

# Bulletin

PO Box 3135, Wellington, NZ.

Aug - Sep 2016









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Cover: Bill Denize's "Scruffy" the 2004 MGZR - Photograph Dean Gray.

Inside Cover: Mid-Winter Back County Adventure Tour.

Top: Wanganui Opera House. Middle: Top of Whanganui River Road. Bottom: On the road to adventure. Photographs: Ross Armstrong.



### **Coming Events**

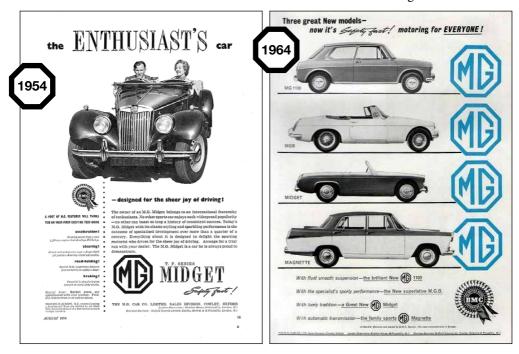
Sun 7 August	MGCC (Wgtn) AGM - Bentley Room, Southwards Car Museum 1.30 - 2pm, Southwards, Paraparumu.		
Sun	Round 3 - The Surgery Sprints 2016 - MG round, volunteers needed.		
14 August	Contact: Ron Robertson - ron@mgcarclub.org.nz		
Thurs	Old Speckled Hen Run - Ron Mitchell & Shirley Kelly, Lynne & Lox Lummis		
25 August	Contact: Michael Anderson - e-mail: michael.anderson@xtra.co.nz		
Wed 31 August	Club Night Dinner - To be confirmed Contact: Michael Shouse, details will be confirmed by e-mail.		
Wed	Noggin N Natter -		
7 Sept	Contact: Paul Chipp, details will be confirmed by e-mail.		
Sun	Round 4 - The Surgery Sprints 2016		
11 Sept	Contact: Ron Robertson - ron@mgcarclub.org.nz		
Thurs	Old Speckled Hen Run -		
29 Sept	Contact: Michael Anderson - e-mail: michael.anderson@xtra.co.nz		
Wed	Noggin N Natter -		
5 Oct	Contact: Paul Chipp, details will be confirmed by e-mail.		
Sat	Prize Giving Dinner - New venue to be announced		
8 Oct	Contact: John Grant, details will be confirmed by e-mail.		
Wed	Club Night Dinner -		
26 Oct	Contact: Michael Shouse, details will be confirmed by e-mail.		
Thurs	Old Speckled Hen Run - 7 day tour around the East Coast		
27 Oct	Contact: Michael Anderson - e-mail: michael.anderson@xtra.co.nz		
Wed	Noggin N Natter -		
2 Nov	Contact: Paul Chipp, details will be confirmed by e-mail.		
Fri - Sat	31st MG Classic Motor Race Meeting		
11 - 13 Nov	Contact: Ron Robertson - ron@mgcarclub.org.nz		
Thurs	Old Speckled Hen Run - End of Year BBQ Lunch		
24 Nov	Contact: Michael Anderson - e-mail: michael.anderson@xtra.co.nz		
Committee	Committee meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, 5.30pm,		

Meeting room, Wellington Bridge Club, 17 Tinakori Road, Thorndon.



#### **President's Note**

In the absent of the President's column we have historic MG advertising.





#### **Captain's Ramblings**

Unfortunately Pip has had some bad news healthwise and John has been more concerned about supporting her than the MG Bulletin. We wish her a speedy recovery.



#### **Articles**

Articles, letters and events write ups for publication in the Bulletin should be sent to editor@mgcarclub.org.nz.

Closing date is now the 20th of each odd numbered month, for publication in the following two monthly Bulletin, six issues per year.

Typed in the body of the e-mail or in a Pdf format attached to the e-mail would be great, but hand-written on anything clean is equally as welcome. Pseudonyms will be used if specifically requested, but please supply a name and address.

Committee members will each contribute a minimum of two per year by roster to ensure a 'wider editorial style'.

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in this bulletin do not necessarily reflect those of the Club or the Centre Committee.



#### **Editorial**







Last issue I had just painted the front of the MG, After letting the paint cure for a week, I did the final polish and reassembled the car, fitting a head light relay circuit as featured in Tech talk Feb-Mar 2016. The MG was ready for its WOF. I had bled the brakes, but as I drove off these were still a bit spongy. The car failed its WOF, I had used it for about a month after the last WOF and had been working on it since getting the Morris on the road. So was surprised that it failed on front wheel bearings, a track rod, rear tyre and a hole in the exhaust. These are all relatively minor, but I decided to replace both rear tyres and before I did, I would repaint the rims, taking about a week for painting, ordering the tyres and fitting. It was also pointed out to me that some rust was appearing on the rear guard (not a WOF issue), so while I was sorting the wheels, etc, I welded up the rust. Now I have committed myself to painting the rear of the MG, but in the meantime I reassembled the bits and fitted the new tyres and set off for a retest, via the petrol station for tyre pressure top up. But on the way the brakes felt spongy again, as I arrived I was beaten to the pump and while waiting I pumped the pedal hard. At first all felt fine, if spongy, after pumping the tyres, I left and when I tried to pull up to a stop when exiting, pressing the pedal slowed the MG, but it also sank to the floor, a quick use of the handbrake stopped the car! Pulling over I saw a rear hose was covered in fluid. I bought some brake fluid from the service station and topped up the master and using back roads drove home in 1st. On inspection it wasn't a rear hose, but a brake pipe that had failed rust. The pipe was painted black and hidden in the subframe, so any rust was impossible to see. I have a selection of pipes from wrecked cars and so I selected a good set, treated them for rust and painted them with silver zinc. The next day all the rear pipes were replaced and the system bled, all firm and off to the retest - Passed. While the dollar is high against the pound, I then ordered a set of Hosetechnik 95PVC Stainless steel braided PTFE hoses, which are now fitted, so hopefully brake problems are now a thing of the pass. The rear of the MG is currently disassembled again while I prepare it for painting.





# Graeme Tulloch



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### Old Speckled Hen Run - June

The mid winter run that we ran last year was popular so this year we decided on a similar format but exploring some new territory with another Trial thrown in for good measure nothing to hard but a bit of motoring knowledge was helpful as was sharp eyesight.

The run effectively started in Ashurst at about 11am. After all the southern members meeting at Waiknae at 9am we headed to Ashurst, where a briefing was given and the cars sent off at 2 minute intervals, at this point it must be said we had already had one DNF in fact a DNS (did not start) due to an operator error involving a immobilizer switch some stuff on the storage tray a tow truck and an orange BGT no names mentioned here to avoid embarrassment to those concerned.



