



THE OCTAGON



Newsletter of the M.G. Owners Club
The Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club



Since 1957!



The Holiday Tea
Photo: Rick Anguiano

January 2023

About *The Octagon* and the MG Owners Club

The M.G. Owners Club, formed in 1957, is the Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club, formed in England in 1930. The Peninsula T Register was formed in 1973 and is now an informal sub-group of the MGOC. We receive a copy of the MGCC's *Safety Fast*, available to members on loan from the Corresponding Secretary. The club is also associated with the North American MGB Register, the North American MGA Register, and the New England MG T Register. The MGOC holds a business meeting each month at an event known as the "Natter and Noggin" in the style of English clubs. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the MG Owners Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or Board of Directors.

DIRECTORY of MGOC OFFICERS for 2023

President: **Kirk Prentiss**, kirkprentiss@gmail.com
Vice President: **Andy Preston**, andypreston@att.net
Treasurer: **Marla Preston**, marlapreston@hotmail.com
Secretary: **Mike Jacobsen**, 415-333-9699, MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Member-at-Large: **Mark McGothigan**, 510-633-1981, markmc3us@yahoo.com
Member-at-Large: **John Hunt**, huntsails@comcast.net
Member-at-Large: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125, j2george@pacbell.net

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Webmaster: **Rick Anguiano**, 209-617-8492 webmaster@mgocsf.org
Regalia: **Andy Preston**, 707-795-3480, andypreston@att.net

CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

Feel free to call these members, who have volunteered to help with purchase, repair, and restoration of various M.G. models, etc.
MGB: **Steve Lilves**, 415-924-3173, slilves@sbcglobal.net
MGB Early & Originality: **Don Scott**, 707-942-0546, Don@napanet.net
MGB V8 Conversion: **Tony Bates**, 408-666-6174, avbates@yahoo.com
MGC: **Tom Doyle**, 530-546-9924, wtdoyleii@gmail.com
M.G. Midget: **Christian Rowcliffe**, 415-359-6319, Car@rowcliffe.com
MGA Coupe: **Andy Preston**, andypreston@att.net
MGA & Twin Cam: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125, j2george@pacbell.net
Z-Magnette Saloon: **Eric Baker**, 510-531-7032 mgpb36@yahoo.com

T-types: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125, j2george@pacbell.net
Pre-war Midgets-Magnas-Magnettes: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125
PA/PB Midget 1934-36: **Eric Baker**, 510-531-7032, mgpb36@yahoo.com

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to **Rick Anguiano** at 209-617-8492 or webmaster@mgocsf.org. 2023 rates are: monthly (yearly): full pg. \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75). All ads expire on Jan. 1st, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10th of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO *THE OCTAGON*

Your stories, photos, tips, questions, and anything MGOC-related are always welcome in *The Octagon*. Please make your contributions by the 15th of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to magnut_dan@hotmail.com or send them to: **Dan Shockey**, 12632 Edith Dr., Garden Grove, CA 92841

RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? The club roster is available from **Steve Kellogg** upon request.

MGOCSE.ORG

Upcoming events, MGOC history, photos, membership forms, *The Octagon*, and helpful links are posted on the Club Web site at <http://mgocsf.org>.

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MGOC Planning Meeting

Saturday, January 7

10:00 a.m.



Please join us!

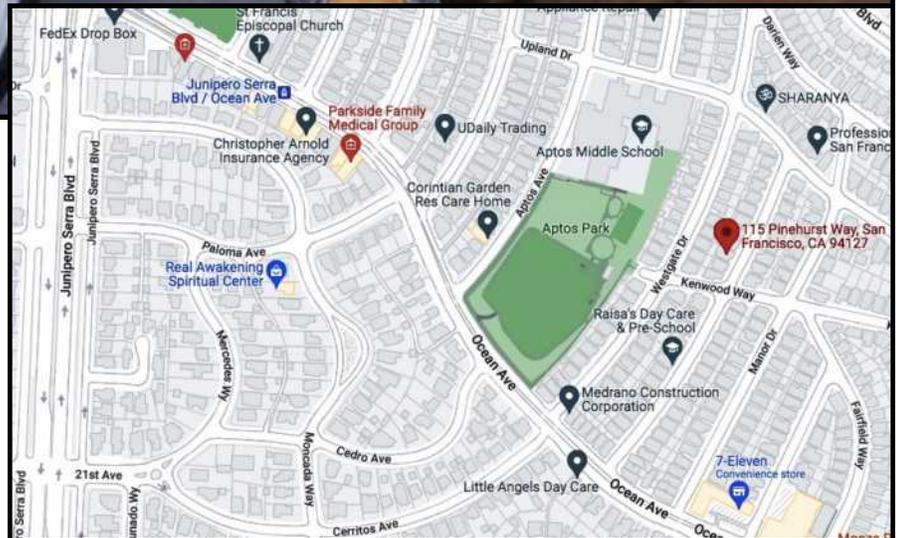
We need your help to plan our events and activities for this New Year. Everyone is welcome especially new members and anyone who has any ideas for new or old events. All ideas are welcome and there are lots of people who are willing to help you.

Date: Saturday, January 7, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Location: Elaine's house at **115 Pinehurst Way, San Francisco**

Event: At this time we'll plan the dates and locations for our monthly meetings, tours and events. The club will provide tea and coffee, donuts and pastries.

Please RSVP to Andy Preston 707-795-3480, andypreston@att.net



All enthusiasts welcome!
Joint club events are popular

From the Editor

Happy New Year!

28 December 2022

We traveled to New Mexico and Texas in December and I fought the RSV virus for most of November. I did a little work on the burnt-out TD. It is nearly all assembled now but I am helping debug some things not yet working. It will have a salvage title now so will be inspected by the CHP and everything needs to work. A challenge for an old MG! (and for an old MG mechanic.)

I will have to miss the Annual Brunch. I committed months ago to loan my MGs for a Tet Festival street fair that weekend. It is close to our home. They plan to decorate them somehow. Should I be nervous? The Year of the Cat, I think. (a Jaguar?)

I always think I should include a new years toast, Irish if possible. I don't think I can beat the ones I customized in 2018:

"In 2023, may the skimpy hood above us never fall in, and may we comrades soaked below never fall out."

"In the new year, may your stops along the road always be extended in friendship, and never in want."



"May you be poor in breakdowns, rich in MG friendships, slow to get angry at RVs, quick to come to club events; but rich or poor, quick or slow, may you drive nothing but happiness from this day forward."

May 2023 be a good year for you. Remember our members ill and in hospital.

Dan

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5



MGOC Annual Brunch
and it's a Champagne Brunch
Sunday January 22, 2023
Limited to 40 people



Our Annual MGOC Brunch will be held again this year at the Historic Moss Beach Distillery at Moss Beach. We will be limited to 40 people only so sign up early. It will be a *Champagne Brunch* and held in a private room overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

12:00 Noon, Sunday, January 22, 2023; please arrive no later than 11:45 to be seated.

