

MGOC Octagon
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THE OCTAGON

Newsletter of the M.G. Owners Club & the Peninsula T Register
 The Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club



Jacques Coune MGB Berlinette

February 2006

About *The Octagon* and MGOC...

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 on the second Thursday of 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 M.G. 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 2006

President: Bob Stine, San Mateo, 650-349-5128 rastine@rcn.com

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Activity Director: Dan Shockey, 408-923-3927, MGmogul@earthlink.net

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MGOC Historian: John Hunt, 925-299-9006, huntsails@worldnet.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 1962-74: Felix Wong, 510-226-7721 home, mgoc@felixwong.com

MGB 1974-1980: Ed Adams, 510-483-6821

MGB V8 Conversion: Tony Bates, 408-666-6174, Tony@BatesFamily.net

MGC: Kent Leech, 925-253-9757, kent@kentleech.com

M.G. Midget: Kingsley Klarer, 707-226-1955

MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125

Z-Magnette Saloon: Marty Ray, 831-247-5863, martyray@cruzio.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

S.U. Carburettors: Marty Ray, 831-247-5863, martyray@cruzio.com

Bodywork: Bill Weissberg, 209-835-0428, weissber@slip.net

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to Mike Jacobsen at 415-333-9699 or

Annual Dinner at Gulliver s Saturday Feb 11th 7:00 p.m. No Club Meeting in February

MG 2007 Planning Meeting

February 18, 2006 (3rd Sat.) High Noon

The Englander

101 Parrot Street, San Leandro

(510) 357-3571 <http://www.englishpub.com/>

From Northbound I-880, take the Washington Ave. exit within San Leandro and turn right on Washington St. Travel 2.2 miles until you see Parrott St. Turn right on Parrott Street. You will see The Englander on your right.

From Southbound I-880, take Davis St. exit and turn left on Davis. Travel 1.3 miles, then turn right on E. 14th St. Travel 0.3 miles, and then right on Parrott St.

South Bay Natter & Noggin February 24, 2006, (last Fri.) 8 p.m.

Join us for an informal gathering in the South Bay. We'll meet in a lamp-light courtyard setting. Not too crowded and with restaurants right there. Look for us at McHart's Pizza if you don't see anyone with their cars. We once had a line-up of seven MGBs.

This is the Marketplace Shopping Center next to Long's Drugs at 19732 Stevens Creek Blvd. It is right across from the Sears at the Vallco Shopping Mall. It is just off I-280 at Wolfe.

Directions: Take the Wolfe Rd. exit from I-280 and turn west. Turn right on Stevens Creek Blvd. Turn left at first light.

Dan Shockey (408) 923-3927 or Bob Wall (408) 739-2373

Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Please send copy (and check **made payable to MGOC** if a non-member) to MGOC, 601 Greylyn Drive, San Ramon CA, 94583. Members may also email ads to the Editor at Tbobbx@aol.com.

For Sale: 1965 Austin Healey Sprite: Red, \$3995 OBO. Fun little car that runs well. New brake lines, new hoses and belts, new speedometer and odometer, and new door hinges. Extensive work done on the electrical and exhaust. Member Karin, ktroedsson@hotmail.com

For Sale: 1972 MGB: New BRG paint, 50 mi on new performance engine, new distributor, radiator, front end, rack & pinion, rotors, wiring harness, battery, tires, rebuilt master and slave clutch cylinders, rebuilt brake master cylinder, alternator, rear brake shoes and cylinders, dash, Astrali steering wheel. Needs interior carpet, seat covers, panels, soft top (has frame). Photos on request. Member Rob Stagnier stagnier@hotmail.com (925) 451-2610

For Sale: Ribcase 4-speed transmission from a 1974 Midget. Tailshaft rebuilt, good condition \$300/offer. Twin SU carbs from 1974 Midget, Rebuilt \$250/offer. Also have emission components. Make offer. Member Mark Hertz. damhertz@prodigy.net or (925)757-2070

For Sale: 1978 MG Midget. \$3000 or reasonable best offer. SSTS member Dave Bohler, Novato, (415) 897-4915, lawrence.bohler@verizon.net

For Sale: 1970 MGB-GT. Wire wheels. Runs. White. Needs paint but presentable. With or w/o good engine. With or w/o overdrive. \$1500 with engine & OD. Member Dan Shockey, San Jose, (408) 923-3927, mgmogul@earthlink.net

For Sale: 1974 MGB: Silver with Red interior and taupe colored soft-top, Overdrive, Cloth seats with headrests; Pioneer tape player. 152K miles with more than \$7K invested in the car over last five years. Member dkamins@sbcglobal.net or (415) 706-5646