The route chosen tested both drivers navigators and the cars, however the stage before our lunch stop was easy with fast flowing roads with little traffic. Lunch was at Hansen's Cafe in the hamlet of Kimbolton where we met up with John and Viv Eames, this cafe has become a "destination cafe" due to the superb food, large open fire, quirky furniture made from the recycled crosstrees of telegraph poles and of course the owners who went out of their way to accommodate our needs. I can recommend the smoked salmon and cream cheese pizza but others said the two soups on offer were excellent.





#### Old Speckled Hen Run - June









After lunch the route took to the hills beyond Kimbolton through Cross Hills and past places with names like Peep 'o' Day and over roads that most if not all of our intrepid participants had never covered before.

To underline the back country nature of the area we came across a large mob of sheep being driven along the road from one block to another however the second block was several kilometres away, the farmers were friendly and enabled us to proceed with little delay other obstacles included slips and large blocks of papa clay in the middle of the road.







### Old Speckled Hen Run - June



As we reached Kawhatau Valley Road we farewelled our day trippers and carried on towards Taihape via more back roads through some of the most spectacular scenery in the lower North Island.

Our final destination and our bed for the night was The Chateau Tongariro where the red carpet was laid out for us in the form of a personalized sign at the entrance to the hotel welcoming the MG car club and covered parking for our cars, very welcome as the overnight temperature was well below zero and this was at no extra cost.



The rooms provided were in the new wing and the reports at breakfast suggest that the accommodations exceeded all expectations. Pre-dinner drinks were served at 5.30 pm at which time prize giving took place with joint 1st. going to the Wilsons and the Hectors with 3rd going to the Stevensons and a special prize 2 chocolate fish to Michael and Elaine Anderson for overcoming errant immobilizer, tow trucks and mechanics to make the final destination before all of the rest of us albeit via SH1.

The meal was a Christmas themed affair including Xmas Crackers, silly hats, bad jokes and Christmas pud. The service from the waiting staff was outstanding with all meals hitting the table at the same time and even the curve ball of one vegetarian dish requested at the last minute proved no problem.

#### "OLD SPECKLED HEN"

### Old Speckled Hen Run - June

Friday dawned fine clear and brass monkey with frost and ice on the road and grass.

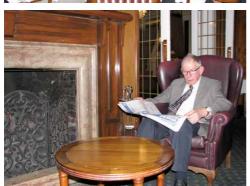
Breakfast was another delight with a number of our group managing to get through most of the buffet which was no mean feat given the previous nights meal.

Our return trip was an individual affair with some choosing a later departure so as to take in some of the sights occasioned by some of the short walks available.

Altogether I am pleased with this trip and the format using a high quality hotel in a spectacular setting and with this in mind given enough folk feeling the same we will run a similar trip next year via another route but just as spectacular.

















#### **Tech Talk - MGF Heater Fan**

#### Heater fan resistor burn out anyone?

Our MGF's heater fan only worked on the two highest of four speeds.

A Google search on the topic suggested that two of the heater resistors had burnt out.

There are a number of sites which suggest various ways of replacing the resistors; but only if your MGF does NOT have air con fitted.

If you do have air con the evaporator box is in the way and the resistors are impossible to access unless the air con is degassed, removed and then recharged afterwards – an expensive exercise.

A chap in Jersey called Willyphixitt has designed and sold a PWM (pulse width modulated) speed controller to avoid having to access the resistors. This just fits in a convenient location and is tapped into the existing wiring.

See: http://www.mgfregister.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=14214&p=149874&hilit=fan+controller

The schematic diagram is available for those wanting to build their own controller.

I was about to do this when I found a readymade PWM controller on Trademe which offers some advantages over Willyphixitt's design and is cheaper than buying the components for the build it yourself design.

Look for seller 'safensecure' on Trademe.co.nz

The PWM controller is listed as 15 Amp speed controller for DC motors PWM and sells for \$16.80.

To make it work on your MGF there is a little surgery to the wiring required

By Richard Whitehead



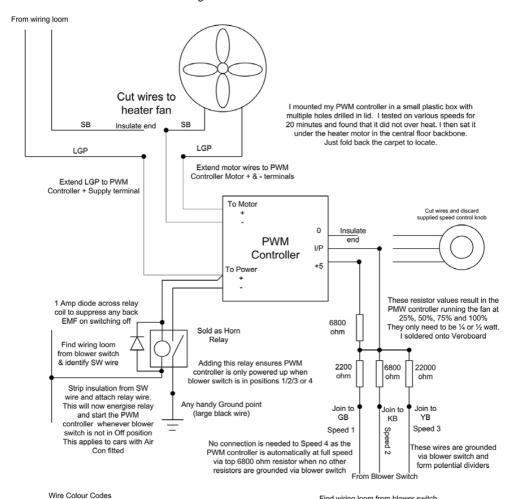
safensecure 90V 15A PWM





#### **Tech Talk - MGF Heater Fan**

Fan speed controller using a PWM Controller with a 0 to 5 volt control voltage Wiring described is for an MGF



B = Black SB = Slate + Black YB = Yellow + Black GB = Green + Black KB = Pink + Black SW = Slate + White

LGP = Light Green + Purple

Find wiring Ioom from blower switch & identify YB, KB & GB wires.
These connect to blower switch speeds 1, 2 & 3
BUT NOTE wiring diagram shows YB as speed 1 and GB as speed 3.
Mine were reversed I
Cut the wires heading off to the failed resistor pack and join them as shown.



# ME

### **Tech Talk - MGF Cooling Monitor**

A little project I am working on which may have appeal to some members is a Microcontroller with small LCD display.

Like my other project this one is for our "F" but can be adapted for other vehicles.

The project started out of a desire to prevent the renowned F head gasket problems caused by overheating and low coolant levels.

An article found on the internet about using a VW Polo double skinned coolant expansion tank complete with inbuilt level sensor in place of the standard F tank aroused my curiosity. \$60 later I had a Polo tank from a chap in Petone. Only problem was the level sensor was a capacitive one and all of the electronics were in the VW's ECU.

To the rescue came an Arduino microcontroller and some code also found on the internet which I had to heavily modify to suit. One thing led to another and the prototype can now display coolant tank liquid level, water temperature, radiator pipes in and out temperature and battery volts.