Moss Beach Distillery, 140 Beach Way, CA 94038

\$30/person (MGOC members) and \$50/person (non members) paid in advance

Your *Brunch* will include: Fresh baked pastries, cup of seasonal fruit, your choice of one from 5 entrees: Coastal Crab Cake Benedict, Grilled Salmon, Smoked Salmon Benedict, California Coastal Omelet with or without Prawns, and Pork Chop and eggs, plus Tea, Coffee, OJ and of course Champagne and Mimosas. Please advise Marla of your entrée when you sign up.

RSVP by January 15, 2022 with your entrée choice and check made out to the MGOC and mail to: Marla Preston, 7305 Rebas Way, Rohnert Park, CA, 94928 707-795-3480, marlapreston@hotmail.com

To pay through PayPal go to the website at: www.mgocsf.org and under Events click on Brunch Payment and select your entrée. But please tell Marla that you have paid through PayPal and your entrée choice.

New Members!

Welcome India Maaske of Oakland with a 1963 MG Midget

Here is a picture and a little blurb about Lucy. I bought my 1963 MG Midget in 2018, and she has been my daily driver ever since. A man in Modesto was selling his late mother's belongings, and I was just lucky enough to have found it on Craigslist. With the help of my college friends, we got it to campus and got it running. While I was learning to drive stick on my friend's Sprite, they were pulling out the engine with a forklift in the parking lot, and detailing it for her first car show. As things broke or needed replacing, I learned how to fix them, and now I'm happy to say I've been able to keep her running. Thanks, India

Welcome back Suzy Savage and Brian Linke of Alameda with a 1967 MGB Roadster, 1959 Morris Minor Pickup and a 1970 Triumph Spitfire

My car is still in the shop from this spring's big crash.

I signed up my friend India. She has a really beautiful Midget named Lucy. Maybe she can tell a Lucy story :) Thank you, Suzy



Member Notes

MGA & MGB wanted from Don Scott:

I do want to buy a really nice early MGB (better than the one I have anyway), and a very nice Mk2 MGA. Also, am still interested in getting pieces for the cars.

I drove my MGB a bit today and yesterday. It drives really nicely, albeit a very noisy first gear. I am redoing an engine and have had an early overdrive gearbox rebuilt. My B runs and drives pretty well, so surgery is "elective" and that makes it kinda hard psychologically to want to tear into the car.

It's been really cold here, and when I start the MGB it really stumbles and cries for me to pull on the choke lever. I think a few turns on the enrichment of the carbs might be a good idea, as I'm noticing that seasonal tweak to the carbs help the car run better, whether it's change to cold, or change to hot weather. I don't remember that being needed from my early days with MGAs and MGBs. Modern fuels perhaps?

Update from Marty Rayman:

I thoroughly enjoyed the most recent *OCTAGON*. I loved the top down article. Makes me not miss the TD! I drove with the windshield down twice. It was a thrill but I worried about a pebble coming at my head & killing me. Cheers,

MG video from John Hunt:

I found a cool video clip about Freddy March, C Type, and Goodwood. Enjoy:

https://www.google.com/search?q=mgb+racing+vintage&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US752&tbm=vid&ei=RACMY_b4IKvf0PEP8Ku76Ao&start=10&sa=N&ved=2ahUKEwj2qtf47977AhWrLzQIHfDvDq0Q8NMDegQIDhAW&biw=1488&bih=823&dpr=1#fps_tate=ive&vld=cid:4b5be07b,vid:CNlg4dsOy1Q

Happy holidays!

MG TF website from Don Scott:

What a great thing to do to help preserve these little cars! I wonder if anyone has done something similar for an MGA or MGB.

<https://www.mg-cars.org.uk/mgtf/Pictures/TF9432/>

Note from Barbara Down-Under:

Thanks Dan and thanks for printing the article. You always put together a great read with a sense of humor. Love the Christmas trimmings. Cheers,

President's Ponderings

And so begins another year, and I have some very big shoes to fill. Andy Preston has been the consummate club President and stepping in after him is a daunting task. He has tirelessly been the club leader for six years. His zeal and dedication to MGOCSF has ensured we are the preeminent Bay Area MG Club. How does one top that? I will be happy if I can come close to his club accomplishments! Thank you Andy for your positive spirit and I request that you keep a lifeline available to me assuming the role of club President.

In my management career I learned early on that achieving any success was dependent on surrounding yourself with the best of the best, and those who share a commitment to achieving the best. Frankly, we have just that on the board of MGOC.

Vice President, Andy Preston

Ah ha! Fortunately for me you are still on the board and I can lean on you for your expert guidance. Thanks IN ADVANCE for that.

Treasurer, Marla Preston

Thanks to you for remaining in the role of Treasurer. You have kept us on track financially and knowing that you'll continue providing your expertise is a great benefit.

Secretary, Mike Jacobsen

You are the keeper of the club record, and I am relieved that you too will remain on the board. Your knowledge (and memory) of club details, your documentarian skills, and your affiliation with other MG clubs is a huge asset to our club. We are so lucky that you enjoy the minute details and keep them organized in expert fashion.

Registrar, Steve Kellogg

Thanks for continuing on keeping track of our membership. A club is only good as it's members it is said, but having all of their details organized is equally important. I will be looking forward to working on bringing more of our membership out for events. Let's brainstorm soon about that.

Newsletter Editor, Dan Shockey

Dan, I cannot say enough about your accomplishments as our newsletter editor. I have done this job and can speak from experience that it is a huge undertaking. You provide an extremely content rich newsletter that has reached way beyond our own club. Congratulations again for the newsletter of the year recognition! Bravo, Sir!

Webmaster, Rick Anguiano

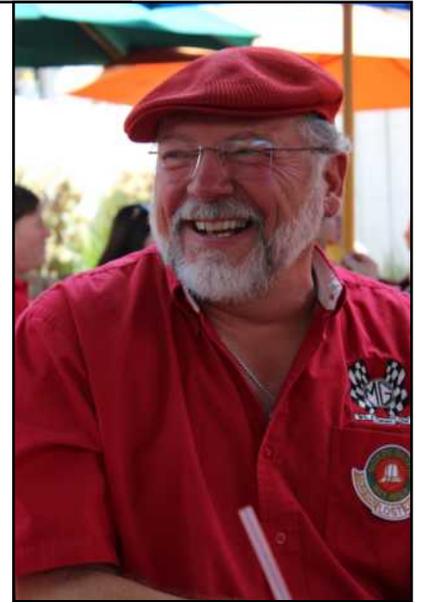
Welcome new Webmaster! Steve Kellogg has provided many years of expert support to our webpage (huge thanks Steve!!). Thank you Rick for taking on this highly visible and important representation of our club to the world. I look forward to working with you on this in 2023!

Appointees, and often unspoken hero's

Many, many, MANY thanks to all appointees. And especially to Elaine Chan and Marcia Crawford, for always providing spectacular Holiday Tea and Planning Meeting events. Cheers to you!



