



THE OCTAGON

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



North American MGB Register



Since 1957!

A crisp fall morning on
the Sonoma Tour
Photo: Marty Rayman



**Holiday Tea!
December 10**



December 2022



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.

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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
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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 **Mike Jacobsen** at
415-333-9699 or MikesMuseum@yahoo.com. 2022 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.

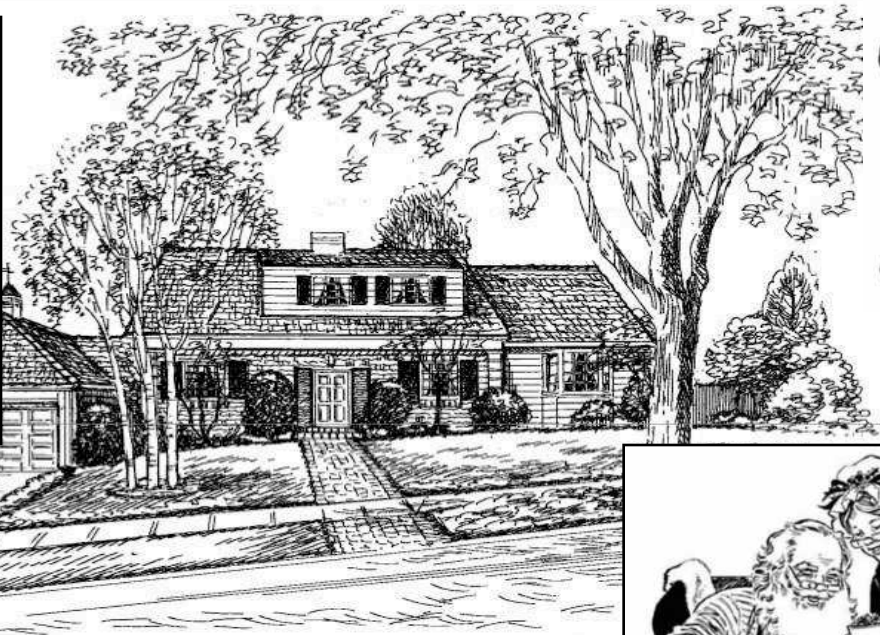
MGOCSE.ORG

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 Holiday Tea and Toy Drive



Hosts: Marcia Crawford and George Steneberg

Date: Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022

When: 1:00 p.m. (Board Meeting and vote tally 12:30-1:00)

Where: 150 Purdue Avenue, Kensington, CA

This year's Holiday Tea will be hosted by Marcia and George at Marcia's beautiful home in Kensington. Please bring a favorite dish and tea to share and enjoy with other fellow members. Also please bring an unwrapped toy for the toy drive. We're looking forward to reminiscing about the past year and hearing your latest stories and adventures in your MGs. A short Board Meeting will start at 12:30 and includes voting for next year's Board members.

RSVP: Marcia at 510-526-8951 or George at j2george@pacbell.net

Directions from the North or South Bay Area: Take Eastshore Freeway 80 or Highway 580 toward Golden Gate Fields. Exit at Albany/Buchanan. At light turn east (toward hills). Follow Buchanan east. Buchanan curves right and becomes Marin. Cross San Pablo Ave. and continue east on Marin thru several lights. Cross The Alameda (round fire house on your right) and continue to Marin Circle (fountain in middle) and around to The Arlington (only divided road). Continue on The Arlington to stop sign. Pass stores on your right and continue three blocks, then turn right on Westminster. Turn right on Kenyon (at top of "T") and continue around and up to Purdue. Turn left on Purdue Ave and continue a short way to 150 Purdue, a white colonial house on your left. Continue up three to four houses to find parking.

From the Editor

Merry Christmas!

29 November 2022

Tradition has me share a few encouraging words in each newsletter – though after six years (this stint), I am not sure of anything original. I am glad I do not preach a weekly sermon.

I had thought of attending the Sonoma Tour – always a highlight – but was laid low with the “RSV” respiratory virus and have done little this month. The MGs wait patiently in the garage. My thoughts have instead turned to the cobbler’s sewing machine and my need for a new top and tonneau cover for the 1935 MG. The special fabric material is well aged now, also in the garage. Can this old dog learn new tricks?

The Holiday Tea, Planning Meeting and Annual Brunch are really good winter events for the club. Do try them this year. May your days be bright.



Dan

Test sewing



The \$100 sewing machine is made in China and is a copy of an 1852 English machine. It will sew though 1/4" of leather. The machine arrives rough and crude with work required – so suits an old MG. Shockey pics.

Below: A 6' Christmas tree WILL fit in an MG! Dan's workhorse GT in 2004. (with original paint!)



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MGOC Planning Meeting

Saturday, January 7

10:00 a.m.



Please join us!

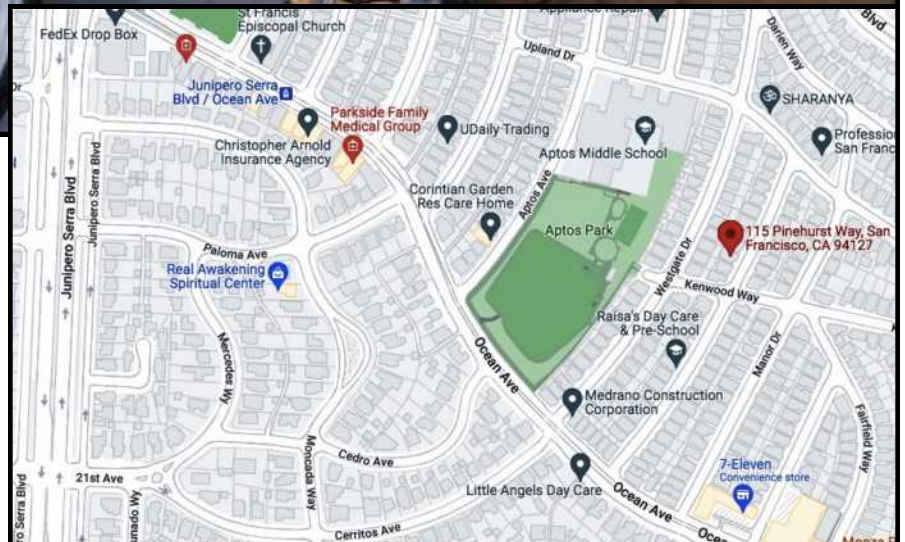
We need your help to plan our events and activities for this New Year. Everyone is welcome especially new members and anyone who has any ideas for new or old events. All ideas are welcome and there are lots of people who are willing to help you.

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



President's Ponderings

Stepping down as President

It's been 6 years since I became President, and I've enjoyed every moment but now feel that it's time for someone else to take the wheel. I've been very fortunate to have had a wonderful Board both past and present that has made the job enjoyable and satisfying. I'd like to thank everyone for their continued support over these past 6 years, especially those who have helped organize and run events. All of the events that have

been organized by different members of the club have been very well attended which makes it all worthwhile.

I must give a special shout out and thanks to my good friend Dan Shockey who I asked to be the Editor of the Octagon when I became President and he has continued to publish the best newsletters month after month. This is why he was selected to receive the "Ken Smith Newsletter of the Year Award for 2022" from the North American MGB Register. Well done and thank you, Dan.

I also want to acknowledge and thank Steve Kellogg for all the work he does behind the scenes that mainly goes unrecognized because he does it so quietly and efficiently as both our Registrar and Webmaster. Thank you Steve.

I also want to thank Mike Jacobsen who has held many roles and is now club Secretary and let's not forget my better half, Marla, who has been our Treasurer for at least 8 years and looks after our finances like her own.

I also want to thank the other members of our Board; Kirk Prentiss, George Steneburg, Ken Gittings, Mark McGothigan, and John Hunt for their continued work and support.

