

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



UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

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The famous lighted wreath belonging to Mike Jacobsen's Magnette. North Coast Extravaganza. See article page 12. Photo: Dan Shockey

December 2004

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 2004

President: Bob Stine, 650-349-5128, RAStine@rcn.com

Vice President: Randy Grossman, 510-483-3171, r.m.grossman@comcast.net

Treasurer: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699, MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

Secretary: David Wright, 510-653-3831

T Register Director: Jim Carlson, 408-257-9976, mjgim@att.net

Activities Director: John Hunt, 925-299-9006, Huntsails@worldnet.att.net

Corresponding Secretary: George Steneberg, 510-525-9152,

j2george@pacbell.net

Membership Development: Bob Stine, 650-349-5128, RAStine@rcn.com

OCTAGON Editor: Dan Shockey, 408-923-3927, MGmogul@earthlink.net

Commercial Advertising: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699,

MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

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

Pre-war Midgets-Magnas-Magnettes: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125

PA/PB Midget 1934-36: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032, mgbp36@yahoo.com

S.U. Carburetters: 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 MikesMuseum@yahoo.com. 2004 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

Natter & Noggin with Club Meeting

Dec. 9, 2004 (Thurs.), 8 p.m.

The Englander Sports Pub & Restaurant
101 Parrott St., San Leandro, 510-357-3571

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 the 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 turn right on Parrott St.

The Englander is an enjoyable place where we have our own cozy room. The food is good so bring your appetites.

South Bay Natter & Noggin Friday Evening, Jan. 28, 2005, 8 p.m.

Join us for an informal gathering in the South Bay. We'll meet at a fun British Pub. Our attendance has been good and we're trying the Britannia Arms on DeAnza just north of Hwy 85, between Cupertino and San Jose. The pub's parking lot fills up on Friday evenings but we can park together in the business lot across the side street (Fallen Leaf Lane), if necessary.

The Britannia Arms, 1087 S. DeAnza Blvd., San Jose, (408) 252-7262

Directions: From Hwy 85 south of I-280, take the DeAnza exit and go north. Make a U-turn at the 2nd light. The Pub will be on your right. Try the lot in front of Galaxy Lighting. If we're not there, check the business parking lot north of Fallen Leaf Lane.

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

Attention!!

Have your MG painted by a fellow sports car lover with 14 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 available. Call for an appointment for a free estimate.

Andy Schank, 510-236-5232

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, 3219 Mabury Rd., San Jose, CA 95127. Members may also email ads to the Editor at MGmogul@earthlink.net

1967 MGB-GT: Wire wheel car. No motor or transmission. Interior is fair, serviceable. Fairly easy to turn into a running car. The shell is essentially rust free and straight, with a few rough edges. A few hundred dollars is my asking price. Also restored 1969 MGB GT shell with rebuilt suspensions. Ready to paint.

Parts for MGB 64-69+: many used and a few NOS. 3-main motors, heads, manifolds, radiators, transmission, suspension, wheels/tires, gauges, electrics, alternators, generators, starters, brakes, glass, body sundries, and more. Member Marty Ray, Santa Cruz, 831-475-6204, 831-247-5863 cell or martyray@cruzio.com

From Craig's List: (Posted 11/22/04) My husband died last year. I must now sell his MGs and a garage full of all kinds of MG parts, tools, gauges, etc.

MGB 1968: \$1,500. Mazda B-2200 engine with 4 speed. Racing green with tan canvas top.

MGB GT 1972: \$1,000. Toyota engine with 4 speed. White

MG 1963: Project. Best Offer. Buick alum. V-8 engine & 5-speed transmission.

MG 1969: spare parts car. Best Offer.

Please call for more information: 650-364-0277, vkean80@aol.com

Complete front cross-member for 1966 MGB. The new shocks, rotors & rebuilt calipers have 5k miles. Assembled. \$200. Member Pat Kaye, Novato, (415) 897-9651 twopatz@greaterbaynet.com

1969 Sprite: in Novato. 2nd owner. Garaged 3 years ago. In very good shape. Joyce Kleege at 415-898-2636. (Info from member Bob Luebbert)

'53 TD Parts: complete rear end, two front shocks, 5 painted 60-spoke wire wheels (15") with new tires. Member Bob Luebbert, 510-276-0365 luebbert@spade.net

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. The editor's address is: Dan Shockey, 3219 Mabury Rd., San Jose, CA 95127. Or, you may email contributions to MGmogul@earthlink.net

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 (which is us!) events are in **bold** type.

Every Sat. – Donut Derelicts, Los Altos, Martinez, see Nov. *Octagon*

Dec. 9th Thurs – **Club Meeting & Natter**, see page 23

Dec. 11th (Sat.) – **MGOC Holiday Tea**, Milsap's, Alameda, see page 5

Dec. 26th (Sun.) – **Boxing Day Tour**, see page 4

Jan. TBD – **MGOC Annual Dinner**

Jan. 26th (Fri.) – **South Bay Natter**, see page 23

May 7th (Sat.) – **MGs by the Bay**, see page 20

July 7-10, 2005 – NAMGBR Annual Meet, Olympia, Washington, (south of Seattle) www.MG2005.com

July 11-15, 2005 – GoF, California Central Coast, Buellton

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MGs line up at Laguna Seca, October, 2004. Shockey photo.

