



### NUFFIELD CHALLENGE TROPHY, December 2016.

#### **The MG Car Club of Toronto has been awarded the NUFFIELD Challenge Trophy, more commonly called the Nuffield CUP, for 2016**

In early November 2016 the MG Car Club of Toronto was advised that we had been awarded the North American NUFFIELD CUP. We immediately went to work in the logistics of actually obtaining the cup from last year's winners, MGs of Baltimore Car Club. Richard Liddick, President of the Baltimore Club generously drove it up to the US side of the border at Niagara Falls and our Jim Sweeney went over and picked it up. Fortunately, there is a Canada Customs provision that allows temporary importation of prestigious trophies such as this so it came over without incident.

The Cup is the property of the MG Car Club UK who make the final decision on who should be awarded it with advice from the North American Council of MG Registers.

The ideal opportunity to announce our winning of this cup was our annual banquet on November 25<sup>th</sup>. We were fortunate in having Brian Woodhams the Overseas Manager of the UK club in town to actually present it to the club at the banquet. Not only was it a surprise to many that we had won it but having Brian present to award it to us was a bonus.

This is the third time we have been awarded the NUFFIELD Cup and we are the only club in Canada to have received it. In the attached articles it mentions that the cups have gone missing for a period of time. Our Johan Petersen actually kept it in safe storage for several years.

The MG Car Club of Toronto is a very active club with over 300 members and schedules activities in every month of the year. Every quarter we distribute to our members a copy of the OCTAGON, our award winning magazine. Enjoy the following articles.

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### History of the Nuffield Cup

By Mike Hawke of the M.G. Car Club



The MG. Car Club was but a few months old when Lord Nuffield (as he later became) agreed to be our Patron. In the manner of good and conscientious patrons he took an interest in his clubs and supported us in many ways. One such

was that, in 1936, he donated a gold Cup to the committee to employ for a purpose that "will enhance the Clubs prestige, assist its growth, and add to the enthusiasm of its members."

This is the Nuffield Gold Cup, a truly magnificent pot, which really is made of solid gold and for which Lord Nuffield personally wrote out a cheque for £163, an amount that would have bought a brand-new Morris car at the time. Today, we present this to the Centre of the MG. Car Club which has shown the most meritorious growth, enthusiasm and enterprise during the previous year. Normally the chairman chooses the recipient.

In recent years the interpretation of the word centre' has been somewhat liberal and one or two registers have been known to win it. We wait for a racing or other group to break new ground and get this recognition.

But that is not all. The rapid growth of the Club overseas which followed the post-1945 boom in MG exports brought about the creation of four more Nuffield Trophies, not gold this time. These were to be awarded to the best centres in each of Europe, the United States of America, Oceana and Africa. These were first awarded for 1954 and the winners were chosen by Russell Lowry and John Thornley. They were given by Lord Nuffield for exactly the same purpose as the Gold Cup and are engraved, Nuffield Challenge Trophy for the annual competition between all Centres of the MG. Car Club in the Area.

These cups are the property of the MG. Car Club, so one of the rules is that a club which is not affiliated cannot win the thing, no matter how keen and active they are. It follows that, should all club activity cease in a particular area, then the cup should be returned to Kimber House for safe keeping. Do not scoff at this apparently dire situation, it has happened! But as one's world collapses in rape, plunder and civil war the last likely thought is, "Goodness me, I must post off that Nuffield Cup." All the trophies have had periods when they were not awarded because they were lost. The European Cup went missing from 1961 to 1979. Someone's loss was the Frankfurt Centre's gain for they were awarded The GOLD Cup in 1973 for their efforts in connection with the Hausach Rallies, a pioneering effort in the matter of collecting M.G.s from many countries for what was principally a social gathering. The Oceana Cup also had a long period of hibernation, again starting in 1961, but this is now in circulation again. The Australian clubs tend to hog this one to the exclusion of the really keen New Zealanders and it is difficult to see how the Kiwis can get a look-in by any democratic voting procedure. The Africa Cup was lost in the Rhodesian civil war but escaped the fate of being melted down for bullets. The USA Cup also had a period of being 'lost' from 1962 until 1985.

This long period of hibernation of all four of the Overseas Nuffield Cups may be tied up with the California Cup whose story is given separately. Thanks to the efforts started by Phil Richer, when he was overseas director all four Nuffield Cups are now in circulation again, even if the news of these received at home is spasmodic and incomplete.

