

**MARCH  
2019  
EDITION**



THE ROAD IS NEVER LONG  
BETWEEN FRIENDS.



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## Secretary's Report



Hello Everyone,

Sorry I wasn't at the last meeting. Neil and I had been to Madeira and had just got back that evening. As my daughter had also arrived with her three little dogs for us to look after, we weren't able to come. We had a lovely time in Madeira; it was mostly sunny and about 19-21C, which was very pleasant. We did lots of walking and quite a lot of eating, especially the lovely Portuguese custard tarts, which make our UK tarts look positively anaemic. We did spot one MG in Funchal, but that was it.

Back home, the three little dogs were reasonably well behaved, but they did seem to spend a lot of time on the back of the sofa, barking at anyone who walked past, and as we are quite near the woods, there were quite a lot of dogs walking past. It suddenly became very peaceful when they went home.

Regarding Drive it Day on the 28<sup>th</sup> April, we will be meeting mid-morning (TBC), on the moor outside the Knightstone tea rooms (now called Abigail's). You may pre-book food if you wish, or bring along a picnic lunch. If you wish to use the café toilets, it would be polite to at least buy a coffee even if you don't want food there. We will be leaving there about 12.30ish, for a drive around the moor, ending up at Salmons Leap café Buckfastleigh for a cream tea at about 2.30 -3pm. From there it is a straight run on to the A38 to get you back home. It is a much simpler day than Peter and Jan's 'Drive it Day' last year (which was marvellous) but our route still gets us out on the roads to be seen. We will bring Abigail's menu to the AGM if anyone is interested in pre ordering food or drink, but you will have to do this yourself, we are only organising the cream tea.

We had a lovely drive out on Sally and Keith's Sunday lunch run to the Little Fox Hotel (*see the run reports later, Ed.*). Neil and I had the beef which was delicious, so many thanks to Sally and Keith for organising it all.

Best Wishes & Happy Driving

*Pam*

1 Buena Vista Close, Glenholt, Plymouth, PL6 7JH



## Notes from your Chairman



Hi everyone,

As you can imagine with this recent spell of sunshine and soaring temperatures for this time of the year we have been out and about in our MGB making hay whilst the sun shines. Wrong!

Having said that we did have a top-down afternoon in the Lotus the other day and drove over the stunning moors to Holne for a late lunch in the café, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.

Actually we have been out in the garden doing a bit of tidying up and transporting all the garden waste down the tip. The last couple of days have seen me up a ladder cleaning out gutters, washing them down along with soffits, fascia boards and also cleaning windows.

After all that we are now being threatened with Saharan sand being blown in, along with a bit of wet weather which will undo all the hard work.

Sally and Keith's February Sunday lunch run to the Little Fox Hotel near Craffhole was a superb event. Only two couples managed to do the run without mistakes, whilst the rest of us enjoyed the enticing detours. Still it was nice to catch up with Vanessa at Tilland Mill whilst passing through. I know we weren't supposed to go that way..... now!

The club's AGM is now imminent and I really hope that you will be able to come along and oversee the club's due processes. One of those processes is the election of a new committee for the new club year, March 2019 to March 2020.

Alison and I have found time to drive our route for the March Sunday lunch when we go to the Moorland Hotel, Wotter. Currently we have two places left if you wish to come along.

I have been helping Roger out with his MGF and we have now managed to get a working clutch once more. With a new slave cylinder fitted and bled, I can confirm it is a real bleeding job!

Safe MG motoring,  
*Alan*



## Event Secretary keeping it wheel



Dear all,  
At the time of writing we still have no-one to organise the Friday supper in June.

Finally we are getting our MGA repainted. When we bought it there was slight bubbling in places and I knew it would need a re-spray sooner or later. In the three and a half years of our ownership it has got slightly worse and I want it fixed before it becomes serious.



*Stripped of the wings I was pleased to see that the body and chassis look very sound, but as well as the bubbling it needs attention around some of the edges and seams.*

Having drawn a blank with some paint shops that had been recommended due to their current workload, I am getting it done at *Retro Rides Restored* off Billacombe Road, suggested by someone I met in Spain who is having an MGB restored there. I still had to wait four months for a slot in their schedule.

The chap who runs it, Paul, dubbed a "perfectionist" on Facebook feedback, doesn't advertise much as he has plenty of work via word-of-mouth.

