



# The BREED

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[www.mgcc-ct.co.za](http://www.mgcc-ct.co.za)



Affiliated to the  
MG Car Club - England

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JULY 2016

## FROM THE (VICE) CHAIR

As Brian is away on holiday in Italy he asked me to write what would normally be his bit in the newsletter. Well I have a few thoughts that I would like to share with you.

Shirley and I have just returned from our third Milligans Rally which was held in Mossel Bay this year, we thoroughly enjoyed the event. The organisers go to an enormous amount of work to make sure that the event is successful and participating in events like this is a lot of fun. Where this is leading is that I would like to encourage you to participate in as many events as you are able to. Most especially, the 2016 Indaba in Tshwane and the 2017 Cape Centres Gathering in the Wilderness are MG events that you should not miss.

I am particularly pleased that the Saturday braais have proved popular with members – at the braai on Saturday 4th June we once again saw many members who had not attended the Tuesday evening meetings for some time. I am sure that we will have more of these.

The run on Sunday 19th June to the Fireman's Arms was held in typical Cape winter rain and it was a rare sight to see more plastics than MGs! Thank you to all those who attended, no matter which car you came in, a special thumbs up to those who braved the weather in their MGs.

The July meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th July – the theme will be “Christmas in July” which is a popular event – Dieter will be making his famous Gluhwein, so don't miss out.

The club made a donation to the Oasis Foundation in lieu of flowers following Ralph Clarke's death and has received a letter of thanks from them.

Keep warm.

**Philip**

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There seems to be nothing but doom and gloom around the world so let's make a change and get into the spirit of things on the 12th July! Wear something 'Christmassy' be it hat or scarf, to chase the 'blues' away.

Some interesting articles in this Breed and true to his word, Roger Lewis has given us a fascinating insight into his history of MGs on pages 8-10. There is more to follow in the next issue.

Henry Watermeyer shares nostalgic memories of his friendship with Ralph Clarke on pages 6-7.

Last day for submission of articles for the August issue of The Breed is 23rd July.

### **Fran**

### Our bank details are:

<b>Bank:</b>	Standard Bank
<b>Account:</b>	MG Car Club – Cape Town Centre
<b>Branch code:</b>	036 309
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## OUT AND ABOUT

### JULY

Tuesday	12th	<b>“Christmas in July”</b> at CHC Clubhouse, Riebeeck Street, Wynberg 7:30pm
Thursday	28th	Veteran’s run to Darling - details below

### AUGUST

??	??	Natter & Noggin at CHC Clubhouse, Riebeeck Street, Wynberg (date still to be advised)
Thursday	25th	Veteran’s run - details in next issue of The Breed

#### VETERAN’S RUN TO DARLING OLIVES (28th July)

The run will take us to Darling Olives for olive tasting, followed by lunch at Brig’s Barn in Darling. Starting at the Farmyard, Melkbosstrand off the R27, from there it is a 55km drive to Darling Olives. Unfortunately there are roadworks on R27 and R307. There is a **stop/go** with a possible delay of 20 mins on R307, those who wish to travel at a slow pace must leave by 09h15 and those who wish to travel faster must leave by 09h30 at the latest, to be at Darling Olives by 10h30. Those who would like to go direct please let us know and we can email directions to you. Cost of olive tasting R30pp payable in cash to Angela or Roger at either the Farmyard or at Darling Olives.

After olive tasting and shopping we will go back 4kms to Brig’s Barn for lunch. A 2-course lunch for R110pp including gratuity or if you prefer only a main course at R85pp. Payable in cash to Angela or Roger please. In order to assist with catering we would ask those who are attending to kindly indicate their choice from the below menu:

*Main course:* 150g steak, egg and chips (or) bobotie and rice (or) beer battered fish and chips (all with salad)

*Dessert:* malva pudding and custard (or) chocolate brownie (or) apple crumble and cream or ice cream

All liquid refreshment is to be paid for on purchase please.

Other sights in Darling include: Evita se Peron Museum, Darling Museum, old churches and Darling Brew, a craft brewery where one can taste their range of 13 beers for R110 (3 or 4 people may share IF so desired)

**Contact details:** Angela or Roger Manton 083 415 3184 email: mantons@telkomsa.net



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## **Veteran's run to Cape Town Stadium in May - Colin Cromhout**

It started with a typically beautiful, windless autumn day with a moderate temperature leaning towards 19 degrees. We could not have asked for better weather. All the usual suspects met in the car park outside the Stadium at 09:30 as planned, to start our tour at 10:00.