Left: Kirk and Amy with their ZB Magnette



Looking ahead to the new year, I would like to gather together as many members at the planning meeting on Saturday, January 7th as possible. Let's get those ideas for tours and local drives on the table. Now, I know that we have a core group of members that lead the charge, always step forward to lead our event. Ask yourself, "Have I lead a tour in the last year or two?" If the answer is no, then I encourage you to make 2023 the year you do coordinate a tour. If you have never lead a tour and think, "Oh, I have never done that because it's much too difficult or I don't know anywhere that we haven't gone before." Many of the best drives I have experienced have been the "simple" ones. Because of club drives I have been on roads in the greater Bay Area that I would not have experienced without a fellow member taking us on a drive. Don't

you also look forward to many of the traditional drives, like St. Patrick's Day, that we have driven many times before? Like an old friend, they are always lovely to experience repeatedly. Step forward. Volunteer for a drive. Weekdays for those retired; weekends because we can. Whatever, just volunteer!

In closing I would like to say that before I joined several MG Clubs, I was not a "club joiner." As Groucho Marx would say, "I'd never join a club that would have me as a member!" Happily my experience has been that by joining, I have met many wonderful people who share the love and enthusiasm for classic cars. Even more than that, being in an MG Club is more. The ups and downs of keeping these "LBCs" (Little British Cars) on the road, having adventures that include making it "there AND back," and sometimes not back, is always the source of fun stories. Being able to share those with others who understand that, like these LBCs, life is a journey and not just a destination. Where else can you find this common connection? Sorry Groucho, but obviously you were never a member of an MG Club, were you.

Happy New Year!

Kirk

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Driving Shoes

Speaking of big shoes to fill, I picked these for my birthday gift. Narrow, good support and rounded heels. On sale on Amazon. - Dan

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The MORRIS GARAGES MARQUE of CARS (MG): CENTENARY YEAR

For many years across the MG community 1924 has been taken to be the year when the first MG cars were made and sold. Some have put the case for recognition in later years – 1925/6/7 – and have given reasons for doing so. In the main though, 1924 has been the accepted year and has been the basis of past anniversaries which have been celebrated by both MG clubs, and the various parent manufacturers of MGs.

The 1924 date has been based upon the modified 'Bullnose' Morris Oxford cars of 1924 which have been known as the 14/28s and accepted as the first 'MGs'. It has been known for a long time that a car prior to the 14/28 was commissioned by Cecil Kimber – founder of MG, and from early 1922 manager of the Morris Garage in Queen Street, Oxford. Kimber ordered six Morris Cowley chassis from the Morris works, had some modifications made to these chassis at the Alfred Lane workshop in Oxford, and ordered bodies from Raworth & Co. based in St. Aldates, Oxford. None of these six cars have survived, and nor – until 1998 – had details of the alterations made to these cars.

The MG community tended to be divided on the Raworths between those who felt the 14/28s and the 1924 date was the correct one, and those who believed that the Raworths should receive recognition as the first MGs – in concept, if not realization. The 14/28 school had the advantage of surviving cars which could be compared to the standard Morris versions and the modifications identified, along with the very different Kimber-inspired bodies. The 14/28 school were reluctant to acknowledge the significance of the Raworths because there was an absence of evidence that they were more than bespoke-bodied Morrises. The 1923 view was not helped by the fact that the Raworths were a commercial failure, unlike the 14/28s.



The current governing Board of the MG Car Club (UK) has made a careful and thorough examination of the evidence, and arrived at the conclusion that the year 1923 can indeed be regarded and celebrated as the founding year of the MG marque. While the available evidence is not absolutely conclusive, the first Raworth MG was most likely registered on 1st June 1923 with the Oxford authority as FC5581. It is also recognized however that 1924 was the year when the first successful MG was manufactured – the 14/28. Without the success of Cecil Kimber's second attempt at a sports car his employer, William Morris, would not have provided the £16,000 necessary to build the first bespoke MG factory in Oxford (Edmund Road) and ensured the future of the marque. It seems entirely appropriate therefore that the 14/28 and 1924 should also receive celebratory recognition.

With these two aims in mind it has been decided that the centenary year should start in June 2023 and last until June 2024. In this way Cecil Kimber's vision as well as his successful realization of the MG are both recognized. **Peter Cook**

MG Car Club U.K., Overseas Director 11/12/2017
This summary is a brief overview of a far more detailed paper. Anyone who would like to read the full paper should contact me: – petercookdr@btinternet.com.



The Centenary Badge

Celebrate MG's Centenary in style with our very own Centenary Badge. Available in time for Christmas!

Order your 'Celebrating 100 years MG' car badge now from Jennie for delivery in early December, cost is \$40 per badge, to which add packing and postage cost of \$4.00 Australia, \$17.45 NZ, \$28.65 UK



MG Models and Year Introduced in UK

Peter Tilbury

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1923 Morris Garages created by Cecil Kimber | 1961 Midget Mk I, Mk II, Mk III & 1500 (948, 1098, 1275 & 1500) |
| 1924 MG 14/28 | 1962 MGB, MG 1100 |
| 1925 Old Number One | 1965 MGB GT |
| 1926 MG 14/40 – first Octagon logo | 1967 MGC, MGC GT |
| 1928 M Type Midget, MG 1880 Tourer | 1968 MG 1300 |
| 1931 C & D-Type Midgets. F1 Magna & K1 Magnette | 1973 MGB GT V8 |
| 1932 J1 & J2 & J3 & J4 Midgets, KN Saloon | 1982 Metro, Maestro, Montego (M-series) |
| 1933 K3 Magnette, L1 Magna | 1983 Metro Turbo |
| 1934 L1 Continental Coupe, NA, NB & ND Magnettes, PA Midget, Q Type Midget | 1985 MG Metro 6R4 (Group B rally car) |
| 1935 T-Type, SA, R Type, PB Midget | 1988 Maestro Turbo |
| 1936 MG TA Midget | 1992 MG RV8 |
| 1937 VA Saloon | 1995 MG F |
| 1938 WA Saloon | 2001 MG ZR, ZS, ZT & ZTT (Z-series), MG Express Van |
| 1939 MG TB Midget | 2002 MG TF |
| 1945 MG TC Midget | 2004 MG XV & SVR |
| 1947 YA Saloon, YT Tourer | 2005 MG X Power WR |
| 1949 MG TD Midget | 2008-2016 MG Motor UK assembled MG TF & MG3 kits from China |
| 1950 Series Y, TD & TF | 2016-Current Day SAIC Motors (China) sells MG3, MG6, MG GS, MG HS, MG ZS etc. in UK, incl. plug-in hybrid & MG4 electric vehicles |
| 1951 YB Saloon | |
| 1953 MG TF, ZA & ZB Varitone Magnette | |
| 1955 MGA, MGA Coupe (1500,1699, 1600 Mk II) | |
| 1958 MGA Twin Cam | |

MG cars were also assembled in Australia, Canada, South Africa, Cuba, Denmark, Holland, Ireland & Mexico from CKD kits.

MG Turns 100 in 2023

A GREAT TIME TO GET INVOLVED

Graeme Menzies



MGOC Meeting Minutes

at 150 Purdue Ave, Kensington, Sat Dec 10, 2022

Call to Order: Andy Preston at: 12:47pm

Attending and introductions: Elaine Chan, Marcia Crawford, Mike Jacobsen, Brian Linke, Mark McGothigan, Andy & Marla Preston, Suzy Savage, George Steneberg, and Ray & Kristy Davis.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Aug 6, 2022: *Motion:* Mike, *Second:* Ray

REPORTS

President's Report: Many thanks to Marcia and George for hosting the Holiday Tea.

