

All MG Racing History

Racing has always been part of the history of MGs. In Australia there have been five distinct periods worth looking at.

The "Pre-War" era.

The main players in this era were notable identities such as Otto Stone with his factor K3, John Dutton with his C-Type, Les Murphy with his P-Type, Leo Kelly with what became known as the Murphy Q-Type, Cec Warren with another Q-Type, the John Sherwood imported NE Magnette, the Lanes Motors K3, The Jim Gullan K3, the Lex Davison/John Barraclough K3 (generally know as the Brady K3 or Prince Bira car), the Dale K3 (generally know as the Nilsson car), the Tomlinson TA which won the 1939 AGP and the Ohlmeyer TB.

These cars and drivers carried the MG flag successfully during the period and many of the cars are still here in Australia and competing actively in the Historic Racing scene.

The "Post-War" era

This was the era of the innovative Australian MG Specials. Identities include Clarrie Head with his SC TC, the very successful Harry Firth SC TC, the Davison TC, the Cobden TC, the Patterson/Curly Bryden TC, the very innovative rear engined TC Special of Les Wheeler and the MG Ausca of Gus Mercurio.

Again, many of these cars still exist which is a testament to the strength of our Historic Racing movement.

The "Early MGCC" era.

During the 1960's MGCC luminaries became involved in lifting MG racing to a higher, more organised level. Thus was born the "MG Road Racing Championship". It was first run in 1969 and Peter Beasley donated the Trophy Cup which is still battled for today, nearly a half a century later. This era was full of characters, some wonderful cars and tight racing. The entrants during that period include Peter Beasley in his SC TC Special and the more familiar MG Midget (which he retains today), the shortened TC of "Rocket" Rod Robertson, George Makin in his MGB, the Forde Brothers with a TC, the Buttercup TC of Mike Card, the MGBs of Vaughan Gibson and Denis Casey, Ian Wells and his TC, the fierce competitor Bob Gill in his Midget, Kas Cohen in her TC, Ken Price in his Midget.

This was a wonderful era and set the scene for what was to come.

The "Mid MGCC" era.

As the 1970's unfolded so MG Racing started to mature and with the introduction of the Group D Sports cars era MGs became the car to race.

Who can forget the identities of that era, some of whom are still racing today. Paul Trevethan won the Championship more times than Adam has toes in a variety of MGs including MGB, V8, TB Special and the squashed Caterpillar MGA, Frank Campagna in his Turbo MGB, the ever present Ranald McLurkin in his "B", Geoff Bell in his TC, Harry Firth continuing to hound in his TC, Barry Jupp was very quick in his TC. Boy there were some characters. John Latham was sublime in his Midget, the skills of John Baragwanath were displayed in his "A", "B" (still racing it today) and Midget, Ellen reed in her Midget and squashed Caterpillar, Greg Smith in his T-Type and Peter Beasley in his Midget.

It was a Golden era when MGs were competing and winning at the top level of Australian Sports Car racing as well as the MGCC State level events.

The "Revival" era.

By the mid 1980's MG Racing had slipped into a decline in numbers and activity which was also reflected in the competition activities of the MGCC. There was very little racing going on in MG terms.

A small group of interested people which included David Mottram, Ian Mawson and Wayne Rushton started to crank up MG Racing again to a higher level. The committee of the State Race Series was approached and they agreed to provide the MGCC with a grid for our cars conditional on us providing a decent grid of cars at the first meeting for the year in 1986.

During 1985 a concerted effort was made to enthuse members with the concept of racing their MGs in an All MG Grid. Lots of meetings were held to provide advice on how to get into racing, how to get the car ready for a Logbook, how to get the race licence, what aspects of MG racing were important to both the beginner and the seasoned campaigners. We ran Driver Training days, hands on vehicle preparation workshops, nurtured likely entrants, threatened members with ex-communication if they did not show up after committing to the movement; whatever was needed was done. Andrew McDowell and the MG Workshops became a real driver and central point in the formative years. Paul Trevethan and Broadwalk MG also provided much advice and help for many in this era

1986 saw the successful "Revival" of State Level All MG Racing which has continued through to the current day. It is the longest running Championship of any one marque in Australia.

The competitors in that first year were trail blazers in many ways. We had 18 starters in the first race at Calder which included a few "Sprites" who supported us by helping to ensure a decent grid of cars. One such person was Greg Prunster who is still racing with us today. The other competitors will be names we all recognise. Andrew, Simon and Neil McDowell in their MGBs and Midget, Barry Oosthuizen in his MGB which is still used in competition today, Glenn Renshaw in the squashed Caterpillar MGA which is still campaigned today, Charles McLennan in his very well driven MGB, Alan Morcombe with his Twin Cam MGA, David Mottram in his NA Magnette, TD, Midget and MGF, Ian Mawson in his variety of MGs, Mike Herlihy in his "B", Robin Page with an MGB, David Vernall in his SC MGB, Mort Fitzgerald in the winged V8, the Molinas in their TC, John Moore (it took him six years of effort to win the Championship in his Midget) and all the old stagers of course who continued on from the Golden Years the list could run to probably five hundred people who have competed on the grid since 1986. In 2012 for example there were 76 entrants during the year.