Paul called me while I was on top of a mountain in the Alps to say the paint was worse than expected underneath the bubbles. He asked if I wanted a quick bodge to make it look nice, an option he clearly didn't want to me choose! Instead he almost begged me to let him do the job properly with most of it taken back to bare metal. I chose the latter option as I have no intention of selling the car and hope it will last someone another 57 years – hopefully it will be me for much of that time (though to be allowed to keep it on the road that long it may have to have an electric engine...or hydrogen power?)!

When the car is 100 years old in 2062 I'll be 110. It would be nice, if fanciful, to think I might see the car's centennial milestone, as well as my own! My dad is almost 97 and still firing on all cylinders, so fingers crossed I last as well as him. Perhaps I'd better start looking after myself a bit better. However, even if our MGA is still in great shape by 2062, the way things are going I worry about what state the country and planet will be in.

Currently a too-bright Ford diamond white, the car will be newly painted Old English White, but I won't be able to show it much this year as almost all of May will be taken up with our trip to Scotland and Wales.

Happy MGing!  
*Howard*

Send submissions to [eventsecretarytvmgoc@gmail.com](mailto:eventsecretarytvmgoc@gmail.com) or [mediatvmgoc@gmail.com](mailto:mediatvmgoc@gmail.com)



## Upcoming events

The most up to date and detailed information on all 2019 events can be found and downloaded on the Event Diary Page and the Entry Forms page. See: [www.tvmgoc.org.uk](http://www.tvmgoc.org.uk)

## Coming soon

Remember that information about start times etc. for lunch and supper runs will be in the newsletters, on our website under the Entry forms tab, and usually on the run's entry sheet/menu choice list.

17 Mar	Club Sunday Lunch	Alan & Alison organising to The Moorland Hotel at Wotter <a href="mailto:chairmantvmgoc@gmail.com">chairmantvmgoc@gmail.com</a> Meeting point & time: Knightstone Tea Rooms, near Yelverton. PL20 6BT at 11.00am If you wish to have a tea/coffee and a chat in comfort beforehand allow for an earlier arrival time. Opens: 10am Toilets are intended for customers' use only.
28 April	Drive It Day	With the Treasure Hunt trophy organised by last year's winners Pam & Neil – inform them of your participation. See the Secretary's report above. <a href="mailto:clubsecretarytvmgocplease@gmail.com">clubsecretarytvmgocplease@gmail.com</a>
10 May	Club Friday supper run	To the Cuddy Shack organised by Alan & Alison – details TBA
12 May	Keat's bluebell woods open day for local charities	TBA at Foxhams House, Horrabridge, PL20 7QT 2pm to 5pm Bring a picnic – more details to follow
12 May	Devon & Cornwall event	Killerton House Classic Car Day (Club Stand) Cars under 25 years old can only attend if part of a club stand. Entry form is on our website – closes 22 April
26 May	Devon & Cornwall event	Moor 2 Sea Run (Exeter MGOC) Form available on our website
31 May to 3 June	TVMGOC weekend away	Southampton & New Forest MGOC New Forest Run Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> May - Travel Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> June - club run TBA with a skittles competition in the evening 2 <sup>nd</sup> June - New Forest Run 3 <sup>rd</sup> June - return home The entry form is on our website and 12 places are reserved for the Sunday NF run and 12 rooms in the hotel. More can be added. See the December newsletter for full booking details. Please book soon and inform Event Sec. of your interest
14 June	Club Friday supper run	Currently not happening as there is no organiser

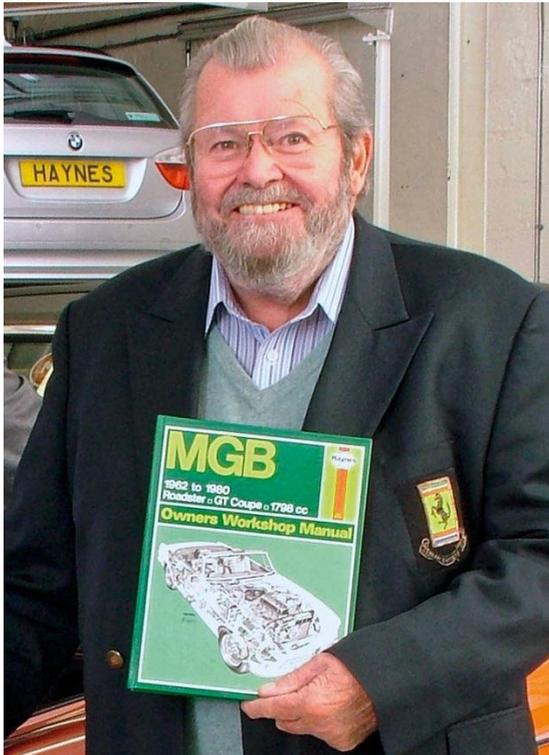
## Supper & lunch runs with organisers

To register your participation, contact these event organisers via email when details are available.