Vice President's Report: Kirk Prentiss: Absent

Treasurer's Report: Marla Preston:

Account	December 7, 2022	August 6, 2022
Checking	13,028.11	13,053.89
Savings	9,922.00	9,922.00
Total	22,950.11	22,975.89

Since our last Treasurer's report we have hosted our Annual Picnic and paid for web hosting fees and are beginning to receive 2023 dues.

Secretary's Report: Mike Jacobsen: All ballots received voted for the entire slate.

Registrar's Report: Steve Kellogg: Report by email.

190	Number of Regular Members
46	Number of Regular Family Members
236	Total Regular and Family Members
7	Number of Corresponding Members
4	Number of Corresponding Family Members
11	Total Corresponding and Family Members
247	Total Membership

Will start the dues renewal process at the start of the New Year. Will expect the typical approximately 50 members to drop off by February.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: George Steneberg: Suggested doing away with the office. There has been less and less to do since the advent of email and messaging. The Secretary could

assume these duties with basically no additional work. No action was taken until it could be determined if the Corresponding Secretary position was required in the Club Bylaws.

Members at Large Reports: Mark McGothigan, John Hunt, George Steneberg: Thanks to Andy for his many years of service.

Regalia Report: Andy Preston: Nothing to report.

The Octagon Report: Dan Shockey: Not present. It was noted that Dan received the NAMGBR award for the best chapter newsletter in 2022.

Website Report: Steve Kellogg: Report by email. We have a new Webmaster – Rick Anguiano! He is very enthusiastic, has some great ideas and is tech savvy. I think he'll do a great job.

PAST EVENTS: Monterey Car Week, Pirate BBQ, Back to the Beach Monterey, Sonoma Tour

UPCOMING EVENTS: MGOC events in **bold**

Jan 7 Planning Meeting, 115 Pinehurst Way, San Francisco

Jan 22 Annual Brunch Moss Beach

Distillery, Moss Beach – Entree choices are now available. Contact the Treasurer if you wish to attend.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: New advertising manager needed. Rick Anguiano is considering the position.

BUSINESS RESOLVED ONLINE SINCE LAST MEETING: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Contact Mike Jacobsen if you plan on driving to the NAMGAR GT in Memphis next year.
- A sweatshirt was presented to Andy with his years of service embroidered on it.

NEXT MEETING: Annual planning meeting on January 7.

Meeting adjourned at: 1:07pm
Submitted by: Mike Jacobsen

Thank you, Mike!

A Cold Dark Night on the Moors

An English Christmas Ghost Story

By Joe Carroll, Canadian Classic MG Club, Vancouver, B.C.

Looking back, it must have been Christmas 1946. I had studied engineering at Sheffield during the war and after graduating I decided to take employment in this city of engineers. Although I was from the south my mother was a Yorkshire lass and as often as I could I visited her sister and family in the village of Skelpton, about two and a half hours travel by car. My father had given me his old M type MG Midget after he "fettled" it for me. With petrol available again it was a most welcome gift.

On the rolling roads of the moors it was difficult for the MG's tiny engine to maintain an average of forty mph but I loved that car. I had left Sheffield right after work, just a day before Christmas. The late afternoon was grey and chilly. As darkness came the weather became colder with freezing rain which occasionally changed to sleet. Of course the car had no heater, but with warm clothes and the top up it was liveable. I stopped numerous times to clean off the windscreen, and at one stop I used an old trick of Dad's - I undid the bonnet catches and lifted each wing of the bonnet and placed a matchbox under each wing right in front of the windscreen. The weight of the bonnet held the matchboxes in place, allowing warm air from the engine to warm up the freezing tiny windscreen.

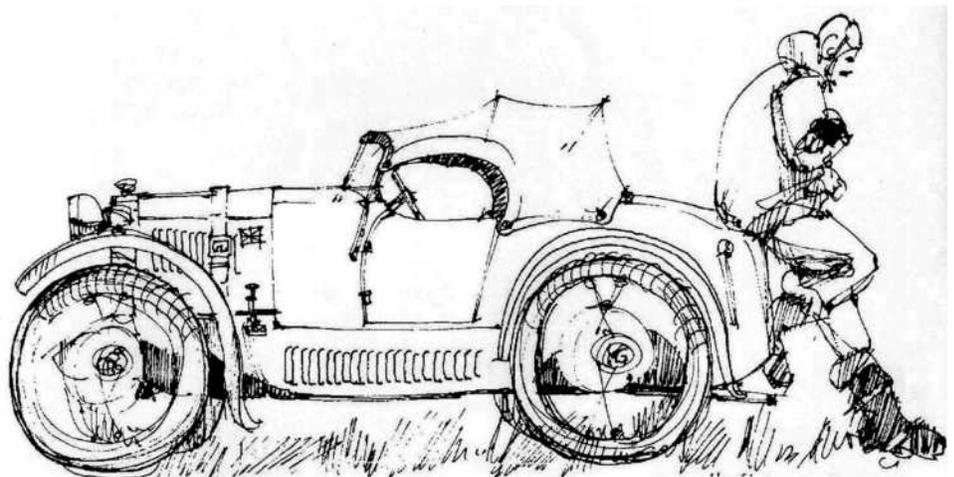
I was having problems with landmarks in the sleety darkness and the headlights were only so so, the car having a very basic electrical system. I set the moveable third brush in the dynamo to maximum and crossed my fingers.

As I began to get back into the car I saw someone approaching. It was a man in Royal Air Force apparel, in fact he had insulated aircrew clothing and boots. In what I thought was an American accent he said "Not the nicest weather to be out in." I concurred and in an honest moment I told him I was heading for Skelpton but with no visible landmarks and most of the signposts still removed for the war. I was lost. With an engaging smile he said "My base is just down the road a bit, I'll show you the way and I'm sure the boys will put you up for the night, it's not worth carrying on."

Conversation wasn't easy in the noisy little car but eventually he directed me into a lighted area at the entrance to the base. Getting out of the car he held up the barrier for me and I drove through to a well-lit Quonset hut he had indicated to me. As I closed the car door I turned to thank my saviour but he was gone. I thought perhaps he had gone to another hut.

As I opened the door of the Quonset I stepped into a warm mixture of cigarette smoke and food. Two men seated at one of the tables playing cards looked up, surprised. I explained I was lost and one of them said "I think you need warming up!". I was about to accept but I suddenly remembered that I had better drain the block on the MG before it froze. "No problem" said the smoker, "come with me". I followed him to a workshop where we put my car and he then produced a round squat safety kerosene car heater. He lit the wick, closed the gauze safety cover and slid the heater under sump of the MG. "She'll be fine all night" he said.

As we left the workshop I asked him where the airman who guided me in had gone, "What airman?" he replied. I told him about the new friend I had met on the road. "Well," he said, "first of all he's not a yank, he is a Canadian and his name is Gary. Let's get back to the kitchen". Once inside the kitchen my helper said to his partner who was preparing a meal for me on the stove, "He's seen Gary." The cook seemed startled and said "Give the young feller a scotch".