For Sale: 1971 MGB/GT Color: Bedouin (Beige) black Recaro seats, four spoke Molita steering wheel. Engine built by Doug Jackson combined with Advance Performance Technologies ported and polished Pierce aluminum head. Weber side draft. OD transmission. Composite rear springs, gas shocks and Panhard rod. Sway bar, competition modified shock valves. Four spoke American Racing wheels including spare. \$5700.00 Member Dennis Gray, club member gray44@pacbell.net

For Sale: 1967 Austin (London) Taxi, Fresh black paint Diesel engine. 805-927-8164, Member Al Benson

Wanted: 70-74 MGB Short Block in rebuildable condition. Member James Brown. JamesCBrown@sbcglobal.net, (408) 893-8986

MikesMuseum@yahoo.com. 2006 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 20th of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. The editor's address is: Bob Trencheny, 601 Greylyn Drive, San Ramon CA 94583. Or, you may email contributions to BobTrencheny@gmail.com

RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? Bob Stine (650-349-5128) is in charge of new member recruitment and can send you flyers. The club roster is available from Mike Jacobsen upon request.

Forthcoming Events

MGOC in bold, SSTS: Sorry Safari Touring Society, ARR: Abingdon Rough Riders

Feb. 11 (Sat.) — **MGOC Annual Dinner**, Sign up by Feb. 8, See Jan. Octagon, Bob Stine, 650-349-5128 rastine@rcn.com

Feb. 19 (Sun.) — SSTS Rainy Day Tour, Rod Schweiger, (650) 871-7921

March 4 (Sat.) — **Pierce Manifolds Tour**, Gilroy, Dan Shockey, See page 9

Mar. 11-12 — Open Autocross, Marina Airport, Info next issue

March 18 (Sat.) — **MGOC Tour to Rohnert Park** MG2007 site

April 2 (Sun.) — **Nile Canyon Steam Train Tour**, See page 16

April 15 (Sat.) — **Mount Hamilton Tour**, Bob Wall, See page 16

Continued next page

FREE Parts & Accessories Catalogs

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Order Catalogs & Parts Online at

www.VictoriaBritish.com

Forthcoming Events (Continued)

April 29-30 — Vintage Auto Racing; Moss British Extravaganza at Buttonwillow

May 5-7 — Grand Am Sports Car Series, Laguna Seca

May 7 — Hillsborough Concours

www.hsf.org/events_concours/carshow2006/

May 13 (Sat.) — **MGs by the Bay**, San Leandro Marina

May 21 (Sun.) — Annual All British Show at Dixon —

www.ubsc.org/dixon.htm

June 2-4 — MG Vintage Racing at Halletts, OK

May 27 - June 4 — British Car Week — www.britishcarweek.org

June 9-11 — *Open Roads 2006*, Lake Tahoe www.goldengatehealeys.com

June 18 (Sun.) — Hayward British Field Meet

June 21-26 — All-Register **MG2006** in Gatlinburg, TN. www.MG2006.com

June 25 — Palo Alto Concours — Loveable British Cars! —

www.paconcours.com

July 3-6 — GoF West, Welches, OR

July TBD — **Lake Chabot Tour**, Pat Davis

July Late — **North Bay Wine Tour**, Preston's

July 28-30 — Champ Car Grand Prix of San Jose

Aug. 12 (Sat.) — **MGOC Annual Picnic**

Aug. 18-20 — Monterey Historic Races, Features: Cooper & Laguna Seca

Aug 25-27 — IRL Indy Grand Prix at Infineon (Sears Point)

Sept. 9-10 — Palo Alto British Field Meet

Sept. 23-24 — **MGOC Tour to Redding**

Oct 8-10 — *High Country Tour* in Sedona, AZ RacerMoss@mac.com

Oct. 13-15 — MG Clubs 50th Anniversary, Inn at Morro Bay, ARR

Oct. 14-15 — San Juan Bautista British meet

Oct. TBD — **East Bay Tour**, Bob Trencheny

Nov. TBD — **MGOC Tour to Watsonville**

Dec. TBD — **Holiday Tea**



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Interesting M.G. Tidbits

Abingdon's Competitions Department

The Competitions Department was founded in 1955. John Thornley (MG's General Manager) hired Marcus Chambers, a former HRG driver at Le Mans and also a team manager for two privateers that raced HRGs. BMC gave the department a budget of 100,000 pounds which meant the program was well funded; in today's money 100,000 pounds is equal to 1,620,405.