July	Supper run – John I	12 July
August	Supper run - Vanessa	16 Aug
September	Club run TBA – this <i>may</i> be added but only after all these other runs get organisers - Howard & Jan	15 Sept?
October	Lunch on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday inc. Tulip Trophy – Keat & Peter	20 Oct
November	Lunch on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday – John & B.	17 Nov
December	No lunch – Christmas dinner	TBA



## News snippets



### John Harold Haynes OBE: RIP

There can't be many car enthusiasts who haven't given thanks for the information and help provided by an oil-stained Haynes *Owners Workshop Manual*. Sadly, the eponymous creator of these invaluable books has passed away aged 80 after a short illness. His legacy is vast.

Haynes was almost single-handedly responsible for inspiring generations of home mechanics. His detailed books give instructions to dismantle and rebuild practically your entire car. They feature step-by-step descriptions and photographs breaking down mechanical renovation and repair into stages so that it might be more easily explained to a layman.

As well as the huge range of books Haynes published, he also opened the Haynes International Motor Museum in 1985, donating his personal collection of 30 cars for the wider public to enjoy. A couple of years ago TVMGOC enjoyed a day out there to see the collection that has now swollen to 400 cars.



### Z cars

As mentioned last month, MG ZR, ZS and ZT cars are fast disappearing from our roads. Now data backs this up, revealing that some 78% of the sporty MG Rover models have already vanished. At the end of production in 2006, the total number of MG Z cars on the road was 90,191. Today there are just 19,618.



MG model	Number (2006)	Number (Q3 2018)	Cars lost
ZR	51,116	7,964	43,152 = 84%
ZS	20,055	5,478	14,577 = 72%
ZT & ZT-T	19,020	6,176	12,844 = 67%
<b>Z Range</b>	<b>90,191</b>	<b>19,618</b>	<b>70, 573 = 78%</b>

*Data from HowManyLeft.co.uk*

In response, the MG Car Club and Zed Register are launching *Save Our Zeds* – a campaign to highlight the decline of Zed MGs and help equip owners with the right tools to keep enjoying and running their cars, rather than consigning them to the scrapheap.

To many, these cars are very much 'proper' MGs that are an important part of the brand's heritage, but one that soon could be lost; future generations could miss out on these much loved cars.

With low values for these MGs, the cost of major repairs appears to be an uneconomic option, so for those TVMGOC members who have one, it is worth looking after.

## FOR SALE

Jim and Margaret have reduced the asking price for their MGTF 135 to £2250 ono.

See the February newsletter for full details.  
Phone 07800 904671.



My MGA is surely one of the most vulnerable in the TVMGOC fleet to theft. Why? Well for starters it can't be locked. In addition, we use it quite a lot away from home, so it spends numerous nights parked up in hotels or on streets both here and sometimes abroad. It's also relatively valuable. I *really* don't want it nicked, and even with an agreed valuation I'd rather keep hold of the car than be given a wad of cash if it gets stolen.

I've been looking into security systems, spurred into action by a long article in *Classic Car Weekly* urging owners to act, as classics are being stolen in unprecedented numbers. They say MGBs are now a particular target as they are easy to refresh and given a new face. Like many British sports cars they came originally with stamped ID plates fixed on with screws. A new forged or cloned identity can be created easily and quickly.

Your perception of risk may be different from mine, but here's what I want to mitigate against: as our MGA usually lives in our home garage which has an alarm, I believe the most likely risk to it is that it's spotted whilst we are out and about and in the dead of night gets hot-wired, towed or lifted onto a truck and spirited away. So I want to both make that more difficult and, if it does get taken, have a tracking device so that there's a good chance of recovery before it gets broken down into spare parts.

Yes I'm careful where it's parked, but currently I have just two lines of defence – a steering wheel lock and a battery cut-off switch - more on these below. Neither would deter a determined thief.