If you look at the Officer Ballot for 2023 you'll see that Kirk Prentiss has volunteered to run for President and I know we'll be in good hands with him in charge. Kirk has been VP for the last 6 years and is also active in the Sorry Safari Touring Society so I expect things to get even better and I know they will. BTW, I'm not going anywhere and am running for VP, so Marla and I will still be as involved as we are at the moment. I see a great future ahead for the club with even more events going on.

New Webmaster

As I just mentioned, Steve Kellogg has been doing double duty as both the Registrar and Webmaster for many years and has recently found someone else to take over as Webmaster. Welcome Rick Anguiano as our new Webmaster. Rick has been a member of the club for several years and is very familiar with web hosting. Steve will stay on in an oversight role for a short while until Rick learns the ropes. Rick and his wife Mary will be at the Holiday Tea so please say hello and let them know if you have any ideas you'd like to see in the website.

Holiday Tea

Don't forget that the Holiday Tea is on Saturday December 10 at Marcia's beautiful house in Kensington. See the flier in this edition for further information and please bring a dish to share and gift for the toy drive. This is a really fun event and a really good way to meet new and old members.

I wish everyone a very Happy Holiday Season and treat your MG to at least one outing during this festive season. You'll both enjoy it.

Andy

2023 Officer Nominees

President: Kirk Prentiss, was VP

Vice-President: Andy Preston, was President

Treasurer: Marla Preston, Incumbent

Secretary: Mike Jacobsen, Incumbent

Please send or email other nominees to Mike Jacobsen

MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

320B Monterey Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94131-3141

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. Their *Brunch* is rated #1 in the Bay Area.

12:00 Noon, Sunday, January 22, 2023

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 from 3 entrees, TBD later, Tea, Coffee, OJ and of course Champagne and Mimosas. The restaurant is currently reviewing its Brunch menu for 2023 so we will advise you of the choices in the near future; in the meantime please sign up now to reserve your spot.

RSVP by January 15, 2022 with your 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 Announcements click on "read more" under the Annual Brunch 2023. But please tell Marla that you have paid through PayPal.

Member Notes

New Web King from Steve Kellogg:

We have a new Webmaster. His name is Rick Anguiano and he is versed in editing websites and will bring a fresh pair of eyes to the site. I will still be involved as the club Registrar and still add/delete members/users on the site.



Rick Anguiano here:

I've stepped up to the plate and I'll be taking over the webmaster position and give Steve Kellogg a rest. There's some ideas and questions I have. 209-617-8492 or email. Best regards,

YT for sale in Springfield, Ohio, from Dave McCann:

I saw this car when the truck picked it up from his house. Just happened to be driving down the street. Guy owned the car for 40 years.

I've been building a garage. It's in pretty good shape now, but I'm still working on some things. The garage is behind the house on the alley.

Not retired. My MGA is good. It's stored in Virginia now. I swapped it for the yellow car (MGB/GT V8) to drive through the colder months. I'm working on several car projects. I'm designing some brackets to attach Triumph turn and high beam stalks to the MGA.

I'm working on adapters to fit a new fan to the HVAC in the yellow car. Third, I guess, is tuning the fuel injection I got for the yellow car. It has a four-barrel manifold so I got one of those Holley EFI units. It drives fine, but has a few places in the map that need some improvement.

MG Parts Exchange from Lloyd Faust:

I drove down for it last year. I used to be a member of VMG and long for the old days when even Moss would show up with a van and trailer load of stuff. Moved out of the O.C. in 2006.

MGA Parts from Bev Morgan:

We still have a stash of MGA hoods (bonnets) and trunk lids (boots.) Call Tom (650-740-4116) if interested.

More Issues from John Hunt:

When I drive my MG, occasionally I hear a metal hitting metal sound when I change gears. It's not a grinding sound, it's a brief hitting sound that quickly comes and goes. Just makes that sound when I release the clutch pedal occasionally. Doesn't happen all the time and no vibration. Just a brief clunk sound.

I had a friend review the clutch, seems like a minor issue. I discovered my brake master cylinder is leaking. I just replaced it a few years ago. Given I only drive a few hundred miles a year, that was a bit of a surprise. Thank you everyone for your mechanical insights.

Tips from Andy Preston:

Hi John it could be as simple as the clutch pedal lever arm hitting the back of the opening under the dash where the pedal passes through the opening under the dash. With the engine off try pushing the clutch pedal down and then release it quickly by sliding your foot to the left and see if you hear a clunk. If that's the problem glue a small rubber pad to the opening where the pedal is hitting. I have the same problem with my GT. If you hear a grinding or screeching noise it's more serious.

MGB DOA from John Mein:

We won't make it today on the Sonoma Tour as my new black 1980 MGB totally died on 19th Ave heading up. Next year! Cheers,

A 1978 MGB has arrived:

In the LKQ Pick-Your-Part Yard in Oceanside. Color: Blue. VIN: GHN5UJ468825G. Complete with all the smog components. Has Rostyle wheels. Looks complete. Has a hard top. 2315 Carpenter Road

1963 MGB For Sale:

We need to sell my Dad's 1963 MG. He passed away in August and my mom would like to sell it. It needs work but runs and has a rebuilt engine. No overdrive. Thanks. Mark Buck, markb@ibew595.org, (925) 548-4600 (cell)

Q-Type anyone?

I have a MG Q project for sale if desired. Tony Gould, tonygould1954@gmail.com

Member Notes - Continued

GOF Opportunity:

GOF West 2023 is happening, October 16-20, 2023, in Carlsbad, CA. We are getting a late start. We are looking for bids on the #1 registration, and offering to feature your MG on the color program cover. We are looking for a minimum bid of \$500 and an MG that has some history with GOF or other MG events. Bids [include the dollar amount of your bid AND information on your MG] can be sent now to: Joyce & David Edgar, event co-chairs, at gofwestinc@gmail.com. Bids will be accepted until January 1.

Preston MGB Poster from Mike Jacobsen:

Elaine & I saw a poster made from one of the photo shoots involving Preston Show Cars, Ltd. A photo of it is attached.



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Photo shoot story in November, 2021, **The Octagon**



The Closing of Abingdon: End of the MG Era

By Michael R. Losey – Member, MG Classics Club of Jacksonville, Florida

VMGCC's Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the November, 2013, newsletter of the MG Classics of Jacksonville, Florida. Because of space limitations it was published in the *Vintage Viewpoint* in two installments. Both Michael Losey and Geoff Armstrong have graciously given their permission to share this fascinating story with our members. The MG Classics of Jacksonville newsletter editor, Jim Nolen, says "...to those of us who lived through those last days, this article is important because it tells WHY the MG Era ended."

Introduction:

Geoff Armstrong is a very good friend and we have much in common. We both had long careers in the human resource management profession. Later in our careers we both became the Chief Staff Officer of our country's HR professional society, he in the United Kingdom and me in the United States. Both of us served together on the Board of Directors of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations and both became the president of this professional federation that links the global human resource management professional interests of greater than 70 nations. I knew him well, or so I thought.

Then one day I wanted to share (translate: "gloat") with my British friend that I had one of his country's prized cars, a 1949 MG-TC. I showed him photos of my MG thinking that I finally had something that he did not have or, at a minimum, I might lure his envy. But no, I was to learn that he knew much, much more than me about MGs. In fact, he told me that as one of the senior executives of British Leyland at the time, he helped close the MG Abingdon factory.

After informing him this could be the end of our friendship, we spoke frequently about his role in the closure of the Abingdon plant, but always at my initiative. Consistent with his gentlemanly and conservative style, he volunteered little. But as a member of the MG Classics of Jacksonville, I thought other members might enjoy a firsthand account of why and how the proud and revered MG car line ceased to exist, at least as we knew it at Abingdon.

I knew we would meet at the 2006 WFPMA World Congress to be held in Singapore. I asked if I could interview him for an article. My good friend, Geoff Armstrong, did not fail me. I also discovered that the MG story is not a simple one. Instead, the tale is interwoven into the story of the much larger parent company and its challenges with product, productivity, costs, employee relations, government policy and global competitive requirements.

