



WAMGOC



The "Wycombe Area MG Owners Club" Newsletter - sponsored by Summit Motors

Issue No 157

January 2005

Many of us ended 2004 on a very low note with the dreaded "English" cold/flu. Gerry, Keith, and your ed to name but three!

However we're all on the mend now. We're again dreaming of warmer days, of long runs in reliable MGs, of fun and of good food and drink, the last two not dependent on the season (see Keith's Bit).

After a few technical problems with my first effort, I embark on No 157 quite a bit wiser.

Let's hope that it's not a case of a little learning is a dangerous thing.

Keith's Bit

Happy New Year to all of you. I do hope you are looking forward as much as I am to a fantastic year of MGing in 2005. Lets hope we see plenty of good weather for the events we have planned?

December 2004 proved to be a great month of celebrations for WAMGOC with three of our most popular events.

December Christmas Quiz

Our Christmas Quiz took place at The Gate on Wednesday the 1st December.

Thanks to Clive Walters, Willie Richmond last year's winners who did a great job of setting the questions for us. The evening was spent pondering over the answers, some proving to be very difficult with some very brain numbing sections and I know we were all very relieved when it was all over and the winners were announced.

Stan & Jane Best our 2002 winners were again on

the ball with the most right answers and now have the honour of organizing next year's quiz. They will hopefully go easy on us and make the questions a little easier than in 2003. Well done yet again to Stan & Jane and Clive & Willie.

Pre Christmas Dinner

On Sunday 12th December 59 members enjoyed an excellent pre-Christmas lunch at Capriccio Italian Restaurant, Hazlemere Crossroads, for a completely turkey-free Christmas celebratory meal. The staff at Capriccio looked after us so well and a great time was had by all. We will certainly be paying them another visit very soon.

Thanks to Sue Knowles for organizing the feast.

Photo Quest

Forty-nine WAMGOC members and friends took part in this year's post Christmas Photographic Quest in Amersham Old Town on Monday 27th December.

After meeting in the car park of the Swan between 10 & 10.30am, small groups of members and friends set off to walk around the village in search of the answers to the set questions.

It was cold and bright as we started, with a bit of a wind blowing, but unlike last year this didn't turn to sleet and snow and a pleasant if not cold mornings walk was enjoyed by all. What really got us all through was the thought of a pint and some dinner in a nice warm pub afterwards.

The idea as usual was to search through pictures of objects from the sides of houses, chimney pots, gate post, and other unusual items taken from different angles, finding their locations and the answering a question about that location. The only twist was that there was no set route and the pictures aren't in the right order.

On arrival back at the pub our organizers Trevor

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and Jacky Cox had a Picture puzzle set for us to complete, just in case our brains hadn't been stretched enough by then.

After a good warm and a fine lunch, Trevor announced that the winners and next year's event organizers were past winners Sue, Phil and Ian.

Results:

Sue, Phil, & Ian	39pts
Pat & Roger Anderson	34pts
Sheila, Kate, Scott)
Terry Payne) 33pts

Ed's note. I am informed that a special award was made to Chris & Keith to celebrate their outstanding achievement of 100% correct in the Photo Recognition Section

Well done to them and many thanks to Trevor and Jacky for all their hard work and giving us such a wonderful day.

Annual Photographic Competition

As has now become the custom, we'll be holding our Photographic Competition at our February meeting – so now's the time to check you have a suitable entry for both categories – or if not get the Kodak clicking over the next few weeks.

As usual, there will be the two categories – Best Photo and Funniest Photo and the only criteria are that the photos must have been taken during 2004 and must be MG related (however remotely!)

Please either send your entries to Sue Knowles by the January meeting, or soon after.

I am sure the standard will be as high, if not higher, than usual!

Don't forget the MG Spares Day at Stoneliagh on Sunday 20th February.

Trade stands, autojumble, club displays and MG's for sale, all in 125,000 sq.ft of heated halls at Stoneleigh Park exhibition & conference Centre, Coventry.

Tickets cost £8 on the day, or £7 if you book by phone on 01568 797881, or on line @

www.mgshow.co.uk, www.classiccarshows.org.uk, by the 10th of February.