CCW suggest there are steps we can take without shelling out a lot of money, but some effective security devices can be costly. They say it's "worth thinking of them as an essential investment."  
Let's see what they suggest.

### **Create several layers of defence**

A determined thief will deploy multiple tactics to steal your car. If using a steering wheel lock, turn the wheels into the curb before locking and park carefully to make forward motion difficult. Always combine conspicuous devices that might deter an opportunistic thief with invisible methods such as a tracker (more on these later). Aim to make every stage of their task time-consuming and therefore risky.

### **Don't advertise too much**

Don't post pictures on social media when you are away from home, thereby telling the world that your house and garage are unattended. Nor do the thief's homework for them by posting pictures of your car in its garage, showing what they might have to tackle to get inside.

### **Keep temptation at bay**

Remove all belongings from inside the car and never leave anything of value on show.

## Secure your garage

Fit a security camera or alarm, and if possible block the garage door with another vehicle that has a car alarm. CCW say, "CCTV isn't as expensive as you might think but quality varies, so ensure you buy one with a decent HD picture that can transmit live footage to your 'phone."

Don't leave your garage out of sight and out of mind. Check inside regularly.

## Cheap yet effective

Remove the distributor rotor arm (taking care not to lose it!).

## Mechanical devices

A steering wheel lock, wheel clamp or pedal locks can be cost effective, but the latter two can be large and difficult to stow in a small sports car. Whichever you choose, CCW always recommend a Thatcham-approved device above cheaper ones.

## Thatcham-approved

The RAC say this about Thatcham, "The number of different car alarms and security features on offer, and the corresponding level of protection they give, can be baffling for a new buyer. That's without even considering the huge number of after-market units available. Thankfully Thatcham Research independently rates these different car alarms and immobilisers by category to give consumers a better idea of the role they play. Officially known as the Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre, the organisation works closely with car companies to set car insurance rates depending on the complexity of security systems, safety and repair costs."

So fitting a Thatcham-approved device could lower your insurance premium. To see an explanation of all the different security options Google 'Thatcham-approved RAC'.

## Fit a battery/ignition cut-off isolator.



I have the type on the left, but any self-respecting thief will carry a red key as it's a one-fits-all (my boat had the same).

I am replacing it with the one on the right that has a proper lock. It is a Durite 0-605-20 100A 24V Battery Isolator. It also works with 12v. The cheapest price was £34.14 on eBay. Richard M. put me onto these. They should only be used when not under electrical load. The mantra is 'first on, last off' i.e. don't use it as a switch to stop the engine.



## Trackers

So I shall be vigilant in doing all of the above, but this will not make my car free from the risk of theft whilst out and about. In the scenario outlined at the start of this article, I want to be able to find the car quickly after it has been stolen. For this I need a tracker. But which one to choose can be a bit of a mine field. Look on Amazon and there are a whole range of different types at different prices.

At this stage you might come across a variety of alarms, immobilisers and trackers that are for modern cars and can do all kinds of clever things via the car's Electronic Control Unit. I am ignoring these as they are unsuitable for computerless classics. However, even if you have a modern MG the principles of what follows are relevant.

For my car both the Tracker company and CCW suggest fitting a 'Tracker Locate' at £462 including fitting, plus a location-finding subscription at about £12pm – a lot of money, but by examining what this particular device and service offers it is useful to compare with other/cheaper options.

Prior to going to bed in my far-off hotel, the Tracker Locate would allow me to geo-fence the car using a smartphone app. A geo-fence is a virtual perimeter for a small geographic area – think "X marks the spot".

I tell the hidden tracker unit to note where the car is currently parked and then inform me via a text/app if the car moves from that spot. This works anywhere in Europe.

Whilst I'm asleep the baddies come along and steal the car, taking it outside its geo-fenced area. As soon as the MG moves, the tracker alerts me. I then call the tracker location company to say this is an unauthorised move and they start following it and inform the Police. If I didn't immediately wake up, I'd have to inform the location service as soon as I noticed the car was missing the following morning. The point is it could still be located.

Although the location service is able to track a car at any time, it doesn't look at your vehicle's signal until you tell them to, as they have no idea if each time the car moves it is legitimate or not. In all cases the company needs to be told of an unauthorised move. But the point is that via the app, even if you and the car are separated by many miles, you get to hear of it.

