

MG CAR CLUB LIMITED

DEVON AND CORNWALL CENTRE

WINTER 2009/10 NEWSLETTER

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Dear Member,

Welcome to the Newsletter, again being written by your Centre Treasurer, Barry Smith. We should all have recovered from the rigours of Christmas by now, so let me begin by wishing you all a very happy New Year. Hopefully, you will all have made a resolution to make the most of your MGCC membership during the coming year by coming along to at least one of the many events available, with or without your MG!

Firstly, a warm welcome to the following new members:

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|---------------------------|-----------|
| Geoff Cathery | Truro |
| Mr & Mrs Ian Edwardson | Crediton |
| Murray Hammick | Sidmouth |
| Robert Haynes | Braunton |
| Gareth Kennard | Ivybridge |
| Matthew North | Helston |
| David Perks | Truro |
| Frank Smith | Tiverton |
| Michael Stevenson | Exeter |
| Mr & Mrs Myles Sutherland | Exeter |

Transferred in:

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| John Hart | Tiverton |
| Wendy Keeling | South Molton |

Now on to the events that have taken place since the last Newsletter in October:

A total of 28 Members and friends gathered at Tavistock for a Treasure hunt on 4th October, a most satisfying turn-out, particularly under rather rain threatening skies. In recent years we have become more concerned about the risks of "clue hunting" whilst driving and have resolved to reduce this aspect of traditional treasure hunts as far as practicable. This event involved no driving element, but took everyone on a short circular walk along the River Tavy and into the historic Bedford Square, whilst using their observational powers to seek answers to the clues on the route sheets. The threatened rain did not materialise so all were able to take things at a leisurely pace and learn something of Tavistock history in the process.

Once completed, everyone drove the short distance to the Centre Chairman, Colin Bird's home where Cream teas were enjoyed whilst the clue sheets were marked and results deduced. Eventual winners were John & Pauline Noblett, in their first venture into this style of event. Despite being local residents, they professed to learning much about Tavistock that they had not previously encountered!

On 11th October, the Healey Driver's Club ran the **Exmoor Rut**. This scenic run is organised by Ex MGCC committee member Colin Lennox-Jones and is thrown open to our own members, who formed a significant part of the 76 starters. The event has a bit of a reputation for inclement weather, and unfortunately, this year's was no exception. (Well it was Devon in October!) Starting from the Buckfastleigh station on the S. Devon Railway, the route followed much of the old A38 into Exeter then via the Exe valley up towards Exmoor. After visiting Porlock Weir and climbing the notorious hill, Lorna Doone country was visited, then Lynmouth and back over high Exmoor through Simonsbath to the finish at the Highbullen Country Club. Here, everyone could enjoy the inevitable cream tea whilst drying themselves out.

25th October saw this year's running of the **Tamar Trial**, one of the local events included in the Association of Classic Trials Club's (ACTC) annual championship. Although this is promoted by the Launceston & N. Cornwall Motor Club, it would not take place without our Centre's involvement, with several committee members being heavily involved in the organisation. Our Centre marshalled seven of the Observed Sections this year, entailing a commitment from over 30 members and friends. The event is for motor cycles as well as cars and always provides excellent spectator value, particularly the motor cycles with sidecars whose crews often seem barely in control when the going gets slippery! For the last two years I have run the section in Lee Woods, between Chillaton and Lewdown, which is a steep track up through trees emerging into a disused quarry at the top. Centre member Brian Galipeau provided a Land Rover in case we had to recover any competitors wedged between trees, but this proved to be unnecessary this year. The Doney Cup, one of the Centre's historic trophies is awarded for the best MG performance, which went to Bill Bennett in his J2. Others upholding MG honours were Colin Biles (Midget) and Dudley Sterry with his highly developed J2 special.

On 14th November a **Skittles Match** was laid on by the East Devon natter, this time at their regular meeting venue, the New Inn at Broadclyst. This is to the East of Exeter and further afield for Plymouth and Cornwall folks, which may explain the smaller turnout from these areas compared to previous years. Nevertheless, 32 members played, being split into "host Natter" and visitors teams. Several people found the alley quite unpredictable to play, with an uneven surface resembling lunar craters and a slight slope to one side! This was all taken in light-hearted fun, however, and a final round was successfully completed after a break for the buffet, with the final result being a narrow win for the visitors. Highest individual gents and ladies scorers were John Paramore and Jennifer Mather. Thanks due again to Tony & Anne Short for organising an enjoyable evening.

