

# The History of the Tamar Valley MG Owners Club



## 1982 - 2021

It all started back in 1982 when following some initial publicity, a large number of MG enthusiasts met at the Strathmore Hotel and the Tamar Valley MG Owners Club was formed with Alan Davies of Tamar Valley Motoring Centre being elected as the first Club Secretary. The link between the Club and the local MG specialist was also cemented when they agreed to become a sponsor of the Club and this was a relationship that remained until 2017 when the owner started to wind down his business involvement.

Monthly meetings have been held at various establishments over the years covering most of the local area. The first meeting point was at the Holland Inn (now The Cardinals Hatt) but we soon moved to The Notter Bridge Inn with the meetings taking place in what was then their new conservatory and we have also been as far East as The Mill at Avonwick on the A38. Other venues such as The Mayflower Inn at Ernesettle, The White Thorn at Shaugh Prior and The Moorland Hotel have come and gone with the requirements of changing membership numbers and the availability of venues. In 2007 we moved to what was then The Moorland Links Hotel (latterly The Moorland Garden) which with its large car park and flexible meeting rooms remained our home until the summer of 2020, when sadly the hotel ceased trading.

This closure was a bit of a blow because we were at this time also trying to keep the club functioning albeit online only, having had to postpone all our club activities from March 2020 due to the Covid- 19 pandemic. Fortunately we managed to find another suitable venue for our club meetings and will be returning to one of our old haunts, the Moorland Hotel at Wotter. Hopefully if the planned route map out of this pandemic goes to plan, we should be able to resume our normal club activities sometime in July 2021.

The Club is an affiliated member Club of the Main MG Owners Club and we have made regular article contributions for publication in Enjoying MG as well as the monthly report from the Secretary which used to go by post, then by fax and nowadays it is sent by email with just the click of a mouse, it is amazing to think that this wonder of technology is now so commonplace and even now to the younger generation, perhaps a bit old hat!!!

In 2007 we were honoured to have the founder of the MGOC Roche Bentley as the guest speaker at a black tie dinner to celebrate the Clubs Silver Jubilee and that year we also had an organised run for all Classic cars. This was repeated in 2009 and was organised by a small sub-committee who decided to have a theme for the event and so 'The People & Places Run' was born. This theme has endured through the years with runs taking place in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018. We should have held a run in 2020 but PP6 had to be postponed until 2021 due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. It should perhaps be noted that these runs are also able to raise funds for a chosen charity.



In the earlier days the annual Club weekend away went to Clyro near Hay on Wye for a number of years before adopting an islands theme with visits to Jersey, The Isle of Man, Guernsey, and The Isle of Wight. The Club has also struck out onto The Continent with visits to Brittany, an invasion of the Normandy Landing Beaches on 'Operation Over There' in 2012 and most memorably another trip to France where Hilary & Keith shared their honeymoon with 10 other members (that's dedication for you!!, but more of that later).

The Club has also enjoyed a number of camping weekends at Harford Bridge near Tavistock thanks to very long standing members Irene & Gerald who at that time ran the holiday park there, before letting the younger generation take over the running of their challenging family business.

In 2016 we visited Llanerchindda Farm near Llandovery in Mid Wales for what turned out to be an exceptionally well organised weekend enjoying their Classic Car Tour package. The club has since returned to Llanerchindda in 2018 and also 2020 for a permitted socially distanced weekend.

In 2004, the Club staged a MG themed day at Crownhill Fort which included a timeline of members' cars from John Hunt's 1938 MG YA Tickford through to what was at the time the latest model, the MGTF.

Throughout the years The Club has been very active in the Devon and Cornwall area regularly attending shows with a good number of cars in both counties. In Cornwall at events such as Morval, Boconnoc & Launceston Steam Fairs, Wadebridge Wheels and days out on the Bodmin & Wenford Railway where we usually have priority parking thanks to their Engineering Director being a Club Member. In Devon regular events have been Killerton House & Morwellham Quay shows, the annual historic vehicle gathering at Powderham Castle and The English Riviera Show at Paignton where in 2010 we won the trophy for 'Best Club Stand'.



We also have good numbers of cars representing the Club on the Classic Car Runs in the local area such as Exeter's Moor to Sea, The ACE and Cornish Riviera Runs both organised by the MG Car Club and The Healey Drivers Club's Exmoor Rut every October. In recent years we have started to centre the annual Club weekend away around other MGOC affiliated Clubs Runs and have been to the New Forest, Cotswold Caper and Bridgend's Cwm To Coast to name a few.



Members of the Club attended the national events to mark the 50th anniversary of the MGB in 2012

which saw over 2000 MGBs gathered on the lawns at Blenheim Palace.

Unfortunately it was a really wet day but it didn't stop us having a great weekend away. In 2015 a large group of members were also at MGF20 which was held at The British Motor Museum at Gaydon, where all of the cars were parked according to colour, quite a sight! and we also took part in the Run to the home of the MGF/TF at the old Longbridge factory on the Sunday.



During this weekend, thanks to Tony MacManus' contacts within Aston Martin, we were very privileged to have a private tour of their factory where some amazing machinery was on display, a truly incredible once in a lifetime experience.

The Club has always maintained a full diary of events to cover the whole year with very successful and well supported monthly Sunday Lunch Runs to various hostleries taking place during the off-season winter months. In 2012 Friday Evening Supper Runs were introduced again on a monthly basis but between May & August and these remain very popular.



No Club can function without those few members who are willing and able to be members of the Elected Committee. The numbers of Committee members have fluctuated over the years depending on the size of the membership but while Committee members have changed roles and come and



gone continuity of leadership has always been maintained with the focus of the Club being centred on friendship and fun for those who have an interest in the best of British Classic Cars.

There was an earlier mention of dedication in this article with reference to Hilary & Keith Medland who are very long standing members of the Club and who between them have served either together or separately on the Committee for 14

years between 1997 – 2011, dedication indeed and it is in no small way thanks to their determination that the Club is the thriving and vibrant organisation that it is

today. So that is it, we are up to date and well into our 39th year, as we anticipate the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions.

*Alan Colville, Chairman 2016 - Present*

References: This article has been written using information and extracts from previously documented accounts written by the following Club Members: Long standing members Keith & Hilary Medland who in 2012 provided a comprehensive account of the Club's history from inception through to the 30th anniversary. Ade Nursey – Events Secretary 2016-17.