Sophisticated thieves can use technology to jam some types of signals used in cheaper units so that the car can't be tracked. I'll not get into technical specifics as my eyes glaze over and anyway I'm no Sheldon Cooper (if that goes over your head Google him). However the Tracker Locate uses four different types of location signals - VHF, GPS, GSM and Mesh Network technology (I've no idea what the latter two mean but they sound impressive) - some of which can't be jammed, and can be followed even if the car is inside a metal box or an underground garage.

My battery cut-off switch could still be used to stop the car from being easily started. The Tracker Locate is hidden inside the car and gets its power directly from the car battery, bypassing the cut-off switch. It also has an internal back-up battery should the power to it be cut. CCW say the best trackers have a 90% recovery rate, "giving the Police a rapid and effective way of catching crooks red-handed."

I'm no comparison website, and it may be that there are cheaper units that do all the Locate does, but for now I think that's what I'll go for come the Spring as I believe it's worth it. Expensive yes, but a snip compared to what I paid to have a new clutch fitted, the cylinder head converted, and compared to what I'm about to pay to get the car re-sprayed. You pay your money....

*PS It does look like cheap options might be a false economy. Richard M has also been looking into this topic and asked some technical questions of vendors selling trackers on eBay in the UK. Answers were not forthcoming and Richard says their command of English is tending to zero and that they had to ask the manufacturer in China for answers. In simple terms there is little or no technical support or understanding of their products.*



## **Sunday Lunch Run to The Little Fox Hotel, Tregantle**



Firstly what a wonderful location, great view, service and food and many thanks to Sally and Keith for organising a run `that never was` for some people.

It was all down to misinterpretation of the instructions, which if we had followed them to the letter all would have been well, however we all ended up at the Little Fox albeit that three couples including Sally and Keith followed the route throughout.



15 cars met up at Tamar Nurseries Saltash at 1030 or thereabouts, the early birds managing to get a coffee in the cafe, even at that hour it was getting busy, without us being there. There was however plenty of time for a chat.



Leaving about 1115 we went through Hatt and Pillaton through some lovely wooded areas with views of the river Lynher and over an old clapper bridge. Through Blunts, then Tideford Cross and towards Tilland and Dodycross - what wonderful names these places have! It was along a muddy road that we and many others went wrong.

My feeling is that we all wanted to see the old Tilland Mill where Paddy and John live because we all passed it, some got a wave from Vanessa, and reached the 'bridge too far' which the route instructions stated.

Many turned around and probably picked up the route again, we however pressed on and reached Trerulefoot roundabout, so hot footed it to Crafhole, even then we were only the third car to arrive.



All in all a great day out, the company is always good and no blame can be put at Sally and Keith's door. READ the route and OBEY the instructions.

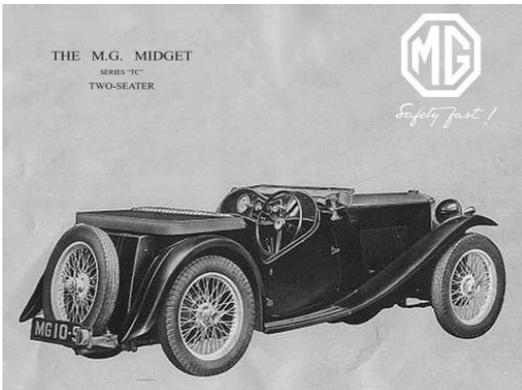
*Roger and Sylvia*

*Richard M. has also written a trial report for this run and asks for feedback before he volunteers to do more. There seems to be no reason not to include it here and thus offer encouragement to write more. Thanks Richard, Ed.*

The Sunday Lunch run from Carkeel to Crafhole took in some stunning views in southeast Cornwall, passing along lanes that are off the beaten track for many but if you wish to visit this locality you would be well rewarded. At the outset we were advised that, due to the weather and time of year, one particular passage might be muddy, and indeed we were not to be disappointed in that regard. Although a short cut was suggested as an alternative, once through the mud patch the route continued without further ado. In brief we initially headed north before turning to pass through Pillaton and traversing the narrow bridge across the river Lynher. At Tideford Cross a tight turn (requiring some embarrassing manoeuvring by your scribe) took us on **past** the turn to Tilland before passing under the A38 into the charming village of St Germans. The skies cleared and the sun came out as we took a turn southwards at Polbathic to "the top of the world" where the views were very far-reaching and rewarding. Finally turning East with spectacular views of surf, sea, and Rame Head in the distance, we headed for Crafhole and the "Little Fox" where we were served an excellent lunch in good company without fuss or bother. A jolly good day out.