I can't recall what was on my plate, it must have been delicious but I was shaken by the story they told me. It seemed the base was home to Lancaster bombers during the war. In 1943 or 44, I can't remember which, Gary Miller was a Lancaster pilot. What I do remember was his age, he was just twenty-three, not a lot older than me. Returning late to the base from a raid over Germany, their plane was running low on fuel and badly shot up. Approaching where Gary and his navigator figured the runway should be, when the runway lights came on the damaged instruments had them off course and the engines were misfiring from lack of fuel. Gary stayed at his post and ordered his crew to bail out. They obeyed and watched the stricken Lancaster lose height and crash off the runway. Gary died in the cockpit.

My two companions said they were posted to the base only recently, and although they were told of the ghost of the young pilot they had never seen it. The pair were to mothball the base which had been closed a year ago, with the help of local labour. It was a while before I fell asleep that night.

I awoke to a bright sunny morning, the sleet was melting and dripping off the window frames. After breakfast we got out the Ordnance Survey maps and my hosts showed how to get back onto the Skelpton road.

My uncle and Aunt's home was the usual happy, riotous place I had come to know. After the youngsters were put to bed the three of us sat in the cozy kitchen and I told them about my encounter with Gary. My uncle said "Aye lad, there's bin all kind of ghosts on t'moors, there's bin wars fought since before the Romans come".

With my trusty little MG I often drove the narrow roads and at least once a year I would go to the outcrop about a hundred feet from the runway. The locals never disturbed the remains of the wreckage, however they did erect a cairn to Gary Miller's memory. On one of my visits to the site I ran into the farmer who grazed his sheep there. He said, "I see thee up here once int' while, thee might like to know there's a pub in Skipton on Swale were forces lads liked to go. Inside there's a glass mirror ont' wall. Along with other forces lad's names scratched ont' mirror thee'll find Gary's".

I found the pub, still there, and I was looking for the mirror. A young barman said, pointing, "If you are looking for the mirror, it's around the corner." I looked at all the names and there it was "Gary Miller". Returning to the bar the barman presented me with a fresh pulled pint. I reached for my money, but an older man behind the bar said. "Nay, man, it's on the house for them that remember."

The Last Word: This story is fiction, but if you ever get to Skipton on Swale, there is a pub with servicemen's names scratched on a mirror. And as far as I know, if someone is moved by it, the publican still pulls a free pint for them!

Used with permission



Aftermarket Gauges Might be for You

story and photos by Scott Paradise

Tired of guessing how fast you are going in your classic British car? Dashboard needs an update? Here is one way of solving your problems. While refurbishing a Mazda-powered Sprite, I realized that the gauge package was not up to the job. Unbelievably, the person(s) who originally installed the rotor motor powertrain into the Sprite actually found a speedometer cable which screwed right up to the Mazda gearbox and the Smiths speedometer which unfortunately is wildly inaccurate.

After looking at my options, I decided to go with a GPS driven speedometer and matching tachometer from Speedhut, a gauge manufacturer who builds them here in the USA. While purists may be put off, these gauges offer some interesting features:

- **Speedometer:** deadly accurate. Clock. Temperature. Altitude(really?). Odometer and trip odometer. And, for those so inclined, automatic 0 to 60 times as well as



mile times! Oh, and one more thing—top speed. Might want to reset that one.

- **Tachometer:** I chose the 0 to 10,000 RPM —after all, it is a rotary mo-



tor. The tach features a settable redline and sequential shift warning lights as redline is approached.

Speedhut offers a wide range of options including gauge diameter, face color, numeral color and font, needle color and bezel finish. For a small fee of \$20.00, you can even add a logo to the instrument. The gauges I had built look at home with the existing Smiths fuel and oil/temp gauges.



Installation is pretty straightforward and includes about everything you need, including wiring instructions which actually make sense!



Pricing is not crazy when compared to replacing / rebuilding original gauges. The two gauges cost less than \$600.00 with the optional logos.

[These look great, and would be a welcome upgrade for anyone dealing with "oscillating" gauge needles-Ed.]



Keep Planning for 2023!

WINTER



Sat., Jan. 7: MGOC Planning Meeting, Mike & Elaine, San Francisco, See page 3

Sat., Jan. 14: SSTS Planning Meeting, Ray & Kristie

Jan. TBD: Pub Night, On the Road Again, Morgan Hill

Sun., Jan. 21, MGOC Annual Brunch, See page 5



2023



Feb. 10: Drive your Triumph Day! Join 'em. Brit Car solidarity

June 12-16, NAMGAR GT-48, Memphis, Tennessee

July 17-20, NAMGBR MG2023, Calgary, Alberta

Oct. 16-20, GOF West, Carlsbad, CA



Cartoon at right from
Marty Rayman



Holiday Tea Report

Andy Preston

"Yes – It was a lot of work but Joyful preparing and absolutely great fun!! It brought us JOY during gray weather and sad COVID time." - hostess Marcia Crawford.

I couldn't have said it any better myself; the Holiday Tea was absolutely wonderful and a real joy thanks to the planning and hard work of Marcia Crawford and George Steneburg.

The day as Marcia said was gray and rainy and not at all inviting and Marcia thought that a lot of people would cancel but only a few did. I think it was the best attended Holiday Tea in a long time with some people coming from far away.

First of all we had the Board Meeting with a limited number of members but soon after, the door bell started to ring and more and more people started to come in with food and toys. In the end we had 24 people which was really surprising given the rainy weather. Attending were: Marcia and George, Mike and Elaine, Ray and Kristy Davis, John and Kate Hutchinson, Lee and Valerie Sheldon (who drove down from Lincoln), Rick and Mary Anguiano and their daughter Megann, Mark McGothigan, Jenny and Rick McLaury, Scott and Toni Pinsky, Suzy Savage and Brian Linke, India Maaske and Henry and Andy and Marla. Unfortunately Kirk and Amy Prentiss couldn't attend due to family matters in Oregon, they sent their apologies and were missed.

Everyone bought something to share so there was no shortage of food with plenty left over to take home. It was great talking to everyone and especially new members who were attending their first event. Everyone was busy eating and talking and getting to know each other; and then we all went around the room introducing ourselves and our cars and telling interesting stories about them. I must say that many of them were remarkable and there was a wonderful variety of British cars thrown in as well. Our youngest new member India Maaske told of her 1963 MGB Midget which is her daily driver and how she recently replaced the differential and real axles herself. Wow! Way to go India!

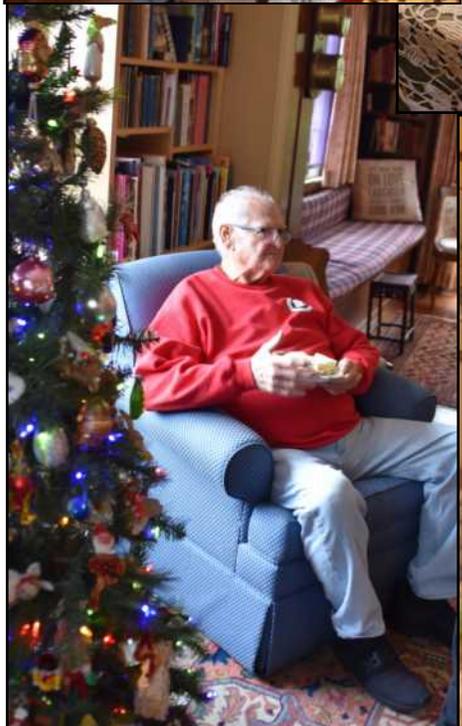
I was really surprised when Marla presented me with a Thank You card signed by everyone and a beautiful vest embroidered with 'MGOC President 2017-2022'. Thank you very much for such a thoughtful gift.

