



# MGCC *Malta Bulletin*

MG Car Club Malta online Bulletin



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- A word from Vivian Vleeshouwers
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### Contributors

- Vivienne Vleeshouwers
- Chris Stewart
- Robert Muscat
- Joseph Casapinta

# Welcome



Dear Members,

Many of us have ideas, thoughts and dreams that linger on our minds for years. With today's busy life, there seems to be never have enough time to exploit those thoughts to make them happen. Personally, the MGCC (Malta) is a dream come true. After 35 years, in coming to finally own an MG and being part of a same marque club has come to be a reality.

Last April we launched our Club, with over forty MGs attending the event. Drivers and riders alike exchanged ideas, shared their experiences and also expressed their interest in joining this prestigious Club. During our Extraordinary General Meeting in June, a good turn out, once again, filled the meeting room and once again we had the floor going with questions and interest from our prospective members.

Since then we have been busy with organizing our administrative requirements, setting our foundations which are beneficial for the Club's future and members alike.

Most of you may have met each committee member, however, for the sake of those who haven't, may I kindly introduce to you each of the members and their respective roles.:

Joseph Casapinta	Chairman
Sandro Zammit	Secretary
Joseph R. Sammut	Treasurer
Kris Scicluna	Memberships
Robert Muscat	Social Events
Frank Mallia	Public Relations & Technical

In the coming days, although we have now reached the high summer temperatures, we will still be organizing events as the one planned for the 21st July, to which I am very much so looking forward and hoping to seeing you participating in this run, which will take us from Bahar ic-Caghaq to the New Jersey Diner in Zonqor Point, enjoying a relaxing evening with all cars parked in a designated area, also to be enjoyed by the public.

On behalf of the MG Car Club Malta Committee, I would like to thank you for your support, your participation and your feedback. Without you, there will be no club!

Wishing you all a wonderful Safety Fast Ride

Chairman



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*Vivian Vleeshouwers*



Dear all,

It is a great pleasure to welcome the MG Car Club Malta to the European MG family!

During the last months I was in regular contact with Joe Casapinta and the other board members and felt the enthusiasm and power to start the MG Car Club in Malta.

Wonderful meetings were held and many people joined in. An official logo was designed and a website was built. On 2<sup>nd</sup> June the board was elected and now the MG Car Club Malta is operational.

The board expressed to me their intention of becoming affiliated to the MG Car Club UK.

Being the European Manager I am responsible for the connections between all European Clubs. It is with big enthusiasm that I started the talks on affiliation.

Being affiliated means that the club belongs to the worldwide MG network. Many international events are organized, like MG Live at Silverstone and the annual European Event of the Year takes place in one of the European countries. In 2020 this event will take place in Würzburg, Germany and in 2021 we will visit Portugal.

In 2021 there is also an event planned in Sardinia.

Not only international events but also the local ones are open to any member of an affiliated club.

The chairmen of all European clubs are in regular contact and share their challenges and successes together.

The atmosphere is one of a wonderful family. A lot of enthusiasm and commitment to the MG brand is what connects us.

I wish you all a flourishing and successful club with a lot of new friendships!

Best regards,

Vivian Vleeshouwers  
European Manager





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## Sebring is Born

Robert Muscat



Having worked closely with Valletta Grand Prix Foundation during the annual Malta Classic, and being brought up around classic cars, it was a natural progression for me to take the plunge into classic car racing, even if rather late in my life.



The opportunity came and I gladly grasped it. My chosen racer was an MGB GT 1976 acquired barely one month before the Mdina Grand Prix of 2015. The experience was a learning experience but so enjoyable that, like so many before me, I got

hooked, and, as the saying goes, the rest is history. The following year, things were hastily put up a notch or two. Adrenaline kicked in a tad too much, and my second experience was cut short with an unfortunate accident which left the car in need of a total



transformation.

