



# Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders MG CLUB

[www.MG-Edinburgh.co.uk](http://www.MG-Edinburgh.co.uk)



October 2023



Photo:  
Donald Rosie

A big grin from Allan after the run 'up the hill' in Royston's Special

Credits: Helen, John M, Fiona, Craig, David T, Karen, Fraser, Steve, Donald, Andrew

## MEMBERS' CARS

New Member John Murray's Midget 1275 resto



## INTERESTING CAR

Spotted by Steve at Loch Awe





## Mrs Grumpy's Grumble

**INTERESTING CAR**  
1926 Alvis

Again, many thanks to those who contributed articles.

The standard of driving is getting bad, along with a certain arrogance that says "nothing is more important than me" or "I can daydream along and don't have check mirrors or be aware of what's around me."

A good example of the first was the temporary traffic lights at Fairmilehead crossroads, which, admittedly, were causing long tailbacks - but that's not really an excuse. I was coming along Frogston road, approaching said temporary lights, which turned red so I had to stop. A white Lexus, joining Frogston Road from the right, decided he wasn't going to wait behind me and drove through the junction at speed, completely on the wrong side - all the way across. Now, he couldn't have known how the lights were set up or how quickly they were going to change and at that speed he'd have a job stopping before hitting some hapless soul coming through on the green.

For the second, you get the youngish female who just doesn't look in her mirror. Coming back from the Kingdom Automobile Show at the Bus Museum, I was in Boris, on the by-pass, in the inside lane, in good weather and good visibility.

A small blue hatchback was passing me in the outside lane and took what I thought was a "wobble" towards the inside lane. I then realised she was moving into the inside lane while she was just in front of my driver's door and was going to hit me. I stood old Boris on his nose (glad he is a tad over-braked with the RV8 front suspension) and feeling even gladder that the big Beamer behind me had clocked what was happening and didn't run up my backside! And the small blue hatchback? Continued happily on her way, oblivious to flashed headlights, a loud blast on the horns and the fact she'd nearly been involved in a serious smash.

They drive amongst us!

## MG100 ECOSSE at DOUNE HILLCLIMB

Well, what a fantastic celebration of MG100 - many thanks and full credit to all the organisers. There were 187 MGs, from the 'auld yins' on the Octagon stand, through MGAs, MGBs, RV8s, new TFs, some Zeds (only about half a dozen, mostly on the Tayside stand thanks to Mike & Kay Dennis) and a few modern Chinese cars. In addition, there were the ten MGs entered for the MG100 class in the hillclimb - MGBs, Midgets and the winning ZR.

Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders were opposite the Octagon Club and we had 20 cars on the day - sadly, a few had had to call off due to mechanical issues. There were cars from Aberdeen, Glasgow, Highland, Kingdom, Stirling and Tayside MGOC, the MGCC Caledonian Centre and Young Members, plus an area for individual/turn up on the day MGs. In addition there were stands from Chic Doig, MGOC Regalia, Wheel Lacing, Arnold Clark, SCAA and Scottish Autism. The Cyberster all electric sports car, with the Turner twins, made an appearance at the end of the day too.



Allan and myself went up to Doune on the Saturday to help set things up - most Area Secretaries and helpers were there pegging out the stand areas and putting up gazebos. Allan and I intended to put up our gazebo, but fell at the first hurdle - I had the gazebo frame, but Steve had the cover and Craig had the tent pegs and hammers! We put up the frame using tent pegs scrounged from Willy Scott from the Caledonian Centre and then emailed Steve and Craig to ask if they could get there sharpish on the Sunday and complete the gazebo, which they duly did.

On Sunday, members were meeting up at Dobbies with Andrew & Martin 'herding the cats' - Andrew snapped a moment of hilarity. They coped admirably and got our members to Doune in good time.



Peter was on gate duty, directing cars into the correct area. We had got the first Edinburgh MG at the appropriate jaunty angle and Fraser lined up the rest. Allan & myself were handing out wristbands, info sheets and MG100 stickers as the MGs came thick and fast. There seemed to be a shortage of scouts at the beginning!

By 9.30 we could step down and Craig kindly bought me a coffee and donut - I was definitely needing a sugar fix and a sit down!