To build the team he recruited Pat Moss (the sister of legendary driver Sterling Moss). She made a big impact on the program in many ways. Her past love of horses led to the creation of BMC's logo. The rosettes Pat had in her stable from her equine activities actually played a part in the creation of the team's badge. Some of the Continentals used the word *Ecurie* for a rally team; MG used *Safety Fast* as a slogan. We were the British Motor Corporation and our badge would have to be tricolour; I got the MG Drawing Office to do an *Ecurie Safety Fast* layout, based on Pat's show jumping rosettes, and the Publicity ordered the stick-on-transfers.

On the driving front she had a number of victories driving various BMC cars such as the Mini, Morris Minor, Austin Healy, and M.G. In 1957 in the Liege Rome Liege Rally she won the Ladies Prize in an MGA. Then in 1960 driving an Austin Healy in the Liege Rome Liege rally with Ann Wisdom she became the first woman driver to win an international rally. It was also the first time BMC had claimed first place in Europe.

The source of this interesting story is from a new book called *BMC Competitions Department Secrets*, written by the three past managers: Marcus Chambers, Stuart Turner, and Peter Browning. You can order it by going on-line to the M.G. Car Club's website at www.mgcars.org.uk/carclub/.



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New MGOC Historian

John Hunt

At the last meeting, I took on the role as Club Historian/Archivist. For many years, George Steneberg has done an outstanding job as Historian. Thanks to him, our club's history, stories and photos are preserved. We owe a great deal to George's dedication and work for our club.

My first goal is to put together a history booklet to help celebrate our club's upcoming 50th Anniversary in 2007. The objective of the booklet is to:

1. To celebrate the people, cars and the club
2. To capture the spirit of the magic that is M.G.
3. To create a booklet that would be interesting to all generations and one that would create a better understanding and appreciation of the marque and the club.

This booklet will also be used to help promote *MG2007* that we are hosting.

My second goal is a work in progress. I hope to interview members, gather photos and stories so that we can continue to build our story. Ideally, some day I would like to put together an in-depth history of our club. With almost 50 years, there are a lot of wonderful, fun, exciting stories to tell.

My third goal, when time allows, is to write and publish interviews of our members called *The MGOC Experience!* in our monthly newsletter, *The Octagon*.

For our club's history to be alive and dynamic, I need everyone's help. It's your story and I want to help document it. I welcome and look forward to any input our members have!

My phone number is: (925) 299-9006 and my e-mail is: huntsails@worldnet.att.net

Attention!!

Have your MG painted by a fellow sports car lover with 15 years experience. High quality rubbed-out polyurethane finish at reasonable cost. I do bodywork, rust repair, and welding. Fast turn-around time. References and examples of my work are available. Call for an appointment for a free estimate.

Andy Schank, 510-236-5232

President's Ponderings

Thank God for Sunny California: This time of year, even Sunny California experiences rain. Sometimes we're tempted to complain about the weather this time of year and some people even suffer a state of depression because of the gray skies.

From now on, if I'm tempted to complain about the weather I'll reflect on the long conversation I had with Mike Lewis earlier this week. Mike lives in Gretna, LA, very close to New Orleans. He explained to me how lucky he was that his MG was only three feet under water as a result of Hurricane Katrina. He has been able to return to his home but still has much work to do to combat the water damage.

Our club decided to send \$200 to the Mardi Gras T's so they could have a pizza party as a diversion from the stress of their plight. Some of the club members had to wait for the water to recede before getting their cars because the cars were under as much as twelve feet of water!

Mike Zobrist is their treasurer and he lives in Baton Rouge. When Mike Jacobsen, our treasurer (lots of Mikes, huh?) was preparing to send the check, he discovered that the postal service isn't yet delivering mail to the area and would return any mail to its sender! We had to send the check to Mike Lewis instead. They will use the money for a dinner following a car show sponsored by the British Motor Cars of New Orleans (BMCNO). Good luck, guys! Have a beer on us.

Annual MGOC Dinner: Don't forget our annual dinner on February 11 at Gulliver's. So far, we have about twenty members who have sent in their reservations. We look forward to this as our best opportunity to visit with the members we don't see at many other events. Of course, food **always** seems to help draw people together.

To Protect and to Serve: I went to the San Leandro police department today to submit the application for a permit to have our annual car show at the San Leandro Marina. I called yesterday in an effort to set up an appointment with the lady who handles permits, but she didn't return my voice mail message. I didn't want to waste any more time so I drove to the police station without an appointment. The officer at the front desk took the application and said she'd put it in Kristina's inbox. I mentioned that I had tried to call and she explained that Kristina spends most of her time away from the office, dealing with other events.

