

President's Report - 2017 Annual General Meeting

It is only a few days since a number of our members made the annual pilgrimage to Wagga Wagga for the Gathering of the Faithful (GOF). I like this weekend. *Lorelei* gets a decent run albeit sometimes a little disconcerting driving a tiny Midget adjacent to the 110 kph wheels of a B-Double. But it also provides an opportunity to spend the weekend with friends wining and dining, country driving and of course seeing what cars have also made the journey for the GOF display. It's these elements that bring us all together in the MG Car Club Canberra; outings with friends in the cars that we (generally) love.

Of course, GOF is only one of the annual fixtures on our Club calendar. Earlier in the year we had a very successful weekend away to Oberon as organised by Brian and Christine Calder. A wonderful weekend of driving through the Abercrombie gorge, sightseeing in the beautiful Mayfield Gardens and a range of other activities including patting alpacas on top of the Great Dividing Range.

Mike Lawless and Graeme Corbett have provided us with a veritable mix of events on our social calendar with monthly runs and mid-week meanders to country cafes, restaurants, wineries, pubs and picnic grounds in our region. In between time we had the daylight-saving BBQs or restaurant nights which provided other opportunities to use vehicles on concessional registration with twilight, top-down drives being a favourite for some.

The weekend away to GOF in September last year was very notable for the last minute change for the display venue when widespread rains resulted in significant flooding such that the usual display area was metres underwater. Apart from that aspect though it was a beautiful weekend organised by Mark and Naomi for the 28 club members who made the trek to Wagga.

And on the subject of major events, MG TYme 2016 held in October was an outstanding success both in the numbers attending as well as the event itself, particularly with the main display held at the National Museum where our visitors to Canberra were able to avail themselves of a visit to Floriade via a shuttle very kindly provided by Graeme Rossiter. The Sunday display in pride of place at the Old Bus Depot Markets was well attended by members of the public and the run to the Cotter provided a very scenic drive before everyone enjoyed a sumptuous picnic in the park expertly catered by Mo Dechaineux and her band of merry volunteers. The organising sub-Committee, together with a number of Club volunteers, made a significant logistical task seem so seamless with the very positive feedback strongly suggesting MG TYme again be held in 2018.

Carlo Busato has done a wonderful job in organising our display events throughout the year. We implemented the new Pride of Ownership display at Terribly British Day which complemented the annual *Concours d'Elegance*. With National Capital Authority rules currently restricting car displays to hard surfaced areas in lieu of

grassed areas, there has been considerable discussion on the future of such displays being held in the ACT. Carlo has been involved in many meetings with the relevant authorities and car clubs on determining a way forward. There has been considerable anecdotal support for a move to Queanbeyan for these events but it is hoped that a longer term solution will be found to keep these displays in the ACT, particularly in locations that will attract passing foot traffic

Our motorsport activities have continued to attract a healthy number of participants to the motorkhanas. Earlier concerns regarding the longer term availability of the Sutton Rd complex appear to have abated with each motorkhana being well supported by motorsport enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. Motorsport Coordinator Kent Brown and Clerk of the Course Chris Hillman have made a significant contribution in time and expertise to organise these events while Virginia Brown and her group of Girl Guides have continued to provide competitors, officials and spectators with their BBQ and coffee stop. A band of dedicated volunteers has helped with timekeeping, recording and a host of other tasks necessary to run these events safely and professionally. It is fair to say our very good reputation in this area is well deserved. Our motor sport reports also keep us up to date with the travels and historic motor racing competitions in which some of our members compete with all measures of success. The MG marque is alive and well in demonstrating its historical racing pedigree.

Under Laurie Gardiner's guidance we have again benefitted from a number of workshops at our Service Centre. Electrics, gear boxes, welding, brakes and wheel balancing are just a few of the topics presented by volunteers keen to share their knowledge amongst interested members. The workshops are always well attended with, I suspect, the offer of coffee, cakes and a lunchtime BBQ providing sufficient temptation to make the journey to Fyshwick to learn or refresh ones knowledge in maintaining our MGs. Laurie has also overseen the improvements to our club trailer with the installation of new tie down points, a framework to allow a canopy to be fitted to the trailer as well as organising the general servicing requirements to ensure the trailer remains safe and roadworthy. Our thanks must also go to Mark and Glen Hogan for their MasterChef skills at the BBQ given that one shouldn't participate in a workshop without proper sustenance.

Our annual Presentation Dinner was held at the Royal Canberra Golf Club for the first time with Gail Argyle again weaving her magic to deliver a wonderful evening of food and entertainment whilst we formally recognised those members with their respective awards for participation in club activities, motorsport and display events.

Tappet Chatter production continues to evolve. With only a dozen members now electing to receive the printed version, printing is now very kindly being done by Laurie Gardiner on a reimbursement basis instead of using a commercial printer. It was decided to retain the user pays principle for those receiving the hard copy. Of note is a recent decision at the 2017 Nat Meet to review the regulations for the best

club magazine prize due to the impact of electronic magazines and their increasing use over printed media.