Boxing Day Run

Sunday, December 26, 2004

Come join me for a scenic run through Marin and Sonoma Counties.

If it rains drive something civilized otherwise the fun-mobile!

Meet in the Strawberry Town & Country Shopping Center beside Northbound 101 in Mill Valley at 9:30 a.m. - Depart 10:00 a.m.

Wendell is active in the Morgan Club but we in the MG Owners Club (and Sorry Safari Club) are also expressly invited.

RSVP to Wendell Bain by December 18, 2004
(707) 795-0260, email: wbain@sonic.net

Come join the fun!

Members Marla & Andy Preston take First MGB at the *Autumn Classic*, San Juan Bautista, October, 2004. Marla was able to read her book on the way home in hard rain! (Hood left at home.)



Photo: Dan Shockey

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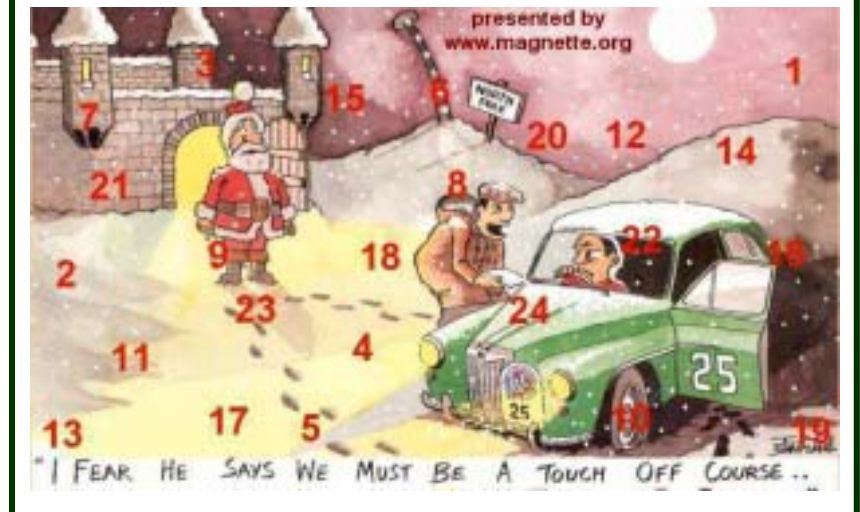
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“Studies show that one out of every six elves owns an old MG!”
Quote & card from Phil Frank, copyright 2001, Frank & Troise

Advent Calendar



Happy Holiday Motoring!
From the Officers of the
MG Owners Club

Jack London Square Type Car Show: The following sites are still being considered for our May event:

The Presidio in San Francisco, South Lot: The Club would need to provide portapotties. The cost to the Club would be \$5 per car (\$500 to \$650 typically.) If amplified music was desired, we would have to pay \$65 per hour to have a representative on site to ensure we don't make too much noise. It was noted that there would be a long walk to the nearest restaurant and that to have a caterer at the location might be difficult or expensive.

San Leandro Marina: This is a nice location in the Marina park picnic areas, right on the Bay. Cost would be \$300 to \$500. There are restaurants in short walking distance. The Marina is only 10 miles from Oakland (south) so we believe we would still draw the Oakland area and North Bay folks.

Jack London Square: This could be either in the Harbor Master lot we used last year or spread across the Square as we have done in the past. There will be construction in full swing by May between the Harbor Master lot and the rest of the Square. The cost remains \$1000.

It was agreed that Randy should talk to the officials for the San Leandro Marina and try to set up the Car Show for a Saturday between the last Saturday in April and the 3rd Saturday in May. Dan will talk to the Sorry Safari Club to get their reaction to the site change and to the possible dates. (The Sorry Safari Club is the largest other club that supports the JLS event.) This was considered a tentative or "soft" decision to go with the Marina site instead of JLS. By January 1st we need to begin promotion of the event. We will make a final decision at the December meeting. (Since the meeting, Randy has tentatively reserved a date of May 7th for the event. The reaction from the Sorry Safari was positive.)

OLD BUSINESS

North Coast Tour: \$57.69 will be sent to the organizers to cover some of the costs of charcoal and drinks. (Thank you again to Dave Newhouse and Scott Crawford for this great event.)

Sears Point Track Tour: \$500 was sent to SCRG to pay for the Club track tour on October 10.