Once again it was a wonderful Holiday Tea and everyone had a great time thanks to our generous hosts Marcia and George. We look forward to seeing everyone again in the New Year.





Photos: Rick Anguiano



Rally Vents in an MGA

By Dan Shockey. MG Owners Club, Northern California, Reprinted from **MGA!** Magazine

We really enjoy our MGA coupe but it can be a very warm place on a hot day. We arrive feeling very wrung out and medium-well done. The problem appears to be that heat cannot easily escape the engine compartment or inside the cockpit. Roadsters are better. (See studies of the aerodynamics of the MGA.) You can – and I have – insulate the cockpit and block heat from the exhaust but eventually the heat trapped in the engine bay soaks into the cockpit.

I tried wrapping the exhaust manifold with insulating tape. That seemed to help with the under-bonnet temperatures but seemed to make the engine run hotter. As a result, I was not comfortable with that solution. I have not yet tried ceramic coating of the exhaust manifold. A good engineer friend told me that an internal-combustion engine is a “heat engine,” so that getting the heat away from the cylinder head is very important.

Old wives tales and urban legends aside, I felt I must do something drastic to make the MGA more comfortable. I helped a buddy restore his Austin-Healey 100-6. Healey added front fender vents to their rally cars to help the heat escape from the engine bay and we did the same to his car. (He says it helped a lot.) The Big Healey is a very similar shape to the MGA, with a tight engine bay with frame rails also in the way of heat extraction. Healey folks call them, “Rally Vents.”

A company in Australia makes reproductions of these vents, in sturdy steel. I ordered a pair some years ago and finally got around to installing them. Key to their effectiveness is opening airflow through the inner panels. There is a not a large area in the MGA where this can be done.

Since my coupe is all-together with good paint, I did not want to cut and weld (or braze) the vents to my front fenders. I worried quite a time about cutting into the fenders. In addition, the Healy is fairly flat in that area of their front fenders while the MGA is more rounded. But I finally dived in, using my jig saw with a fine metal-cutting blade.

I decided to cut the hole just a little smaller than the inside of the outer flange of the vent. (Just the left side first.) I made a template in cardboard. My plan was to glue the vent to the fender somehow though I admit to not having a definite plan at that point. I was concerned about getting a clean cut especially around the three corners of the hole. I tried a hole punch first but found that with any body putty on the fender, the punch would leave a mark as it compressed the putty. Fortunately the jig saw could make a good-enough cut. I then used files to smooth the edges and eliminate any irregularities from the cut. I rounded the edges inward a bit with the files.

Once the hole was cut in the fender, I had more room to make the cut to the inner fender. (I did not remove the fenders.) I used an electric cutoff tool for this but an air cutting tool might work better. I had to watch for the shelf and the vents on the inside of the inner panels. Again I used a file to smooth the cut plus a small stone in a Dremel type tool. I tried to leave areas in the correct places on the left side to bolt in a small radiator style fan.

Now came the moment of truth (or consequences). I fitted the vent inside the fender and it seemed to lay in there nicely.

I chose to use construction adhesive, knowing how strong that became after set-up. The flange of the vent is rather narrow which saves adhesive but minimizes the area for contact. I used wood pieces on each side and wire to hold the vent tight to the fender. I also used some small hobby clamps, mostly at the front edge. Then I waited 24 hours to see if it would hold.



It did! It seems a really strong bond. The adhesive can be scraped away if any excess is left. It doesn't get hard except when it is compressed (unlike epoxy). On the right fender, I found that I did not get the vent adhered along the front edge and was able to scrape out some of the glue and glue that section again with the small hobby clamps. I think the vent has somewhat conformed the fender to its flatter shape but it is not obvious.

I pre-painted the vents before installing them. I was left with the unpainted edge of the sheet metal (and a little bondo). I touched that up with a small model brush. Of course, repainting the whole fender would look better but it came out very well for an "after" job.

After consulting with others, I added a 7" radiator fan blowing out on the left side next to the exhaust. I can run this fan as needed.

On my first low-speed test without the fan, I was impressed at how warm the left front fender was above the vent. I have not yet enclosed the vent area inside the fender. That implies that the heat was moving out the vent even at city street speeds and without a fan.

I later took the coupe for a drive in the hot canyons near me ("canyon carving".) It was a hot day but it did not seem especially hotter in the cockpit. We still get the "greenhouse" effect of the coupe. I am very pleased with the look and effectiveness of this solution to the coupe heat



problem.

But I may still install an air-conditioner. Must be getting old and soft. Happy trails!



Aftermarket Ignition System Woes

Barry Rosenberg, British Car Service, Talking Rock, Georgia
Reprinted from the Peachtree MG Registry

Tech Article:
November, 2022,

Some of you may know of my dislike for Petronix ignition systems. I know some of yall believe them to be the best thing for old British cars since radial tires. I will admit that I do not like most aftermarket electronic ignitions, and I hate all the original systems the British tried. They all have the same failure problem.

You are driving down a country road, beautiful fall colors lining the roadway; curves so gentle and sweeping you feel like you are driving an old open wheel race car and BAMM, your engine dies. Just like someone turned the key to off. Your heater motor still hums along, your turn signals work well enough to let the cars behind you know you are pulling off the road and your brake lights let them know you are stopping.

Your first thought is "what the hell?" Welcome to the world of electronic ignition in an old British car. And, other than the original units which are very far and few between, you most likely have a Petronix in your distributor. Wise and knowledgeable drivers will recognize what went wrong.

Novices or "mechanically challenged" drivers will open the hood and start fiddling with things trying to impress their passenger with their ability to fix the problem. Except there is no fixing this problem. The only cure is replacement of parts; either a new Petronix or a set of points and condenser (my choice).

At least with the old crappy factory electronic systems, there was a cure; well sort of. The factory method to test the ignition and see if that is what caused your engine to die an instant death

was: carry a cold wet rag or thermos of cold water with you at all times. When the engine quit, either wrap the cold wet rag around your ignition amplifier (they were assuming you knew what this was and what it looked like) or pour the cold water over the unit and immediately try to restart the engine.

If this worked, you just diagnosed your problem and usually had enough life left in the unit to get you home or somewhere you could get the car repaired. How many of yall carry either a cold wet rag or thermos of cold water? As I thought, none of you do.

But the Petronix, it is mounted inside your distributor and cold water is useless on them. When it dies, it is dead. Plan the funeral and invite your mechanic to the wake.

The above is my exact thoughts and beliefs of a Petronix ignition; that is until last week. I was working on a TR6 that had dual SUs, headers, perfect 155 lbs. of compression across all 6 cylinders and a Petronix.

The problems started off as several vacuum leaks, leaking rear float bowl and very poor running condition. One's first assumption is that the poor running was caused by excessive gas going thru the rear carb due to a bad float or needle and seat. Several attempts were made to fix the float problem first.

