that my new MG4 was on , with 7,799 others, we can start to trace back and see where it has been. At the end of August the Anji Prestige was back in Shanghai before moving north to Yantai.

Let's look at the shipping note again. We can see that it left China from the port of Xiamen however I haven't been able to find the date of that departure.



The Anji Prestige at sea

Using Internet shipping trackers we can begin to trace its route, with my car onboard, from when it entered the Suez Canal on the 18th June.

It then arrived in Wilhelmshaven in Germany on the 28th June where, no doubt some of the cargo was unloaded. Then on to Le Havre arriving on the 30th June and leaving on the 1st July where more cars would have been unloaded.

The shipping note says its port of arrival was Bristol but the ship's manifest narrows that down to Portbury where it arrived at 21.54hrs on the 5th July. It must have taken the roundabout route to cross the channel!

It remained in port until the 9th July when it headed back to Shanghai arriving on the 4th August. It left port the next day and must have been anchored at sea as it did not arrive in Yantai until the 30th August.

So, my MG4 was off loading on to the docks some time between the 6th and 8th July where, as far as I know, it remained until I purchased it in mid August when it was transported to Shepperton by road transporter.

Despite its thousands of miles of travel the car only showed 12 miles driven on arrival.



The staging area at the Ningde factory – around 1,500 cars in this Google satellite image – my MG4 is likely to have been here from January until June



This Google satellite image shows how the Ningde factory has been built on a reclaimed tidal basin. The two straight lines on the left are train carriages waiting to be loaded. My MG4 would have hitched a ride on one of these.

The Car's compliance record shows that it was built on the 9th January 2026 which means it would have been parked in the massive parking area at the Ningde factory in Fujian province for some months before heading to Xiamen and the Anji Prestige.

In 2017 SAIC began construction of a huge mega factory on a tidal basin just outside of Ningde in Fujian Province. Prior to that it was essentially a swamp. 17 months later the brand new factory opened and is now the largest car making plant in Asia. This factory opened on September 28th 2019 and employs over 1500 people, many of whom are housed in new blocks of flats opposite the factory. It produces 63 cars an hour, around 300,000 a year.

Once a car rolls off the end of the production line it is driven around a 900 metre long test track to check for any issues. From there it goes to the holding area before being loaded on to a train to take it to the port – in our case Xiamen, some 200 mile away. There is a rail on roll off port at Ningde so not all cars go the train route as mine did – they just drive straight on to the ship.

In the picture above you can see two trains waiting to be loaded top left and in the picture on the left is part of the massive storage area.

Ningde concentrates on new energy and high tech vehicles, mostly MGs and Roewe's predominantly for export - such as the MG4, Cyberster and plug in Hybrids like the MG HS. 34

The Natters & Wanderers

PINNER NATTER

GERRY EDWARDS

The Pinner Natter have had an incredibly busy summer with a large number of events - Breakfast meetings being held monthly at the Bells of Ouzeley and a couple of river trips afterwards!

A local pub is now holding monthly Classic Car meetings on Saturday mornings and where a good number of members attend if only to sample the excellent bacon rolls! A local garden centre is also now holding monthly Classic Car meetings which fortunately do not clash with the pub events. These two local classic car meetings show just how popular such events have become. Natter members turned out in force on a beautiful day to the very popular Chorleywood Classic Car Show where the organisers counted at least 250 cars in! More or less every make of car was present including a large number of MGs and a good collection of Italian supercars!



*Above:
Breakfast
meetings at the
Bells of Ouzeley
and river trips
after.*



Being fairly local, our members attend Brooklands on a regular basis and there is rarely a Sunday event without some Pinner Natter members attending. Though, the highlights for the Natter, other than the Chorleywood Classic Car Show, have been in attending both the Goodwood Festival of Speed and the Goodwood Revival (both of which were superb this year) and many Natter members attended both.

Lunchtime runs have proved popular with the Chequers Inn in Wooburn Green being the venue.