Your entry fee got you a wristband that allowed you to walk up the hill FOC to watch the hillclimb cars - some of them scarily fast! The other treat was the two parades of MGs up the hill at 12.30 and 3.30. The MGs were in a group behind a pace car and Allan entered me on his ticket as he hadn't brought SPUD but the SUV with stand stuff. I enjoyed the run up the hill in Boris the black 'B - but there is no way I'd go up the hill against the clock! The V8 was left at home due to iffy wipers and just as well considering the torrential rain on the M9 going home.

Donald's photo shows the first group at the holding paddock at the top, before their run down.



I got some not very good photos of the first group going up the hill - I still haven't worked out how to change the shutter speed on the new camera and the intelligent auto isn't up to it - so some pics are a bit motion blurred. There's no pics of the second group because myself and Craig & June were in it, so we couldn't take photos!



Martin warmed up his bridies in the time honoured way of engine drivers and Lindsay brought his TD to the Octagon club, which won best in its age group and Lindsay went happily away with a big rosette and a bottle of malt!

The weather was cold and dreich but didn't put a damper on proceedings until the very end, when it started to rain in earnest - just as the Cyberster arrived. It was a great day wandering around looking at the lovely cars on show and catching up with old friends - with a visit to the Antiques Centre for a warm up!



I'd taken in loadsa prizes for the raffle - some MG stuff from Ralph Forbes at Central Garage and some MG stuff of my own that was surplus to requirements, plus some non-MG items - including that Eucalyptus stuff that I'd got at our last raffle and I won it back!! Well, I said 'Keep it!' and was a goody-two-shoes and didn't take another prize, although I was offered one. I'd won a book and a bottle of wine and thought that was plenty. There were masses of prizes, so I hope everyone got something.

What a wonderful day it was and the event raised £2,276 which will be distributed among SCAA, Maggie's Centre, Scottish Autism, Scouts and Lothian Car Club. Finally I've added some photos of members enjoying themselves.

**Mrs Grumpy**





## MG CYBERSTER



Peter Vardy MG at Seafield had asked local MG owners to come to the unveiling of the new electric Cyberster sports car and to bring our old MGs along. It was a sunny evening and we had 8 MGs parked in front of Peter Vardy (Dominic's TF isn't in the pic before you say) - along with a newly restored Maestro turbo, a few Zeds and a Mini. Some members got the VIP parking places! Once inside, the Cyberster was still under cover, but we chatted and tucked into the plentiful food & drink (non alcoholic of course) while we waited for the grand reveal.

The Cyberster was impressive looking and we could see the performance figures, sit in it, try it for size and press various buttons. The car is very attractive and well spec'd and they reckon the price will be £50 - £60k, which isn't too horrendous for an electric car of this calibre - and they've increased the range, which is good. However, I personally thought it was too wide - you'd need a big garage to keep it in as you've got to allow for the swing up doors.

Most of us sat in it - it was quite low, which might be a problem for us oldies, but the interior was attractive and well put together - and I liked the metallic red.



The wheels were lovely, I do wonder what those tyres cost though. Perhaps if you've got to ask then you can't afford the car - a bit like asking what a Bentley's fuel consumption is! Also not sure how those nice wheels will cope with Edinburgh pot holes!





I was one of the few who liked the indicators as even Audi & BMW drivers should understand them!! Thanks go to Peter Vardy for asking us to an interesting evening. Thanks also to Fraser and Andrew for some of the photos.

**Mrs Grumpy**



# HOW DO THEY KNOW? Part 1

This is a salutary tale which all car owners should take heed of! Just how do cars sense that their days with you are numbered?

"It was all going so well" is a phrase we always associate with a dear friend from Preston who we met on a Lakes and Borders weekend. He owned a MGB Roadster of indeterminate age. We first met Kevin when we stopped to see if we could be of any assistance when said MG had broken down. This was the first of many occasions on which the phrase "it was all going so well" was to be uttered.