*Richard M.*

# How MG and other British sports cars saved the nation



These three articles are inspired by a talk given by American author John Nikas, who wrote *Rule Britannia - When British Sports Cars Saved a Nation*, augmented by numerous other sources. So far we have discovered what an important part MG played in resurrecting a bankrupt post-war Britain by exporting cars to America and other parts of the world.

The MG T series cars may be revered classics now, but come the 1950s, with export orders still being so vital for Britain's balance of payments, these pre-war designed cars were out of date. A new model was needed to continue to bring in vital foreign cash.

## Part three...Mind the Gap!

In 1952 the British Motor Corporation was formed, comprising Austin, Morris, MG, Riley and Wolseley. It commanded a 40% share of the British market. That same year, BMC partnered a deal with Donald Healey to produce the Healey 100.

MG designer John Ferneley went to Longbridge with a new design for a car which would be more beautiful, more modern and faster than the MG TD. The new design had to have mass appeal to restore and even grow MG's earning power abroad. Post-war Britain was on the mend but the nation was still relatively poor.

Enter the MGA...except that it didn't. Unfortunately, the MGA proposal was 4 days late. BMC did not have the resources to put both the MGA and the Healey 100 into production at the same time. So the MGA ended up being delayed until 1955. Instead, in 1953 MG put the TF variation of the pre-war car into production. The TF Midget was an excellent car but at the time it was outdated. So many times, great British cars could and should have been brought to market but the money simply was not there to pay for them to be built.

Also in 1953 Triumph introduced the TR2, a car without a single compound curve - a shape made up of two or more arcs of successively shorter or longer radii - as these are expensive to produce. The order across all motor manufacturers was that everything had to be made as cheaply as possible. Body fit was atrocious. For speed, body panels were stamped out not singly to achieve a uniform result, but 10 to 12 at a time. The variance between panel 1 and panel 12 could be over a centimetre resulting in either gaping gaps between body parts or no gap at all, necessitating work with hammers and files.



*The fault rectification department at Abingdon*

Nikas says one of the greatest ironies today is British sports cars entering into concours events. Pristine cars were not what we were producing throughout the 40s and 50s. Brand new cars had poor paintwork, the aforementioned terrible body fit, and leaked oil onto display stands. Interviewed years later, the man in charge of quality control at Abingdon for Healey and MG said the only purpose of quality control was to ensure that a problem on the assembly line could be fixed afterwards. He could not recall a single time that quality control found a defect that was fixed before it was sent out. That was the dealers' job.

Jaguar was no better. When the big cats were shipped to the United States they had to send someone back into

the ship's hold with a sack to pick up the pieces that fell off during the voyage and make sure they went back in the car before they were delivered to the dealer to reattach so they didn't have to ship out new parts.

None of the British cars of the time were designed to last more than three years. Michael Dale, President of Jaguar, said the problem wasn't that Jaguar didn't know how to build a good car. The problem was they couldn't tell which one it was when it came time to sell it!

However, despite all this, the beauty of British sports cars was that they were simple. When anything did break it could be repaired quickly and easily as nothing is very complicated.

### **Bound for America**



*MGA assembly line of LHD cars*



*MGAs at the loading dock*

Finally brought to market in 1955, the MGA was the first 'modern' MG. The traditional square rigger models had fallen from favour and out of fashion. Although its performance was not breath-taking, the MGA went on to sell 101,081 examples, a feat never before achieved by a sports car, due to it being genuinely delightful with no significant weaknesses. The exception was the Twin Cam. The engine got itself a bad name for melting piston crowns resulting in crippling warranty claims.\* After selling just 2011 Twin-Cams, MG eventually withdrew this engine to be replaced by the reliable B-series 1622cc MkII model.

Fewer than 6,000 MGAs stayed on British roads and, as 95% of the total built was destined for overseas, it remains to this day the highest export percentage of any British car before or since.

For tax reasons, MGAs were exported as kits to Australia to be assembled locally and using some locally sourced parts, such as batteries, tyres and trim vinyl. Vinyl is better suited to extreme sunshine than the leather used on all UK built MGAs. *MG Enthusiast* magazine in December 2018 carried a detailed article about Australian MG assembly.