WAMGOC Octagonal Run

It was decided that next years Octagonal Run would take place on Sunday 14th August 2005. Please make a note of this in your diaries, as it is important that you're there to help us have a good day and raise a good sum for our charity. Suggestions and offers of help will always be well received. Watch this space for details of forthcoming WAMGOC events.

Next year any surplus amounts leftover from WAMGOC events will be given in memory of Margaret Mealing to the Ian Renee Hospice at home charity, who looked after her in the latter part of her illness at the end of last year.

David Lloyd has already started work on updating our web site and constructing a new one, so why not pay them a visit @ www.brmmbrrmm.com/wamgoc and www.wamgoc.org where you will be able to follow all the latest WAMGOC news and see many WAMGOC pictures.

WAMGOC 20th Birthday Celebrations.

As you may know WAMGOC turned eighteen in June this year and Phil and I were wondering what we should do for our twentieth birthday in 2006. We need to know what celebrations you would like us to organize for the end of June 2006. I'm sure Chris will make us a wonderful cake, can we get past members back for the party, does anyone have addresses for members who have moved away, are we having a BBQ a dinner-dance or a barn dance? Its up to you.

Just tell us what you want and we'll start making the plans!

A birthday Road Run and a barn dance are just two of the suggestion to come from members so far.

Does any one know of a barn dances caller or band that would be suitable?

Please keep your ideas coming!

WAMGOC DIARY DATES

January 2005

Wed 5th Monthly Meeting, The Gate.

February

Wed 2nd Photo Completion & Monthly Meeting, The Gate.

Sun 20th MG Spares Day at NAC, Stoneliagh March

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Wed 2nd Monthly Meeting, The Gate.
April
Wed 6th Monthly Meeting, The Gate.
Fri/Sun 15/17th WAMGOC Weekend Away,
Salston Manor Hotel, Ottery St Mary.
May
Wed 4th Monthly Meeting, The Gate.
Sat 14th Informal Gathering @ The Polecat 7pm
June
Wed 1st Monthly Meeting, The Gate.
Sat 12th Informal Gathering @ The Firecrest 7pm
July
Wed 6th Monthly Meeting, The Gate.
Sun 10th Sunday Lunchtime & Run to The Folly
at Adstock.
August
Wed 3rd Monthly Meeting, The Gate.
Sun 14th WAMGOC Octagonal Run 2005.

The following item is published without
Credit for reasons of political correctness.

Government's policy on binge drinking, or;
THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR - 2005 version

Nelson: "Order the signal, Hardy."

Hardy: "Aye, aye sir."

Nelson: "Hold on, that's not what I dictated to the
signal officer. What's the meaning of this?"

Hardy: "Sorry sir?"

Nelson (reading aloud): "England expects every
person to do his duty, regardless of race, gender,
sexual orientation, religious persuasion or
disability". "What gobbledygook is this?"

Hardy: "Admiralty policy, I'm afraid, sir. We're an
equal opportunities employer now. We had the
devil's own job getting 'England' past the censors,
lest it be considered racist."

Nelson: "Gadzooks, Hardy. Hand me my pipe and
tobacco."

Hardy: "Sorry sir. All naval vessels have been
designated smoke-free working environments."

Nelson: "In that case, break open the rum ration.
Let us splice the main brace to steel the men before
battle."

Hardy: "The rum ration has been abolished,
Admiral. Its part of the Government's policy on
binge drinking."

Nelson: "Good heavens, Hardy. I suppose we'd
better get on with it. Full speed ahead."

Hardy: "I think you'll find that there's a four knot
speed limit in this stretch of water."

Nelson: "Damn it man! We are on the eve of the
greatest sea battle in history. We must advance
with all despatch. Report from the crow's nest,
please."

Hardy: "That won't be possible, sir."

Nelson: "What?"

Hardy: "Health and safety have closed the crow's
nest, sir. No harness. And they said that rope
ladder doesn't meet regulations. They won't let
anyone up there until a proper scaffolding can be
erected."

Nelson: "Then get me the ship's carpenter without
delay, Hardy."

Hardy: "He's busy knocking up a wheelchair access
to the fo'c'sle, Admiral."

Nelson: "Wheelchair access? I've never heard
anything so absurd."

Hardy: "Health and safety again, sir. We have to
provide a barrier-free environment for the
differently abled."