I took the float bowl top off and cleaned the needle and seat and adjusted the float level. Nope, still leaked. I swapped in another used float and new needle and seat. Nope, still leaked. I swapped the front float and needle and seat. Nope, still leaked. I swapped the front float bowl top and used the original float and needle and seat from the front float bowl. Nope, still leaked.

Continued on next page

See also the Tune Up article by Barry in the September, 2022, *Octagon*.

Someone suggested I redo the fuel routing and see if the rear carb fuel line was getting more pressure than the front. I know that fluid pressure would be equal but by now I was willing to try anything. Nope, still leaked. Fuel pressure was less than 3 lbs. so I knew that was not the problem.

I got the car patched together enough for it to be driven home until I could get some new parts for it. I knew I wanted new needle and seats and new floats. Even though some carb expert had very recently rebuilt the carbs (why did they have used parts in them). I also ordered the two thermoplastic heat isolators missing between the carbs and manifold and the mixture needles I like in this carb conversion.

Once all the parts came in, the car was returned, and I installed new mounting studs for the carbs so the new isolators and gaskets would fit. This eliminated the vacuum leaks, and the floats and needles fixed the flooding. Now to make the car run good. It still popped, sputtered and jerked under any load.

Normally, this type of condition is related to a bad condenser, but this car had Petronix. I did a proper tune, replacing the plugs with the correct heat range, new cap and rotor, new wires and still it ran like crap. I installed a used pair of carb pistons from the 1967 TR4A IRS I had bought to restore with my 7-year-old granddaughter. I know a lot of people think you cannot mix the pistons and chambers from different carbs, but you can.

I had ordered a special pair of mixture needles for the SUs and installed them in the used pistons and reassembled the carbs. Finally, I incorrectly thought, it was cured. Still ran like

crap. Going back thru everything I had done just to check, I decided I made no mistakes in my workmanship. It had to be something I missed.

I decided to pull the distributor apart on the car and replace the Petronix with points and condenser and repair the loose play in the breaker plate assembly. Then, I checked the resistance in the coil and found it was 3 ohms. This TR6 had a resistor wire from the key to the coil and needed a 1.5-ohm coil for best running. The resistor wire provides the other 1.5 ohms resistance.

After replacing the coil and setting the timing, now using points, the car really woke up. Fine tuning the timing and carbs made the TR6 fly. It turned out to be one of the fastest TR6s I had ever driven.

Petronix had pulled a dirty trick and found another way to screw up. It was acting like a bad Lucas condenser! In all my years, this was a first. And now, I have another reason to dislike Petronix. Stick with points and you can always get home, unless your rotor breaks and then you need to have a spare.

The TR6 runs absolutely great, now it needs some rear suspension work, and it will be ready for any road the owner wants to take.

Well, enough about my dislike of Petronix. Hope to see yall somewhere soon.

Barry Rosenberg
770-689-7573



Ghost Racetrack in Santa Rosa?

By Dan Shockey

Don Scott reports that there was one right in Santa Rosa. There were two WWII airfields in the Santa Rosa area and one (the Army field) is now the municipal airport. I do not think that the naval airfield was the track Don has found. He says the track was located near the intersection of Cleveland and Russell Avenues - now dominated by Highway 101. (See view below.)



The air view seems to perhaps show the ghostly remains of a possible track but I have not found any further information. I have found races at the Cotati track called "the Santa Rosa Sports Car Races" (in May, 1957). See the January, 2021, issue.

Let us know if you come across any information on this part of local MG sports car history. We love an English mystery!

The photo at left was identified by Don as from Santa Rosa. If correct, it shows an airfield tower.



Tech Article: June; 2022 (Part Two)

Last article concluded the ignition side of tuning. Now I will start with the fuel side. But first, have any of you had cataract surgery? If so, did you lose peripheral vision? And did the drops you had to use after surgery feel like they have tiny grains of sand in them? I have done one eye and am supposed to do the other eye next week. Right now, I can barely see thru my glasses unless I close the completed eye and just use the other. So, you may see some misspelled words in this article.

Have any of you that has had the surgery been disappointed with it? Right now, I am. It makes driving a little harder as I can't see as well to my right due to the loss of peripheral vision. And if you remember, I did not see a horse that crossed into our lane recently and hit him. I am not sure I can afford to lose any more of my sight.

OK, let's look at fuel. First a few fuel facts. You do not need high test gas in the vast majority of our LBCs. Regular is fine. To test; let your car get low and add only 1/2 tank of regular. Drive awhile and see how it performs. If there is no pinging or loss of power, you are good to use regular. If you notice a little pinging under heavy load, top up the tank with mid-range and you should be fine.

Next; add nothing to your gas tank other than BG44K cleaner and some Sta-Bil fuel stabilizer (use this only if your car sits for months at a time). Do not waste your money of any other additive, they do not work. Most aftermarket additives are made using up to 95% kerosene and a tiny amount of other stuff. You do not need it and it does nothing for your engine.

It is best if you can use only non-ethanol gas. If you drive your car a lot, ethanol can be used without any real damage. Ethanol absorbs moisture from the air, and it can separate in the tank if the car sits for long periods of time. Continually using your gas is better if you must use ethanol, so don't let your car sit too long.

Most old British car owners always accuse the SU or Stromberg carbs for any and every little running problem they have; not true. These carbs are great if you know how to set them and then leave them the hell alone. They do not require constant fiddling. As I do not like the Webers, I will not go into them much.

Regardless of which carbs you have, and this does include the Weber downdrafts, you need between 2 and 4 pounds of fuel pressure. Any pump over that can, not will, cause problems. The standard mechanical pump or the standard SU pump is fine. The best aftermarket electric pump is the Facet. Check with a company called Aircraft Spruce located in Atlanta for the best price.

They have a long list of Facet pumps based on pressure. If they are good enough for home-built aircraft, they are good enough for our LBCs. The one fault they have is they constantly tick, loudly. This is an easy fix. Mount the Facet to a rear transmission mount from an MGB. The bolt spacing is the same. Then use an existing hole or drill one hole to mount the trans mount to the car. The mount had a 5/16 fine thread stud attached. This makes the pump quiet.

Always mount your electric pump as close to the tank as possible and as low as possible (don't let it be the lowest part of your car). You can use the factory wire on most MGs, and you will need to run a wire from the ignition side of the green fuse. Use the ignition side as you do not want to run the pump thru the fuse.

Electric pumps are better pushers than pullers of fuel. A great item to add to your emergency kit is a Facet pump with some hose attached and a wire with an alligator clip on it. You can zip tie the pump under the hood, clip the wire onto a fuse and run a ground wire, also with an alligator clip, and drive your car home should your original pump fail.

Continued on next page

So, we have a good fuel supply to the carbs, now what? As long as there are no leaks you are about ready to do some tuning. What tools do you need? Some small sockets to release the linkage between dual carbs; a couple of flat and Posi-drive screwdrivers, if you have HS type carbs (side float bowls) an old 7/16" or small crescent wrench, a can of Gum Out carb cleaner, a little ATF (automatic trans fluid), a short piece of 1/4" fuel line and some patience.