As well as being a pioneering exporter of cars, there was something else remarkable about MG. With the exception possibly of Rolls-Royce, MG built the best cars in Britain in terms of quality. They weren't always perfect, but they were better than their competitors.

Throughout the entire history of the factory, which is almost 50 years at Abingdon, MG never lost a single minute to a labour dispute - a claim unique to the company. Every worker considered that product was a part of them and that is why those cars ended up being the good cars they were, and still are today. In the words of John Nikas, the workforce of every other British car manufacture tended to be "drunk and angry all the time", which explains why those cars ended up being the way they were – initially of poor quality.

Established in the mid-1920s, it had taken only a few years for MG to go from being a small-scale, specialist car maker to become one of the world's leading sports car manufacturers. In the 40s and 50s the MG TC led broken Britain's vital Export or Die revolution helping revitalise the country's war-torn economy. But as the next decade began, the days of austerity were over. In came an exciting new era of liberation and fun.

In the Swinging Sixties the cars that start the West's sexual and cultural revolution, trail-blazed by bands such as The Beatles, The Who, The Rolling Stones and, yes, even The Monkees, are British cars like the MGA, the Mini and the E-Type. Those cars exported British pop culture around the world and managed to make a contribution far more excessive than might be expected of this little tiny island nation.



*Let the good times rock! The Monkees groovin' in an MGA.*

*R.I.P. Peter Tork who died last month aged 77*

If further proof were needed, look no further than the man who first truly exemplified a new generation of optimistic, uninhibited youthfulness. Elvis Presley, the greatest hip-swivelling, swoon-inducing pop idol in the world, wanted to look super cool driving around the sun-kissed tropics. In the 1961 film *Blue Hawaii* Elvis cast for his girlfriend's car a sexy red MGA. The King had taste (and Joan Blackman was a great casting too!).



Over 7,000 miles from where it was built in grey, industrial Abingdon, filming on a tiny island haven in the Pacific, Elvis chose to be seen driving a life-affirming car that perfectly encapsulated an exotic, sun worshipping, care-free lifestyle - a British MG. Elvis loved the roadster so much he bought it afterwards, and it is now on permanent display in Graceland. Amazing - now there's a car with provenance!

From 1952 the Magnette saloons, and from 1961 the MG Midgets, were produced in relatively low numbers and are somewhat outside the remit of these articles. But from 1962 the MGB era cannot be ignored as they too were a huge export earner, helping Britain grow financially strong again. Sales for the MGB, MGC and MGB GT V8 combined totalled 523,836 cars, the majority exported to the USA with the exception of the V8.

Moving on through the seventies and eighties, MG only made saloon Metros, Maestros and Montegos, giving Mazda a clear run to success with its little sporty MX5. It wasn't until 1993 that MG finally produced a new two-seater. Unfortunately, contemporary road tests often dismissed the RV8 as an indulgence, especially with its £26,000 price tag (over £45,000 in modern money). Only made with right hand drive, a large proportion of the limited RV8 production went to Japan – 1,579 of the 1,983 produced.

During this period the classic car movement was beginning to grow. With the surging American economy, owners could justify the cost of a "fun" car again. Now, on both sides of the Atlantic, many of these aging cars have been brought out of storage, repaired or restored and the owners are again rediscovering the joys of motoring as it used to be. Many export cars have been re-imported into Britain.

And today? Alan Magnuson of the MG Car Club in the US, estimates there could be as many as 30,000 families in America which own MG cars of various ages. In an interview in the Telegraph he said, "After the Second World War... up until 1980...roughly 60 per cent of MGs came to North America. MGs stir memories of youth in the Baby Boomer Generation and those older who recall seeing or driving MGs, Triumphs, Sunbeams, Fiats, Alfa Romeos...affordable sports cars were plentiful and desirable. Sports cars represent a carefree lifestyle."

MG, Triumph, AC, Aston Martin, Healey, Jaguar, Morgan and others made British sports cars that really did help save the nation and put broken post-war Britain back on its feet. The money they brought in was utterly vital, as were the jobs they provided. These companies were not giant conglomerates, but initially little independent companies. The cars themselves were relatively low-volume underdogs, but the British sports car is something that succeeded when it shouldn't.