Geoff Armstrong and BMC

Geoff grew up in the industrial city of Liverpool, the son of an active trade unionist. His working class background was an early contributor to an interest in industrial sociology. As a good student at the University of Portsmouth, he soon extended his interest in industrial sociology to the more pragmatic challenge of understanding the relationship between people at work and what, if anything, contributed to worker motivation and productivity. After his university graduation he sought employment in what was called, in those days, Industrial Relations.

At that time trade union membership was very high as a percentage of the UK workforce, greater than twice the percentage of the United States, for instance. Thus UK labor unions were very strong and also linked closely to the interests and policies of the UK Labor Party. Many companies were at risk in this environment, threatened not only by strong local and national unions but government policy. Geoff felt that the "front line of this class warfare was in the motor car industry." Fortunately, he received offers of employment from the Ford Motor Company and General Motors. But his primary interest was the offer from, what was called then, the British Motor Corporation.

The offer from BMC was to work at their Coventry complex where they had three major plants employing greater than 6,000 blue-collar workers and approximately 2,000 white-collar workers. These combined facilities were known as Morris Engines. The plants produced engines, gearboxes and castings for the assembly lines of Austin, Morris, MG, Riley and Wolseley.

As a BMC graduate trainee, he began his employment in the fall of 1967. But he soon discovered there would be more "hands on" training than classroom training. To gain practical and accelerated insight into the automobile manufacturing industry, he was assigned temporarily to the Apprentice Training School, customarily attended by younger sixteen year olds in their four-year apprenticeship-training program. Geoff recalls being issued special "green overalls" to highlight his lack of experience and need for oversight, or as he told me, "to make sure I did not cut my fingers off on a lathe." Geoff now looks back and fully recognizes the importance of this "shop floor" orientation, even if it was for only a few brief months. In addition to learning what many of the machines did and witness more closely the complexity of a manufacturing process, he gained an equally important and early appreciation of the worker's role. This included an evolving relationship with Joe Pirie, a long-time Amalgamated Engineering Union shop steward. Joe represented the "rectification fitters." These workers did the final quality checks and rectification of the engines and gearboxes and were, therefore, more skilled than the regular assembly line track worker.

Mike Losey and Geoff Armstrong (photo)



Possibly Pirie took an interest in this young university graduate and hopeful future management candidate because he knew that Geoff was from a working class family and had a father who was also a union leader. But for whatever reason, to this day, Geoff considers Joe Pirie's personal mentoring on how industrial relations really works, as some of the most important education and best advice he ever received.

Geoff Armstrong and Abingdon:

Then, in early 1968, the company learned that approximately one hundred engines and gearboxes for MGBs were defective. Unfortunately the defective units had already been shipped from Coventry to the MG plant in Abingdon, including some that were already in completely assembled MGs still at the factory. The "quick fix" was for six Coventry fitters to go to Abingdon for several weeks to do the rework. As the union official for the fitters, Joe Pirie had some influence on who would go to Abingdon.

Apparently not yet done with mentoring Geoff, Joe Pirie asked Geoff if he would like to be one of the men to go to Abingdon. And this was no small feat since, as a non-union management trainee, Geoff had always been absolutely forbidden to do any actual "shop" work while at Coventry. His role was primarily limited to "observation." But Pirie also knew that the union at Abingdon was much less militant than the same union at Coventry. Thus, Geoff "jumped at any chance" to go with the other fitters. And Pirie faithfully delivered on his promise to arrange for Geoff to become one of the six men to go to the Abingdon factory.

While at Abingdon, Geoff recalls noting the major differences he observed between Coventry and Abingdon even though both plants were part of the same company. For instance, in addition to a less combative union, Abingdon, with only 1,200 total employees, had fewer employees than Coventry, which employed greater than six times that amount. Also, the Abingdon plant was located in a much more rural area and many Abingdon workers were from the surrounding Oxfordshire countryside. Many of their parents had worked on the land or in local service industries. The MG workers were, therefore, mostly first generation factory workers and had not experienced the harsh orientation to combative labor relations that existed in many larger UK cities and companies at the time. Wages at Abingdon were also somewhat less than the other larger auto factories, again, given the usual lower level of production workers' pay in a rural community.

But even with lower wages, employee turnover at Abingdon "was almost nonexistent" and to some extent shamed the high turnover of the larger factories in the industrialized cities. In fact, the Abingdon employee relations were so good that most employees readily recommended other family members also seek employment at the company. Geoff also recalls "Abingdon was a more relaxed work environment with the employees taking greater pride in their products and quality. It did not go unnoticed either that Abingdon's MG car works was seen as "... one of the personal interests or, as some would say, "hobbies," of Lord Nuffield of the original Morris Garage."

Another difference was that there were no motorized paced conveyers on the car assembly line. Instead, the cars were assembled on a "buggy" or trolley-like unit. Then, when the workers completed the work at their station, they simply pulled or pushed the car down to the next assembly station by themselves. This gave the work groups a considerable degree of autonomy about who did what and when. As such, the pace was not as intense, relentless nor machine driven as existed in a traditional automobile assembly operation. This is not to say the workers did not have a quota of cars to be built by the end of the day but how they did it was more up to them than management direction or the Frederick Winslow Taylor mindless standards.

For example, Armstrong highlights that Abingdon even had a barbershop at the plant. If a worker needed his hair cut (and it was "his" – there were no women on the assembly line) the worker would inform his fellow workers at their assembly station. They would then attempt to work ahead to allow the worker who needed a haircut to jump off of the track to get his hair cut and then rush back in time so to not delay production.

Thus the workers were efficient in their own way and economical production was never given the priority one would expect in mass-producing automobiles. But part of that phenomenon was because everyone at Abingdon did not see themselves as "just" making automobiles. They were making MGs! Armstrong reports that, "Pride in the product was extremely high with photographs of MGs all over the factory and if an MG did something special there would be something posted on the board for all to see." Armstrong also highlights that Abingdon was only an assembly factory with all of the components made elsewhere. As a result, there were not as many highly skilled workers at Abingdon. But the workers took great pride in seeing a sporty and highly desired car come off of the end of the assembly line. They also had a keen appreciation that few in the world would ever have the opportunity to drive, let alone own a MG.

Yes, in those years, the feelings of accomplishment of completing one more MGs was much different than today, when completed cars are checked out electronically and are test driven on a rolling road built into the final assembly station. "At Abingdon, the workers at the final assembly station," Armstrong affectionately recalls, "put on the wheels and tires and filled the just completed MG with enough petrol to drive it off the assembly line. Then it was immediately driven on to the adjacent figure 8 ash track where the thirty second test dash around the track was precious." Thus Abingdon was very different from the "volume" factories that Geoff later came to know, such as Longbridge – the largest factory with about 30,000 employees and the home of Austin so it produced cars under the Austin, Morris, Riley, Wolseley marquees, as well as engines, gearboxes and mechanical units for other assembly plants), Cowley (Austin and Morris), Canley (Triumph) and Solihull (Rover). All of these plants were much larger and had mechanically paced assembly lines. They also produced a larger variety of cars resulting in less employee product identification and possibly even less pride in their production than existed with MG workers.

Also, Armstrong emphasizes that the MG brand in the UK had a very good image. Geoff characterizes the brand as "being seen as a little bit racy, exotic and exciting – not your normal car." "In today's parlance," Armstrong continues, "it

would have been described as a 'cool car.'" In fact, in the 1970s, Armstrong was the proud owner of a MGB GT himself. "It felt like a racing car," he recalls, "...yet with only an 1800 cc engine you could be out accelerated by the neighbor's family Ford." But he also recalls the "great growl and nice feel" that appealed to dedicated admirers like him.

These were Geoff's observations from not only the few weeks he spent helping with the rework at Abingdon but also his evolving successful career at BMC. He recognized, even if with some regret, that the Abingdon working environment was far different than not only other BMC operations but other automobile manufacturers as well. All auto manufactures, and especially the Japanese, followed by the US, knew to successfully compete globally would require renewed emphasis on automated processes, increased productivity and quality.

