

FROM THE CLUB ARCHIVIST

ISSUE 9: NOVEMBER 2022



Welcome to this somewhat late Spring issue of the archivist's Newsletter.

I've changed the month at the top three times now; it's high time I get it out to you.

Additions to the archives

Member John Noble has very kindly contributed a further item to the Club archives. It's John's copy of the programme for the 6th National Pre-56 MG Rally which was held in Dunedin from 12th to 16th January 1987.

John attended the rally in his MGA alongside 67 other MG owners.

Interestingly, the second Pre-56 Rally of 1979 which was to be held in Timaru was cancelled due to the fuel crisis that year. The Government had imposed a fuel sales ban on public holidays and weekends. Try doing that today, there would be blood inside the Beehive not just outside on the grass as we saw this year.

The ban was part of a series of actions taken by the Government in response to a worldwide fuel shortage and included a reduction in speed limits and carless days.



The first person caught for using their car on a "carless" day was Gordon Marks of Christchurch, (no that's not Gordon Marks above) in October 1979. He had been at a party and decided to take a nap before heading home. He woke at 3.45am and hopped in his car, forgetting that as of 2am he was on his carless day.

Sentencing him, the judge agreed it was an oversight by Marks but said as it was the first case to come before the courts, the legislation had to be seen to have "teeth". Marks was fined \$50 of a potential \$400 fine.

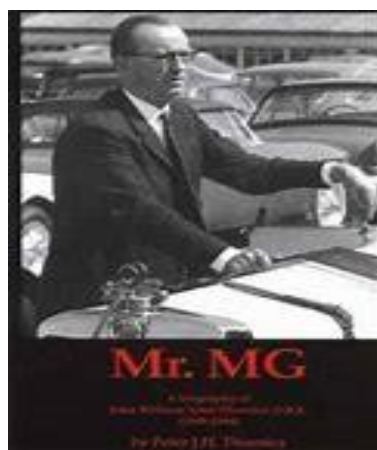
The 1987 Rally included a concours held at Chingford Park, a Gymkhana at Horse Hoof Station (on the road to Middlemarch – our club used this farm for our very own local Gymkhana events, but we've not held one for a very long time), a sightseeing trial and prize giving dinner at Larnach Castle.

I haven't been able to track down the results of the event, so if any one has more information on who won what, that would be much appreciated.

The Rally, which is held every other year, was last held in 2021 in Cambridge and was the 23rd event. Go to this link to the event to see more: <https://mgpre56.co.nz/web/>

Mr MG – A biography of John Thornley

Kevin Carter has very kindly lent me his copy of this book which tells the story of John Thornley. After Cecil Kimber, John was probably the most influential MG employee in terms of driving the success of the MG Car Company. I'm looking forward to reading the book. I'll report back after I've finished.



The MG Salute

It wasn't long after I bought my first MG in April 1974 that I started to collect anything and everything to do with these cars.

Amongst papers of mine that I've placed into the Club archives is a copy of an advertisement from Motor Magazine of May 1975 in which British Leyland is encouraging readers to buy an MG. Three models are shown, an MGBGT, a midget and a B roadster.

It's interesting to see what is acceptable or not has changed over the years. This advertisement is headed up...

"Ladies (young) are not expected to..."

It's certainly an attention, grabbing title as it was intended to be but also very suggestive too.

It then goes onto say... But every other MG driver should. Or so The Sports Car – the then named official magazine of the MG Car Club – would have you believe in 1939.

What was this strange ritual?

The article states "MG owners are not snobs". The jealous, petty, ignoble, uncaring attitude of other road users "is not shown by MG owners, let us thankfully say. Rather they seem keen on meeting their brethren and passing the time of day – or at any rate, conveying something which can be taken for a cheerful greeting. The MG salute is a definite part of the MG owner's equipment"

So, what actually is this MG salute? Well, its best described as a closed fist with the thumb and forefinger extended almost like a cocked pistol but it most certainly wasn't pointed at the other MG driver (thank goodness).

The MG salute seems to have fallen into lack of use. Perhaps that's a very good thing you might say given the connotation that extended fingers imply. I certainly recall it was quite normal for MG owners to give a wave of some sort to other MG drivers but this too seems to have fallen out of common use somewhat.

Interestingly, the advertisement was also promoting the limited edition (of 750) of the MGB GTs specially built to mark half a century of MG motoring history.

Anyway, should we reintroduce the MG Salute? Let me know your thoughts.

As an aside, the advertisement shows a cute scotty dog with an MG sign around its neck and photographed on the bonnet of a T-type.

And by the way, the suggestiveness continues right to the end of the advert when the final words are:

“You can do it in an MG”

Memento... a moment of your time

When I sold my 1976 MGBGT a couple of years ago now, I keep the badge bar and badges as a memento of my ownership. If any of you have done something similar, please do let me know what you retained. A photograph would be even better if you had one.