There were 31 of us in attendance and our tour guide, a young lady, Keisha, rounded us up and ushered us to a view point on the second highest floor for a briefing. She told us that the cost to build the stadium was a staggering R4,5 billion and it was built to accommodate 68 000 people, however in the end they only fitted 55 000 seats.

It was of course built and used for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, an event that many of us will never forget. We were taken to the grass area but were not allowed to walk on it.

Very high above us, we were shown the glass and aluminium panels that surround the stadium roof. I was told later at lunch, that one of the members of our club had actually walked on those panels during the installation process. My immediate thought was that only he and his laundry man would have known how he felt doing that.

Today the stadium is the home to AJAX Cape Town and is used for the Rugby Sevens games as well. Another use for the stadium has been music concerts, for international stars like Mariah Carey and Lionel Ritchie, to name but a few.

We were taken to the Presidential Suite on the top floor, to see where the VIPs are hosted. After that we were shown the dressing rooms and relaxation areas with Jacuzzi baths, steam showers and even an ice bath. We were then shown the jail where the troublemakers are kept during the games.

The tour ended with us all making our way to the Cattle Baron Restaurant in Constantia, where arrangements had been made for us to accommodate the entire top floor of the restaurant to enjoy a delicious buffet lunch.

Our sincere thanks go to Brian and Jenny Armstrong for arranging a most enjoyable outing.



## SOCIAL NEWS

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Mike Kahn
- 7 John Taylor
- 9 Nico Montauban
- 11 Carol Cromhout
- 14 Pat Crawford
- 16 Roy Zazeraj, Elmien Burger
- 21 Vernon Terrapon
- 22 Mike Plows
- 25 June Opperman
- 26 Chris du Plessis
- 30 Richard Grinstead
- 31 Dinky Braun, Chris Nel

Happy Birthday to you all!

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Special thoughts are with Eileen Dallimore who, unfortunately was involved in a serious car accident on 7th June and has spent 3 weeks in Paarl Medi-Clinic. At present she is still in high-care and Brian and family are going through a very stressful time. Eileen, we are all thinking of you during this time and hope each day brings renewed strength.



*Importers of Classic and Modern Car Parts*

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## Who is Gerry, What is she, Why does she matter?

*This is a story about a car and a man.*

*The car is a 1936 MG PB called Gerry.*

*The man was Ralph Clarke.*

Nothing is known of the pre-war history of Gerry but a chap called Stewart Cunninghame bought her from a local, Johannesburg dealer towards the end of the war. Stewart used her as everyday transport between his home in Johannesburg and his work in Pretoria. Today a trip of some 65km by motorway, but then a long road through Orange Grove, Halfway House and Irene. Not a jaunt to undertake lightly in a little 950cc sports car. Every day!!

After a couple of years a Rhodesian called Sam Tingle made Stewart an offer he couldn't understand for the car. That money was used as a deposit to buy a brand new MG TC, at which point exit Stewart from the history.

Sam removed the engine, gearbox and brakes before abandoning the remains in a hedge in a leafy suburb of Johannesburg. He took the parts and incorporated them in what became a well known Rhodesian racing J2 special. This car is still owned by the Tingle family and as far as I know is still north of the border.

Along came an engineering apprentice called Ralph Clarke who extracted the car from its hedge, it is not known if he paid for it, and then rebuilt it. Then blue, it was used as daily transport, to race and most importantly to court Hilda.

As a racing car, Gerry is reputed to have achieved 90 mph around the Gunner Circle track in Epping, Cape Town. That is 145 kph in 1950/51 from 950cc and on narrow 400 wide tyres. For those who don't know Gunners Circle is/was a wide road built as part of the development of a new post war industrial area outside Cape Town and even today to achieve this kind of speed would require big .... "whatever". At some stage the car was fitted with smaller hydraulic brakes.

Ralph married Hilda and eventually sold the car. The arrival of Robin may have had something to do with its sale. Its history for around 6 months is not clear but it was then bought by Dick Riley who became a neighbour of my parents and was eventually bought by me in 1970, although I had the use of her before buying her.

Ralph and Dick were good friends and Ralph retained his interest in her over the years, thereby ensuring that I also became a friend of his. Dick did extensive work on the car and painted it black.

I used the car regularly for a while and my then wife used it to take prospective clients to see houses in upper Sea Point and Green Point. Dodgy brakes, crash box and low power notwithstanding.

In a process that is in itself a story, Dickon Daggit and I swapped the small brakes that he needed for his J2 with the correct cable operated large drums she now wears.