When I mentioned the filing fee, she said it has gone up from \$45 to \$50. I asked for a copy of the paper she looked at to determine the fee, but she said, "If you're going to have the show here again next year, you should come in and get the form before you fill out the application. That way you'll know the current fee." She was quite surly throughout this dialog.

As I left, I wished her a nice day and said I hoped the rain would stop. I like the rain, she grumbled. Apparently, the motto for the San Leandro Police is, "To Protect . . . It certainly doesn't seem to be . . . To Serve . . ." Hope to see you at the dinner!

Bob Stine
President, MGOC
rastine@rcn.com

From da Ed

January, 2006

It's late January and we should all be up to our elbows with car projects. Somewhere out there are torn boots to replace and sumps to be drained. It may be cool in the garage but fortunately we are in Northern California and not upstate New York where sub-freezing temperatures make winter time car work almost miserable. Now is the time to get the projects done because once the warmer weather returns we want the cars ready to go.

I attended the Club's annual planning meeting today and am happy to report there is a full schedule of events planned through the remainder of the year. I

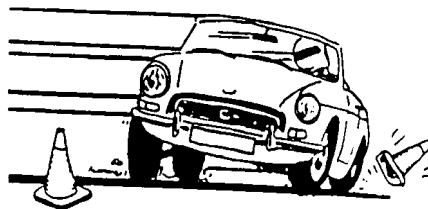
think we have at least one event per month for the rest of the year and many months have multiple events on the calendar. This is another great reason to get your cars in shape now.

Last month the MGOC sent out 125 paper copies of *The Octagon* and 81 electronic copies via e-mail. We can do better. If you want to change to electronic delivery to get the *Octagon* faster and in color, send Mike Jacobsen MikesMuseum@yahoo.com an e-mail and he will make it happen.

We are still trying to map out our members. You can help out by signing up at [Frapp.com](http://www.frapp.com) here: <http://www.frapp.com/mgocbayarea>

Hope to see you at the Annual Dinner at Gulliver's in San Mateo.

Let's Ride,
Bob



MG

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Useful Tools

Cotter Pin Puller

Sooner or later you will have to remove a cotter pin from your car. It may be the pin that secures the castellated front wheel bearing nuts, or perhaps the pin that keeps the clutch slave cylinder's clevis pin from falling out. No matter where the cotter pin is, though, it's often awkward to remove. Most folks use a pair of needle nose pliers to straighten the legs of the pin, grab the loop on the other end, and then yank it out. This is seldom as easy as it sounds because the loop can be slippery with grease, the legs can still be bent enough to bind on extraction, or the loop is so low in the castellations that you can hardly reach it.

Instead of using pliers or a small screwdriver, use a cotter pin puller. A cotter pin puller looks something like an awl whose tip got formed into an elaborate hook. You insert the pointed tip of the puller into the loop of the cotter pin, rock the bend in the puller against the nut, shaft, or whatever is nearby, and lift the pin straight out. You don't even have to straighten the legs first (though that does make extraction easier) and the usual amount of grease around your average cotter pin that makes the pliers slip actually makes it easier to insert the puller.

My cotter pin puller came from Sears, item 4319, but you can usually find one at the local auto parts store. Get one and stop wasting time doing it the hard way.

Article by Mike Jacobsen.



Photo by Elaine Chan

Don't forget to sign up for the Annual
Dinner on Feb. 11.

RSVP to Bob Stine by Feb. 8!

planning meeting, but at 1 pm, due to the change in start time for the planning meeting.

Annual dinner — A sign-up form was included in the January *Octagon* and reservations are being accepted.

Tech sessions — No report.

Pierce Manifolds tour — No report.

MGs by the Bay — Our first choice for the event date is May 13, second choice is May 6.

Old Business:

Gifts for distribution at Annual Dinner — Dan Shockey is working on this.

Update on JLS cookbook — A meeting to update the cookbook is scheduled for 7:30 pm, January 18 at Randy Grossman's home. Mike Jacobsen & Bob Stine will attend.

Regalia for 50th anniversary of MGOC — This was tabled until the MGOC ever planning meeting on January 21.

MG2007 update — All topics, such as request for more help and trophies, were tabled until the MG2007 planning meeting on January 21.

Donation of a club grille badge and pizza for the New Orleans MG club — John Hunt reported that he had contacted Mike Lewis of the Mardi Gras T club of New Orleans. Mike suggested that we sponsor a pizza feed for a British Motoring Club of New Orleans event on March 25 as a gesture of support, and said that our \$200 budget was more than sufficient for the expected attendance. Bob Stine may be able to deliver the check in person, depending on travel plans.