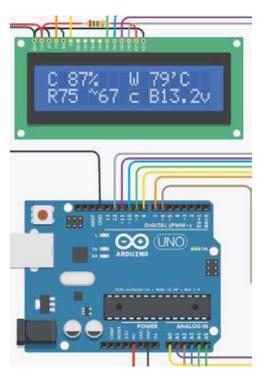
This image is a working simulation showing coolant tank level of 87%, Water temperature of 79C, Radiator in pipe 75C, Radiator out pipe 67C and Battery at 13.2 volts. Alarms are being coded to sound an alert when things get out of the comfort zone.

If anyone is interested in developing a system for their own vehicle I can be contacted via the Editor.

By Richard Whitehead



VW Polo double skinned coolant expansion tank



Arduino microcontroller and display



### **Noggin N Natter - July**

This event was attended by 13+ members, who heard Sigurd Magnusun talk about electric vehicles current and future trends in New Zealand.

It was an entertaining time and he was very convincing that the trend will be towards electric vehicles, which will in time only get cheaper with a longer range.

George and the editor got a ride in the Nissan Leaf after the event and both of us were impressed.

MG has been building electric prototypes, so you can expect...





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### "Scruffy" the 2004 MGZR



Back in April of this year I saw an XPower Grey MGZR for sale on Trade Me, low mileage for the year with 78,000 kms on the clock and quite a rare model in that it was a 5 door one. There were no buyers for the car by the closing date and I subsequently contacted the owner who lived at Dairy Flat, north of Auckland and just south of Orewa.

I flew up to Auckland and my daughter Megan picked me up and drove me to Dairy Flat to look at the ZR. To be honest it wasn't as described and after having a good look at it I decided not to proceed with the purchase. However the owner suggested I take it for a drive and then make him an offer. The car, which is NZ new, drove just as a ZR should. All its service records were complete including a cam belt and water pump change together with a replacement alternator, all done in the last 12 months. The car could be best described as dirty inside and out and it appeared that it had been carrying firewood in the boot which had pierced the carpet and broken the boot board. These were all things that I could fix in my spare time, so the upshot was that I made a considerably lower offer which was accepted and I drove away in the car.

The first port of call was Paul Walbran Motors in New Lynn. I had already prearranged to have the car checked over by Paul (before driving it to Wellington) so dropped it off on the Monday morning and Paul's team checked it over which included a full oil service, flushing the radiator and putting new coolant in the system. At the same time I asked Paul to check the compressions to make sure the head gasket was alright. Nos. 3 and 4 compressions were down significantly and after the Walbran team had checked it out they found that the main cam pulley marks were aligned but those of the secondary pulleys were not. As a result, the cam belts and cam gears had to be removed and examined i.e. the locating dowels and their slots. It was found that the slot in the



#### "Scruffy" the 2004 MGZR

main exhaust pulley had been damaged in the past by fitting the pulley in the incorrect position. A good second hand pulley was found (new ones being NLA), pulleys and cam belts refitted and the cams re-timed. Compressions rechecked: now 190/195/190/195 so all good on that front with no apparent head gasket issues. What it does show that it pays to take your MGF, MGTF and MGZR to a garage which has the experience and knowledge of the "K" Series motor that these cars are fitted with. If they are well maintained then you will get good mileage out of these motors and both Paul Walbran Motors (Auckland) and Ray Hartley Motors (Wellington) have a wealth of experience with the "K" Series motor.

Paul and Andrew Walbran looked after the car for about 10 days, driving it regularly to ensure that there were no other issues before I arranged to have the car transported to Wellington rather than fly up and drive it home.

Now the work has begun to see whether or not this car (over time) can be made in to a Concours winner!!! Always a challenge as far as I am concerned and something that I enjoy doing. Rae commented "that this is the scruffiest car you have ever bought" and she was absolutely right and it is a good winter project for me. I have already made a start, but...

Where to start was the challenge. I started by vacuuming out the interior and the boot. The MG fitted mats were pretty dirty and I have made up new replacement over mats for the interior. The existing carpet (underneath the over mats) was in pretty good order once the vacuuming











### "Scruffy" the 2004 MGZR

was finished. The front seats were quite badly stained and I have cleaned these up although the driver's seat requires some repair work to one of the leather bolsters which has suffered some wear and tear by the driver getting in and out the car.

I then attacked the door jambs, rear hatch and bonnet closure areas removing 12 years of dirt and grease. Fortunately there is no rust anywhere in these areas. Then on to the engine bay which had a considerable amount of corrosion on various aluminum parts of the motor. Ross Armstrong gave me a good tip when he suggested I use methylated spirits on the metal parts where there is corrosion. That worked a treat and after 3 or 4 hours I had the engine bay and the underside of the bonnet looking reasonably tidy but definitely not up to concours standard. Still some work required here.

The wheels and under guards were next. The wheels were not too bad to clean up but unfortunately they are quite kerbed and I will need some outside assistance to get these looking a bit tidier (maybe a visit from the Wheel Magician will do the trick). Meanwhile I have had some paint matched to the wheels and have put this on to mask the kerb damage. The under guards were covered in dry mud and tar and I have spent quite a few of hours on these and I have painted some of the suspension where needed.

I then turned my attention to the boot area. I don't think the jack has ever been used and the spare wheel certainly hasn't been on the car. After hunting around local upholsterers I managed to get a very similar carpet for the boot floor and using the









# WE

### "Scruffy" the 2004 MGZR

old carpet as a pattern I now have a newly carpeted boot floor. I went to Bunnings for a 4.75 mm thick custom board sheet and using my router cut out a new boot board which is now fitted under the new carpet. So the boot is now looking new again.

In between times (when not working on the car, earning a living or sleeping) I have been on EBay UK buying sundry bits and pieces for the car, including new exterior MG Badges, replacement remote key fobs, leather door pull surrounds, Turtle Wax "Dark Grey" polish and other sundry items. You can buy almost anything for the ZR since it was produced in significant numbers in the UK. They are still very popular there and are often purchased by the younger car set who turbo charge them, repaint the cars in fancy "changing colour" metallic paintwork and fit larger mag wheels in order to dress them up. Here in NZ according to records, there are said to be 31 of these cars registered for the road with most of these sold new here. Most of them were 3 door models and motors varied from 120 HP, 135HP and 160HP.

This car that I purchased is the second one we have owned. The 160HP motor has plenty of get up and go and the handling is simply amazing... much like a Go Kart with a wheel in each corner. Roll on Easter next year for some fun at the Concours and motorkhana events.

In summary and in fairness to the car it is now no longer "SCRUFFY" but the name will probably stick !!!!