At the first MMM meet in Franschhoek in 2013 Ralph drove Gerry, now red, for the first time in probably some 60 years and reported that she felt exactly as she always had.

Ralph; Gerry and I will miss you greatly and I am sorry you could not be reunited with her again last year.

## **Henry Watermeyer**

(Honorary Life Member MG Car Club, Cape Town)

During the course of last year I was recalling my early days of MG ownership, my first MG being a 1969 white BGT in nowhere near concours condition, not that I knew what concours meant back then. I had just returned from doing a stint overseas and my dad was helping me pick out a car for getting around. Before leaving for overseas I had sold a Triumph 1500 saloon which I had enjoyed what I was looking for was a Triumph 2000. We came home with an MGBGT; it didn't take long to appreciate the MG.

Spares that I needed were being gained from Rob Motors, who were the MG agents at the time, eventually the parts manager suggested that I contacted the MG Car Club who were sure to be able to help me more than he could, one way of getting rid of what was obviously becoming a headache. What followed not only helped with my quest to improve the condition of my MG, but so much more, virtually a lifetime's association with MG and all the very special people that make up our movement here and abroad. Some of my closest friends are those from the MG world. But before I waffle on and you run for the tissues let me stay on the MG track.

After doing a series of running improvements on the BGT, the car was stripped to its shell and fully rebuilt, it was entered in the club concours and won, the car went on to be appreciated as a fine example of the Breed. It was also the car on which I cut my teeth on how to do things properly, even if in order to do this I needed help from others, even purveyors of rice bowls for which I am eternally grateful.

On a return trip from an MG Indaba in East London, at which the BGT won its class, those travelling together thought that swapping cars would help to break up the long homeward journey, I think it was actually a cunning plan to keep the young Lewis in check, stopping him rushing off into the far distance. The masters of the plan conspired to have me drive Garth Green's TD whilst he drove my cherished GT. The plan failed, the TD was fantastic, with the wind in my hair I was off. The miles clicked by and the TD purred along steadily. Once I had settled into the saddle I began to become concerned as why I could not see any signs of the trailing group, thinking the worst I pulled over in the next patch of civilisation and waited, then over the rise appeared my beloved GT, Garth was as relieved as I was that both cars were none the worse for their experiences. But the seed had been well and truly planted; a TD was in my future.

As now, finding a TD was not an easy exercise, unless you had a good bank balance. One example was found but on review was not considered to be the right investment; it was eventually acquired by Paul Tops and served him well. The TD quest was not forgotten but other adventures intervened.

The next chapter in my MG career started when I was asked by a friend if I would be prepared to go and collect a BGT V8 he had purchased from a chap in White River and drive it back to Cape Town. I accepted the adventure and was dispatched to White River where I met Rodney Green for the first time. I got in the car and drove the V8 through the night to get back to my girlfriend of the time, who later became my wife.

I recall filling up in Bloemfontein and driving the leg to Beaufort West, average speed being a hundred miles an hour. Back 1982 this was quite something, pity the overdrive was not working at the time.

Having been spoilt by the sheer driving pleasure of the V8, I put the word out that should one become available I would be interested. It was not long and one was available, but for more money than I had, (at the time a new small model BMW cost the same) I needed a loan, so now starts my lifetime apprenticeship in the world of money matters and the bank. With my life signed away with policies to match and my first debt, the V8 was mine.

The V8 was fantastic as long as you were not trying to drive in a club convoy. Even at modest speed a V8 is on idle, if you touch the throttle you are gone. For all intents and purposes the V8 has an automatic gearbox, once rolling gears are of little purpose. Yet with the 1800 if you wanted it to go you needed to put in the effort, using all the gears, third and fourth overdrive to keep your speed developing as you pulled away, the car was a lot more engaging. Having two MG's was just not logical especially without secure garaging. After much to-ing and fro-ing the 1800 was sold. It was not easy and in many ways I think I sold the wrong one which may seem silly but stayed with me.

During the ensuing period details of a wife, homeownership and career developments all transpired. We first got a bond that enabled the purchase of a small doer upper cottage; even then houses in Cape Town were far more expensive than other major centres, by way of example a 3 bedroom house in Durban with a double garage could be bought for that of a small two bedroom cottage without a garage in Claremont. A garage was added so the V8 could be close at hand, daily hacks being used for general transport.

Times were tough financially as it was for many but there in the garage was a car that if sold would have paid off the bond. The car stayed and the bills got paid.

By this time my involvement in the MG Club saw me undertake various committee roles, including stints as Chairman.