As Aristotle said almost 2000 years ago, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts". In more recent times that great philosopher would surely have been a classic MG driver.

*\*The MGA Twin-cam engine problem was actually caused by the SU carburettors becoming lean due to the effects of engine vibration at a certain RPM causing the fuel to froth. It should have been a great engine that lifted MG well clear of its rivals, but instead was a costly failure due to insufficient development by BMC.*

*Howard*



Thanks to all who resonded to my plea for suggestions.  
Once you put your mind to it, it's lovely to see we have a membership with imagination!

Received entries	From
<i>My other car is a Rover.</i>	Howard
<i>James, just follow the signs to Barking.</i>	Howard
<i>James, I know it's raining, but please do try and avoid the poodles.</i>	Howard
<i>When Madam asked me to take the car for a poodle round the lanes this is not what I expected!</i>	John I.
<i>I thought it best not to say anything to Madam on our way back from the hairdressers.</i>	John I.
<i>James could you turn left at Pooh corner.</i>	John I.
<i>Jeeves and Woofster out for a drive, just poodling along.</i>	Jan P.
<i>Are we there yet driver?</i>	Margaret C.
<i>"Madam you are looking ravishing tonight, however I think you have forgotten the mouthwash!"</i>	Alan
<i>So, Karl Lagerfeld was your friend too?</i>	Murray C.
<i>Just "poodling along"</i>	Richard M.
<i>'Parker got his wires crossed, when he dropped Lady Penelope at the poodle parlour and not the beauty parlour!'</i>	Sally
<i>To the park James</i>	Nigel V
<i>Driving miss Lazy</i>	Roger
<i>How much is that doggie in the window</i>	Roger
<i>James please close the window the draught is spoiling my new hairdo.</i>	Janis
<i>I'm so glad we have a classic Rolls, Jeeves; a seat belt would simply destroy my latest all-over coiffeur.</i>	John H.
<i>Just keep your eyes on the road, he said.</i>	Margaret H.
<i>You really should be in back maam</i>	John N
<i>Mind that cat</i>	
<i>Get that cat</i>	John N

The winner of February's competition, Noel, has chosen this month's winning entry. That honour goes to...John I. who now gets to choose next month's winner.



Here is the photo that requires a caption for our April Newsletter.  
Your entries please by email to:  
[mediatvmgoc@gmail.com](mailto:mediatvmgoc@gmail.com)



## And finally...



### Traveller's tales

These tales have nothing to do with cars, but one thing we all surely have in common in the depth of winter is to look forward to our summer holidays. Of course, these do not always go exactly to plan. Plymouth Travel Expert Anthony Goord (Jan and I can heartily recommend Peter Goord Travel Agents) thought he'd share some of the genuine complaints sent to tour operators. Standby to have your belief well and truly beggared.

*"It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England. It took the Americans only three hours to get home. This seems unfair."*

*"Although the brochure said that there was a fully equipped kitchen, there was no egg-slicer in the drawers."*

*"I compared the size of our one-bedroom suite to our friend's three-bedroom suite, and ours was significantly smaller."*

*"On my holiday to Goa in India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food."*

*"They should not allow topless sunbathing on the beach. It was very distracting for my husband who just wanted to relax."*

*"We went on holiday to Spain and had a problem with the taxi drivers as they were all Spanish."*

*"We booked an excursion to a water park, but no-one had told us we had to bring our own swimsuits and towels. We assumed it would be included in the price."*

*"The beach was too sandy. We had to clean everything when we returned to our room."*

*"We found the sand was not like the sand in your brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as white, but it was more yellow."*

*"It's lazy of the local shopkeepers in Puerto Vallarta to close in the afternoons. I often need to buy things during 'siesta' time – this should be banned."*

*"No-one told us there would be fish in the water. The children were scared."*

*"The brochure said, 'No hairdressers at the resort'. We are trainee hairdressers and we think they knew and made us wait longer for service."*

*"When we were in Spain there were too many Spanish people there. The receptionist spoke Spanish, the food was Spanish. No-one told us that there would be so many foreigners."*

*"We had to wait outside to catch the boat and there was no air-conditioning."*

*"It is your duty as a travel operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests before we travel."*

*"My fiancée and I requested twin-beds when we booked, but instead we were placed in a room with a king bed. We now hold you responsible, and want to be re-reimbursed for the fact that I became pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room we had booked."*

Not everyone is quite so amorous though...