Nelson: "Differently abled? I've only one arm and
one eye and I refuse even to hear mention of the
word. I didn't rise to the rank of admiral by playing
the disability card."

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Hardy: "Actually, sir, you did. The Royal Navy is under-represented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency."

Nelson: "Whatever next? Give me full sail. The salt spray beckons."

Hardy: "A couple of problems there too, sir. Health and safety won't let the crew up the rigging without crash helmets. And they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt - haven't you seen the adverts?"

Nelson: "I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy."

Hardy: "The men are a bit worried about shooting at anyone, Admiral."

Nelson: "What? This is mutiny."

Hardy: "It's not that, sir. It's just that they're afraid of being charged with murder if they actually kill anyone. There's a couple of legal aid lawyers on board, watching everyone like hawks."

Nelson: "Then how are we to sink the Frenchies and the Spanish?"

Hardy: "Actually, sir, we're not."

Nelson: "We're not?"

Hardy: "No, sir. The Frenchies and the Spanish are our European partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy, we shouldn't even be in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation."

Nelson: "But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil."

Hardy: "I wouldn't let the ship's diversity co-ordinator hear you saying that sir. You'll be up on disciplinary."

Nelson: "You must consider every man an enemy who speaks ill of your King."

Hardy: "Not any more, sir. We must be inclusive in this multicultural age. Now put on your Kevlar vest; it's the rules."

Nelson: "Don't tell me - health and safety. Whatever happened to rum, sodomy and the lash?"

Hardy: "As I explained, sir, rum is off the menu! And there's a ban on corporal punishment."

Nelson: "What about sodomy?"

Hardy: "I believe it's to be encouraged, sir."

Nelson: "In that case ...kiss me, Hardy."



In 1961 a group of students from the University of Ulm (not far from BMW HQ) designed this GT as their entry into a Swiss competition.

This photo was released in 1962 of the prototype, built by Pinninfarina and based on an Austin Healey 3000 running chassis.

The body shell was steel, it had a Scimitar type opening rear window, and the headlights were enclosed by aerodynamic "Perspex" pods. Quite advanced for it's time.

BMC publically expressed no interest!

Sunshine and Safaris, or 3 Weeks in Southern Africa

On the 30th July 2003 the Dana Sirena sailed easily across the smooth North Sea under a clear blue sky, all the MGCC members assembled on deck agreed that the Danish event had been excellent, if expensive and we were sorry to be going home. Well there is South Africa next year said someone, have you booked yet? This last was aimed at Jane and myself. I had never considered going there for any reason at all, and certainly not an MG event, however on the 11th Sept this year we buckled up in an SAA 747-300 for the 13 hour flight to Johannesburg.

There was a lot to look forward to, the week long MG event, a 12 day train trip into the Namibian desert organised by the SAMGCC and in between we had planned some time in the Kruger National Park. We did not have a lot of free time around Johannesburg and Pretoria, but we made good use of what we had.

Now clearly the first thing you think about an event like this is, well we had better leave in plenty of time as that is a long drive, oh and we had must pack the rifle and malaria tablets and maybe change the oil in the MGB before the off. Now the fact that this was way past the end of the M20 was part of the conversation on the Sirena, where we were told that the South African CC members would always find a car to lend to a visitor. This seemed to be too much to ask from someone we had never met, and I had put some effort into finding a suitable car to hire. We had found a local hire company offering the *MGTF*, the current one, not the T series, and they told us we could reserve now and actually make a firm booking 6 to 8 weeks before arrival. I put a note in the diary and mentally ticked that off. At the earliest date possible I e-mailed in confirming the booking, and got no answer, I chased and again no answer. Eventually I phoned this is easier than with some destinations as they are only 1 hour ahead of UK time. After being passed around a few departments it turned out that the MGs had been sold, and we had been allocated a 3 series BMW saloon as an equivalent vehicle. After a few exploratory questions it became clear that this was a dead end and we cancelled the booking for