As Chairman of the club you receive all sort of calls, the theme of this particular period were calls relating to how much should I pay for an XYZ MG, at times it could get quite frustrating, almost to the point of saying well how long is a piece of string.

However one particular call was a bit different as the caller was having difficulty sharing what type of MG he was considering. The usual suspect descriptions were shared, BGT, MGB, MGA, none of which seem to fit, only when I started to share the form of a T Type did things seem to make any sense. My interest by this time was now on high alert to trace the car, especially if it was a TD. Calls were made and with the help of Robin Clark the MG was understood to be a TD on a small holding just outside Gordon's Bay.

What was to be found were the remains of a TD half buried under a tree in what can be best described as a chicken run, a classic basket case. 2000.00 Rands were exchanged and I had the basis of my TD. To put the money paid in perspective it was half the deposit I later paid for what would be our home in Tokai, with a double garage. The TD could not come home as the Tokai house was still to come, so it found refuge at my parents' home where it matured for a few years longer.

Rather than starting a further chapter the TD was completed some 10 years later and lived alongside the V8 in the garage in Tokai. Every outing the TD was the car of choice, with the V8 standing. The bond was still there no matter how hard all the savings went in to pay it off. The time had come to settle the debts and the V8 was sold.

Without the bond life was far easier, work however had become quite consuming and then life threw a curved ball with my wife leaving for a new life, tough times to say the least.

The house was retained along with the TD, but not a lot else, as tough as it was the sun began to shine and the opportunity to buy John Lock's MG Maestro Turbo was shared by Stuart Leach, the car was viewed, tested and driven away.

Not long after, Andrea and her two girls entered my life and the Maestro being a four door, served a valued purpose when it came to MG weekends away which were quite popular at that time.

Andrea and I settled on sharing our lives, the Tokai house was sold in favour of investing in what has become our home in Noordhoek and together we set about converting what was a house in dire despair to the home we enjoy today. The great bonus in all of this was garage space that could accommodate 4 cars, more toy space than ever before. The TD and Maestro soon settled in and for a while there was room to spare. Even an E-Type came to roost for a while, by the time all its little bugs were ironed out the owner returned, but I still get to drive it now and again.

With the house and garage all rebuilt and fitted out a Hedgehog appeared and a new chapter of MG magic commenced, this time on the track, but that's a further chapter.

Racing had also touched Mervyn Corbishley who being involved in Hedgehog set about converting his yet to be completed MGA into a track car. He enjoyed a few events but came to the realisation that racing at his stage of life was not for him, he shared his thoughts and after some bartering the MGA filled the last remaining slot in my garage.

The Maestro has not been without its challenges which I have learnt to understand and maintain, dealing with these challenges has given me a far greater appreciation of the simpler things in life, the trusty TD and my fond memories of my original BGT.

I started to seriously consider adding a BGT to my growing little collection. I looked at a few examples but somehow they didn't do justice to my now distorted memories. Sharing my thoughts with my good friend Mr Leach, not many weeks past when Stuart called to share Ralph Clark was reluctantly selling his late model, very low mileage 1980 MGB. A viewing and tea were arranged and the car taken for a test drive, a trade was agreed and the B moved to its new home in Noordhoek. Not before first negotiating with Andrea to give up some of her garage space so that a fifth MG could be fitted in. Andrea aided the process with a spirit of total support.

The B was in very original condition and has hardly been touched from new, apart from tyres and the fitting of stainless steel exhaust. Once home I could give the B a detailed survey, there were some oil leaks and with the passing of time some fair wear and tear was resulting in the onset of some serious patina, especially on the front suspension, cross member and wheel backing plates. My dilemma was to either try and patch up what was actually a rather poor paint job done when the car was first produced, or leave it claiming originality.



**Next instalment – Claiming back the years.**

## FOR SALE

Distributor - new electronic hall type. To replace Lucas type 25D or 45D. Simple two wire connection, no more points and condensers. The unit is new and still in the box (R3000)

**Contact:** Pat Coyne 072 348 4493 / pacman@kingsley.co.za

**1971 MGB GT** in BRG with wire wheels and factory sun-roof. One of the best GTs which due to lack of space must sadly go to a good home. This is a genuine 3 owner car originally owned by a well-known Cape Town family. It has just been recommissioned after a number of years in dry storage. With very little use, just 55000 km as confirmed by the service book. It has been extensively refurbished with many new parts and sympathetic upgrades.