Natter meetings continue to be very well attended, and it has been suggested by some that we start to meet twice monthly and that is something that is currently under investigation and consultation with the pub's manager! Breakfast Runs will continue through the autumn and winter months and we are currently exploring the possibility of a Christmas style Breakfast but more of that next time!



*A stylish event
– Gerry, Becky
and Jack at
Goodwood
Revival*

FAIRMILE NATTER

IAN AILES & JON GLOVER

The Fairmile hosted the centre's third PoO which is covered elsewhere in this issue.

In addition, we made visits to Brooklands Museum and on one such visit we found an interesting special bodied M type (far right) . Other MGs including an Airline and stunning blown K type also at Brooklands.



NORTH DOWNS NATTER

Will Opie & Ray Ruffels

Over the summer the North downs natter has not only enjoyed its regular meetings on the third Wednesday at the Red Lion Charing Heath but also regular meet up and lunches at other pubs over the summer.



Above: The Red Lion



Left: A regular favourite - the Three Chimneys near Biddenden

NORTH SURREY NATTER

John Morgan & Austin Banner

During the summer, the natter continued with social style evenings.

For the July meeting, we held our Boules challenge in the pub garden. August was just a chat in The Barn followed by our Darts Challenge in September.

This was a closely fought challenge with the final between Kerry James and Martin Atkins; Kerry was the victorious winner.



“Kerry was the
victorious
winner.”



Looking ahead to future meetings, this month we start our Autumn talks and presentations. In October, Tim Morris is giving his talk on the subject of ‘Jello to Gun Boats - The Macklin Story’. Sir Noel Campbell Macklin was an innovative British car maker and boat designer. He founded Eric-Campbell in 1919, Silver Hawk in 1920, Invicta in 1925, and Railton in 1933.

In 1939 he founded Fairmile Marine and supplied patrol boats to the Royal Navy throughout World War II.

The photograph shows two Railtons recently at Brooklands

This will be followed in November by a talk by one of members, Martin Atkins, who is CEO of the Green Lizard Technologies, on the topic of ‘Sustainable and Synthetic Fuels’. This could be particularly relevant to the future of keeping our MGs on the road.

Our main Autumn event will be the Autumn Leaves Run and Scavenger on Saturday 17th October, Refer to MGCC SE Centre website for more information and entry. Always very popular, so enter early.

Contact John or Austin for more information.

ASHDOWN ADVENTURERS

David Oakenfold

The Ashdown Adventurers continue with our 1st Wednesday in every month Luncheon at a different venue each month. We always welcome anyone new wishing to join us, please see contact details on contact page or on the SE Centre website.



I completed in the MG South Downs run in my VA. This picture shows my VA as the oldest car on the run together with the newest MG Cyberster!

Congratulations again to West Sussex MGOC for another fantastic event!



Editor: Another shot of Davids VA "Valentine" taken a few years ago at Beachy Head. David tells me it is very useable and still pretty rapid for an 87 year old! He also confirmed to me the inbuilt jacking system still worked!

MGF REGISTER NATTER

TIM MORRIS

The South East MGFs hosted the annual MG Fish n Chips on the Beach gathering at Hayling Island at the beginning of August. The gathering was mostly MGF/TFs again but there were others – some MGBs, an MG Magnette and MGA. The event is open to all MGs and we have built a connection with the West Sussex Owners Club over the years and it is always great to meet up with some of them on the pebbles.

The annual Beach Boules competition also took place and the winner this year was ...

Other than that the group still meets on the third Wednesday of the month and we have moved away from our regular venue for a while and are now back at The Jovial Sailor in Ripley.

Members are still joining in the South East Centre events and, of course, were present at the MGFest26 weekend. We had three MGF/TFs on the South East Centre stand and others were in the MGF register parking.

We were delighted that Nigel and Helen Scutt won the Premier PoO at Lullingstone with their immaculate MGF and, although not from our patch, Martin and Timothy Barker should get a special prize for restoring their Trophy 160 after it had resided in a barn for 16 years. Then driving it to the event, taking part in the road run, entering and winning an award in both the PoO at Lullingstone and the California Cup at Brands Hatch.