the event, but left open a group 2 (compact with air con) for the visit to Kruger. We had always planned to change cars, as I did not fancy Lion watching from a convertible. The only other softop car available for hire in the region was BMW Z3, I think I would have preferred the 3 series saloon, anyway it was time for some help from our friends and an e mail was sent to Trish Spence in the Northern Centre. We heard back within days that the Auburgs who were hosting us had a spare MGB that they were going to lend us, so we were able to relax again and swapped a few e-mails with the Auburgs. One week before we left we heard from Trish again, we were having a change of host couple, it would now be the Bailies, and they were lending us an MGA. Again we swapped a few e-mails and they promised to be at Johannesburg to meet the plane, and we even got the flight and day right in the end. I told them that Jane had bought a new pink cloche style straw sun hat, so we should be easy to spot and we seemed all set. The Limo, kindly booked and paid for by our daughter arrived on time with a sober fully awake driver, and our biggest problem was that Jane never managed to stay awake all through Shrek 2 in either direction and I had to buy the DVD when we got home. We really liked SAA although some of the locals did not have much time for them. At the airport no one rushed up to greet us at the International arrivals gate despite Jane wearing her “look at me” hat. We had an e mailed pic of the Bailies and Doug and Christine Bush were also there to meet us and some of the French who were arriving BA from Paris at almost the same time. I did several circuits of the arrival hall with no luck and eventually said to Jane, “sun hat on and you see what you can find”. This worked perfectly and within 10 minute we were being greeted warmly by a large group of people, one or two of whom we had actually met before, oh the International power of the Octagon! We piled into the Bailies twin cab with our luggage and set off for their house, which is on a secure estate between Johannesburg and Pretoria; by now it was Sunday morning and a Barbecue lunch was planned in Johannesburg followed by a chance to watch the Italian GP. Doug navigated us there like a homing pigeon, the sun blazed, the garage was full of MGs, TF WA V8 MGB roadster and a new *TF*. How do you say, I’m taking the *TF*, in Italics? As the icing on the cake Rubens Barrichelo came

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through for me and I won 500 SAR on the sweepstake.

When we got back to what we were now thinking of as home, we went to look at Doug's extensive motor vehicle collection, the white MGA roadster was there, with its bonnet raised and he told me that the wiper motor had burnt out. It is possible to get very heavy rain in SA in their summer, and of course driving without working wipers is illegal. Since the motor would not be there until sometime on the Monday Doug asked if we would like to take the TD instead, you have to recall that I had met him for the first time that morning! Of course we were delighted to be offered the use of this car, which was a very pretty one in red with beige trim.



Doug then took us for a drive round the Estate in a very smart Ford model A, Jane and I sat in the rumble seat like a pair of extras in Bonnie and Clyde.

Once it was established that we would use the T type Doug called up two of his gardening staff to wash the car ready for us to use, a courtesy that was to have some consequences later.

We should really have repacked at this point, by this time we were past being embarrassed about asking for favours, and we had already arranged to use the Bailies as left luggage office as we knew how limited the space is in an MGA. Now we had to squeeze everything into the TD, however after the flight and the long day we settled for a light supper, and getting the car checked and full of fuel today, and packing Manana. Doug said, you move it up to the hardstanding next to the house, we can

check the oil and water and tyres and then you can drive it to the filling station. He showed me how to start the car, which needed both carbs tickled from cold and full choke, however it would not start. After some drying out and jiggling with the throttle it did eventually go on 2 cylinders. This set some alarm bells ringing and sure enough, the plugs were connected in the wrong order with 2 and 3 swapped. Put back to 1342 things improved, but it was still not well. I had discovered that the centrifugal advance and retard was only very weakly spring biased and was staying over advanced and thought that may be the trouble, however Doug said the car had run fine on the 2000km Tusker tour a few weeks ago. He suggested we take it out to fill it up and see how it went, and after some excitement with the brakes pulling to one side we got there and back, and as no 2 and 3 plugs cleaned up it ran a lot better.

The next day there was an organised (-ish) run up to the Adventura Game resort in Bela Bela where the Indaba was to be held. We got up early and packed the car, this was a lot easier than we had expected everything went in and we got the tonneau cover back on and attached at all fixing points. We waved the Bailies goodbye as I drove their car cautiously out of the drive. We were heading for an MG rendezvous, which was a 5-minutes away near an on ramp to the R21. What difference a day makes. In the brilliant sunlight the little T type pulled cleanly and stopped straight and true. The drums had been skimmed, lined with stainless steel and new shoes and cylinders fitted the year before, so the lurching around the previous night as they were applied was almost certainly water in the drums from an enthusiastic wash. The other difficulties were probably caused by trying to get the engine clean!