Bill Denize Photographs Dean Gray













Sitting side by side in our single-car garage are two supercharged MGs. One is our own 1932 super-charged J2. The other is the 1931 C Type of Lawrence Poolman. This presented a not to be missed opportunity to test Lawrence's C Type, a model otherwise known as a Montlhery Midget. We have had considerable experience with our own J2, and it would be fascinating to see how a works racer compared with our well-developed car. This car has a long history of successful competition in the hands of its previous owner, Garth Bagnall, who not only developed the car, but also, through his exceptional driving skills, was competitive against much more modern machinery, such as Mini Coopers.

The first MG Midget or M Type (1928-1932) was basically a re-bodied Morris Minor, which had the Wolseley based overhead camshaft 847cc engine and a simple fabric-covered boat-tailed body constructed by Carbodies and delivered to the Abingdon factory where MG assembled the cars. These bodies proved very popular, but today look rather quaint and perhaps too small as a modern male of 5' 10" (1.8m) looks rather too large sitting in one. Towards the end of its production run, Carbodies paneled these bodies in steel.

Until 1928, MGs had been touring cars with the accent on comfort and average speed rather than high performance, but the popularity of Austin's 7 prompted Cecil Kimber, MG's founder, to produce the M Type when he realised there was a demand for an affordable sportscar.

Shortly after the 1928 Motor Show at Olympia, MG produced a sporting version of the M type specifically to compete in the Brooklands Double Twelve endurance race. The five cars entered stormed away with the team prize after an arduous high-speed race. Resulting from public demand, a limited run of 30 cars, known as Double Twelve Replicas, were soon in the hands of enthusiastic drivers.



Several special Midgets were produced specifically for record breaking during 1930 and the Abingdon factory prepared a prototype, designated EX 120, for Captain George Eyston and Ernest Eldridge to attempt international speed records in Class H for cars up to 750cc. MG reduced the M Type's 847cc to 743cc and a special boattailed body was fitted. The first attempt at the Montlhery Track in France failed, so they fitted a supercharger. Eyston wanted to crack the magic 100 mph figure for the flying mile. With an engine of only 743cc, such a record would stand for years. The attempt made at Montlhery in the summer of 1931 was successful. Eyston drove to a record of 101 mph and then figured





C Type rear

in an incident that would have mystified Sherlock Holmes. After finishing the record run, he swung around the track for an extra lap. As he drove out of sight of the pits, the crew heard the engine cut out. They piled into their truck and raced around the bend. There was EX 120 in flames! Only seconds remained in which to save the driver. The crew knew that the big-framed Eyston had difficulty removing himself from the tightly fitting cockpit! With frantic haste, they kicked the side panels off. The seat was empty! A desperate search of the track revealed nothing—no driver!

Eyston himself later supplied the answers. On that last lap, he discovered smoke and flames rising at his feet. Slowing the car to 60 he managed, with that last ditch strength of desperation, to jump from the car. A moment later a Frenchman, testing his Citroen, found the unconscious Eyston, put him in his car and drove across the fields to the Montlhery hospital. There the anxious MG crew found him, quietly recuperating from his bruises, not at all concerned about his phantom disappearance. This ended the saga of EX 120.

Following this success, Kimber immediately released details of another project for a special racing Midget designated the C Type Midget, or as it soon became better known, the Montlhery Midget.

With EX 120 used as a test-bed for future models, and the chassis and engine details sufficiently proven at Brooklands Race Track, tooling was put in hand for the C Type. An innovation was a scuttle-mounted oil tank, float chamber controlled, which obviated the need to check oil at pit stops. This system was a great benefit to the later supercharged cars, which had particularly heavy oil consumption. A large external filler gave access to the tank at pit stops.







A specially developed twin plate clutch transferred power to the hefty ENV four-speed crash gearbox and the final drive was through straight cut bevel gears. The chassis frame was straight and parallel steel channel which under slung the rear axle and swept over the front axle. Cross-braced tubes passed through the side members and, fixed with brazed flanges, gave a strong yet flexible structure.

There was a hand-wheel control adjacent to the gear lever, which allows adjustment of the brakes whilst driving along with an adjuster for the Andre Hartford rear shock absorbers.

The top of the scuttle for the first time sported two humps directly in front of the driver and passenger, supposedly to deflect wind over the heads of the occupants. These humps were to become the hallmark of all Midgets up to the TF of 1955. The bodies for the 44 cars produced were also made by Carbodies, better known these days as the makers of London taxis.

Straight off, the cars were successful in competition, winning the under 1500cc section of the Irish Grand Prix in June 1931, beating supercharged Austin Sevens and Rileys. Because their race time was faster than the winners of the larger engined class raced the next day, they were declared overall winners too. By the end of the season, Ronnie Horton had driven his supercharged C Type into first place in the Five Hundred Miles race at Brooklands at 96.29 mph, a speed which, only ten months earlier, EX 120 had struggled to achieve over five kilometers. Not only that, but he lapped the Outer Circuit at 115.29 mph, faster than the best 1100cc cars.

With only 44 cars made, the C Type is not only rare, but in MG enthusiasts eyes, highly sought after and consequently, rather valuable. Supposedly, only 33 remain. Apparently, none of the original C types had superchargers fitted when they left the factory, but some were later converted. In addition, the factory did not fit cross-flow heads initially, but when they became standard fitment on the J2, some were retrofitted to C types.

The Powerplus supercharger was mounted between the front chassis dumb-irons, driven off the end of the crankshaft and was designed to blow at 8-101bs. The maximum rpm for the two-bearing engine was 7,000rpm, quite remarkable for the time. £295 in standard form was the initial advertised price, and £345 with super-charger, but the price quickly rose to £490 in standard form and £575 with super-charger, a most startling increase.





Chelsea Warsh hillclimb (Photo: John King)

The body on Lawrence's car has no doors, and pins and finger-tightened knurled knobs, fitted by Lawrence, fix the bonnet, as the leather strap was not effective. This makes for a much more rigid body, and combines with a straight under-shield for streamlining with only the finned sump protruding. It is certainly much stiffer and more rattle-free than our J2, which has doors and a lengthy, lift-up bonnet, which not only exposes the engine, but also the gearbox and footwells.

The instrumentation and wiring were to a high level and of a quality commensurate with international road racing standards of the day. A water pump and fan was an optional extra, the car otherwise having a thermo-siphon system. Lawrence's car has a water pump whilst our J2 does not, and it has been our experience that, at sustained high speeds, with the motor producing much more power than originally intended, the thermo-siphon system cannot cope with the extra energy produced and after a while one has to reduce speed to allow the cooling system to catch up.