The MGB GT as raced in Malta Classic 2016, replicating an MG Sebring raced in the 70s with the same colours

Back to the drawing board, and after many long nights of searching and information gathering, it was clear that a full race spec MG Sebring with a Rover 3.6 V8 engine would be a doable conversion. Thanks to the priceless work and input of Keith Vella, a dear friend and team mechanic, the project began and took just over a year to complete. In this time, another friend Ben Mangion got hooked on the project and himself acquired another MG Sebring, which will be featured in future issues of this newsletter.

Having used the completed Sebring for the last 10 months, taking part in the Malta Classic 2018, a number of hill climbs organised by Island Car Club, pursuit at Hal Far organised by 360M and MDRA, and also a time attack at Racalmuto with a group of classics taken to this nice track by Joe Anastasi, and collecting some trophies on the way, I can finally say, what a car...what a roar...



**More on the MG Sebring V8 and the experiences of the MG Car Club Racing Team in the next newsletter.**





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## *King of the road*

Christ Stewart



Full marques for a car that refused to die.

There are few marques in the history of the motor industry that evoke as much enthusiasm as the MG.

For more than half a century the letters MG, enclosed in the famous octagonal badge, signalled romance, fun and excitement.

But the story and the marque reached the end of the road when, in 1980, The Abingdon, Oxfordshire, factory that had turned out nearly a million of the famous little sports cars was closed down and production ceased - seemingly forever.

But it's a car that has refused to die. For before Abingdon was sold off to property developers, the manufacturing press dies and jig tools of the MGB Roadster were carefully collected and secretly stored away for the future.

Finally in 1989, eight years since the last MGB left the production line, the glamorous two seater was back in small-scale production in a workshop with a mere 15 devoted workers at British Motor Heritage in Witney, Oxfordshire.

The MG was a success from the start. As a youthful naval officer Prince Philip courted Princess Elizabeth by dashing up to London and Windsor each weekend in his two-seater MG TC sports car.

Then rushing back to Portsmouth and Naval duties on Sunday evening, Prince Philip skidded off the road. He was unhurt and the car undamaged, but the King George VI later told the dashing young prince that the MG was not a suitable car in which to transport the future Queen of England. Philip gave up the car and married Elizabeth. But both remembered the magic of the little wire-wheeled MG. When Prince Charles passed his driving test, they gave him his first new car - an MGA.

Virgin Boss Richard Branson is so enthusiastic about the MGB that he was even persuaded to take part in a race at Silverstone at an anniversary meeting.

He proved his skill by finishing fifth against experienced opposition.

Sir Michael Edwardes, who reluctantly killed off the most famous sports car in the world in 1980, because it was allegedly bleeding the state-owned BL to death, gave permission to British Heritage to take what parts they needed to provide spares for existing cars.

When most cars cease to be manufactured, the chance of them re-entering production at all is very slim; the number of cars that are resuscitated several years after their demise is consequently even smaller. With the end of the MGB there was a period when bodies and panels would be built on an occasional basis to meet service demands but the long term prognosis for the tooling was mothballing followed by eventual scrapping. However, thanks largely to one man - David Nicholas of Pressed Steel - the tools survived and were placed in storage at Swindon. Thanks chiefly to another man - former Cowley Materials Control Manager David Bishop - these tools would later be rescued, reconditioned, and brought to a small site at Faringdon as part of a bold project to bring the MGB bodyshells back to life.

British Motor Heritage has to date supplied over 6000 bodyshells to support restoration projects by owners of these iconic cars.

The MG badge has been kept alive because of the owners love of the cars. It is now possible for the enthusiast to restore even the most rusty and delapidated MGB. ***Now the Legend will never die!***



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Driving to Malta through France and Italy  
It was the need to renew the sills on both sides of my MGB Roadster which prompted our first drive to Malta.



I had first visited Malta in 1974, to meet my good friend Hughie Zammit, who lived in Berzebugia, the 'Southend' of Malta, one of the finest and most popular, holiday destinations in Malta at the time.