In 2016, after 16 years of ownership and being in receipt of a modest inheritance, I decided it would be wise to replace my much loved and fun Toyota MR2. It was decided it would be appropriate to have one last blast in her and repeat our first outing in her with a stay at Airds Hotel in Port Appin. As many of the members will know, there are some wonderful roads en route where an engine can be fully exercised ..... Coming home I became aware of a decrease in power and so it was decided to head to Perth rather than Edinburgh, as the replacement vehicle was being acquired from Struan Motors. We limped there on Sunday evening and on Monday Mike tried to identify what was at the root of the problem. Being a "modern" vehicle, as opposed to the MGA's "classic engineering" he had to acquire via the internet a diagnostic tool to help identify this problem. Bear in mind that the MR2 was parked on a public street outside our flat with several drainage gratings at the kerb edge. This all added to the fun/challenge of getting the car back on the road in double quick time as it was to be part exchanged in a week's time. The Toyota was not an easy car to work on having a rear engine and the offending fuel injector was fairly inaccessible to a mechanic without access to a 4-post lift working outdoors and contending with the Scottish weather. Never one to give up, Mike succeeded in completing the replacement just in time to take the Toyota to Struans as planned and I became the owner of a new Mazda MX-5. Goodbye High Speed Fiona and welcome Xtra Wonderful Roadster - Fun driving would continue.



Two years ago Blueberry, our beautiful MGA Roadster, was still tucked up in her garage in Trinity but was being neglected and taken out less often now that we had moved to Cramond. After 23 years of being her custodians it was decided she should find another MG owner who would care for her and enjoy driving her on a more regular basis. Duncan was identified as that suitable person but as this was during the Covid lockdown he was given lots of info, pros and cons, photos etc of her adventures with us until it was possible for him to travel to Edinburgh to take a test drive. At this point Blueberry decided to be "unco-operative" and developed yet another brake issue.

Those Newsletter readers of a certain vintage will recall being regaled with tales of her brake problems over the years and yet again Mike the Mechanic was required to hurriedly fix a binding front brake before Duncan arrived. He was totally smitten with her and decided this was the MGA Roadster he had been looking for. Arrangements were made that she would be transported down to Cambridgeshire the following week but before then she would have to go up to Chic Doig to be "professionally serviced" then MOT'd. Would she throw another strop at the last minute? NO and to our relief we were able to get her onto that trailer and on her way to her new custodian. Just to make sure she had gone to a good home within a few weeks she would seriously challenge Duncan by having an unexpected catastrophic failure. He messaged us a follows:

"The engine rebuild is progressing well but at a snail's pace! I must try to be more patient! The cause of the problem was that the crankshaft was in 2 halves. I have no idea what could have caused that and I hope that the engineering company might be able to offer some explanation in due course. Meanwhile I have enjoyed exploring all the little nooks and crannies and doing a bit of cleaning up and chassis painting whilst the engine is out. At least the car is in my garage so I can pop in there and fiddle around any time."

It was to be more than a year before the repaired engine was to be available! Since then further enhancements have been made and we are reassured that Blueberry has definitely gone to an exceptionally good home.

**Fiona Davies.**

TO BE CONTINUED



The MGA's broken crankshaft



# IT'S NEVER FINISHED

Ever since I got the 'B on the road in 2016, I've never gotten around to finishing the centre console. I had managed to fit a cigarette lighter socket and that has served me well, for a plug in satnav during jaunts to Italy and Spa. That left two round holes and two rectangular holes - presumably for additional rocker switches. So, while looking for alternative bits and pieces for the Midget restoration I decided to see if I could find some solutions.

Once again Car Builder Solutions (CBS) came to the rescue in the form of two USB ports for the round holes and some number plate lights that would cover the rectangular holes and shine some more light into the footwells.

With the items ordered and on their way, first on the agenda was to remove the centre console. This involved removing the gearstick surround and gaiter before lifting this out of the way. I was then able to pull the console forward before disconnecting the interior light and cigarette lighter.

Mrs. J then very kindly drew up some circles and rectangles on the PC, so I could find the centres to open up the round holes and drill the mounting holes for the lights. Once these were drilled, I could then mount them to see how they looked. Although they are not wired in yet, they look as if they were meant to be there.