We arrived in good time to find some people already there, and within 20 minutes the party was complete and joining the R21 northbound. The direct route would have been 120 kms. due north on the N1, a fast secure toll road, the scenic run made almost 3 sides of a rectangle and was between 200 and 250 kms. The only navigational aid we had was very sketchy e-mail and there had been no chance to buy a map, we had not found anything worth buying in the UK. Clearly this left me keener than I usually am to be a flock animal. The route

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was well chosen, traffic was light to non-existent, scenery great, we had several stops at shops or filling stations and the pace was set at one that the T Type had no problems with. The high spots were driving across the top of the Kosmos Dam wall, and being followed by the WA along the N4, it was like having an amiable red cliff tagging along in your mirrors. It seemed as if most cars broke down once, some several times, this caused more problems than in the UK as you might expect. I noticed that when travelling in company everyone looked out for each other, rather than a group leader as we were used to, and that if a car broke down everyone stuck together until it was fixed, and other groups passing would also stop to help. Fortunately the rain that must fall into every life had fallen into our drums and distributor the previous night so all this meant for us was that we arrived in the late afternoon, and got to meet a lot of people en route.

Because of our late arrival we missed the icebreaker fun event, but so did nearly everyone. I forgot to ask about it, so you will have to use your imagination. I was quite greasy after working on a TC that had had some problems on the Scenic Drive. By the time we had found our Chalet and unpacked to the point where I could get washed it meant we arrived towards the end of the Opening Reception and Cocktail party. The event was held outdoors under palm trees. We got our free drinks, and there was still lots of food, but we missed the speeches, so no complaints from me. Later on there was a meeting in one of the bars where Roger Pearce gave a talk about driving his MGB GT to Silverstone this year. We missed most of this also as Jane realised that she had left her handbag at the reception, and Doug Bush then remembered he had had a camera with him when he started the evening. Both had been collected by a club member, handed onto the organisers, then to the Chairman who had left site, you get the picture. By the time we were re-united with our lost property, we had missed Rogers talk, however we were to see him and the car later on.

The event proper started the next day; Continental Tyres, who looked after us very well, sponsored it. Continental have several galleries, which include two of "our" TD posted on the Continental Tyres SA website, the link is

<http://www.continental.co.za/gallery.asp?folder=2004%5C15%2E+MG+Bushveld+Indaba+2004&cache=12/5/2004%207:14:21%20PM>

On this day only we ate breakfast in the hotel dining room, it worked fairly well, but was very expensive and geared towards the local custom which seems to be to eat heroic quantities of animal protein 4 times a day.

The first event was a Concours d'Etat a Concours d'comique and a TOPS this last acronym lines up with our POO. The Comique was new to me, but the name is self-explanatory. For a comedy shows, some of the centres took it seriously. I entered "our" car in the TOPS. The outside was still quite clean so I just dusted it off, but the evidence of the extensive cat and dog population in our hosts household some of which seemed to think of the garage as dormitory, had to go. In the 20 minutes available to me I surprised myself by how effective a damp tea towel could be in this task. However it did not do much for my standing with the domestic staff looking after our chalet. Once I had the car parked with its hood up and sidescreens and tonneau cover available for inspection we at last had some time to ourselves. We were able to walk into Bela Bela, buy a decent road atlas and some cornflakes and in fact generally stocked up the Kitchen, which included a fridge. There were informal market stalls selling African handicrafts, but all we bought was small hand carved Zebra who now lives with our herd of Swedish Dalecarlian horses, Jane did full justice to the artefacts in Kwa Zulu and in Namibia later on in the trip however. We took some food home for lunch and sat outside the chalet in a small shaded barbecue area, called a Stoop in Afrikaans and in so doing started our animal collection. By the time we left we had acquired a family of black cats, including two ravishingly cute kittens and a family of plovers. It might seem strange that the cats and birds co-existed, but they were big strong birds, and small undernourished cats. By the time we had dispatched a bottle of wine, taken a few phone calls, gratifyingly from people staring out at a dark rain lashed England, collected the car, re-stowed its unfamiliar hood and met a few people on the way it was time to get ready for the evenings entertainment.