Part 2 of The Closing of Abingdon: End of the MG Era

By: Michael R. Losey - Member, MG Classics Club of Jacksonville, Florida

The Beginning of the End:

As early as 1968 BMC was losing money heavily. In addition, Prime Minister Harold Wilson headed the UK Labour Party. One of his themes was the consolidation of the industrial base in Britain. Geoff reports that Wilson encouraged the very successful Leyland Motor Corporation, primarily a manufacturer of trucks and buses at the time, but who also manufactured the Triumph line, to assist in the consolidation of the UK auto industry. One thing Wilson persuaded the Leyland chief executive, Donald Stokes (later Lord Stokes), to do was acquire BMC.

This created the British Leyland Motor Corporation, which many now suggest was not a good fit for many reasons. Also, with a strong Labour Government in place, union power was at its peak. Numerous strikes occurred though out the merged company. "Needed badly was a new approach to labor and management relations that would result in a better balancing of interests," recalls Armstrong.

This was no small task since thirteen trade unions represented 180,000 blue-collar workers and five additional unions represented another 45,000 white-collar workers across the now combined British Leyland.

Most of this effort to improve and change relationships with the union was advanced by Pat Lowry, the company's first human resource management senior officer. Armstrong, less than thirty years old at the time, was appointed as a key assistant to Lowry. Their objective, Armstrong confirms, was to confront the multiple national and local unions "... with the reality that the current poor management and union relationships would have to change -- that what existed was going to kill the company." At the top management and national union levels meaningful progress was made. However, as Armstrong reports "... the crunch came on the shop floor where local union stewards did no work and were paid by the company to spend all of their time doing trade union business. Thus their interests really laid in not agreeing with change." For instance, Armstrong recalls that one of his new responsibilities was to prepare a daily report of strikes within the company.

He emphasized the seriousness of the situation by reporting: "On most days there were at least 20 or 30 strikes somewhere in the company." Most of the strikes were usually about job piece rates and the impact was enormous. Under these piece rate schemes an employee's pay was directly related to the piece rate and how many pieces (parts, components, etc.) they produced. These rates were, therefore, the source of frequent union/management disagreement. Also such disputes and any resultant work stoppage needed to only involve a handful of employees that were producing key components and a whole assembly plant might have to close for lack of those parts.

Worse, this process was self-perpetuating. Once other workers saw how even a small number of employees could bring pressure on the company and frequently gain important concessions it only served to encourage them to do the same. So serious was this impact that during 1969 - 1970, the average paid time per worker per week at Cowley, one of the most militant factories, was only 28 hours per week out of a scheduled 40-hour workweek. In other words, sending people home because of the lack of parts or other disturbances to orderly operations resulted in non-strikers losing 12 hours or 30% of their pay a week.

As a result, Armstrong suggests, "The Company's competitiveness deteriorated, day by day, and year by year." Geoff continued with British Leyland through the 1970s, and in 1979, at the age of only 33 was made the Group Employee Relations Director for all of British Leyland. He had a corporate staff of greater than 2,400 employees plus every one of the 70 company factories also had an HR department. Total employment was greater than 160,000 employees. Such was the breadth and scope of his new position. And it was at this time that the company had to face up to the fact that it had substantial excess capacity and that overall productivity was too low.

This led to a companywide analysis of where the company was the least efficient and where they were losing the most money. Unfortunately, one of the most egregious loss leaders was Abingdon where the company was losing approximately £1000 for every MG. produced. Described as "Hopelessly uneconomic," major contributors to these losses were the inefficient production processes at Abingdon, as well as the disproportionate cost to ship parts from all over England to Abingdon for relatively small production runs.

But the largest contributor to the MG's demise was the new California exhaust emissions requirements. At that time, California was MG's largest market in the United States and was close to or even exceeded the MG's market in the UK. Unfortunately the MG engineers concluded there was no way to modify the small MG engines to meet the California requirements, at least without major new investment. Unfortunately the company simply did not have the money, especially for a car that was already losing £1000 on each car that drove off of the assembly line.

The Closing of Abingdon:

Geoff recalls that the decision to discontinue production of the MG was very "...painful because a lot of the senior managers had a soft spot for MG." But it was economically inescapable that the company had to move away from the inefficiencies of the Abingdon operation. Therefore, the closure of Abingdon was one of the very early consolidation and cost reduction decisions taken for the parent company to survive

Armstrong also clearly recalls the difficulty in communicating the decision to close Abingdon to not only employees but also customers and community interests. For instance, the managing director of Austin Morris, which was the division to which MG reported, had a special late morning meeting scheduled in London on September 10th, 1979. This meeting was to give government ministers and the local Abingdon area Member of Parliament several hours advanced notice prior to announcing the decision to close Abingdon to the general public later in the day. Immediately thereafter that meeting with the government officials, Armstrong confirms that he was scheduled to have a meeting with national union officials where he was to also give them advance notice of the announcement to close the plant.

However, Geoff recalls the departure from this well laid out plan. He reports that "When the managing director met with the government ministers and the local Abingdon Member of Parliament, the Member of Parliament left the meeting, went straight to a radio station, and announced on the one o'clock news what he had just been told." Thus, before Geoff could inform the union or the employees, the Member of Parliament prematurely announced the decision to close the plant. That announcement to close Abingdon was also unfortunately made just two days after a carnival at Abingdon celebrated MG's fifty-year association with the town. September 10th, 1979, became forever known as "Black Monday" amongst MG enthusiasts around the world.

The premature communications complicated union relationships and for a brief time and there was fear of a local strike by Abingdon employees. But in the end the employees also recognized that the closing was unavoidable. Actually, much earlier some employees had seen the company's lack of new product planning and investment for Abingdon as the beginning of the end. Finally, the MG lack of alternatives and necessary departure from the very large California market forecasted MG's departure from the United States, and constructively the end of the company as all MG lovers had known it.

The only remaining issue was the definition of employee redundancy payments. Once it was known that the company would provide fair and reasonably generous separation payments there was no strike and orderly production continued over the next thirteen months until the plant was closed on October 23, 1980.

Given the plant's prime location close to the center of Abingdon, a prosperous and growing market town, the property was later sold. No trace of the MG factory remains. The site has been completely transformed into a business park containing retail stores, other employers and even a large municipal police station. And with that transition Geoff highlights that there are now many more individuals employed on the site of the old MG factory than there ever was as the manufacturer of the prized MGs.

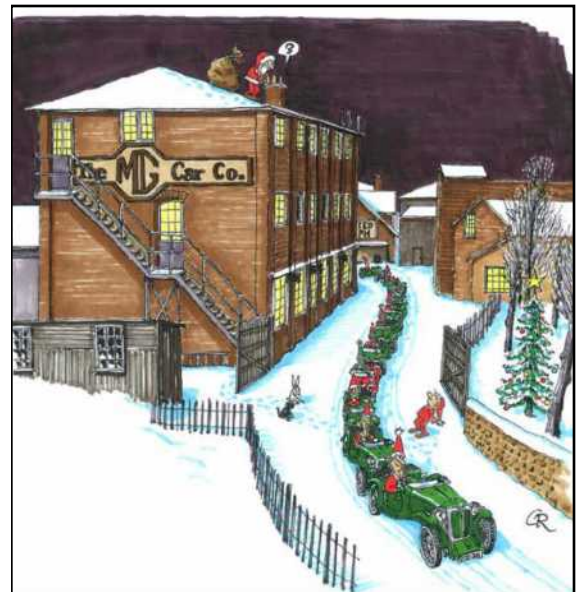
Armstrong assisted in leading British Leyland's efforts to restructure and become more competitive for several more years beyond the closure of the MG plant at Abingdon. Numerous other plant closings were required and thousands and thousands of additional jobs were lost. And until those actions were completed and new government policies developed by the Conservative Party's Margaret Thatcher, worker relationships suffered. There were even Communist and Trotskyist cells actively driving the trade union movement at some company locations.