Not to be forgotten are the large number of women who have competed and prevailed on the grid, The first was Kas Cohen TC followed by Ellen Reed, MGA, Patricia Mottram TD and Midget, Louise Simmonds in her Group Sa MGB, Rosemary Trevethan (nee Edgar) dominating in the V8 MGB, Mandy Parry Jones, Chris Crombie and Sue Brice all in Midgets. Jane Vollebregt has raced competitively in her Historic MGB and joining the list is Ursula Weidenmuller in her TR6 and Alana Ondarchie in her Stag both of whom run in the Invited British Class.

The list names of the many entrants who have competed and should be mentioned is large but as with many historical documents this one is but a glimpse into the annals of All MG Racing.

What is worthy of inclusion is the list of MG Road Racing Champions.....

| | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1969 - 70 | Peter Beasley | MG Midget | 1993 | Simon McDowell | MG Midget |
| 1970 - 71 | Rod Robertson | MG TC | 1994 | John Smallman | MGB V8 |
| 1971 - 72 | Peter Hunter | MG TD | 1995 | Mort Fitzgerald | MGB V8 |
| 1972 - 73 | Paul Trevethan | MGB | 1996 | Mort Fitzgerald | MGB V8 |
| 1973 - 74 | Paul Trevethan | MGB | 1997 | Mort Fitzgerald | MGB V8 |
| 1975 | Paul Trevethan | MGB | 1998 | Paul Trevethan | MGB V8 |
| 1976 | Paul Trevethan | MGB GT V8 | 1999 | Rosemary Edgar | MGB |
| 1977 | Paul Trevethan | MGB GT V8 | 2000 | Mike Herlihy | MGB |
| 1978 | Paul Trevethan | MGB GT V8 | 2001 | John Smallman | MGB |
| 1979 | Greg Smith | MG TC | 2002 | Mort Fitzgerald | MGB V8 |
| 1980 | Barry Jupp | MG TC | 2003 | Mort Fitzgerald | MGB V8 |
| 1981 | Paul Trevethan | MG TB | 2004 | Adrian Brooks | MGB GT V8 |
| 1982 | Lou Molina | MG TC | 2005 | Neil Hopwood | MGB V8 |
| 1983 | Anton Molina | MG TC | 2006 | Neil Hopwood | MGB V8 |
| 1984 | Ernst Molina | MG TC | 2007 | Robert Haywood | MGB |
| 1985 | Harry Forde | MG TC | 2008 | Ken Price | MGB |
| 1986 | Andrew McDowel | MGB V8 | 2009 | Robin Bailey | MGB V8 |
| 1987 | Paul Trevethan | MGB V8 | 2010 | Greg Hewson | MG Midget |
| 1988 | Andrew McDowel | MGB V8 | 2011 | Jason Holmes | MG ZR 190 |
| 1989-90 | Simon McDowell | MG Midget | 2012 | Jason Holmes | MG ZR 190 |
| 1991 | Neil McDowell | MGB | 2013 | Cody Hill | MG TF LE500 |
| 1992 | John Moore | MG Midget | | | |

All MG Racing has evolved over time. The technology of the cars changes as does the age of the drivers. We rarely see the older cars these days although we still see plenty of the old snoozers. Their performance capabilities means they feel more comfortable running amongst like cars on the Historic grids which is quite understandable. We still see a mixture of MGBs, both the four and eight cylinder cars as the class structure allows any car from any class to win the Championship. The modern era sees many MGFs and the jelly bean MG Z-Types flourishing which is to be expected.

The Series Sponsors should not be forgotten as without them our racing would be poorer. MG Workshops and Penrite Oil were very supportive early sponsors (MG Workshops still helps as required), Plus Four Automotive supported us as do Wolfchester today. The Hobsons Stores have given significant financial support for many years and there have been many other smaller companies and individuals that have kicked in when the need was there. Many drivers also have some support from individual sponsors to lighten the financial load.

The All MG Series remains a dynamic vital part of the MGCC. The members of the Register contribute to the main club in many ways. A significant number of Presidents of the club have also found their way onto the grid. Even today some of the Club competitors rise to the challenge of racing their car which is as it should be. The All MG grids still make up a very significant part of the State Race Series with grid sizes which are the envy of many groups which have come and gone over the years. There is no reason why All MG Racing cannot still exist well into the future as the new cars and young drivers compete in the series.

David Mottram