To tidy up the historical side of these early Midgets, the J2 followed the M and D Types in 1932, utilising the C Type chassis and the 847cc overhead camshaft motor with a crossflow head. In standard form, these two-bearing motors were red lined at 6000 rpm and ours, with a Phoenix crank-shaft and conrods, reportedly touched 8,200 rpm in competition—quite incredible!

The C Type also had 10-inch brake drums, but 12-inch drums were retrofitted to these when they became available on the later F Types.

The J2 has only 8-inch drums, but conversion to hydraulics and appropriate brake linings on our J2 has made these adequate in competition. The J2 became the iconic British sports car. With its raised double cowl, cutaway doors, and with the spare wheel mounted





on the slab tank at the rear, it became the pattern for all MGs up to the TF. Many other makes from SS to Singer copied the same formula. Carbodies of Holyhead Road, Coventry, as well, made all of these bodies.

The subject car was delivered to its first English owner, possibly a Mr L Walker, on 28 August 1931, and imported to New Zealand in 1938 by Edmond Motors of Fort Street, Auckland. Its history between then and 1940 is unknown, but Duncan Purse, a previous printer of Beaded Wheels, owned it from 1940 until possibly 1944. The next owner was Ivan de Joux of Oamaru (uncle of well-known "special" creator Ferris de Joux) until approximately 1946, then there's a big gap until 1959 when Mervyn Williams of Helensville (Lawrence's brother-in-law) bought it in a dismantled state, and Lawrence helped him reassemble the car.

Lawrence purchased the car in 1961, but didn't get into a serious and thorough restoration of the car until around 1978. Since then, through continuous and hard use, the engine and other components have required the occasional rebuild, the little 746cc motor giving remarkable service for its size.

So what is a Montlhery Midget like to drive?

Of course we chose a cold, wet and very blustery winter's day to test this door-less and windscreen-less car, although the weather started out looking quite fine. First, with no doors, it requires the driver to wriggle his way in, but it's not too difficult to enter or exit.

With a passenger installed, it's intimate, very intimate, with contact by arms and shoulders unavoidable. Without the cutaway body sides it would be impossible. Di is petite and I'm not excessive in any direction.

The tight bucket seats are comfort-able and have much higher backrests than usual. The steering wheel is relatively small, wrapped in leather, and a nice thickness to grip. The steering is light at slow speeds and surprisingly high geared and smooth, requiring little effort even when cornering hard— it's a delight.

To start the motor, switch on pump number one, switch on the ignition, pump the Ki-Gass three or more times, press the starter button and it starts almost immediately,

# MB

#### **1931 MG C Type**







J2 engine

J2 & C Type

Top left: Scrutineering at Springhill, Lawrence in white (Photo: John King)

running roughly initially like the factory racer it is, but evens out to a sewing-machine-smooth idle once warmed up.

The delightful rifle-bolt remote gear-change is counter-intuitive with first where second is normally and vice versa, and top where third should be and ditto. For the first hundred miles or so, I had to make a mental note of the layout before changing gear, but eventually my befuddled brain adjusted to this unusual layout.

For the C Type, the stroke was reduced by 10mm to get 746c cc whereas EX 120 had both a reduced bore and stroke to get down to 743cc. This reduction in stroke and corresponding reduction in size from the standard 847cc appears to have the effect of reducing low speed torque and one needs a few revs to take off without the motor dying.

On main highway driving this also results in a loss of speed on hills, not experienced in our J2, but after this lengthy test drive, I realised that third gear was a close ratio to top, needing only a small blip on the throttle to double declutch down and probably a simple way of maintaining speed on hills. The car is completely at home cruising at the legal limit, showing 3000rpm on the rev counter with the smaller diameter competition wheels on the back. However, it feels much happier being let loose on a tight, windy road where snicking up and down through the gears, and hearing the glorious barp from its Brooklands muffler and fishtailed exhaust when exceeding 4000 rpm, is inspiring.

The Bowden cable-operated brakes pull up strongly and inspire one with enough confidence to rely on them. The ride is pretty stiff as you might expect for a competition car, not too much as to make touring uncomfortable, but causing the rear to step out if a bump is encountered mid-corner.





Lawrence in C Type at the Waihi inaugural hillclimb

We should note here that Lawrence has toured the length and breadth of the country and competed in many speed events in this car. In recent times, Di has driven the car competitively at a number of speed events. It's considerably more practical than a Type 35 Bugatti in this respect, not overly noisy, and produces very little if any cockpit heat (and that would have been appreciated on this day). The tail lid lifts up to access a decent space for luggage storage.

It is a glorious little car to drive, a proper car compared with an Austin 7, which is a study in minimalism with its abbreviated A-frame chassis, quarter elliptic springs at the rear and transverse spring at the front. The C type has a full length chassis with semi elliptics all round, with no spring shackles but rather the rear end of the springs located in slotted brass bushes or "trunnions", which locate the axles more positively. It should also be observed that it is very close to a production MG whereas the Murray Jamieson twin-cam racing Austin Sevens bore little resemblance to production cars.

Everything about the car appears well thought out and thoroughly engineered for the purpose for which it was designed, and that is racing. To that end, it was very successful in competition.

Its front end, with the classic MG radiator, housing over the supercharger, stone guards over the headlights matching the radiator grille, louvred bonnet, outside exhaust, large brake drums and cycle type guards combined with the two scuttle humps and Brooklands-type aero screens all add up to the quintessential classic Vintage race car. At

# (MF)

#### **1931 MG C Type**







C Type gearlever

C Type dashboard

J2 dashboard

the rear, the graceful boat-tailed body with high fish-tailed exhaust is almost as stunning as a Type 35 Bugatti in a more petite way.

Without doubt, the J2 is a more practical car for every day use, and that is to be expected, its cockpit is wider, making it more comfortable for two people. The larger engine has more torque, the C Type having only 1.7 more bhp than the J2 unsupercharged, but our J2 seems to have a much greater propensity to rev than the C, possibly a result of its racing heritage.

Luggage-wise, the J2 has a surprisingly useful space behind the seat, but the C Type also has a useful luggage locker too. The long bonnet of the J2 gives much better access to components, but it is the rarity, looks, tight handling, and extra quality of components, that win the heart over with the Montlhery Midget. Thanks to Lawrence for the opportunity to drive this unique (in New Zealand) car.

Keith Humphreys - Beaded Wheels - Words & photographs

# WE

#### **Odds & Ends**

Spotted in NZ Classic Car February 2008. 'Geoff Brader of Tawa found this key fitted to his Fiat 500 after Christmas dinner in 1972. His sister Ngaire bought the suction cup key back from America, where they were a popular accessory on smaller cars at the time. Geoff said turning the key didn't make his Fiat go any faster.'