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The programme said “African Theme Evening”, in fact the committee must have been scheming on this for some time. We were only told to get to the main car park for 18-00, driving if we wanted where there would be free beer while we waited for the transport. We were put to shame by some of the magnificent outfits sported by other guests, they must have MGs with expanding boots to carry it all. The transport was a long time in coming, and some of the party used the time to put a dent in the ample beer stocks. Eventually a fleet of native Taxis turned up. These are mini buses the, Toyota Hi Ace being a popular choice and generally would be avoided; there was an undignified scramble to board them. The committee played games with us for the next 2 hours, one taxi shed it’s prop shaft, and was repaired by its passengers. Our taxi was forced to stop as some of the more enthusiastic beer drinkers were aboard, and then the sliding door fell off as they re-boarded, again the passengers put the vehicle back together. We finally arrived at the dinner location, which was in the resort’s game reserve, and since it contained no large carnivores we could have walked there in the same time as it took us to reach the assembly in the car park, ho ho ho!

The venue was a circular stone corral, open to the sky and with unglazed windows in the walls. Open fires spluttered in pits set in the stone flagged floor. The food was all native style, and I found it largely inedible. Later on there was an excellent local band and we danced to Eddy Grant’s “Hope Johanna” as the Southern Cross blazed in the freezing night sky of the High Veldt.

Towards the end of the evening we were given our tulip charts, we seemed to have been given 2, and chose to use the one which had collected fewer beer stains when we set out the next morning. There was a lot to get your head around on the chart, over and above the fact that there were 3 separate things going on at once. You did not have to enter all of them, but you were on the same route;

-A regularity rally with timed observed sections.

-A “Poker Run”, you were given a card at every checkpoint, at the end you should have a hand of 5 if you had found all the checkpoints. You were

then offered the chance to change up to 3. I think mine was a pair of 2s, and went downhill from there when I swapped some cards.

-An economy run. Your car was filled at a Garage in Bela Bela. You were in control of how much went in. The final competitive point was a garage where the marshals were in charge of filling.

We were able to clarify as soon as we got the chart that where it said “Robot” it meant traffic lights, this is a frequent source of amusement to visitors. The tulip did not give you the split distances, although it did go back to zero, and told you to zero the odometer. This was at seemingly random points. The TD did not have a working trip zero. I had to work out the all the splits before starting out at 08-00, and then add them to the trip number and hold the result in my head while we were on the rally. We had to work out what we were doing, do all the sums, and then pitch up at the start before 08-00 after getting home at 02-00 that morning. And as one last refinement, the waypoints were in 2 columns on the page, starting at the bottom and going up!

The rally itself was uneventful, I made two errors, one of them was turning at a sign that I should have gone straight on at, however after you left the Blockhouse checkpoint you doubled back and had to turn at it, and were approaching it from it’s “blind side “. This was the reason it appeared as a Tulip point when you went straight past it. My other problem was that I had miscalculated one of the split distances (out of 47), and we had to stop when a hard to spot regularity point (a 60KPH sign) did not come up as expected. We were out of sight of civilisation and it seemed sensible to stop and work things out. Just as I had done this TC came barrelling past confirming that we were as I thought OK in everything except distance run. The car used 14.51 l over the 65 miles for 20 mpg. Given the error I made and the poor sealing of the jet tubes I was happy with this, and it put us in the middle of the T Types. The MGBs returned about 30 mpg, and the MG *F* s nearer to 40 MPG.

All this seemed to result in some home advantage and this was reflected in the results with no overseas visitors placing higher than mid table.

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The actual run was joy, hardly any traffic, great scenery, checkpoints at places that were pleasant or interesting or both and had plenty of parking space the marshalling was adequate, but broke down a bit as the cars arrived to be refilled. This resulted in “our” car being filled to overflowing. I only noticed this when neat petrol started splashing onto my face as we left. To avoid the fuel expanding and fire risk to the car when parked in the sun we headed into the country to burn some of it off; a fellow competitor was kind enough to stop as I was checking the level, which was appreciated. As we headed out, I was intending to cover about 10 miles, the transmission suddenly became very noisy. This was a worry and Jane became very concerned. I turned around and got back OK. I then removed the Speedo drive from the back of the instrument and continued to burn off some fuel. My prayer “don’t let it be the gearbox” was answered, the noise went.