New Business:

Establish budget for our participation in MG2007 — This was tabled until the MGOC event planning meeting on January 21. Mike Jacobsen will present a draft budget at that time.

Vote to provide pizza for attendees of MGOC planning meeting and MG2007 planning meeting on January 21 — This did not pass, due to the change of venue to The Englander.

Archivist — John Hunt volunteered to become the new Club Archivist, or Historian. Dan Shockey is to give John the Club scrapbook, dating back to the 1950s.

Miscellaneous Discussion Items:

Venue for future general meetings — After some discussion, it was decided to continue holding the monthly combined general business and Board meeting at The Englander on the second Thursday of each month. There will be no meeting next month, however, because the Annual Dinner doubles as the meeting.

Next Meeting and Natter: Annual Dinner at Gulliver's in Burlingame, February 11.

No-host cocktails at 7:00, dinner at 8:00. There will be no speaker or door prizes this year.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14. Submitted by Mike Jacobsen.

MG Comeback Stymied

Austin Healey Name Sold by Family

BIRMINGHAM, England The consortium planning to revive MG production in Great Britain has suffered a major blow. The family of the late Donald Healey has just sold the rights to the Austin Healey name to a rival group for a cool \$2 million.

GB Sports Car (GBSC) is poised to announce a deal with China's Nanjing Automotive, the Chinese owners of MG Rover's assets, to restart production of MG sports cars and sedans in part of the former Rover plant at Longbridge, England. GBSC had wanted to build a new Austin Healey as part of that plan.

But instead, the Healey family has sold the rights to build Healey-brand cars to a new British-American firm, HFI Automotive, which plans to revive the defunct marque and employ 400 workers to make sports cars in Great Britain.

The British newspaper *Financial Times* reports that HFI has paid some \$2 million to the three family members who own the name and has given Margot Healey, daughter-in-law of the original founder, and her daughters, Cecilia and Kate, a significant stake in the new company.

Tim Fenna, an automotive consultant and managing director of HFI, said a prototype sports car, called the Healey 3000 after a classic 1960s Austin Healey, had already been tested and should be shown to the public later this year. He noted that the U.S. would be the biggest market for the car.

However, both GBSC and Nanjing claim the Austin Healey name can be used independently of the Healey family, even though Rover, once owner of the name, agreed a decade ago that the family's consent would be needed.

What this means to you: The chaos that surrounds Rover's collapse continues. Looks like GB Sports Car will have to focus on MG, or find another defunct British brand to revive. Luckily, there are plenty of them!

<http://www.edmunds.com/insideline/do/News/articleId=109067>



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The Nuffield Trophies

Rick Ingram with Brian Woodhams

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. I have 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 £6000 each (US\$10,000) and it is expected that the holders take steps to insure the trophies whilst they are held in trust. The American 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. 2005 is the 75th Anniversary of the MGCC UK, so we will try again!

Minutes of the Business Meeting

January 12, 2006

Attending: Nina Barton, John Hunt, Randy Grossman, Mike Jacobsen, George Steneberg, Bob Stine, Bob Trencheny

Introductions: New officers introduced: Bob Stine, President; Nina Barton, Vice-President; Dan Shockey (absent due to illness), Secretary; Mike Jacobsen, Treasurer. Dan Shockey was nominated as the new Events Coordinator, aka the Captain of Fun. Randy Grossman, the outgoing Events Coordinator, will work with Dan on the transition.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: The minutes were approved after being amended to show that Randy Grossman is no longer the Event Coordinator/Captain of Fun.

Treasurer's Report: We still have a positive cash flow, with no outstanding bills at this time.

<u>Registrar's Report:</u>	Regular	206
	Auxiliary	52
	Corresponding	13
	<u>Associate</u>	<u>0</u>
	Total	271

Secretary's Report: Absent

Regalia Report: We have a quote from Triple C for new MGOC grille badges at \$18.50 each, in a quantity of 100. We are waiting for a quote from Ron Hazelhurst, our original supplier.

The Octagon: The editorial policy of the *Octagon* was changed so that letters to the Editor will be edited to remove any mention of items for sale.

Postage increases 2¢ for the next issue, adding about \$2.60 to each mailing.

Current distribution:	Electronic <i>Octagon</i>	81
	Paper <i>Octagon</i>	125

Three commercial advertisers did not renew: Corte Madera British & European, Mario Perelli-Minetti Winery, and Martin Hveem Automobile Restorations.