In 1981, less than one year after the closing of the Abingdon plant, Mr. Armstrong was to be a keynote speaker at Trinity College in Dublin. He was to address the challenges of the British automobile industry specifically and the nation's competitive challenges in general. He had only started his presentation when three intruders in paramilitary uniforms and with masks and guns entered the auditorium from the rear of the speaker's platform.

After stating that what they were to do was on behalf of IRA activists who had been on a hunger strike, they shot Mr. Armstrong three times attempting to destroy his knee caps. Although the terrorists initially escaped one was later arrested, convicted and imprisoned. Mr. Armstrong survived the attack and returned to work at British Leyland within three weeks. Miraculously he has no permanent effects from the attack.

In 1984 Mr. Armstrong was recruited to join another major UK firm, Metal Box. In 1989, he was asked to join one of the world's largest banks; UK headquartered Standard Chartered Bank, as their chief human resource officer. He served there until he was selected as the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development's Director General in 1992.

Ranging from Armstrong's personal recollections about his own MGB-GT and his early and brief time as an Abingdon "fitter" to participating in the actual Abingdon closure, Geoff Armstrong has a unique perspective indeed. And we thank him for sharing it with those of us who continue to love and protect the MGs that remain even if the Abingdon brick and mortar is gone.



The former office block still lives as an apartment building

A Couple of Rare MGs

By Barbara Down-Under (Club Member Barbara Tapp)

On a recent trip to Sydney, Australia, I was fortunate to join my brother John on a 3 day rally to Maitland north of Sydney in his 1964 VX490 Vauxhall. Members from The Australian Historic Car Club joined the Vauxhall Car Club .

To my surprise, one of only two in Australia, a 1938 Tickford Drop Head Coupe MG VA, appeared driven by owner Julie Craig. Julie at one time owned the oldest MG in Australia. The Morris Garage in England tried to buy the 1920s MG from Julie after her husband passed away in the 90's but she held on to it until 7 years or so ago and sold it for the more comfortable MG VA. Julie is in her early 80's and still driving the MG.

Julie owned her first MG, a TC, at age 17 which belonged to her boyfriend and soon to be husband. Julie mentioned that the VA is a comfortable limousine ride in all weather.

Later on the trip we visited an extensive collection of rare cars at a member's property. There were 1920's Vauxhalls, an early Jensen and a rare MG race car. It was hard to choose my favorite.

I did see MGBs on the streets in Sydney. Driving my brother's Vauxhall was a highlight of my trip and I compared it to driving my MGBGT. Lots to admire. Cheers Barbara (Photos by author)





Keep Planning for 2022 & 2023



WINTER

- Sat., Dec. 10: MGOC Holiday Tea, George & Marcia, Kensington. See page 3
 Fri., Dec 9, SSTS Holiday Party
 Fri, Dec. 16: Pub Night, On the Road Again, Morgan Hill
 Sat., Jan. 7: MGOC Planning Meeting, Mike & Elaine, San Francisco. See age 5
 Sun., Jan. 22, MGOC Annual Brunch, see page 7



2023

- June 12-16, NAMGAR GT-48, Memphis, Tennessee
 July 17-20, NAMGBR MG2023, Calgary, Alberta
 Oct. 16-20, GOF West, Carlsbad, CA

Left: "On Christmas Eve" by Alec Macdonald, Obtain cards from Ben: www.charitycards.org

When you tell your Grandma that you want a car cover for Xmas...



Grandma in 1956....

Long drive the King! Prince Charles and Camilla tour the streets of Havana in a vintage MG TD

The Telegraph, April 4, 2019

He is used to being chauffeur-driven in a convoy on royal tours but on Tuesday, Prince Charles took to the driving seat to embrace Cuba's love of classic cars. The heir to the throne took the wheel of a beautifully restored 66-year-old MG TD. With his wife Camilla by his side, the 70-year-old prince drove to the classic car event in Havana's John Lennon Park.

Looking the part in sunglasses and a linen suit, the prince pulled up tentatively and stopped, before helping Camilla, 71, out of the passenger seat. Charles told onlookers: "The one I was driving is the most beautiful car. It has an incredibly powerful accelerator. It is incredibly close to the brake so you have to be careful you don't press the wrong one."

His wife, in a mint-green Anna Valentine dress and parasol, needed a little help to get out of the low-slung car. "You try getting out of that elegantly!" she joked. Turning to look at the range of cars on show, she laughed and said: "I remember most of these cars. Shows how old I am!" As Charles became absorbed in the vehicles on display, his wife joked: "He's never going to leave, he loves his cars. He's really rather in his element."

They also met Lazaro William Gonzalez Ruiz, head of The British Classic Motorbike Enthusiasts, who was wearing a bandana and sporting leathers. Charles and Camilla seemed rather tickled by his appearance and chatted at length to him, through an interpreter, about his passion before looking at the bikes on show, including a 1956 Norton. "Now motorbikes, that's something else he loves," said the Duchess.

The royal TD used to belong to 'our man in Havana,' Stanley Fordham, then Britain's ambassador to Cuba. Built in 1953, the ambassador is thought to have driven the black convertible in 1957, two years before the Revolution. The roadster then ended up languishing in a garage in Havana, only to be discovered by chance by restaurant owner and band manager Eduardo Bermudez eight years ago.

Mr. Bermudez, who manages musicians who used to sing in the world-famous Buena Vista Social Club, was last week asked by the British Embassy if he would loan the car to the prince for the morning. He said the future king had practiced driving it around the streets of Havana on Monday in preparation.

Describing the car as "my baby," Mr. Bermudez told The Telegraph: "Everybody knows my car – it is the most famous car in Cuba. Although he said he only took the car out himself "once or twice a month", he said he was happy to let the prince drive his pride and joy. "It's like my baby – but if the car is being driven by someone like him then I know it's in safe hands."

He bought the car for \$25,000 in 2011 and then spent another \$25,000 restoring it, importing parts from the UK. The car has since won two national competitions in Cuba. Mr. Bermudez, 47, added: "I fell in love with the car as soon as I saw it in the garage. I just knocked on the guy's door and said I have to buy it. He was mad to sell it to me. The brakes, the engine – everything was destroyed so I had to spend two years getting it restored. I imported all the parts from England so it was like original. "Everyone in Cuba has American cars but for me you need to have something original and the best sports cars in the world are British. I know the Prince has a beautiful Aston Martin."

After pulling up to the waving crowd, the royal couple were greeted by Nelida Lupe Fuentes Macias, a representative of British car enthusiasts. They then viewed a selection of British classic cars and motorbikes and met well-wishers, before being introduced to event participants. The classic British cars on display included a 1948 white MG TC and two MGA roadsters.

Photos of King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla driving the black TD are available on the internet. You can readily find videos of the event on Youtube as well. A photo of them driving the TD was Charles and Camilla's Christmas card for 2019. (Facebook entry at right.) The MGOC chooses not to reproduce other photographs due to intense copyright protection for photos of "Royals." It seems odd to see them driving the MG and interacting with the crowd with little apparent security protection.



Sonoma Tour, November 12, 2022

By tour leader Andy Preston

Marla and I have lead many tours in the past but this one was one of the best ones we've ever lead; I'd at least put it near the top! For a start the weather was perfect; we had a crisp clear day in early November with sunny skies all day. You're always taking a chance organizing a tour in November but we couldn't have been luckier once again.

We met in our usual spot in Northgate One, San Rafael and had 15 cars and all MGs and 25 people. MGBs won the day as the car of choice but the group consisted of; a TD; Bill Bliler, TF; Andy Hunt, 2 As; Marty & Naomi Rayman, Mike Jacobsen and Elaine Chan, 8 Bs; Alan Havey, Bob Bundy, Chris Chandler, Ray & Kristy Davis, Bill & Toodie Dodson, Jan Lenci, Ron Simi & John Hutchinson, Lynn & Roberta Bryant, and 2 GTs; Kirk Prentiss and Andy & Marla, and a GT pick up, Ed & Rowena DeMayo.