In 1979 the Danish Centre celebrated their 25th birthday and the super rally to mark the occasion was reported in October's Safety Fast by Gordon Douglas. On the occasion Gordon Cobban was given the Nuffield Cup which they had been hanging on to for nearly 20 years. Gordon displayed this on February 1980's front cover of Safety Fast but there was no hint that anyone knew that there were three more to be found. In 1974 John Thornley put that ace bloodhound Norman Ewing onto the scent of the Africa Nuffield Cup. By 1982 he had tracked it down and brought it back to Johannesburg and into the mainstream of M.G. activity in Africa. While overseas director, Phil Richer had been beavering away rebuilding the links with overseas centres which had been so damaged by the 1968 changes to MGs ownership. Overseas News became a regular feature in Safety Fast in 1985 and, by 1987, the Nuffield Cups for North America and Oceana had been tracked down. Since 1994 the task of choosing winners has been delegated to the local centres. Hopefully, events there than any U.K. based club officer who does not have the benefit of frequent visits to our overseas centres.

Finally, the South-Western Centre have a Nuffield Rally Cup. Although this is not, strictly speaking, part of this little essay, it needs to be mentioned in case anyone might think that they have nicked one for their own nefarious purposes. It was made and specifically donated for the winner of the 1938 M.G. Car Club Malvern Rally. It was first won by J. Fletcher in a VA. The rally was not held again and the cup reappeared in 1951 as an award for the Western Rally, at that time one of the major events on the SW Centre's calendar. The decline in pure road rallying in the U.K. spelled the death knell of the Western Rally and, in 1964, the cup entered a third phase of its life as the main award for the annual registers' meeting at Cheddar. This event folded when Steve Dear sold his field and, since 1983, it has been an award at the Wessex Sprint. So, if you want to win your very own Nuffield Cup, come and make ETD at Colerne. This event is a round of the M.G. Car Club Piper Cams Speed Championship.

There was yet another Nuffield Trophy not donated to the M.G. Car Club. This was given to the winner of a race of about 200 miles for cars up to 1,500cc (called Voiturettes in those days) and held at Donington in the years 1934 to 1939 inclusive. It has been said that Lord Nuffield did not approve of motor racing. He may not have been enthusiastic about it, and was certainly doubtful about its worth to his mainstream business of making family cars and commercial vehicles, but there is plenty of evidence that he rather enjoyed being involved as an owner and patron. This cup is one example to back up that view. M.G. never won it. The nearest they came was in 1934 when Dick Seaman's K3 came second. This car is now owned by Peter Green. Indeed, M.G. were involved with this Nuffield Trophy throughout its life and the ever diligent Triple M Register has traced the whereabouts of all the cars involved, except for Kenneth Evans' QA0254 which

came third in 1934. This particular pot was not competed for after 1939 and the last winner, in 1939, was Prince Bira [Prince Birabongse Bhanudej of Siam] in his ERA [Voiturette].

One wonders if it is in a display cabinet in far-off Thailand.



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### Nuffield Cup of the Americas from North American Council of MG Registers



This very prestigious award has a long history behind it. There are five cups. They are all owned by the MGCC UK. There is one solid gold cup and four silver cups - all to a similar design. The gold cup was presented by Lord Nuffield in 1936 to the Committee of the MGCC UK "for a purpose that will enhance the prestige of the MGCC, assist its growth and add to the enthusiasm of its members". The Cup because of its value spends most of its life in a bank vault, but it always comes out for Silverstone and Presidents' Dinners, etc. Brian Woodhams (MGCC Overseas Director [now Overseas Manager]) has drunk champagne out of it, and several times had the dubious privilege of being responsible for its security whilst in transit to events - it is quite a responsibility because of its history, value, and uniqueness. It is presented to the UK Centre which, in the view of the Chairman, is the most deserving in terms of growth, organization, or merit.

The four solid silver cups were presented in 1954 to the MGCC UK for the Centres in the other four continents - Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania - and this came about because of the growth of the Export drive, and more and more MG Centres being formed worldwide. Because the cups are the property of the MGCC UK, one of the rules of presentation is that the Centre must be an Affiliated Club of the MGCC UK. The cups are held in trust on each of the four continents by the holders, and each of the cups is awarded annually with the exception of the African trophy, which because their Indabas are held biannually, is awarded once every two years. They are all inscribed identically with the exception of the name of the continent. The MGCC UK Overseas Director has direct input on the presentation of the African, American and European (in conjunction with the European Manager) trophies, but the Oceania trophy is presented on an annual basis at the Natmeet by a complicated process of points scored for attendance, participation in events at the Natmeet, and is graded to the actual membership of the Centre!!

The silver cups have a value of approximately £7000 each (US\$14,000) [currently £10,000 – \$17,000 CAD] and it is expected that the holders take steps to insure the trophies whilst they are held in trust. The America's Nuffield Cup is presented on top of a round, black pedestal that contains smaller plaques. These plaques are engraved with each Centre's name, location, and year of presentation.

The only known photo of the four silver cups together appears in Mike Hawkes' book " The First 70 years of the MGCC", and although on the occasion of the Club's 70th Anniversary we tried once again to get them all together, we were unfortunately let down by the Australians and the Oceania trophy did not arrive in England. ❖