

Sixty Three Years of MG

By Viv James

It all started with a MG YA saloon owned by parents of a school friend and souped up by their eldest son. For me, MG ownership was mandatory.

My first car adventure, unknown to my parents was an Austin 7 special at age of 16 built by Tim Trembath and kept in a friendly neighbour's garage until sold for the 40 pounds deposit on a 1932 J2 MG for 75 pounds the balance being earned by repairing valve radiators for neighbours and friends. The J2 was licensed and transferred into my brother's name. It was lots of secret fun (Graeme Wares was in on the plot). In matric swot-week I found a sad but usable TC for 135 pounds. I sold my J2 for 75 pounds and negotiated terms with the TC owner. A holiday job in electronics at Hamrad in town made payment for this wonderful sports car possible. I had confessed to my father who sportingly offered to lend me the balance owing with easy payback terms.



Brian James' MG TC

After an eventful year which included a brush with a Nash Rambler and the loss of a front wheel assembly I stripped the car for a rebuild. This included a complete wood job by Brian Kuyk with coffin wood from Human and Pitt that was owned by his relatives. The finished



Wood work by the late Brian Kuyk

product including engine, rack and pinion steering and red paint took three months with a second wrecked TC being used for mudguards etc.

The restored TC was an eye-catcher and easily fetched the 250 pounds I needed for a Morgan Plus 4. No MGs for two years until the Morgan was replaced by a well-worn MGA. The MGA was not improved by contact with a cow near Storms River and a banana truck in Rondebosch. Subsequently, body parts from Jerry Welz and great panel beating by Toeks Cross produced a gleaming red car which earned its

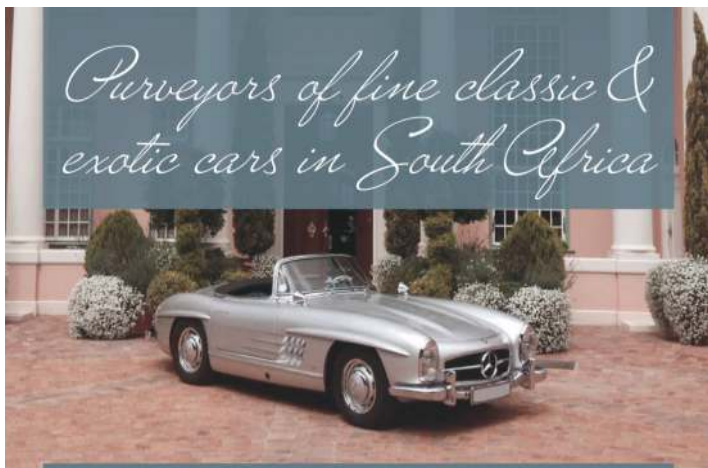
living between PE and Cape Town.

Two years in PE then back to Cape Town where another MGA was found needing body-off repair. Toeks painted this one green and it gave good service before being swapped for a nearly new beetle. Flying and sailing replaced MGs until 1996 when Dickon Daggit sold me an M-Type provided I joined the Crankhandle Club. The very next day, in Wynberg, I found a TC needing a complete rebuild so the M went on hold and the TC took priority. One year later the car was finished in gleaming two pack black and has been well used until the present. My son Brian is now the proud owner.

An empty workshop caused a conversation one Wednesday evening with Johann Marais which resulted in two truckloads of TC number 4 being dumped on my lawn from his Ford F150. The workshop was in action again.

10 years of negotiating with Jerry Welz produced a barn-find PA (Bluebird) which joined TC Number 4 at my house. In the meantime Feliciano Martins had persuaded me to do the woodwork on his TC. Things got very busy. Nick Hendricks spent 18 months there panel beating the three cars and producing three sets of near perfect metalwork while I did three sets of woodwork and Feliciano got busy with his spray gun. The PA went on hold, Feliciano took his stuff away and I with help from Alex Stewart reassembled TC No. 4 in time to win the MGCC National concourse.

Fresh MG projects were delayed by work on my Sunbeam Special and other jobs but in about 2011 a restored Twin Cam MGA without a twin cam engine was bought from



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Jason Groenevelt
+27 (72) 229 6967
JanBart Groenevelt
+27 (83) 460 2228
jasongroenevelt@hotmail.com
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Bluebird




Twin Cam coming together

Feliciano Martins in a semi assembled state. A few beers at the CHC with Dave Alexander produced a Twin Cam donor car in horrific condition but with the correct engine and many useful bits. Lots more work in my garage and lots of help from Chris Champion produced a proper Twin Cam painted in old English White which we use for long trips.

Next was assembly and completion of the PA. This was a difficult but rewarding project and the finished car with its front

mounted supercharger has been loads of fun. Previous owners of this car included Frank Hoal and Ollie Morris.

Some years ago after much discussion with Feliciano and exchange of some currency, his TC became my TC No.5 and more bits arrived back in my workshop (TC No.4 had gone to Knysna and Brian had bought TC No.3).

Now I have another TC and it is nearing completion to make room in the workshop for bits of a Model T Ford..... 



MGA Twin Cam



Gleaming white MG TC



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