My fascination seeing all the old English cars, Jags, Humbers, Vauxhalls, Hillmans, etc looking well cared for, most with diesel engines installed, increased my enthusiasm for the Maltese passion in caring for older cars.

So, in 1980 when my MGB was in need of serious TLC (Tender Loving Care!), I decided to take the plunge and drive the car to Malta.

Having bought the components for the sills and loading them onto the boot (looking like a set of skis) I set off on our voyage of discovery, with my future wife Ann, in August of 1980.



The initial drive was great, negotiating Paris and through France to the Mont Blanc Tunnel. (1049Km)

As we arrived in Aosta, we encountered an electrical problem which meant that the batteries would not charge!!

A local garage did not have the correct spares (faulty condenser) but charged the batteries overnight for us.

We set off the next day, somewhat concerned, but the car ran well and got us to Rome (764km) before we needed another charge. Again a local garage charged the batteries for us overnight ready for our next leg of

the journey south.

Setting off from Rome with fingers crossed, we managed the whole of the remaining journey to Reggio Calabria (693km) and booked into our hotel for the night. In the morning the car had just enough power to start and get us the short distance to the Tirrenia ferry at Messina before conking out finally in the queue.

We were pushed onto the ferry by the crew and settled down for our crossing to Valletta, Malta.

On arrival at the Grand Harbour in Valletta our friends were waiting for us, pushed us off the ferry, and towed us to Berzebugia where we were able to get the car fixed next day.

All in all an interesting journey, but one which gave us faith in the reliability of the MGB even in extreme conditions. The 2 x six volt batteries worked wonders, and I am still amazed we got such longevity out of them.

Surely a testament to a car which was built to for grand touring capability, by engineers who knew how to maintain its legendary reliability, time and time again.

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## *Summer Ride Reminder*

### **CALLING ALL MGS**

*Summer  
Ride  
21.07.2019*



*18:30 Meet at Bahar ic-Caghaq  
19:00 Leave to Zonqor Point*

*All MGs parking in reserved area  
ending ride at New Jersey Diner*



**KINDLY CONFIRM YOUR PARTICIPATION  
TO MGCARCLUBMALTA@GMAIL.COM  
OR SMS TO 79470056**



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## Gallery

These are a couple of photos taken during our events since we launched the MG Car Club Malta.





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## Updates

With a couple of months from our Launch day, we have made progress in both administrative and events organisation. The committee has been very busy and it is with pleasure to point the following updates and information that you may see beneficial.

**www.mgcarclubmalta.net** is the official MG Malta site. This comprises of all the information pertaining to past and future events, information, blogs and discussions posted by members and an on-line shop featuring products from our partners.

**Mgcarclubmalta@gmail.com** is our current main email address. We kindly ask your comments and suggestions to be sent to this mail box.

**Club Communication** with all its members will be done via email, WhatsApp and SMS to reach each one of you. It has been decided that unless otherwise required no normal postage methods will be used. Any club publication can be read on-line via the website through the members portal.

**Memberships.** A Memberships card, together with an entry folio will be issued to our paid members. Any memberships dues are kindly requested to be settled either:

- **Cheque** addressed to the Treasurer, MG Car Club Malta and sent to 35, Madonnina, Dun Gwann Zammit Hammet Street, Balzan BZN1111
- **Revolut** Payment gateway to mobile number 79470056. Receipt will be sent via email.

**MGCC(Malta) Racing Team.** To those for some octane boost, we are in the process of forming the MGCC(Malta) racing team. Currently two members are participating with Sebrings in local and foreign track and hill climb events. We will be organising our own MG track events. Those who are interested in participating in these types of events are kindly requested to let us know by email at [mgcarclubmalta@gmail.com](mailto:mgcarclubmalta@gmail.com)



*Safety fast!*