Past Club Events:

Holiday tea — The tea was attended by approximately two dozen people, and the event came in under budget.

Boxing Day tour — No report.

Upcoming Club Events:

MGOC event planning meeting January 21 at 10:00 am — The correct time is 11:00 am, because that's when The Englander opens. The original time was based on holding the meeting at a member's home. The new time will be sent out via the Club email list, and the site was confirmed with The Englander after the business meeting.

MG2007 planning meeting January 21 at noon — This will follow the event

Continued next page

Without the backing of BMC, and their mass production advantages, Coune's manufacturing methods, although skillfully hand built, were not really a commercially viable proposition. The retail cost was £1,300 against £690 for the equivalent MGB.

Ultimately therefore a total of only fifty six Berlinettes were produced, all of which were left hand drive models for the European Market. CBW 55B is one of only eight known to have survived.



This car and the information above were found on Ebay.com in the first week of January 2005. It is item number: 4517244809, starting bid GBP 24,999.00 (Approximately US \$46,885.62). The car has had one previous owner 34,000 miles, featured in many books and magazines and is located in Cardiff England.

Article and pictures from the Greater Ozarks British Car Club.

Save the Dates!

On **March 18th** the MGOC and MG2007 planning group will tour to the DoubleTree at Rohnert Park to view the site of our 2007 event. We plan a tour via the coast and a nice lunch stop.

On **April 2nd** the MGOC and SSTS will be riding the rails of the Niles Canyon Railway in Sunol. This is one of what we hope will be frequent shared club events. We'll meet for breakfast (optional) in Niles, take the train ride, then tour (by auto) along scenic Calaveras Road past the reservoir to our lunch destination. Come out and ride the historic steam train and meet new MG owners from the SSTS.

On **April 15th** MGOC member Bob Wall will lead the club on our 3rd annual drive to the top of Mount Hamilton. This is a fun drive on a beautiful road. We'll go on down the back side through Lolli's Junction and Livermore and on into Niles.

Details next month

St. Paddy's Tour to Pierce Manifolds With Irish Pub Lunch Following!

Saturday, March 4, 2006 — Rain or Shine

Okay, it won't be St. Patrick's Day but we changed the tour date at the last moment at the request of Mike Pierce. Pierce Manifolds in Gilroy manufactures and sells various components for our MGs. These include aluminum cylinder heads, Weber carburetor manifolds, and 5-speed conversion kits. I believe that the only aluminum heads available for MGAs and MGBs come from Pierce, no matter where you buy them. Find out what is involved in their design, manufacture, and use. Pierce also designed a cross-flow cylinder head and developed a special camshaft to take advantage of the superior breathing capability. Mike's MGB with this set-up was featured in *Grassroots Motorsports* magazine and has been dynoed at 162 h.p.

At Pierce we will get a factory tour, a Q&A session, and product presentations along with one or more MGs with their parts installed. They are the largest distributor of Weber carbs, parts and conversions in the country so have lots of interesting things to look at.

Following the factory visit we will head a few blocks to **The Claddagh Irish Restaurant and Pub**. This is a fun place, rated 5 stars by Yahoo users, and that gave us great service when we visited four years ago.

We plan to have two meeting places: one at Denny's in Emeryville (Oakland), departing at 9am. The second will be at the south end of San Jose, departing at 10am. You may also meet us at Pierce Manifolds (11am). We will get off the freeway and take great back roads from the San Jose meeting spot. Maps and directions will be provided.

After lunch we can retrace our back-roads route or you can zip home on Highway 101. Hope to see you. You need your dose of Irish. MG not required.

Oakland Start: Denny's parking lot, Emeryville; meet at 8:30am for a 9am departure. (There is an office parking lot behind Denny's where we gather.) There is also another breakfast place across the lot and a Starbucks nearby.

San Jose Start: Get off Hwy. 101 at the Hellyer exit in south San Jose. (This is south of the interchange with I-680/I-280.) Turn left at the stop sign, cross the freeway and you will see us on the right, parked next to the Frisbee golf course. Depart at 10am or when the north group arrives.

Pierce Manifolds: 321 Kishimura Dr., Gilroy. From 101, take the Leavesley exit. Take the 1st right onto Murray. Take the 1st left onto Kishimura. (800) 874-3728, www.piercemanifolds.com.

Bring: Green clothes and funny hats, tank of gas, money for lunch, umbrella.

Lunch Info: www.TheCladdagh.net, (408) 848-5050

Info & RSVP: (for lunch count) Dan Shockey, (408) 923-3927, MGmogul@earthlink.net.