Photo credit: Dominion Post collection, Alexander Turnbull Library Wellington, New Zealand.



Taken in Mohuia Crescent Elsdon

George Walter & Denis Christiansen have resigned from the 2017 Pre-56 committee, Ron Roberson has taken over as Chairman.



#### **MG Liquid Suspension Special**



Rock-Gumpert-at-Brickyard-Reunion, Provided-by-Rock-Gumpert

When MG enthusiasts get together, it's inevitable that someone will ask what model MGs they own or owned.

In the case of Rock Gumpert, the answer, at first, is simple and not very surprising. They include a TD, MGA and MGB

But then there's his current MG — one of the most extraordinary MG creations ever. He is the owner of one of the three MG Liquid Suspension Specials – cars prepared in the early '60s to compete in the United States Auto Club's Indy Car Series and raced at the Indianapolis 500.

Having been raised in the Indianapolis area, the amiable business executive loves everything about Indy racing and Indy cars. His business success has allowed him to collect a number of vintage Indy race cars, along with other open-wheel cars, including a 1976 Shadow that was raced extensively in Formula One and a handful of Formula Atlantic cars.

The longtime racing driver, with some 33 years under his belt, also competes in most of those cars in historic venues across the United States.

About four years ago, he had the opportunity to purchase one of the MG Liquid Suspension Specials, a car he knew existed, but little else.

The father of a couple brothers with whom he raced had purchased the old race car, but passed away before getting to use it. When it came up for sale, Gumpert jumped at the opportunity.

"It was rolling, but it was not race ready. It needed to be gone through."

It took a while to prepare the car for the track, and since then it has had its share of teething problems.

"I've had the engine dynoed and its fine," he said, but the fuel pick-up system remains a challenge.

At the Brickyard Vintage Racing Invitational in June at the Indianapolis Speedway, sponsored by the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association, the Special was on track, but

# MB

### **MG Liquid Suspension Special**

retired early because of fuel problems.

"It's not to our liking, as yet," Gumpert explained. But he's far from discouraged considering his car is unquestionably an extraordinary piece of automotive history.

The name, MG Liquid Suspension Special, comes from the "hydrolastic" shock absorber system around which the car was built. That liquid suspension was being used on MG production sedans at the time and MG executives used the three MG Liquid Suspension Specials as a means of promoting the concept and the cars.

Automotive journalists at the time described the use of the MG 1100 hydrolastic suspension as "most unconventional," with the sedan's suspension units mounted inboard, high in the chassis, while smaller units from the 1275cc Cooper S were mounted on top of the forward bulkhead.



At the center of this extraordinary promotional campaign was Kjell Qvale, owner of the British Motor Car Distributors in San Francisco and an incredibly successful MG importer. By some accounts, he was singularly responsible for the popularity of MGs in the United States.

According to historical accounts, Qvale financed the design and construction of the three Specials, which were created at the hands of West Coast race car builder Joe Huffaker and his staff.

"Qvale got together with Huffaker and designed the car around that suspension," Gumpert said.

The rear-engine cars, a rarity in 1964, were constructed of lightweight chrome molybdenum. Power was provided by a four-cylinder, 255-cubic-inch Meyer-Drake Offenhauser engine, equipped with an Air Research turbocharger, which produced a whopping 1,000 horsepower.

Gumpert owns the No. 53 MG Liquid Suspension Special. In 1964, in that car, Walt Hansgen qualified for the Indy 500 race with a four-lap average speed of 152.581 mph, according to Rob Blubaugh, an MG enthusiast and historian.

The car started in 10th place and by lap 50, Hansgen had moved the car into fourth place. A long pit stop for new fuel injector jets dropped him out of contention and he finished in 13th place after completing 176 laps, when the race ended.



### **MG Liquid Suspension Special**

A second Special was qualified by Bob Veith and finished 19th, completing 88 laps and retiring with a burned piston. The third Special was crashed by Pedro Rodriguez and did not qualify.

The 1964 race is one of the most memorable in Indy 500 history and was the first time an accident stopped the race. Coming out of turn four on the second lap of the race, Dave MacDonald swerved left to pass Hansgen on the main straight, but veered out of control hitting the inner retaining wall and exploding. MacDonald and Eddie Sachs, another driver, were killed.

The three MG Liquid Suspension Specials also raced at the Indy 500 the following two years. After 1966, the cars were campaigned without their MG designations.

The cars also continued to race into the '70s in other configurations, Gumpert added, based on his research.

Asked how the Special compares to his other front-engine Indy race cars, he didn't take long to answer.

"You sit a helluva taller, I can tell you that. Your body is more exposed. Back in the '60s when it was raced, you had to be a helluva brave guy to drive it."

Still, he said it's a great runner. "I really enjoy driving it."

Of his other race cars, he said he has a special fondness for those Indy racers built by Fred Gerhardt. Asked about his MG street cars, he said he favored the TD the most.

"Going down a hill, I could go about 80 miles an hour. It was a neat little car."

His Special made a special appearance earlier this year during the North American MGB Register in French Lick, IN, thanks to the efforts of MG enthusiast and historian Rob Blubaugh.

Many years before, he saw the MG Liquid Suspension Specials running at the Indy 500 when they were new. Seeing one of the same cars at the Brickyard Vintage Racing Invitational, he said he couldn't help himself.

Blubaugh approached Gumpert at the Brickyard Vintage Racing Invitational about showing the car during the NAMGBR event, a few weeks later. Gumpert, in turn, arranged for his friend and chief mechanic, Derek Clarson, to transport and show the

race car.

Blubaugh said he hopes the very special car will be available by its owner to show at other MG events in the country so enthusiasts can enjoy this amazing MG creation.

Larry Sanata, Editor of North American Classic MG magazine.





#### **Auction - MG EX234 Prototype**



# THE GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED SALE

Collector's Motor Cars and Automobilia - 24 June 2016

AUCTION 23593:

c.1965 MG EX234 Prototype Roadster

Sold for £63,100 (NZD \$122,003) including premium

# WE

#### **New Members**

We would like to welcome these new members and look forward to meeting them at our various activities.

Mike Nelson Robert and Sandra Illingworth Tawa Palmerston North



register today at www.britsatthebeach.co.nz



### **Smeg unveil MG Fridge**

Smeg has unveiled a limited edition run of MG-inspired fridges to celebrate its new UK headquarters, built on the site of the sports car company's original factory.

Unveiled at the MG Car Club's MGLive! event at Silverstone on June 4th and 5th, the collection of 39 fridges is a significant number as it represents the number emblazoned on the MG K3, which famously won the prestigious Mille Miglia road race in Italy, beating all marques in its class, the 1st non-Italian car to ever take honours, back in 1933.