Price: R135,000 negotiable

**Contact:** Pat Coyne 072 348 4493

**MG TF160 (1967)** \_Engine rebuilt with updated gasket/stiffer oilrail. New cylinders, belt, waterpump, tyres, etc. Gunmetal grey, black leather. Car in excellent condition, runs very well.

Bargain at first R80,000 **Contact:** Brian Crawford 082 783 6921

## TECHNICAL TIP

Rubber bumper loose gear knob. You will find that no amount of tightening will help. Removal is straight forward but needs to be done carefully. Prise the top cap and switch loose. Loosen the two wires from the switch and remove cap with switch. The lower metal part of the knob is held on to the lever by a nut below and a ring inside. Loosen the lower nut then carefully twist off the inner ring. Withdraw the ring and the knob being careful not to damage the wires. Now you will see the reason for the problem, the soft metal of the knob will have thread-like indentations in the soft alloy of the knob. This is caused by the constant vibration of the lever, the key is moulded in one piece with the knob. Now you can start the refurbishment. Remove the switch from the cap and wash out with switch cleaner, benzene can be used. Lubricate with Q20 or similar. Clean plastic cap, the shift diagram can be re-painted using white PVA. Screw switch back into cap. Now make up a shim collar to fit into the metal knob, this can be cut from a smooth piece of jam tin or a beer can. Cut a strip of shim the same width as the length of the knob's internal key. Wrap the shim strip around the threaded part of the gear lever or a bolt with a similar diameter. Cut the shim tube needs to be cut to fit around the knob key, slide the tube into the knob. A few coats of satin black paint on the knob and you are ready to re-assemble. The lower nut on the lever at its lowest point, the knob carefully pushed onto the lever keeping the shim in place. The knob key must line up with the lever key way. Replace the upper retaining-ring and screw down with long nose pliers till the top of the ring matches the top of the lever. Tighten the lower nut pushing the knob up into place, reconnect the wires to the switch, snap the cap back.

You now have a better than new gear knob.

**Pat Coyne**

## **HILLSIDE FARM VISIT IN MAY**

**Maureen James**

The morning when we arrived at our gathering place at the local Moerse Farm Stall in Napier there was no hint of showers but a km outside the village the heavens opened - bringing smiles to the faces of our local farmers whose wheat seeds have been longing for a chance to germinate.

Group 1 included a modern MG TF, a MGB GT, Ford Anglia and a 24 year old Toyota.

24 kms later we arrived at Van Brakel Stoor where the Opel Tigre from Bonnievale and Morris convertible from Hermanus made up Group 2. A further 7kms we met up with group 3 at the entrance to the Van Straaten's delightful Hillside Farm.

Sam welcomed us and led us into the expansive farmhouse which has been in the family for four generations. Many additions to the building has made an interesting layout where it was easy to become lost.

The lovely old furniture dating back to the last century drew us all back in time as we took in Sam's interesting stories of life in bygone days. There were many examples of implements and strange-looking appliances that surprised us. The sharp blades used for blood-letting for healing as well as the forceps used to help castrate young bulls, intrigued and frightened me.

Tea and coffee were served in the enormous kitchen where Sam's wife cooks on the most modern of appliances while Sam was busy in an outside building preparing Waterblommetjie bredie for us, the visitors, in a large black cast-iron pot. Small new potatoes and cauliflower accompanied the waterblommetjies served with rice and roasted butternut which filled the pot to the brim.

Sixteen of us sat around the gigantic dining table. Sam had started the dish before 8 on the open hearth, where his mother-in-law had prepared meals each day for the Italian prisoners of war who worked on the farm as labourers. After the war many of them refused to return to Europe as they had fallen in love with the country and the beautiful girls here.

Sam showed us the family graveyard overlooking the oaks, lawns and the colourful garden. When his father-in-law passed on a grave was dug for his resting place on the site of the original farmhouse. One of the older relatives asked why Sam had chosen that particular spot for the grave? He was surprised to hear that it was exactly over the bedroom where his father-in-law had entered the world.

The waterblommetjie bredie, which was a first for many of us, proved to be absolutely delicious. Pecan nut pie with ice-cream for pudding and the red and white wines made the meal extra special. Sam is an excellent example of a farmer chef and everyone of us congratulated him on the fare. He told us that he had appreciated our company since he had enjoyed himself better than any of us and looked forward to arranging another visit to a friend's farm when we should bring picnic hampers to swop and also climb the mountain.

This could be in springtime, we will be sure to remind him.

Because there was such a relaxed atmosphere in such beautiful surroundings it made the camaraderie special. It was on an occasion such as this that everyone was able to catch up on the lives of others in the group which isn't always possible.