The Red Wire Is Connected to the Blue Wire

It is not often that we see a new product that really solves a problem in such an innovative way. Restoring and driving classics can be a chore, one that is often exacerbated by aging eclectics that fail at inopportune moments. What is worse is that many factory wiring diagrams are hard to read, are printed on pulp paper, and are filled with so many abbreviations that even veteran mechanics will scratch their heads in puzzlement.

Enter Prospero's Garage and their large, laminated, and color-coded wiring diagrams. The 11 X 17-inch format allows for larger type, and the laminated design keeps the diagrams safe from greasy fingerprints. You can even roll them up and take them on the road trips. Prospero's Garage has diagrams for many popular cars, including classics from Alfa Romeo, Austin-Healy, BMW, Datsun, Jaguar, MG, Mini, Porsche, Triumph, and Volkswagen.

Prospero's Garage's home on the internet is: www.slash5.com. You can also write them at Prospero's Garage, 118 Tenny Avenue, Waukesha, WI 53186. The diagrams are priced at \$15.95 each, while shipping adds another \$3.85.

Source: January 2006 issue of Classic & Motorsports magazine.

Thanks to MGOC Member John Hunt for this contribution.

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Jacques Coune MGB Berlinette

The only RHD MGB Berlinette in the World

Sometime during 1963, the Belgian stylist Jacques Coune met Sir Alec Issigonis to discuss the potentiality of collaborating with the British Motor Corporation to explore the possibility of using the design concept of the MGB Berlinette Coupe, for production at Abingdon.

Walter Oldfield, who was then managing director of The Nuffield Press and a former confidant of Lord Nuffield, gave instructions for an MGB minus all the unnecessary trim to be delivered directly from the Abingdon production line to Brussels for Coune to build the coachwork to his own design. This work was duly completed and the Berlinette delivered to Cowley for appraisal early in 1964.

Sir George Harriman, as chairman of BMC became personally involved and together with Issigonis, Sir Leonard Lord, and MG's design engineer Sid Enever, drove the Berlinette for assessment over an extensive trial period throughout the summer of 1964. The final decision was not to adopt the design in favor of the GT already conceived, and in fact introduced in 1965. Issigonis's recorded comments to Coune when advising him of his ruling was: It looks too Italian! A true statement as most of the craftsmen were from Turin, but possibly one of the most regrettable judgments the great man ever made.



Of the fifty-six Berlinettes built only one was of particular significance. CBW 55B was the only right hand drive model to be produced. This according to Coune was personally ordered by Alec Issigonis.

(Cont p.16.)

Member Notes:

Warren Pierce won a 1970 Midget on EBay for a mere \$61.60! Warren says, I was thinking of it as a parts car but other than some rust in the A pillars it really doesn't look too bad. Just what I needed, another project!

Andy Preston says he is the proud owner of a basket case 1600 MGA Coupe. No word yet on how big a basket case the MGA is but Andy did promise us an *Octagon* article on his new toy.

Club Map:

<http://www.frappr.com/mgocbayarea>

New E-mail Address:

I am in the process of changing my e-mail address. Please start using BobTrencheny@gmail.com. I will still receive mail at the old address for the foreseeable future. Thanks, Bob

MGs in the Movies:

<http://gothere.com/mg-world/mg-movies/movies.htm>

In Dash Radio/CD Player

A problem fitting radio/cassettes and especially radio/CDs into MGBs has been the limited depth available due to the demister tubes behind the center console. The tubes come out right where you'd like to put the unit. Some folks have made special mounts or moved the console face further back into the interior.

A solution appears to have come on the scene. In talking to an advisor for the Crutchfield audio catalog, I found out that Kenwood is about to introduce an in-dash radio/CD player that is only 6.1" in depth. Since the depth available in MGBs with center consoles is about 6", this should fit fine. Other MG models may benefit from the short-depth unit as well.

The price for the Kenwood MP6032 is \$149 and the introduction date was quoted to me as Feb. 6, 2006. Specifications and delivery info can be gotten from Crutchfield at 800-555-9507, www.crutchfield.com or your Kenwood dealer. Let us know if you get one.

Dan Shockey

James Bond Car Sells for £1 Million

James Bond's gadget-packed Aston Martin has been sold for more than £1 million at a packed US auction house. Would-be buyers crammed into the sale in Phoenix, Arizona, to get a glimpse of the legendary 1965 Aston Martin DB5, complete with super-spy additions including built-in Browning machine guns and tyre slashers.