The programme continued at a Casino called The Carousel, this is a huge white elephant that was built when gambling was illegal in South Africa, but was going to be allowed in the proposed Bantustans. This was great for providing acres of unused tarmac in the car parks, but dreadful for service. We arrived late after the fuel and transmission problems and washing off the grease, and found everyone in the restaurant still waiting, although some had got drinks. We had all been given refreshment vouchers, but no one had put on any extra staff to cater for us. The locals just said “Africa”. We got a drink by going to the bar and being pleasant to the nice, but overworked lady. I then read the voucher, and saw it was valid at a fast food place in the Atrium, logical in a Casino I suppose. We got a sandwich, and although this did not use up the total value of the voucher, who is counting when you are hungry. Several of the earlier arrivals then followed our example; no one wanted to miss the afternoon’s events.

We could have entered a driving test, but I did not want to do this in a borrowed car. There was a “demonstration “ of two local racing cars built by a Les Miller and raced in the 50s. Some racing MGBs were also let out to play, and Roger Pearce had a go in the MGB GT he had driven to Silverstone.



This car complete with Jerry cans and roof rack gave a very good account of itself; it does have long travel coil over front suspension, although it’s not optimised for smooth tarmac. The star for me was a special based on a TC with a hand made body clearly modelled on a W123 Mercedes. All the cars were demonstrated with increasing enthusiasm until the organisers pulled the plug and then the driving tests were set up.

I decided to try to investigate the problem on the TD further, and removed the Speedo inner drive cable. I could see nothing wrong and it had some grease on it. I put it together again and set off round the car park. I was surprised and pleased to find that the problem had gone. It did not happen again in the time that we had the car. Doug told me when I saw him again that he had spent a lot of money on rebuilding the tacho and speedo and he was not very happy with the results, certainly both were noisy. The car is still fine so maybe it just needed the lubricant re distributing; you must not put too much on as it can get into the Speedo head and cause problems.

The return drive to Bela Bela was 50 km direct on the R101 turning right out of the Carousel. We left fairly promptly and cruised steadily, gaining confidence as the car hummed along. About 10Km into the journey we saw a large troupe of monkeys crossing the road, we slowed down, but did not stop. A steady stream of MGs, flew past, esp. the Bs and Fs it was quite funny to have a T type’s eye view of an MGB, as for 30 years it has been us with

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120 BHP* and an overdrive. Later on a convoy of SE Centre members caught us up, we had planned this and since the TD was going well we tagged on to them. This was very amusing as Piers Hubbard's car had some wildly out of balance wheels and could only be driven at certain speeds, which varied as the wheels went in and out of phase. This meant he would have to drop back then catch up again. Everyone got back without any difficulties and it was time to think about the evening activities.



As we entered our Chalet we found it full of puzzled bees, luckily these were friendly little honeybees, not the big African Killers. The resort sent out some domestics and the maintenance foreman. After letting out the survivors and sweeping up the rest he tried to find out where they were getting in without much luck we then walked around the outside and discovered some crawling in and out of a hole in the wall where a TV aerial feeder had been removed. He blocked this up and then left. I applied some simple logic, removed the plug in the outer leaf of the wall, and went inside, found the matching hole behind a heavy sofa bed where the bees were emerging inside the hose and blocked that. For the rest of our visit we lived in harmony with the nest in the cavity and I hope they are thriving today. There was also a large bumble bee living in the timber supporting the back porch, we got quite fond of it lumbering to and fro, although evidence of maintenance staff attempts to block its borings showed it was not universally loved.

All this time spent on adding the bees to our menagerie meant we were a bit late arriving at the

evenings entertainment's, however it did mean things were warming up by the time we got there. One of the resorts maintenance sheds had been converted into a "Shebeen" with a bar disco and a buffet and Brai (which is just Afrikaans for a barbecue). This was billed as a Bushvelder Evening. We had great time and were impressed with the crocodile kebabs. Again the effort put in by some people was astonishing; one Dutch lady had made and carried with her a Zebra outfit complete with a tail just to wear this once! For me being able to walk home when you wanted to make this evening even better.

On the Thursday there were several fun events in the morning, including Cart Racing, thanks to Continental who looked after us very well. Jane and I decided to use the time on a game drive. Early in the morning is thought to be when you will see most animals. This worked really well and we saw Giraffe Zebra Wildebeest Impala Warthog and Rhino, which was pretty much a full house for this reserve. However this meant we missed the car pulling contest, can't win them all.