Club membership remains at an average of 300 people when spouses/partners and children are included. This position has remained steady for many years now and while we expect a 15-20% drop in memberships at the beginning of a new financial year, this loss is generally compensated by new memberships over the ensuing membership year.

This level of membership combined with savings largely from the decreased production and postage costs of Tappet Chatter, has meant the club is quite sound financially. These savings have also meant that we have not had to raise annual membership fees but also we have been able to offset member costs of various activities by way of club subsidies. We have also benefitted from regular sponsorship by Shannons for which we have to be extremely thankful. Again, in the last financial year we were able to make considerable donations to Alzheimer's Australia (ACT) as the recipient of our fundraising efforts for our community support activity.

Our inability to attract sufficient volunteers for the Committee positions has resulted in a change in the role of Secretary in particular with the various functions being shared amongst three members of the Committee to make the workload more manageable. This situation has worked well to date. One aspect observed in my time as President has been an apparent increase in extended holidays of our largely retired membership. This means that absences by those having Committee or non-Committee roles have had to be undertaken by others but this has not caused any insurmountable issues over the past three years.

We have continued our involvement with the Council of ACT Motoring Clubs. The Club has made a formal submission in response to a review of the governance of the Council. There is some dissatisfaction about various aspects of the Council's management, hence the review, and it remains to be seen if any change is likely to occur as a result of the review. However given the extreme lack of interest by the majority of affiliated clubs in this review, significant change is not likely unfortunately. Ongoing disquiet in this regard has resulted in the MGCCC having no further formal representation on the Council's Committee following the Council's last AGM. It is important however to recognise the substantial efforts of Graeme Rossiter and Brian Calder for their representing the Club on the Council Committee during some very challenging issues.

The many facets of the Club's activities call for a substantial personal input by many of our club members and it is important their contribution over the last 12 months is publicly acknowledged. I have been very grateful for the sage advice and ongoing assistance of Vice-President and Motorsport Coordinator Kent Brown in both of his portfolios. As well as these two roles, Kent has also been a valued contributor to our workshops, his knowledge of the marque is keenly sought via our technical helpline

and his regular articles in Tappet Chatter on motorsport and the history of MGs are always interesting and informative.

Our Secretary Simon Braun has kept the 'engine room' of the club quietly ticking over, ably assisted by Trevor Clement managing memberships and Carlo Busato looking after the mail and its distribution, with Bruce Murray keeping things up to date with our club history records. Our financial functions and obligations have been expertly managed by Laurie Gardiner with our annual audit testament to his sound management across this field. A man of many talents and largesse, Laurie has also continued to manage the Service Centre which is housed in the garage that he rents, he has organised our workshops and looked after the upkeep of the club trailer and workshop equipment and as mentioned earlier, he now prints Tappet Chatter for those still receiving hard copies of our Club magazine.

Mark Horsfield has kept us engaged in both print and electronic media with Tappet Chatter and our website. It never ceases to amaze me where he finds those little snippets he links us to in Tappet Chatter which really add a different dimension to an online magazine. Rob Chilman has been generous with his time assisting with the Tappet Chatter distribution and mailing processes as well as his role as Concessional Registration Scheme Registrar; Mike Lawless and Graeme Corbett have provided us with a variety of interesting routes and destinations for our monthly and mid-week meander runs. John Cooper has served our literary needs managing our library resources and purchasing new references to keep the library relevant. Peter and Val Long have worked long and hard to update the regalia inventory and making sure the 'shop' is open for us every month. Our resident photographer Graham Gittens has captured our displays and activities and made the pictures available in Tappet Chatter and online. Chris Hillman and Gill Tonuri have contributed significantly in the organisation and management of our motokhanas while making sure all of the equipment is securely stowed and kept serviceable, while Malcolm Robertson has photographed the motorkhana competitors in all weathers and posted the photos for all to see in our Facebook pages.

Our monthly meetings would not be the same without a tasty supper to end the evening. My thanks to our kitchen helpers Debbie Whitfield, Mo Dechaineux, Christine Calder, Gail Argyle, Sue Roberts, Val Long, Kerrie Buitendam among others who make sure all the shopping is done, the delicious food is prepared and then the kitchen is all cleaned up after we have had our fill and departed.

I have likely missed acknowledging some of our members who are regulars at helping out; be it at our meetings, runs, displays, motorsport or workshop events and if this is so, I beg your forgiveness but please be assured you have my heartfelt thanks for your valuable contributions, all of which make our Club the outstanding success it is.

The *Marque of Friendship* is alive and well in the ACT because of your passion for the MG and the friendships it engenders. As I finish my elected term of President I can only say what an honour it has been to serve the Club and its members in this capacity.