There was also some MGF success at Parham with David Koskela winning his class and Nigel & Helen picking up top prize in the Premier PoO. It was nice to see Lesley Miles competing again after a number of years absent from South East events – she picked up a runner-up class place.



Alright, let's form a circle – should probably have been an octagon !



A mix of MGs in the beach car park at Hayling Island



Tim's "refreshed" MGF on the South East Centre stand at MGFest26



Tim presents David with his class PoO winning rosette at Parham



Tim congratulates the winner of the 2026 Beach Boules



Ron and Andrew's TF and F were also on the stand at Brands Hatch

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 3N0. £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

Books for Sale from the late Keith Portsmore's Estate

British Leyland Sprite & Midget manual £15
 MG& Triumph 100 years £5
 Combat -B.Lyndon £25
 Motor reprints of MG road tests 1935-40 £12
 MG Sports 4-cylinder cars (Autocar publication) £12
 Route book for the 2001 re-run of the 1934 Abingdon to Abingdon Trial £5
 Beggars Roost +80 - re-enaction of 2010 £5
 Profile Publications MG K3 £10
 Oxford to Abingdon -Barraclough & Jennings £65
 1994 Triple-M Register Yearbook £4
 2008 Triple-M Register list of cars £3
 MG Road Cars, 4-cylinder - Malcolm Green £65
 Magic of MG - Mike Allison £8
 The Classic MG -Richard Aspden £4
 The Classic MG Yearbook - Dick Knudson £15
 Great Marques - Chris Harvey £5
 N-type Magnette original instruction manual (with notes) £22
 The Restoration of Vintage & Thoroughbred Cars - Wheatley & Morgan £10
 Classic car profiles - Anthony Harding £12
 The Car Book - the definitive history £3
 The World of the Automobile - Ralph Stein £3
 Super Sports Cars - Clive Prew - £4
 The fastest cars from around the world - Michael Bowler £12
 McLaren official record of 1998 (in slip case) £20

Contact Anne by e-mail anneportsmore@gmail.com or 01460 432 043

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 .
 Twin exhaust kit .

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



1952 MGTD

£15,000

British Racing Green – Sorted, Reliable & Thoroughly Enjoyable.

Open to sensible offers!

After 7 happy years of ownership, it's time to part with my much-loved 1952 MG TD, finished in traditional British Racing Green with re-trimmed tan leather interior and new green carpet. This car has been enthusiast-owned and sympathetically upgraded to retain its period character while improving reliability and drivability. It's been used regularly in good weather and always properly maintained.

Contact Phil Moir - 01932 843755

info@drycleaningcentre.co.uk



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

£4,750.00. Contact Austin Banner at

Contact austin.banner@gmail.com



John Tait (Dartford Area) has a professional two piece engine crane for sale Price £55

Contact John on 07760 783554

Get in Touch

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

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On board for the record at Brands!

Will Opie

Ian Ailes and myself were close to each other on the track so we tried taking photos of each other. Rather a challenge in the Airline MG for me being solo! Ian's lovely white V8 on the left over the MMM bonnet and the Airline taken on board from the V8.



Gardner's MG at Beaulieu

Tim Morris



Some may remember John Mayhead visiting us at MG100 in 2024 or the Fairmile Natter to talk to us about Goldie Gardner. At MG100 he brought along Gardner's MGTC to display in front of the Brooklands clubhouse.

The car has moved on and is now on permanent display at the Beaulieu National Motor Museum.

John's book simply called "Goldie" is available from all good bookshops.

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 Winter 2026 edition, then please get in touch with the editorial team at:-

Spark@mgccse.co.uk

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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.



We have colour photos this time!

Above is a meet at Amberley Museum, a perfect backdrop for MGs from a past event held there.

Below is a North Downs natter meet up for a run 23 years ago - 2003 .