The afternoon events were a parade of MGs spanning 80 years, from a J2 to a TF and there was some media coverage, a statuesque young black female presenter interviewed The Johannesburg Centre Chairman for local TV. This included some time chatting to her in one of his cars, probably to give his neck a rest as she was a lot taller than Norman! The car used was the wobbly wheel TF that had caused us so much hilarity the day before (well for everyone except Piers). I noticed Norman did not volunteer to "take her for a spin", maybe in that car "going for a wobble" would be more accurate but could lead to misunderstandings. We finally got to use the spa this afternoon, and it was great, there were several pools varying from warm to 10 minute maximum written in large red letters on notice boards. There were inside and outside hot baths and a huge Jacuzzi, as well as 2 large swimming pools complete with diving boards. Swimming is just so much nicer in a warm climate. All too soon it was time to go and get ready for the Gala Dinner and prize giving.

Everyone had bought a posh frock, at least all the ladies, there was brief welcome speech, and MG Rover SA had provided a nice 80 years of MG slide

show on a large screen projector. The dinner was again on a buffet basis, and was 4 courses lay out on tables of aircraft carrier flight deck proportions. The food in South Africa as well as doing quantity also does quality with a wide range of influences including Local Native, European (rather Dutch/German heavy which sent me to sleep one afternoon), and excitingly an Indian/Malay strand from Cape province. The excellent if rather unobtrusive local wines are of course very good value as well.

Eventually it was speeches and prize giving. All agreed that we had enjoyed a wonderful event, which was indisputable. Then the awards were given out, with the home team making a strong showing. The MGCC SE centre table + 1 renegade AWC couple then signed each others menu cards as a souvenir of a memorable event, and that was that.

The following morning we got up at a later hour breakfasted on the patio in the company of our cats, plovers and bees and planned our day including a museum we had missed in Bela Bela a visit to a coffee shop run by a nice local couple and a serious trip to the local native market stalls. We intended to drive back straight down the N1. Just as we were strolling off in the sunshine a red MGA arrived and we were ordered to report to the lakeside villas for convoy duty at 10-30 sharp. Now I never turn down an offer to travel in company in a car of more than 10 years old, as it invites mechanical disaster when you are all alone. So at 11-15 an Anglo-French and Dutch convoy which included us nosed out of Adventura. The sight of so many lovely MGs and the wonderful sunshine made up to some extent for the sadness of saying goodbye to an amazing place where we had such a good time. We had been requested to leave the Continental stickers on the cars on the way home to provide some extra publicity for the sponsors, so for once we could pose and do some good at the same time. Certainly the convoy of sparkling sports cars attracted a great deal of attention on the busy N1. It seemed that everyone had got their breaking down done on the journey up, and the only excitement on the way home was Doug Bush trying frantically to turn me right when we left the R21. I intended to turn left and fill the car up, as giving it back ½ full seemed a bit cheap.

After filling the car it was 5-minute trip back to the estate, a phone call from the gatehouse got us past security and the final challenge was navigating back to our host's house. Finally we rolled onto the drive again, I am not sure if it was me or Doug who was more delighted to see the car back unscathed. I did ask if the TD was for sale, but I think it's present owners rather like it as well.

This only left the post Indaba Dinner, Kruger Park, the 12-day train trip to Namibia and the Lion Park to come.

*TBH yielded 94 BHP at the rear wheels on a rolling road, so the flywheel figure is between 115 and 120



Tail piece

The sobering view of a WA's rear end.
Many thanks to Stan and Jane Best

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YOUR COMMITTEE 2005

All committee members have many responsibilities and projects. The ones listed below are those most obvious at our monthly meetings.

Keith Darbon – Area Secretary

Chris Darbon – Newsletter Distribution

Gerry Garratt – Treasurer

Phil Knowles – Membership Secretary & Quartermaster

Sue Knowles – Assistant to Phil & Special Projects

Dave Le Breton – Octagonal Admin & Technical Book Holder

Ken Proud – WAMTOURS

Janet Harris – Regalia

David Lloyd – Website Organiser

Clive Walters – Print Co-ordinator

Arthur Magee – Editor & Club Photo Album Holder