MCC Exeter Trial on 8th/9th January fell victim to the New Year snow and ice, with the decision to cancel being made at 10a.m. the day prior to the start. Access to many of the Observed sections was considered difficult or dangerous and it was thought unfair to ask the large number of volunteer marshals to attempt getting to their hills. The post-trial club dinner at the finish hotel in Torquay went ahead however, with over 100 frustrated competitors attending and honouring their accommodation reservations. The hotel had

catered for the originally booked numbers, so “seconds” were available for most courses, allowing several to over indulge – I will mention no names! The Tamar Valley contingent elected to use their trials MGs for the Torquay trip, despite the freezing conditions, and encountered no problems, with cleared roads right through. The stark beauty of the snow-covered Devon countryside rendered the drive most enjoyable, though not making up for the loss of the Trial.

Now on to future events:

On 20th February you have your opportunity to be part of the MG Car Club democracy at the **Centre AGM**, to be held again at The Eagle House Hotel, up behind the castle at Launceston. This is probably about as close to the geographic centre of our “patch” as it’s possible to be. We gather at 7:30pm for the start of the meeting at 8:00pm, so do make the effort to come along and express any views you may have about what the Committee is, or should be, proposing. We are constantly on the look out for fresh blood and ideas on the Committee, so if you’d like to be more closely involved, get your nominations into Bob Slatter at the address above by the beginning of February. Rest assured you will be welcomed with open arms, even if you can only attend some of the bi-monthly meetings. There will be a buffet following the completion of the AGM business giving further informal chances to “chew the fat”.

The following weekend sees the Centre’s annual dinner at the **Cottage Hotel, Hope Cove** on 27th February. The three course dinner is exceptional value at £17.50, to include a pre-dinner glass of wine or fruit juice. The hotel is very welcoming and informal, having been run, very much “hands on” by the same family for many years. It is in a splendid, elevated location, looking out to sea over Hope Cove. Rooms & breakfast are from £33.75 p.p. if staying for the Saturday night. It really is a beautiful spot for a sort weekend break and many will be staying for the Friday night as well. Prices for this, including dinner, start at £48.05 p.p. For further information or Dinner tickets, contact Pete or Sue Heath on 01752 775708 (allegropeter@aol.com). Accommodation should be booked directly with the hotel on 01548 561555 (info@hopecove.com), but be aware they shut down for January and the phone may not answered during this period.

On 13th March, the **Spring Skittles Match** will be hosted by the South Hams Natter, at the Westward Inn, Lee Mill, just off the A38 East of Plymouth. This is very easy to get to, so it would be great to see teams from some of the other Natters. Buffet food will be provided, so please contact the Natter leader, Ted Lawrence on 01752 793105 (ted@hedgerowsend.fsnet.co.uk), in order to give the pub numbers to be catered for.

2nd/3rd April we have the annual Easter time running of the **MCC Land’s End Trial**. There is usually a very good MG presence in the entry, including Centre members, and many give time as marshals during the event. Detailed information, including maps, of recommended spectator viewing locations are on the MCC website (www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk), with Crackington, near Boscastle, and Bluehills Mine, at St. Agnes being the most popular. Bluehills, in particular, is a spectacular location high up on the cliffs above the Atlantic.

25th April is the date nominated by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs for their **Drive It Day**. This is when the Federation encourages as many classic car drivers as possible to take to the roads in a public demonstration of the strength and vitality of the movement in the UK. The Centre encourages Natter groups to set up informal trips in their own areas, or organise inter-natter meetings. Contact your local natter leader, Bob Slatter or see our website.

The **Bristol Classic Car Show**, staged these days at the Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, is on 1st May this year. Traditionally, this was an early spring event, but was postponed last year to the early May bank holiday. This was found to have a beneficial effect on attendances, so has now become the regular date.

Looking further ahead, **Janner Week**, when the Centre plays host to a gathering of members and friends from around the country, is 29th May to 5th June. This will be based again at the Woodovis caravan & camping park, near Gunnislake on the Devon & Cornwall border.

It appears the weekend of 5th/6th June will be “**MG Live!**”, the 60th anniversary event at Silverstone. Full details and booking arrangements will appear in *Safety Fast!*

The sub-committee organising the **Atlantic Coast Express Run** on 20th June, reports plans are progressing for the run to start at Okehampton station, with a proposed finish in the Padstow area.

That's it for the moment except for the usual reminder to members to let Bob have an up to date e-mail address for direct transmission of the newsletter, if available, or a phone call to ensure you receive your free hard copy via the post. Additionally, the latest newsletter will always be available to all on the Centre website www.mgcdc.org.uk

SafetyFast,

Barry Smith