We had a member from the MG Car Club in England join us at the start to see what MG events over here were like. Adrian Tucker-Peake from Bromsgrove, England was visiting family in SF and read about the drive in the Octagon and came down to see us. He was surprised by the number of MGs that turned up for the day and said that it was similar to the turn-outs they had back home but we had more older cars. Adrian owns an MG TF, a model (MGF update) that never made it over here.

We drove some roads that we haven't driven before. We started along Lucas Valley Rd and then drove through San Geronimo, Lagunitas and Samuel P. Taylor State Park with its majestic Redwoods on our way to the French Marin Cheese Co. for our rest stop. Several members commented on the good condition of the roads and I said that was Marin and on the second leg of the drive we'll be driving Sonoma County roads that aren't as good. And I wasn't kidding.

After the break we headed out into Chileno Valley and turned onto one of my favorite roads, Marshall-Petaluma Rd that passes through farmland and ascends to the top of a hill where you can see the Tomales Bay with the Pacific Ocean in the background before descending into Marshall. This is a spectacular view from the top of the hill, especially on a clear sunny day. BTW, this road is in very poor condition however it does discourage cyclists because we didn't see any over this stretch. We followed Tomales Bay with the sun sparkling off the water as we drove into Tomales. Here we turned towards Dillon Beach and took the back way into Valley Ford to our final destination at Dinucci's for a well deserved lunch. Back roads all the way!

Dinucci's had a long table already set up for us and were absolutely wonderful. We all ordered from their lunch menu and were served with loaves of sourdough bread and minestrone soup while our entrees were prepared. I was surprised with how quickly the food arrived given the large group. The food and service were great and I have to give high praise to Dinucci's and our server. We had a wonderful day and of course will do it all again in the future.

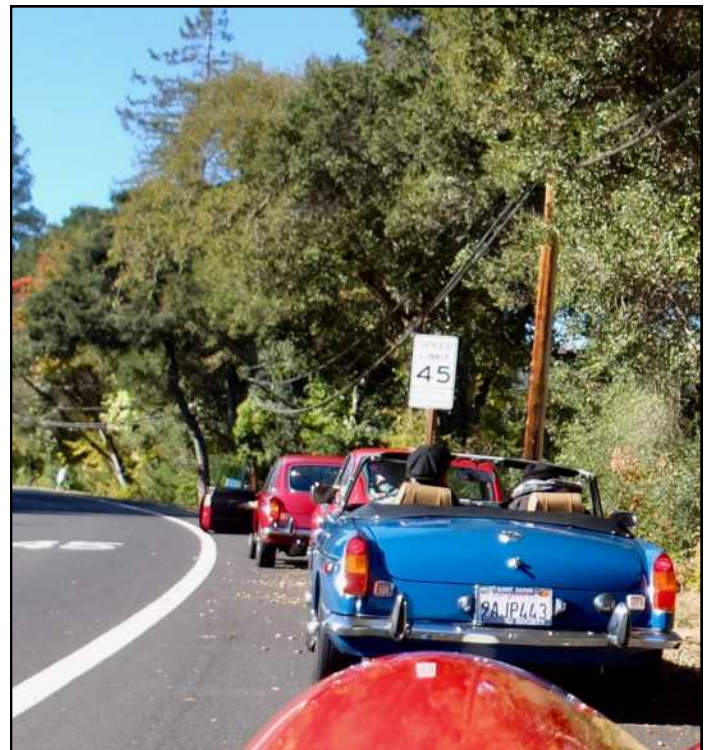
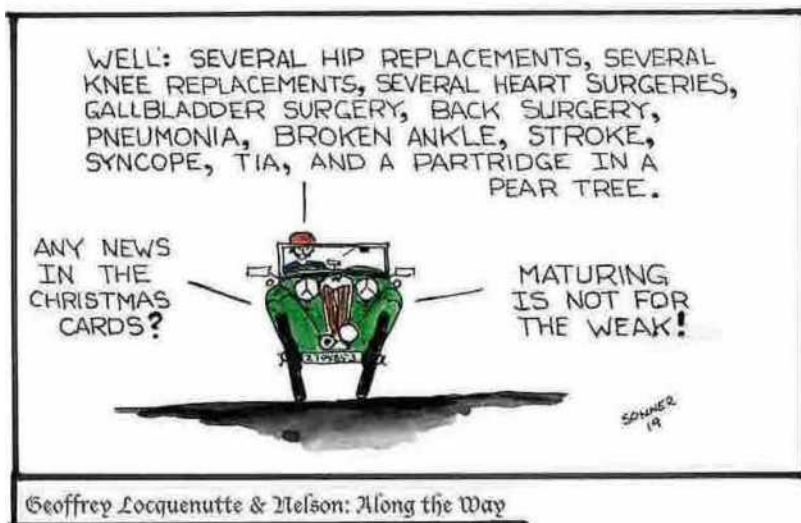
P.S. Doug Hollander was hoping to join the group but was waiting for a rear shock absorber to arrive for his MGB. It arrived on that Saturday and Doug put it on his car. He asked me for the directions and drove the entire route on his own on Sunday. Way to go Doug!



Photo: Andy Preston



Photos: Marty & Naomi Rayman





What a magnificent drive on some of Marin's most fabulous back roads. Thanks to Andy and Marla!

— Marty & Naomi Rayman Photos



See also pp. 20-21, 25-26

A Visit from a Brit MGF Owner

My wife and I are visiting our daughter Katy in SF, looking forward to the birth of our first grandchild. Since we're likely to be around until after Thanksgiving, I thought, as a keen MG Car Club member, that I might see what is happening amongst fellow enthusiasts in the city.

I have been a motorsport competitor, primarily in Trials, for many decades, and my steed for the last 10 years has been a self-prepped MGF that gives us lots of fun across the UK. Last month, I also ran our Centre's local trial, where we include a Taster category for newbies, very rewarding!

I see from your latest fine Octagon newsletter that folk run Natters here as well, so kindly let me know of upcoming meets so I can join up where possible.

Katy's place is in Marina, which we really enjoy, so hopefully there's a gathering in/near this patch.

I'm from Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. Been in the auto industry for my working life (now retired) and in and out of Longbridge three times!

Later... Well unto us a grandchild was born! On October 27th we were blessed with the safe arrival of Miss Octavia Pearl D'Amico, and of course in subsequent days her needs have ruled the family! However I did suggest that given her name, she might in due course qualify for a discounted MG Car Club membership!

Anyway, we are now all getting out and about, including a lovely ferry ride across to Tiburon for lunch yesterday, so I thought I would look at an opportunity for a quick catch up with your local cohort. I see you have the Sonoma Tour on Saturday, so thought I might just pop up to San Rafael and see you all and your motors for an hour or so at the Bagel Street Cafe from around 9:30.

Given our 'fluid' situation here, I hope this works... should be fun, and great to describe at our December Worcestershire Natter!

Thank you for your combined comms that finally got me up in San Rafael for a wonderful, sunny and welcoming hour with fellow MG enthusiasts last Saturday. I hooked up first with Sonoma run organizers Andy and Marla, then was soon saying 'hi' to well wrapped up folk arriving in their 'A's, 'B's and T types amongst glorious Fall colours and hosts of interested passers by.

Everyone was so pleased to meet up with a Brit, one who'd served his time at Longbridge, though my MGF photos didn't really register! All cars were their owners' pride, and some seemed to be part of a domestic MG fleet: all very well turned out, and one B adapted for their pet dog's fresh air motoring!