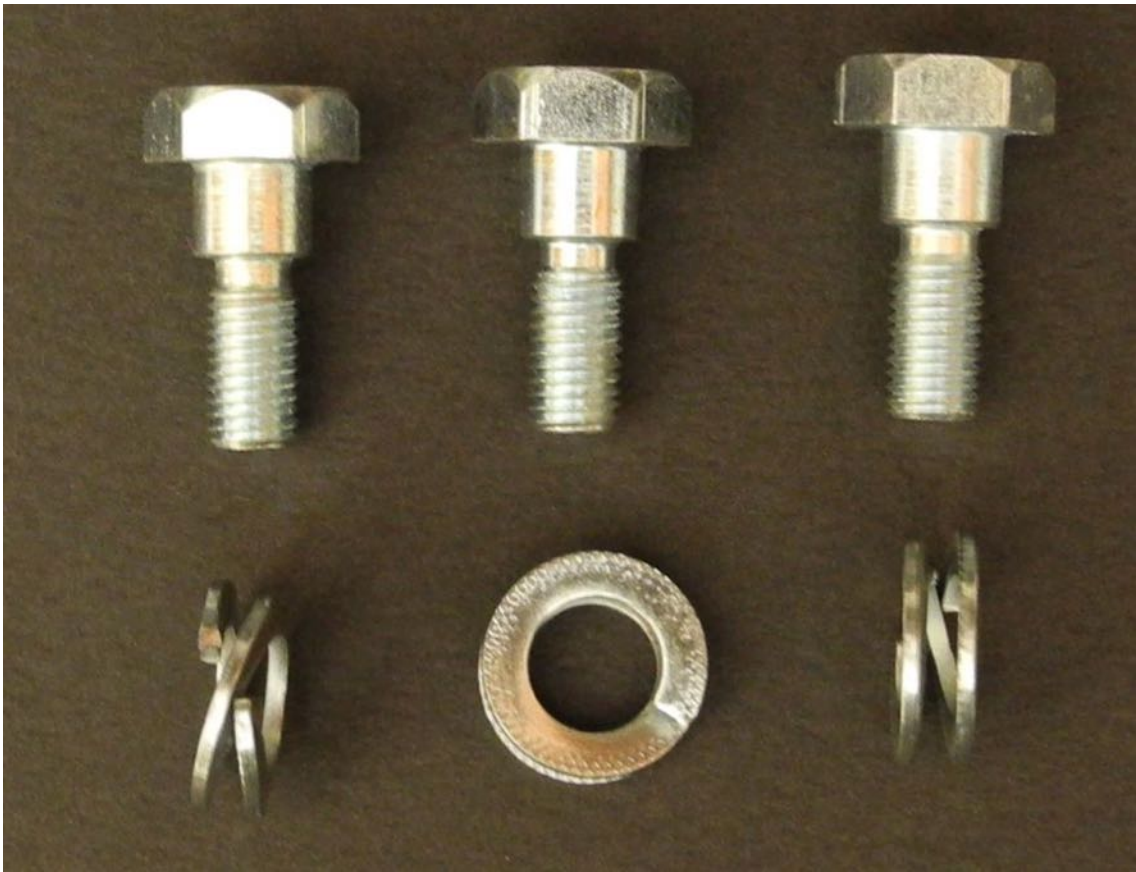
In addition to completing the console, I have always been troubled by a constant buzzing from the gear lever, particularly when the car is in O/D. The accepted solution is to change the small nylon bush under the gear lever and so, one was ordered and replaced - this did not solve the issue!!

Further investigation revealed that the small plate that sits on top of the gearbox should be held in by shouldered bolts with some Two-turn Thackery washers (I had fitted some plain 7/16" bolts with spring washers). These allow the plate to 'float' on these screws while keeping the gear lever free for smooth changes.

Once these arrived, I was able to fit them and put the centre console back together and now there is no more buzzing. **Craig Fotheringham**

The finished console below and the proper gearbox bolts and washers on the next page





## INTERESTING SNIPPET

Back in 2015/16 I did a couple of articles of an incredible MGB re-shell carried out by Jimmy Sher and sold for serious money. Well Nick Gould of Coffee & Classics has bought it for half of what it reputedly sold for! Karen sent in a pic of Craig checking to see if you can still eat your breakfast off the suspension!! BTW, you can.



## MG TF v Mazda MX5: a short reflection

There are several reviews available online comparing the MG TF (2002-2010) with the Mazda MX5 mk3 (2005-2015). Having just acquired a late Chinese built version of the former, and having previously owned one of the latter, I offer some of my own thoughts here.