Before you start any work on the carbs, take the Gum Out and while the car is running spray around the carb mounting base, the intake to the head area, where the throttle shafts pass thru the carbs and around any vacuum fittings. On MGBs spray some on each end of the intake manifold with SUs. There is a core plug on each end and I have seen these leak and fall out.

If you get any decrease in idle when spraying, that is a vacuum leak. The Gum Out makes the engine run rich momentarily and that lowers the idle. Fix the vacuum leak before proceeding except for the throttle shafts. Most will have a slight leak even if you have just had them replaced with new bushings.

You cannot seal the shafts so tight they won't rotate freely. If you want to pull your carbs and fix the shafts, then you need another few tech articles. I adjust the car to run fine with a minor leak. It can be compensated for with a minor mixture adjustment. Once you have the car running at its best, richen the mixture two flats with HS carbs or about 1/4 turn on HIFs. This will compensate for the minor leak at the throttle shaft easier than a full rebuild.

Assuming you have either found no leaks or you have them repaired, we can begin making adjustments; next article.

Barry Rosenberg

British Car Service

Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Some ads picked up from other clubs.

MGB Parts: Chromed (not polished Al) valve cover (used), \$100; Pair SU carbs, rebuilt by Dave Pelton, unused, 2nd Pair SUs, rebuilt then used. Both from 1967 MGB. One original lap belt, one retractable shoulder harness (free), work benches, one with drill press, one with HD vise, Member Ken Gittings, Also valve cover racers! 510-791-8445 (Updated 1/23)

MG TD: Black. Prize winner. Dayton wire wheels, metal spare cover, burlled dash, Owned since 1963! Original owner was a regular actor on Gunsmoke. Runs well. Member Jack Ford, jackrada@att.net, 650) 575-2307 (Posted 11/22)

1969 MGB: Deep blue, new black interior, grey wire wheels, hardtop and good soft top, overdrive, Asking \$12.5k, Russ in Oregon, russ787781346@gmail.com

1978 MGB: British Racing Green. Club ties. Never in an accident, 85K miles, new top and current registration to 2023. It's drivable but recently failed smog. Asking \$4,000 OBO. George White: gwhite333@gmail.com or 916-712-4991 (Posted 11/22)

Selling my Dad's 1963 MGB: Needs lots of work but has a rebuilt engine. \$1000. Non-member Mark Buck, markb@ibew595.org (Posted 1/23)

Blue Plates Special: I have three pairs in good shape. Can be used for MGB or Midget, 1969 through 1980. \$20 each pair plus shipping. Dan Shockey (309) 696-0803 (Posted 12/22) Justin? Suzy-Q?

Enclosed Trailer for Rent: Enclosed car trailer for rent (16' x 8'). Trailer has integrated braking system and lights, 12 volt Electric Winch. Reasonable rates. Eric Baker (510) 517-2165

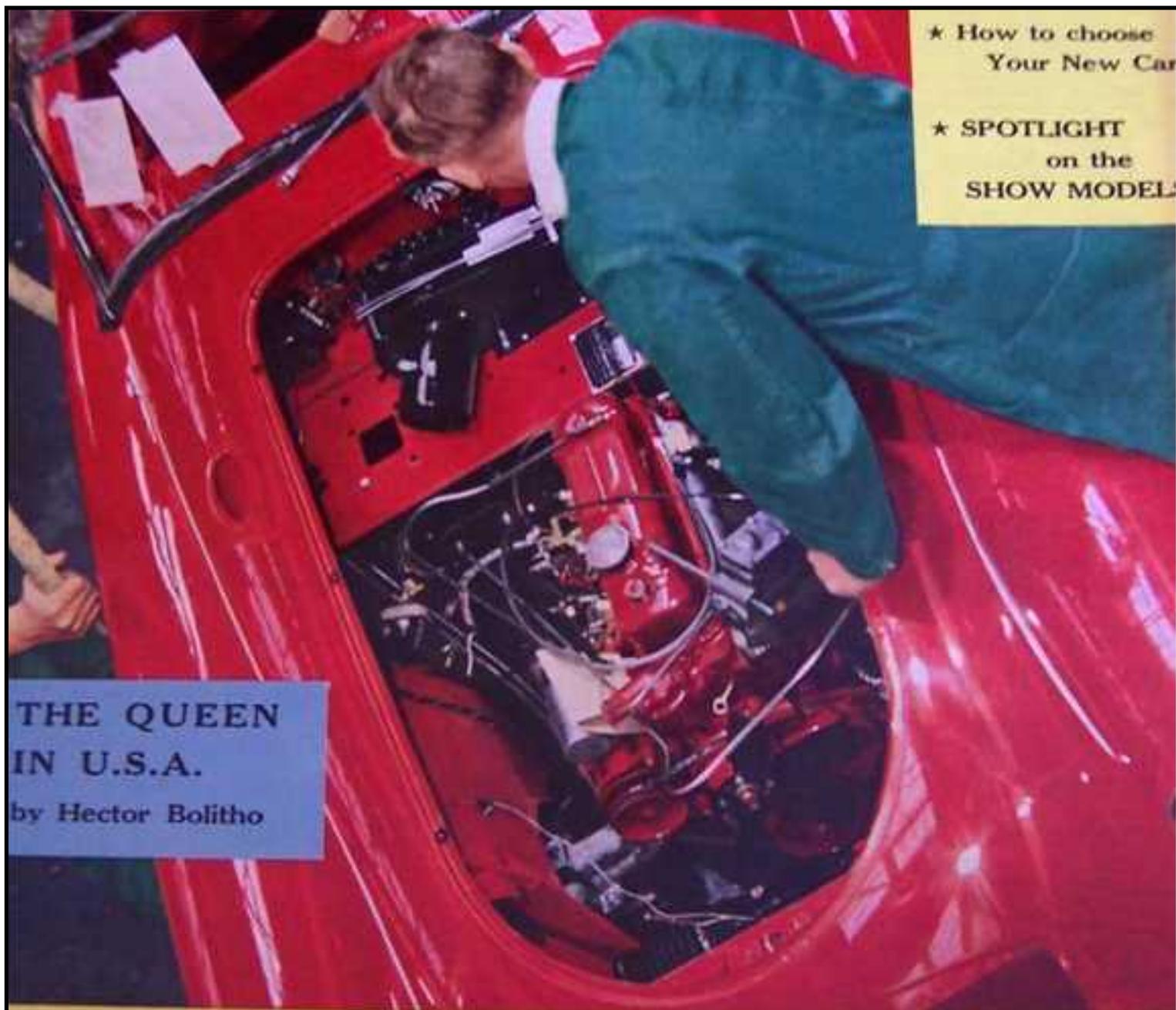
We list ads for 3 months. Advise if you want them extended. For additional ads, see prior issues of *The Octagon* or MGOCSE.org



Buck MGB



A rare color picture of the new MGA being assembled. From **Everybody's** magazine. Good detail.



★ How to choose
Your New Car

★ SPOTLIGHT
on the
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THE QUEEN
IN U.S.A.
by Hector Bolitho

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North American MGB Register



MGOC The Octagon



MG N-type Airline Coupe (1935)

by Ben cards

artist: Richard Wheatland, with permission



Winter events can be exhilarating!
1934 MG PA