The car, which was driven by Sean Connery in the films *Thunderball* and *Goldfinger*, went under the hammer for \$2,090,000 (£1,190,000) after around 15 minutes of intense bidding. Other gadgets include a retractable rear bullet-proof screen, an oil slick ejector, a smoke screen system and three revolving number plates including the registrations 007JB and JB007. But a passenger ejector seat with removable roof panel has been replaced with a standard seat.

The car, which was last on sale 35 years ago, was bought in the room by a European collector, RM Auctions spokesman Terrance Lobzun said. He estimated that around six bidders, plus more on the telephones, were battling it out for the slick motor. It was bought by a Tennessee museum owner from Sir Anthony Bamford for just £5,000 in 1970.

Before the sale began the lights were turned off and Mr Lobzun, dressed in 007-style tuxedo, drove the car on to the stage and demonstrated all the features - including the guns - in return for a standing ovation from the ecstatic audience. Every seat of the 1,500 in the house was sold — it was standing room only. It was the biggest crowd we've ever had, he said.

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<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=103262006>



New MG Rover Inquiry

Quiz former ministers and Phoenix Four

A new inquiry into the government's role in MG Rover's collapse will call two former trade and industry secretaries and the former directors of the company, known as the Phoenix Four, to give evidence.

An inquiry by the Trade and Industry Select Committee, where hearings are open to the public, has been called as frustration is increasing about the length of time being taken by an inquiry commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which could run for at least two years. The select committee had originally hoped to wait for the DTI's inquiry but

now believes that it will take too long and that an investigation into ministers' roles in the Rover collapse last year and its near-collapse in 2000 is vital for the public interest.

Peter Luff, the committee chairman, said that the committee had asked Alan Johnson, the present trade Secretary, how long the inquiry would take but that his answer was obscure and unhelpful. Mr. Luff said 'I think he didn't know and, in the circumstances, we decided we couldn't wait any longer. Memories fade.'

This was the biggest intervention in industry by government in recent years and we want to do a political inquiry into it.

Stephen Byers, the trade and industry secretary in 2000, and Patricia Hewitt, Johnson's predecessor, are expected to be called before MPs. It is also expected that some or all of the controversial Phoenix Four directors — John Towers, Nick Stephenson, Peter Beale, and John Edwards — will be forced to make their first public appearances since MG Rover went into liquidation last April.

Byers recruited the Phoenix Four, who were then local businessmen, to take over the company when BMW decided to sell or close Rover. Hewitt offered the company a £100m loan to help to seal a joint venture between the British carmaker and Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation.

The select committee will hear evidence in the spring and hopes to report by early summer.



**Don't forget to sign up for the Annual
Dinner on Feb. 11.
RSVP to Bob Stine by Feb. 8!**

MGs at the Runoffs

by Dan Shockey

Many British sports cars are still successfully campaigned in the SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) production race classes. Each year the top cars in each class are brought together for a national championship called The Runoffs. Recently the event has been held at the Mid-Ohio course with the latest this past September. You have probably heard already that Kent Prather of Kansas won his sixth national championship in his MGA race car. He was given the President's Cup for this achievement. Other MGs were competitive as well.

In H Production (smallest engine size, volume production cars), Triumph Spitfires took the top two spots but Sprites and MG Midgets qualified from 3rd through 8th and finished 4th through 8th. Decisions on rain versus dry tires figured large in this race. Interestingly these smallest cars turned similar laps to the Camel GT Corvette I used to crew for at this track in the 70s. Dan Collishaw and Ron Bartell are former national champions in MG Midgets that finished 6th and 7th this year.

Prather's MGA won G Production (cars faster than group H) but it was a tough battle. On lap 15 he found himself third but made a daring pass inside the leaders when they slowed just a bit for a slower car. Other than two Sprites, the field was made up mostly of VW, Toyota, Honda and Datsun sedans. Good show, Kent!

E Production also featured small sports cars including RX-7, Caterham 7 (Lotus 7 derivative), Miata, TR-4, TR-6, 240Z, and 914 cars. The race was marred by big accidents at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. This class was once the domain of MGBs (including Group 44) but with 270 h.p. C and D cars now combined with class E, MGBs are less competitive. A 1964 Elva Courier qualified this year with an MGB motor. It looks a lot like an MGB and carried the Octagon into battle. Mark Donohue won the class with an Elva in 1963!

Other classes included sports racers, formula cars, showroom stock, and GT cars such as Corvettes, Camaros and Vipers. MGs were truly the basis of sports car racing in North America so it is good to see some still racing and winning despite their 50 year old designs. Next month: SCCA solo racing.



MGA beats the Hot Hatches, Runoffs 2005, J.C. Meitzler Photo