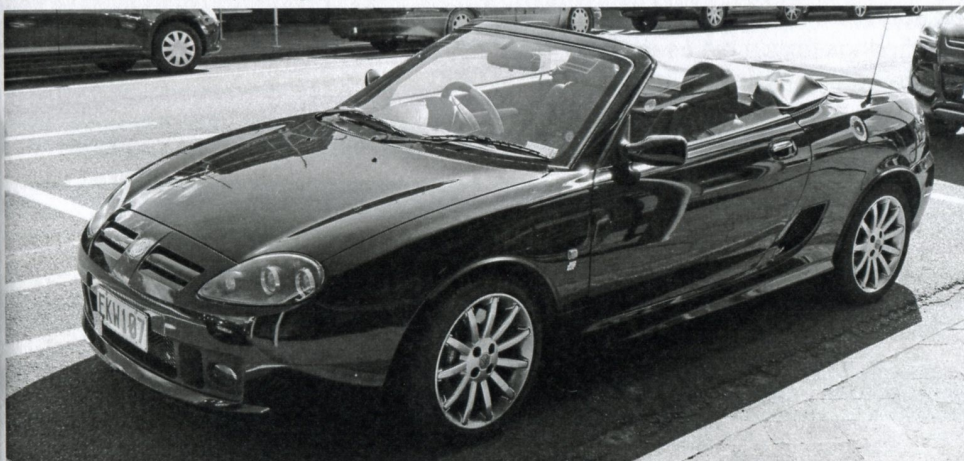


"OLD SPECKLED HEN" The Old Speckled Hen Run - 27 March

Our first proper run of the New Year was designed around the feedback from Club Members at last month's BBQ. Suggestions had focused on a good length run, points of motoring interest, tasty food and perhaps some alternative opportunities for our long-suffering co-drivers!

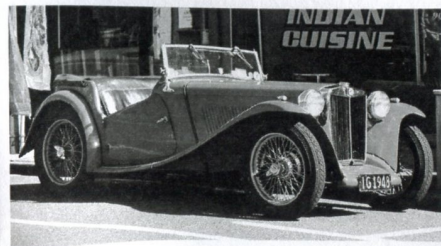
Other events deprived us of some of our regular number, but a hardy group of 9 Wellington based members departed Waikanae at 10am. I was tail-end charlie in the Beemer and had the pleasure of observing four MG's on the road as our convoy headed north on State Highway 1 to our first stop at Bulls. Bill Denise led the way in his MGR V8, followed by Bob and Billie Hulena in a similar vehicle, Ron and Shirley Mitchell in that lovely Anniversary MGTF160 with Scott Stevenson's 1971 MGB GT completing the line.



Ron and Shirley Mitchell's Anniversary MGTF 160

As we headed down the Foxton straight, I dropped back and took in the full vista of the MG's: they truly looked magnificent on the road and they rose and fell over the roading undulations.

Once at Bulls we were joined by three more MGs arriving from Palmerston North and Wanganui. What an irony that both Chris Haslam's and Larry and Sue Jones's MGB GT's were also 1971 vintage like Scott's! The final addition to our party was Bill Baxter who "stole the show" with his 1948 MG TC.



Our time in Bulls created the opportunity to view the display of Chris Amon memorabilia in the local museum. We were in for a treat, as Bill regaled us with stories of his youth, driving around the local fields with an equally youthful Chris Amon! Whilst the display was relatively small, it was very interesting with many photos, pictures and news stories

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about Chris's career as a racing driver. One of Chris's early race cars was on display as were several collections of model cars. I even managed to purchase a signed copy of Chris's biography "Forza Amon! It is astounding that he never won a Grand Prix, although he did achieve 11 podium finishes and many pole positions. Perhaps he truly was the unluckiest GP driver ever. His greatest triumph was in partnership with Bruce McLaren in 1966, when they won the Le Mans 24 hour race in a Ford GT40. This was the first of four consecutive wins of the Ford GT40, breaking a 5 year domination of the event by Ferrari.

Some of our party took the opportunity to look at some of the local shops in Bulls and afterwards spoke fondly about the antiques offered for sale.

We travelled north for about 10 minutes on State Highway 1 to the Sugar Plum Cafe for lunch where the off-street parking was very good. The food was good with offerings from a pie / sandwich through light meals, main courses and a Full English Breakfast. We will certainly look at this location as a future "watering hole" when traveling north. Following lunch, not surprisingly, there was some motor-time: looking at and chatting about the vehicles and even watching Ross maneuvering Bill's RV8: the poor chap really is too tall for the RV8 which must rank as one of, if not, the best MG ever built.



Scott Stevenson and Chris Haslam with their 1971 MGBGTs: spot the difference!

We concluded the formal part of the run with a visit to Marton with the intention of allowing our co-drivers to have a look around the shop. From here five of us accepted Chris Haslam's kind invitation to return to Wellington following afternoon tea at his home in Palmerston North. This was a lovely diversion that was enhanced by the hospitality, the opportunity to meet his wife, daughter and three lovely grandchildren. We shall have to go again: the venue, company and baking was superb!

Our day finished with a gentle run back to the Capital along the Shannon road: so much better than fighting one's way down State Highway 1. My thanks to all who participated and I look forward to seeing you again on Thursday 24 April.

- Andrew Weeks



Spot the difference! John Eames & Trevor Hardy with their BGT's!