1. Despite the comments I've read about the MG having a "cramped cockpit", I disagree. It feels much more spacious than the Mazda, and I can drive it comfortably for greater distances as a result. The top of the windscreen is quite low in the Mazda, rather like an MGB, whereas my view is not cut off in the MG.
2. The comments made about rubbish MG build quality are mostly justified. The Mazda is definitely better screwed together and has better quality materials.
3. There is a lot of hype about mid-engined sports cars handling well. The TF does handle well, but there are other factors. My experience is that the Mazda is generally a more enjoyable and rewarding drive. The steering is nicer and the gear shift quality much better because it's direct rather than the rather odd change by wire feel of the TF.
4. The TF 135 feels livelier than the 1.8 Mazda it competed with. It's more responsive. Fuel economy is very similar.
5. I found the MX5 kicked up a huge amount of road noise and was consequently very tiring to drive on long journeys, particularly given its claustrophobic cockpit. The TF isn't exactly quiet, but I don't find it a problem.
6. Practicality: There's not much in it, despite the MG's engine taking up boot space. What does happen in the MG, though, is that anything in the boot ends up quite warm!
7. Looks: an entirely subjective and personal matter. I think the MG is prettier!

In summary, I think the Mazda is the better car. However, the bottom line is that I couldn't live with the MX5 because I just didn't fit in it, I found the seats uncomfortable and it was too noisy, whereas I'm quite happy in my TF! **David Turner**



# BUNNETS AND HARDHATS

The title is a bit misleading as it really should read 'Bonnets and Hardtops' but it was the only way I could relate this tale to 'head gear'! Any way I digress, the reason for this tale was a message from Chris at CBC to say the I could finally collect my newly painted bonnet and hardtop. Oh! and by the way here is the bill!!!!!!

Moving swiftly on, a plan was formulated to pick these items up. The bonnet was no problem, that would fit in the Seat. The hardtop was another matter. When I bought it originally, I foolishly thought it would go in my trailer, but ended up strapping it to the top of the trailer to get it home from Balerno. I didn't really want to do the same again.

Fortunately, one of my neighbours has a larger trailer and coupled with the fact he also has a Land Rover, formed the basis for the plan. Some quick measurements later confirmed the bonnet would fit in the Landie whilst the Hardtop would sit within the trailer.

A suitable day was agreed and with packing blankets and soft mats packed we headed out to CBC Autobody. Chris was as busy as always and once he got some room and we had the blankets/mats organized we carefully loaded in both items. As always, the journey back was uneventful with Sherriffhall roundabout proving as busy as always.

Once back at Chez Craig we unload the hardtop into the garage and the bonnet into the spare room (where else!) to be kept safe along with the other panels.

Now despite having a triple garage, the adage of junk expanding to fill the space available is very true, had me pondering how and where I could store the hardtop without it getting damaged. To that end I have invested in one of these - [www.ukcustomcovers.com](http://www.ukcustomcovers.com). Along with a couple of ladder hooks that I can screw into the roof joists means it can be stored out of harm's way till needed.

24 hours later (but only if you order before 2pm!) Bradley from DPD arrived at the door with a small suitcase sized package. Quickly unwrapped, and laid out on the living room floor, I was confronted with the hard top bag, which came complete with air holes and straps to suspend it. The interior is lined with fleece to prevent scratching.

Having now received my cover it was time to hang it in the garage. I located suitable wall space and joists, the hooks were then duly screwed in and the bag, complete with hardtop inside, was hung out of harms way. I have to say it looks like the equivalent of a giant bat hanging up - but then again there is nothing wrong with a bat cave!

**Craig Fotheringham**



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*Monthly meetings have resumed at the rugby cub, second Thursday 7.30 for 8pm*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All provisional

**October 12 Meeting**

**October 22 Last run of the season.  
9.45am for 10am start at  
Fort Kinnaird (near Primark)  
for a scenic run along the  
coast and through East  
Lothian, finishing at Gifford  
for a late lunch. Please  
contact Peter**

**November 9 Meeting & Raffle**

**November tbc Film & Curry Night**

**December 14**

**December 15**

**January 11**

**January tbc**

**February 8**

**Open Club Meeting**

**Christmas Dinner at  
The Steading, Hillend.  
£25 for two courses,  
£30 for three courses  
Please give your name  
to Allan by the end of  
November.**

**Meeting & Quiz**

**Skittles evening at the  
Sheep Heid Inn, Duddingston.  
Please contact Martin.**

**AGM**