I waved them off on their morning run with route books leading up through pretty Sonoma's delightful back roads, and now have a few photos to share. A bit of a treat on my family SF visit. :)

Kind regards,
Adrian Tucker-Peake
adrian.tpeake@tiscali.co.uk

Andy leads the driver's meeting. Photo from Adrian



MERRY CHRISTMAS

More Sonoma Tour



Naomi and Marty Rayman at left. Above: Ed, Rowena and Bella. Below: Fall and Christmas Colours. Pics from Adrian Tucker-Peake

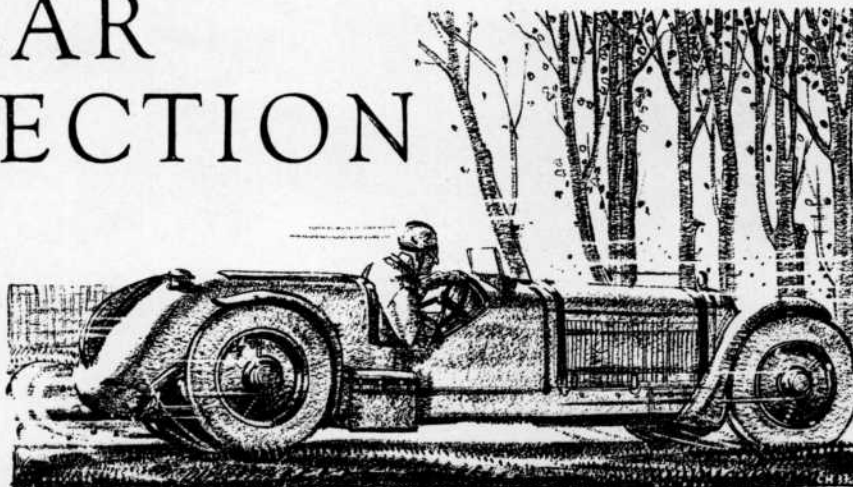


OPEN CAR PROTECTION

Detail Points Which Greatly Improve Driving Comfort

by

BRIAN TWIST



"A WIND in the face makes a man wise." It is an old French saying—not an old Spanish custom. This might be held to be a powerful argument in favour of the open car, now that wisdom on modern crowded roads is so essential; but this article is not so much concerned with the age-old open v. closed car controversy as with the design of the modern open car.

Certainly a wind in the face is better than a pain in the neck. There is a tremendous exhilaration about a strong wind, whether on a high cliff or in a fast car, and therein lies much of the lure of speed. Yet, unfortunately, on the road the wind is frequently laden with dust, and in any case is so powerful at high speed that goggles become desirable to protect the eyes if the windscreen is lowered. Furthermore, at very high speed the rush of air becomes tiring owing

and as it happened it rained that year. All the water, especially from passing cars, was thrown straight on to my visor, instead of passing over my head, making vision practically impossible, and I feel certain that lack of attention to this small point lost the car at least a place at the finish of the race. For subsequent events a scoop was fitted, and the difference in driving comfort, and in the visibility in rain, was enormous.

From Racing Practice

The designer of the modern sports car has seen these scoops on racing machines, and, like the stoneguard, has adopted the fitting for ordinary usage. But in many cases he has merely upswept the scuttle and left it at that, finding, incidentally, that an enormous dashboard became available for huge instruments.

It is often forgotten, however, that the object of a wind scoop is not merely to form a projection on the scuttle seriously limiting vision. The angle of a deflector is most important. The scoop need not be very high, not necessarily above a driver's chest, but it should be at such an angle that if produced it would just pass over his head. The lack of scientific attention to this detail is shown by

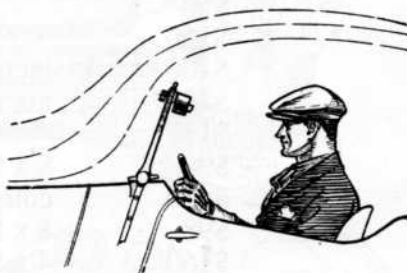


A properly designed wind scoop will deflect the air stream over the driver's head without limiting his vision.

to the intolerable strain of presenting one's head against it, so that a pain in the neck is caused.

This has led designers of racing cars to use wind scoops, to deflect the main rush of air along the bonnet and scuttle over the driver's head. I well remember when first riding a racing motor cycle on the track how the added height of an A.C.U. crash helmet caused one's head to be forced back and back at speeds of over 80 m.p.h. whenever one lifted it from the "flat-out" position.

But when I entered a small French racing car in one of the B.R.D.C. 500-Miles Races I had not learnt wisdom, for the car had no screen and no wind scoop,



Slightly sloping and close to the driver are the most efficient touring screens; the air is then deflected in an even flow.

the fact that on some modern cars the scoop is vertical, or even in the worst cases *bends back* towards the front! In any case an air scoop does not fully come into action till the air speed rises to at least 80 m.p.h.

Not everyone, too, will perhaps be as tall as the designer, and the fact that

the average female is shorter than the gallant male is often overlooked.

Now it is not unknown for a girl passenger to be carried in a sports car, or even to drive the same, but on nearly every 1934 car with sports bodywork she finds herself immured in her seat, her vision bounded by a large, dancing dashboard, and her unhappy fate

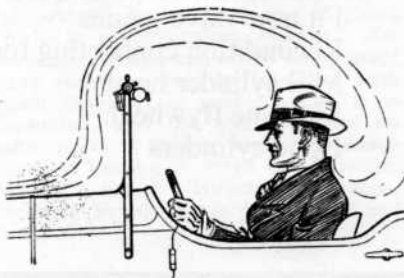
*"To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world."*

The difficulty could be solved, if scoops one must have on cars not capable of more than 65-70 m.p.h., by the use of small aero screens (detachable) mounted on low shields behind the main screen, which themselves could be used as deflectors. Many high-performance cars now have this fitting.

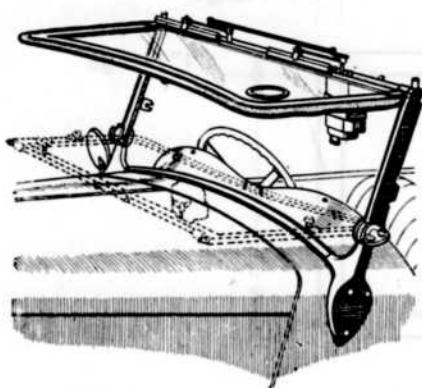
Driver Close to Screen

So much for the wind scoop, which obviously is of use only when the screen is lowered. The screen itself, however, is usually the principal wind deflector, and its position relative to the driver is of paramount importance. Fortunately, this point is better realised by designers, yet even so it cannot be stressed too highly that the closer the screen to the driver the better protection it will afford—and moreover, the better will be the vision when the glass is wet.

The other day I was returning from the south coast in an open sports car, and no sooner had I started than it began to rain, gently at first, then harder and harder. I was in rather a hurry, and the car was unfamiliar, having a very neat disappearing hood folded away in its



Excessive back draught is caused by the old-fashioned vertical screen.



Single-panel screens should be made to fold flat and also to open outwards for use in fog with the hood up.

locker. So long as I kept up a reasonable speed the screen caught all the rain and flung it over my head, and actually, when I arrived in London—it was still raining—only the top of my head was wet, and not a drop had fallen on my shoulders.

Not all cars have screens as efficient as that one, nor in all cases is it possible for the screen to be brought back to its proper position, owing to the shortness of the steering column. The old vertical screens have fortunately disappeared, however, with their ability to cause excessive back-draught and their habit of reflecting back dazzling lights from an overtaking car into the driver's eyes.

The best type of screen from the point of view of protection is probably V-shaped and heavily raked, but carries with it the disadvantages, first, of a central pillar obstructing vision, and secondly, the fact that when the screen is wet it is difficult to see through the opposite panel, set at an angle.