The FAB28RDMGG is finished in the signature British Racing green archetypal of MG's racing cars, which also features MG's iconic octagon badge and plaque denoting its limited edition number.

It boasts 251 litres of capacity, a number well recognised by MG enthusiasts, a tropicalized compressor, an energy consumption of 180Kw/h per year, three adjustable glass shelves, a fruit and vegetable container and a chrome wine rack, as well as an additional internal 2kg freezer capacity.

The name of Smeg's 'Magna Building' headquarters in Abingdon, Oxfordshire is also linked to one of the former MG site's most iconic cars – the Magnette – in a dedication to the history and heritage of the original car works.

Mike Giddings, Smeg's UK managing director, said: "The fridges are a fitting tribute to the site of the original MG car works, which are a seminal part of British motor history.

"Smeg prides itself on strong community ties here in Abingdon, and celebrating local history is very much part of the Smeg philosophy.

"We're extremely privileged to have our fantastic new headquarters situated on a site that is already home to so much design and engineering excellence, and we hope to build on that heritage as Smeg enters an exciting new chapter here in the UK."

Smeg worked closely with the MG Car Club to bring to life this exciting project.

Adam Sloman, General Manager commented: "since its formation in 1930, the Club has been at the forefront of championing MG's classic heritage, its workers and owners, and surrounding local industry.

"We're delighted to have collaborated with Smeg on this very innovative project to celebrate our joint history and heritage and create such a unique piece of memorabilia."

The limited edition MG fridge will retail for £1,499. - www.mg-cars.org.uk



#### From the archives - 1962

More action from the Wright's Hill Hillclimb March or April. - Dave Hector



TR3 – Des Gibb, now deceased, much older brother of Sefton Gibb



Gravel corner about 75m up from the start



MGA 1600 II De luxe – Tony Whatmough, this car is now owned by Gay Baxter



MG Midget - Unknown

# ME

#### **Odds & Ends**

The pictured vehicle was a proposal to the Ministry of Defence in 1933 and was an armoured vehicle, based on an MG VA chassis, that never made it into production.



# MB

#### **Mid-Winter Back County Adventure Tour - July**



View of Mt. Ruapehu



Rugged up, Dawn Judge of Auckland



Ohura doer-upper



Ross & Anne Armstrong

The weekend was an entirely non-competitive drive through roads of your own choosing. The concept was to explore and enjoy roads of interest and to meet up with others at various points along the way over a coffee or a bite to eat. The roads covered the area generally between Taihape, Wanganui, Hunterville and Ohakune, though there were some roads identified that were a bit outside of this area.

The Gumboot Manor Restaurant on SH1 in Taihape served as the meeting point for the weekend. It was a cold and frosty weekend... but the sunshine did not elude us for most of Saturday.

The Wellington contingent was comprised of Ross & Anne Armstrong in their blue MGB, Terry Collier & Anne Lee in the red MG TF135, Michael Shouse & Helen Cox with the MGBLE and Gina Jones & Malcolm Fleming joined in with the green MGF.

29 other cars and drivers attended from mostly the Auckland MGCC.

There was no mandatory or fixed route but rather a number of re-group points which offered a range of suggested roads you could choose to take in between them. The re-group points and roads were identified in an excellent map book supplied by the organiser Paul Walbran of the AKL Club.

On Friday evening at Taihape, we were provided with the map book covering the areas for travel, including the area for the return home on Sunday. The map book contained two series of maps:

- AA maps
- NZ Topo maps



#### **Mid-Winter Back County Adventure Tour - July**

The AA maps were clearly drawn and had more detail (road names in particular) but lacked accuracy once you departed the main road – which was not very helpful for this type of weekend! An example of the lack of accuracy was that they omitted some roads altogether, while others were shown as no exit when in fact they were through roads, and their coding on seal or gravel was well out of date. Having said that, they are 90+% accurate.

The NZ topographical maps were much more accurate, but unhelpfully didn't list the road names. (The 1:50 000 series do include road names but we would have needed 10 times as many maps at that scale!) Taken together, the maps provided a reasonably reliable means of plotting the selected route.

The suggestions were based on various members' recollections, based on years of experience, of great roads to drive and included a number of iconic rally stages from the past, both tarmac and gravel. You were not expected to cover all the suggested roads (that would take all week rather than a weekend!), but to choose those which were appealing to you – be it all tarmac, lots of gravel, a bit of each, main road to save time or whatever.



MG's lined up in Raetihi

# MB

#### **Mid-Winter Back County Adventure Tour - July**

#### Friday:

After making our own way to Taihape, we met up with the rest of the team over a meal at the Gumboot Manor Restaurant, SH1 on the north side of town. The restaurant had a range of food options from burgers through to full meals. The welcome and verbal briefing took place at the restaurant after the meal.

#### Saturday:

The aim was to get everyone back in time to refresh and have a meal at 7pm. This year, Saturday's roads explored were generally in Wanganui area, and obviously the roads on the way there and back to Taihape. As with all aspects of the weekend's routes everyone's final selection was up to them.

We chose to drive to Wanganui via Ohakune, Raetihi and Jerusalem, meeting mid-morning at the Angel Louise Café in Raetihi and for lunch in Wanganui at Stellar Bistro on the corner of Victoria St and Taupo Quay. After lunch we proceeded to Hunterville for another café stop and then back to Taihape via an interesting back road detour around the spectacular Rangiwahea region.





MG's lined up in Raetihi



On the road to Jerusalem



# MB

#### **Mid-Winter Back County Adventure Tour - July**

#### Sunday:

The Aucklanders had a longer drive ahead than us Wellingtonians so they mostly departed early to enjoy a relaxing drive home. We did the same and made time to enjoy a few stops as we returned southwards. In Otaki we had the pleasure of driving past Ross as he waited patiently in the blue B while Anne indulged in a little retail therapy- what better way to end a thoroughly enjoyable weekend!

(Happily submitted by Wellington club members Michael Shouse and Helen Cox)

Photographs: Michael Shouse, Ross Armstrong, MGCC (Auck)







Alter of St. Joseph's Church



Get together on the river road overlooking the Whanganui river



### Old Speckled Hen Run - July

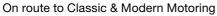
The day was one of those that makes you wish that you could stay in bed but commitments have been made and an interesting day has been promised so its breakfast and then roof on the B.

The drive from Tawa to the Hutt via Haywards was interesting black skies wiper stalling rain and wind strong enough to raise thoughts of sail powered cars.

