

FROM THE CLUB ARCHIVIST

ISSUE 2: NOVEMBER 2021



DEAR FRIENDS,

SINCE WRITING THE FIRST NEWSLETTER, I'VE BEEN BUSY TRAWLING THROUGH THE BOXES OF CLUB ARCHIVES TO IDENTIFY INTERESTING ASPECTS FROM THE CLUB'S PAST THAT YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING OR AT LEAST INFORMATIVE.

THE EARLIEST (AND I BELIEVE THE FIRST) CLUB MAGAZINE IS DATED AUGUST 1976. PRIOR TO THIS DATE, COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS WAS VIA A NEWSLETTER. I'VE INCLUDED A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE FIRST MAGAZINE COVER BELOW. I RECALL THE COVER DESIGN WAS BASED ON A DRAWING BY ALAN JENNINGS. ALAN WAS A VERY ABLE ARTIST AND HAD A WONDERFUL ABILITY TO DRAW CARS – PARTICULARLY MG'S. YOU MAY RECALL HE WAS SO MUCH OF AN MG FAN THAT HE NAMED HIS SON SUCH THAT HIS INITIALS WERE M G. (WAS IT MICHAEL GEORGE? ANYONE REMEMBER?)

IF ANYONE HAS CLUB MATERIAL FROM THE EARLY-DAYS I WOULD WELCOME IT BEING ADDED TO THE ARCHIVES.

FORMATION OF OUR CLUB

A NUMBER OF EMAILS FROM MEMBERS IN RESPONSE TO THE FIRST NEWSLETTER HAVE ASKED WHEN THE CLUB WAS ESTABLISHED.

LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT SOME DATES.

OK, SO WE KNOW THAT THE MG CAR CLUB IN THE UK WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1930 – WE CELEBRATED 90 YEARS IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR.

THEN WE HAVE THE MG CAR CLUB OF NEW ZEALAND BEING FORMED IN 1952 FOLLOWED BY THE MG CAR CLUB SOUTH ISLAND CENTRE INC EMERGING IN 1960.

THEN WE FIND A COMMENT IN THE SOUTH ISLAND CENTRE BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 1967 THAT THE CLUB'S NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED TO THE MG

CAR CLUB (CANTERBURY CENTRE) INC “DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE OTAGO CENTRE HAS NOW BEEN INCORPORATED AS A GROUP”.

I SUSPECT THAT THE USE OF THE TERM “INCORPORATED” HAS BEEN USED IN ITS BROADEST SENSE AS THE OTAGO CENTRE WAS ACTUALLY REGISTERED UNDER THE INCORPORATED SOCIETIES ACT IN DECEMBER 2005.

GOING BACK TO THE SOUTH ISLAND CENTRE BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 1967, WE SEE REFERENCE TO THE “SOUTHLAND SUB-CENTRE” BUT NO REFERENCE TO AN OTAGO SUB-CENTRE. INTERESTING STUFF.

I RECALL THAT HARRY HEDGES SAID THAT THE OTAGO MG CAR CLUB WAS SPUN OUT FROM THE OTAGO SPORTS CAR CLUB. THIS MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CORRECT.

FURTHER UNCERTAINTY ARISES WHEN IN A NOVEMBER 1974 NEWSLETTER, THE THEN CLUB PRESIDENT, KEITH HUNTER, TALKS ABOUT THE TEMPORARY LOSS OF TWO VALUED MEMBERS (WAYNE MARSH AND BARRY RUSSELL – WHO, WITH THEIR WIVES, WERE HEADING TO THE UK FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD). IN THE ARTICLE KEITH SAYS “I SHALL HERE THANK BARRY AND WAYNE FOR THEIR ROLES AS MIDWIVES ATTENDING THE REBIRTH OF THE CLUB”. THIS TENDS TO SUGGEST THAT THE CLUB HAD GONE INTO RECESS FOR A PERIOD AND WAS RE-EMERGING AGAIN UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE TWO SAID GENTLEMEN. KEITH THEN GOES ON TO SAY “WE’LL HAVE TO FEED THE THING OURSELVES NEXT YEAR SO THAT IT SURVIVES THE MONTHS UNTIL THEIR RETURN.” INDEED, THE CLUB HAS SURVIVED FOR A FURTHER 47 YEARS SO FAR. LONG MAY IT CONTINUE.