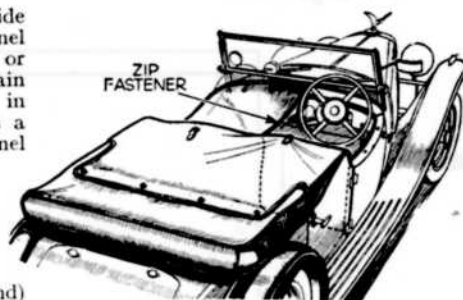
There is much to be said on either side for the single-panel or the double-panel screen. The latter needs a rubber or other joint between its panels, again obstructing vision, but can be opened in fog or light drizzle and still affords a measure of protection. The single-panel screen, on the other hand, gives a clear and unobstructed view, and has a neater appearance, so that the tendency has lately been for its adoption. It should certainly be made, however, so that it will open (and stay open, even in a wind) if necessary, as well as being capable of being folded flat in the popular fashion.

The modern tonneau cover has been greatly improved. It is now the fashion, and very excellent it is, to fit a cover which extends not only over the rear seats, but also, if desired, over the front seats, and this front extension is divided into two parts, so that by means of a zip fastener either both seats may be enclosed or the passenger's seat only.

When it is raining, or the wind is cold, and the driver is alone in the car, the erection of the cover over the other seat affords considerable protection, but one point may be noted, that on some cars rain may collect on the rear tonneau cover and drain down the driver's back, which is most unpleasant. This depends upon the height of the seat backs and the support at the edge of the cover.

It is a great convenience, if the car is being left for a short period only, and slight showers are possible, to have a tonneau cover to protect the whole car, but here again some support, such as a webbing strap, for the centre of the cover is desirable, or the formation of a heavy pool of water may cause the material to sag and lose its shape for evermore.

Another fashion adopted from racing car practice is the cutaway for the driver's elbow, often used now on the



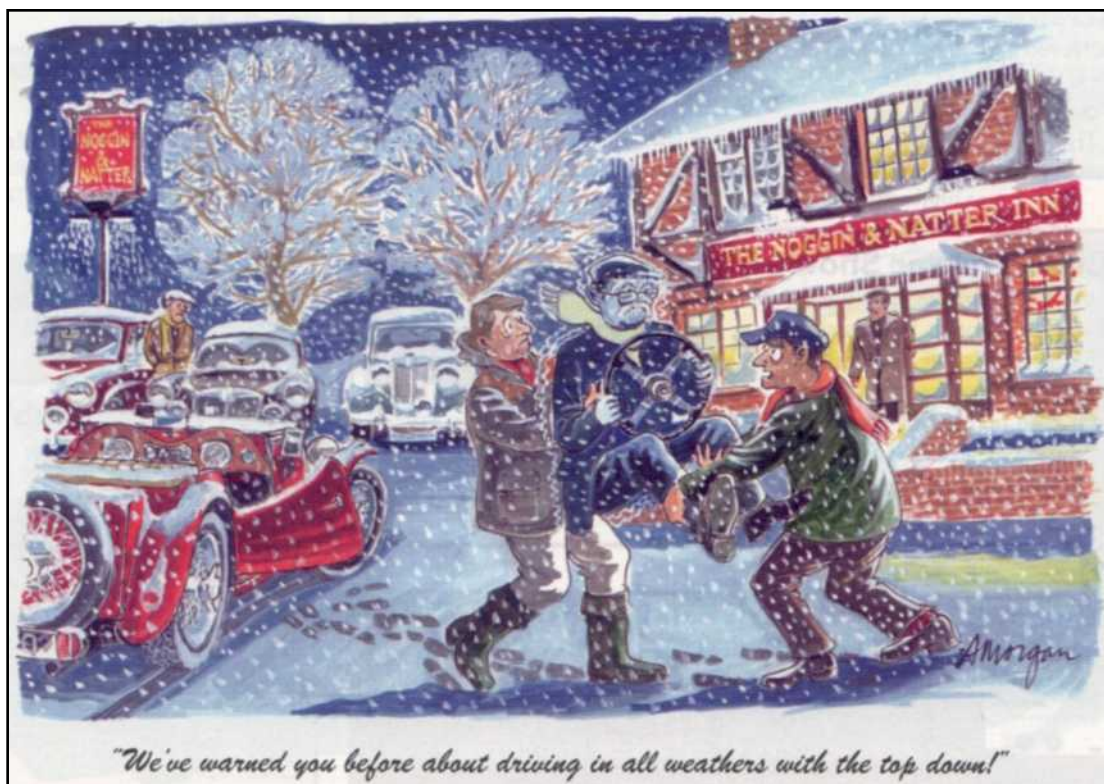
Valuable extra protection is offered by a divided tonneau extending over the front seats.

passenger's side also. This is all very well in order to provide more room in the car, and also to create a more comfortable driving position, but many 1934 cars have this excellent idea carried to excess, and the body sides become so shallow that no protection at all is provided, and the passenger feels as though he or she is in grave danger of falling out.

Also, when the cutaway is low, rain can penetrate the outside sleeves of the car's occupants in no time; one 1934 model at least is greatly to be commended in the fitting of a hinged flap which can be folded down into the door pocket and thus give an excellent cutaway, or erected and give full protection from the body sides. Another expedient is a small fabric sidescreen, which just fits into the cutaway.

With frames underslung at the rear, rear seats have been dropped lower, and the adoption of the two-door body has enabled them to be brought, in many cases, within the wheelbase. The open car shows every sign of returning to popularity, and if designers will pay more attention to detail it will gain even more adherents.

Peace
On
Earth



"We've warned you before about driving in all weathers with the top down!"

New Members

Welcome back John Mein of Cupertino now with a 1980 MGB LE:

John's MGB Background: I bought my 1977 MGB "Mickey" August 23, 1977, brand new from the Arnold Brothers Ford/MG dealership which was located in Boulder, CO. I had my first job in Boulder out of college and I saw an ad in Playboy that fall for MG's so I had to have one! It cost \$5,730.80 and I still have the original invoice. The salesperson Beth talked me out of getting overdrive as she said it would be problematic. She probably did not have one in stock! I recall driving the car home from the dealer and getting caught in an afternoon thunderstorm with some hail. I learned how to put the top up quite quickly!



Welcome again Peter Engler, looking for an MGB:

Most any year with O/D and minimal rust, upwards of \$12k in good condition. peterengler@gmail.com; 415.601.2444

After serving as a Navy combat pilot during the Vietnam War, Peter Engler spent over thirty years as an account executive in New York and San Francisco, now located in Marin County.

The website and newsletter look great. I love the MGB for it's classic British looks, simplicity and agility. I owned one for four years in the 80's and of the 50 or so cars I have enjoyed, it and my Porsches were the best in so many ways. At 78, I am still interested but unsure as to how well my 6-3" body would fit. O/D certainly made a difference. Wonder why they were not standard equipment. Best regards, Peter



Author/Editor/Publisher/Coach

My new novel available at www.amazon.com/author/peterengler

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: New AI head, complete, professionally ported, non-smog. \$1300; Chromed (not polished AI) 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, steel dashboard powder coated, work benches, one with drill press, one with HD vise, Member Ken Gittings, Also valve cover racers! 510-791-8445 (Updated 10/22)

MG TD: Black. Prize winner. Dayton wire wheels, metal spare cover, burl 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)

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)

Blue CA Plates: I have two 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)

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





Lunch on the Sonoma Tour. Always a highlight! Photo by Bill Dodson

Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!

Join over 2,000 enthusiastic owners in the restoration, preservation, and sheer enjoyment of driving an MGA, Magnette, or variant of this noble breed. You'll receive six bi-monthly issues of MGA!, our full-color, award winning magazine, invitations to National and Regional Get-Togethers throughout the U.S. and Canada, plus a knowledge base and support group second to none. All this for just \$37.50 per year (North America), or \$52.50 (International). Get more information at <http://www.namgar.com>, or contact registrar@namgar.com.




North American MGB Register



MGOC The Octagon



"Curse these MG Types and their impossible Christmas lists!"

www.mgcc.co.uk

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Sonoma Tour - by Marty Rayman