However today due to a dental appointment Chris was unable to make this trip so a mate Trevor Edmonds came as co-pilot but a pair of new hips made getting in and out of the B a bit of a mission.

The meeting place was the Hutt River car park at Melling and with Trev stuck in the car the rest of us got a little wet and wind blown chatting in the rain. The drive to Andrew Fox's workshop passed without mishap.







Andrew Fox & John Daniels

Once there we enjoyed coffee and biscuits thanks Andrew and after the obligatory OSH (not Old Speckled Hen ) briefing we had a good look around the workshop and their customer's cars which ranged from T series MGs to Jensen Interceptors and a lot in





#### "OLD SPECKLED HEN"

#### **Old Speckled Hen Run – July**



between. A rather nice 2 door Mk2 Cortina GT caught my eye as this was a car that in my youth I lusted after, alas without success the closest I got was a couple of Mk3 Estate cars not quite the same but houses and kids took preference.

I also noticed a Hillman Minx or maybe it was a Humber 10 in a pre paint stage which looked very sound and will be a nice car to use in classic car outings.

Once we had taken up far to much of Andrew and his team's time we adjourned to The Pavilion at Day's Bay to enjoy a leisurely lunch, the food was of a very high standard with the seafood chowder being outstanding in fact all the food seemed to be a cut above most normal cafe fare.

Our thanks to John Daniels for the well organised run and a big thanks to Andrew Fox for his hospitality during our interruption to his work and hence his cash flow

Les Newman Photographs: Les Newman & Dean Gray













#### For Sale

#### 1960 MGA MkI 1600 fixed head coupe - Offers

Professionally restored and lovingly cherished, will need to find another enthusiast to adopt her.

Contact: Peter Salt E-mail: raf4648@hotmail.com

#### MGB wheels - \$125

4 x MGB Rostyle steel wheels

Contact: Bob Hulena. Mobile: 027 4482 225 A/H: 04 293 8112

E-mail: bobthecalendarman@gmail.com

#### 1953 MG TD2. - 57,017ml - \$40,000

One owner since 1973. Wire wheels fitted in the past. I still have the original disc wheels and drums/hubs. Well maintained and always garaged. Resprayed BRG (Jaguar) and many items re-chromed in 2010. Hood and side screens in good condition. Odometer reading 57017. Log book available.

Reg and WoF until June.

Recent professional valuation \$40,000

The car is in Christchurch.

Contact: John Bain Phone 03 3655206 E-mail: fazazz@fazazz.co.nz.



I have storage available soon for a vintage or classic car in my very spacious garage in St Mary Street, Thorndon. This storage is suitable for someone who doesn't use their car regularly and will be priced accordingly.

E-mail: neilharrap@gmail.com

#### 1966 MG 1100 - 55,390ml - Offers

2 owners, very good condition, NOT registered. As is, where is.

Contact: Grant E-mail: roc01@clear.net.nz

#### 1937 MG VA 4 seater tourer - \$85,000

Health reasons forcing a reluctant sale.

A complete 6 year restoration to the highest concours standards.

A regular concours winner and a great car to drive on the open road.

Personal plate by arrangement.

Contact: June Beresford or George Walter.

E-mail: j.beresford@clear.net.nz E-mail: gwalter@clear.net.nz







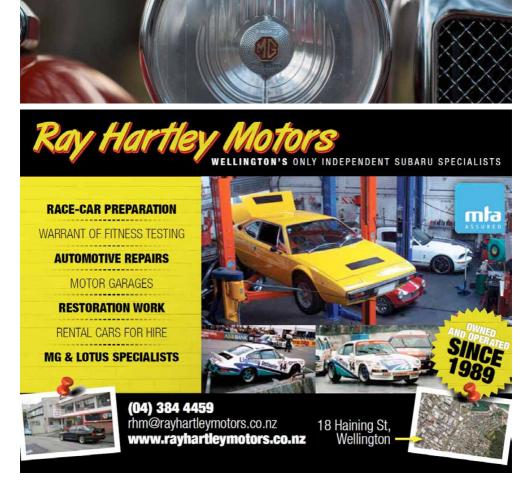
### **Membership Fees**

#### The Membership year is from 1st July to 30th June each year.

Existing members will receive a renewal invoice in the post, usually early June. Those non-members wishing to join the club can do so by following the 'Membership' tab on our Web site: www.mgcarclub.org.nz. This will provide a couple of options, including an online form which is the simplest and quickest way for intending members to join the club.

#### Single \$60 Double \$70 Family \$80

You can pay your renewal on-line direct to our account 03-0539-0165992-00 Please it is important you include your membership number and/or name as a reference.





#### **Grill Badges**

The four MG Car Club Centres in New Zealand - Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago have authorised this new Grille Badge, which has a distinctive NZ flavour with the inclusion of the Silver Fern in the background.

The intention over time is to begin using this badge on communications, regalia and other activities. 61mm x 81mm - \$50.00.



Calling all MGB owners, if you haven't celebrated the birth of your favourite sports car, now is your chance too. We currently have a few remaining MGB 50th grill badges available which will enhance your car and sit beautifully alongside the MG Car club and MG90th grill badges, why not collect the set!

75mm - \$35.00 while stocks last.

Grill badges can be purchased from Iane Hector.

phone: 027 246 6034 or

e-mail: jayhector70@gmail.com



Rear Cover, Mid-Winter Back County Adventure Tour, Whanganui river from the the top of River road. Photograph Ross Armstrong.

# MB

#### Advertising specifications for display advertisements

Prices for 12 months

Advertisements may be supplied in most common digital formats by e-mail or on flash drives or CD's, etc.

Half Page \$200

Quarter Page \$100

Advertisements may be supplied in most common digital formats by e-mail or on flash drives or CD's, etc.

Alternatively your raw copy can be turned into suitable artwork for your approval.

Enquires to Dean Gray, E-mail: editor@mgcarclub.org.nz

### MG Car Club (Wgtn) Regalia



MGCC Lanyard Black/white or Blue/white \$5.00.



1634 - Silverdale, Merino pullover Natural mix - S-XL - \$125.00.



1634 - Silverdale, Merino pullover Navy - S-XL - \$125.00.



WLV - Gear, Women's Vest Silver/Black - S-XL - \$65.00.



LV - Gear, Men's Vest Black - S-XL - \$65.00.



MG90 Car badge 75mm - \$43.00.



MG90 Embroidered badge 72mm - \$5.00.

MG Car Club regalia can be purchased from Jane Hector, phone: 027 246 6034 or e-mail: jayhector70@gmail.com.



498Q - Gear, Zip fleece Navy - S-XL - \$65.00.