SO, THERE WE HAVE IT. WHILE THE DATE OF THE FORMATION OF THE OTAGO CENTRE IS NOT REALLY CLEAR LET’S NOT WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT WHEN WE CAME INTO BEING. WE ARE HERE NOW AND HOPEFULLY WE’LL HAVE MANY YEARS AHEAD OF US.

IF ANY READERS HAVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CLUB, PLEASE DO LET ME KNOW.

CHANGE OF NAME

WE OF COURSE CHANGED THE NAME OF OUR CENTRE TO INCLUDE REFERENCE TO “SOUTHLAND” IN AUGUST 2015. AT THAT STAGE, SOMEWHERE AROUND 40% OF OUR MEMBERS RESIDED IN SOUTHLAND SO IT WAS FELT VERY APPROPRIATE TO UPDATE OUR CENTRE NAME TO BE MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LOCATION OF OUR MEMBERS.

WHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND, HERE’S A PIECE OF (USELESS!) TRIVIA FOR YOU. DID YOU KNOW THAT THE ORIGINAL OTAGO PROVINCE ACTUALLY ENCOMPASSED WHAT WE KNOW TODAY AS OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND? THEN IT WAS DIVIDED UP INTO TWO COUNTIES: BRUCE AND WALLACE. THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN THE TWO WAS NOTHING LIKE THE CURRENT BOUNDARY. IT WAS MORE OF AN EAST/WEST DIVISION. THIS

ALL CHANGED IN 1861 WHEN THE SOUTHLAND PROVINCE CAME INTO BEING. SO, WE REALLY ARE JUST ONE BIG “HAPPY” CLUB.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS

ANOTHER INTERESTING DOCUMENT AMONGST THE CLUB RECORDS IS A LIST OF CLUB MEMBERS FROM SEPTEMBER 1996. AT THAT DATE THE CLUB HAD 78 MEMBERS WHILE TODAY WE HAVE AROUND 50.

COMPARING THE TWO MEMBERSHIP LISTS IS REVEALING. ONLY TEN OF THE ORIGINAL SEVENTY-EIGHT ARE STILL MEMBERS. IT’S GOOD TO SEE THEM STAYING THE COURSE.

GOING BACK TO OUR FIRST MAGAZINE OF AUGUST 1976, THERE IS ONLY ONE NAME INCLUDED THERE WHO IS STILL A CLUB MEMBER – YES YOURS TRULY! GOSH I FEEL OLD! (A VOICE IN MY HEAD SAYS – WELL YOU ARE!)

THE OTHER THING FROM THE MEMBERSHIP LIST THAT’S AN EYE OPENER IS THE CHANGE IN THE MIX OF MG CARS OWNED BY MEMBERS. IN 1996, TWENTY-TWO CARS WERE PRE – MGB/MIDGETS EG T-TYPES, MGA’S ETC WHILE TODAY WE HAVE ONLY A COUPLE OF THESE MODELS AS MOST MEMBERS CARS NOW ARE MGB’S PLUS THE MORE MODERN MG’S. WHERE HAVE ALL THE EARLY MG CARS GONE? OUT OF TOWN AND OVERSEAS I SUSPECT.

CLOSING REMARKS

PLEASE KEEP ALL THOSE LETTERS (EMAILS) AND POSTCARDS ROLLING IN.

**REGARDS
RUSSELL WALKER
CLUB ARCHIVIST**



MGCC - Club
Magazine - August