2005 OFFICERS

The MGOC nominating committee proposed the following slate of club officers for 2005:

President: David Wright
 Vice-President: Nina Barton
 Secretary: Dan Shockey
 Treasurer: Mike Jacobsen
 T Register Director; Jim Carlson
 Octagon Editor: Dan Shockey
 Corresponding Secretary: George Steneberg
 Activities Director: Randy Grossman

(Note that only the first four are elected positions. The others are appointed by the Board of Officers.)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 David Wright
 Secretary, MGOC



MGOC Holiday Tea

Saturday Afternoon, December 11, 2004

The Holiday tea will be at Esther & John Milsap's home in Alameda. Please join us on December 11th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for an afternoon of swapping MG stories and holiday cheer.

Please bring a dessert or hors d'oeuvre to share. And, if you happen to have a favorite tea, bring that along, too. We will have sodas and other things to drink.

Our address is 1819 Ohlone St., Alameda. If you are looking on Map Quest or something like that, our street is a new street and is not listed yet. Use the intersection of Buena Vista Ave & Paru Street. We are just one block after (or before) Paru St. (See directions below.)

R.S.V.P. (only if coming) to: Esther or John Milsap

Home Phone: (510) 749-9167

Email: ebmjem@earthlink.net

From the North:

Use 880 South to the Broadway/Alameda exit. Follow the signs to Alameda. Go through "the tube" to Alameda. When you exit the tube, the road splits. Stay in the left lane and continue over the hill to Buena Vista Ave. Turn left on Buena Vista, you will pass one traffic light. Go past the warehouses and you will see some new homes on the left. The first street is OHLONE ST.

From the South:

Take 880 North to the 23rd Street exit. (Watch out, it is right after the 29th St. exit.) Follow the signs to Alameda. You will go over the freeway and into Alameda over the Park St. Bridge. Stay in the right lane and turn right on Buena Vista. (Shell Gas Station on the corner.) Continue on Buena Vista. You will pass two traffic lights. We are the third street past the second traffic light (Grand Ave.) Turn right on OHLONE ST.

From the East:

Take 24 to 880. Take the 23rd St. exit. Continue on 23rd and go over the Park St. Bridge and continue as above (from the south).

From da Ed...

Happy Holidays to you all. May your stockings be filled with shiny MG bits. We have a couple Christmas activities coming up, the Holiday Tea on Dec. 11 and the Boxing Day Run on Dec. 26. And we hope to schedule the Annual Dinner for mid-January.

For myself, I hope to finish the 1935 MG motor by Christmas but it is going slow. And I think my BGT may have a cracked cylinder head (again).

I hear that MG Rover have sold themselves to a Chinese company. I guess that means that the company will continue in some form and this could lead to MGs coming to the States, I suppose. But I am saddened that they couldn't have

a miracle recovery. I am not sure they got enough vital organs back from the BMW takeover to be viable. The 5,000 workers in England will be glad to keep their jobs. The MGF is a truly great sports car and they did some innovative things with the MG sedans.

Consider joining the national clubs. The North American MGA Register is a excellent organization with a wonderful magazine. The North American MGB Register is also a good group and is having their national meet in Olympia, Washington, this coming July. The New England MGT Register fills a big need for the T series enthusiasts, as well. We as a local club get significant support from these national groups.

We regret that Bob Stine will be stepping down as club president. Bob has gotten very involved in organizing other activities and something had to give.

Start thinking about activities for 2005. We'll start work to lay out our schedule soon. Randy Grossman has taken on the Activities Director function.

Hope to see many of you soon.

Dan'el

Minutes of the MGOC Business Meeting, November 11, 2004

Meeting was called to order at 8:02 p.m. Present were Nina Barton, Randy Grossman, John Hunt, Mike Jacobsen, Bob McCoy, Dan Shockey, George Steneberg and David Wright.

The Minutes of the October meeting were accepted as printed.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Jacobsen reported on the current balances. Advertising renewals are starting to come in.

Secretary's Report: The Secretary was present.

Registrar's Report: The membership stands at a total of 242 members. Additional renewals are still coming in.

Regalia Report: The updated regalia report form was reviewed.

Octagon Report: Dan Shockey reported there was a mix-up (and delay) in sending the electronic version of the newsletter. This has been resolved for the future.

PAST CLUB EVENTS

Festival of Marques, Laguna Seca: 15 MGs attended this event. See the November *Octagon* for details.

Autumn Classic: There was a good turnout of MGOC members for this enjoyable event. See the *Octagon* for more info.

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

Dec. 11, Holiday Tea: This will be held at Esther and John Milsap's home in Alameda. See the *Octagon* for complete details. Melissa and Randy will bring the tea.

January, Annual Dinner: This January event is being finalized. Nina reported that the following locations are under consideration: Spenger's in Berkeley, Scott's in Oakland, Treasure Island, Hotel Mac in Richmond, and the Faculty Club at UC Berkeley. It was agreed that the dinner price to members would be held at \$35 per person and that the Club would make up any difference above that cost. The maximum cost of the dinner is not to exceed \$45/head. Nina will try to schedule the Annual Dinner for the 2nd Saturday in January.

Continued on page 20

MG

TC-TD-TF-MGA-MGB-C-Midget

SHOCK ABSORBERS: Front Rear

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MGTD & TF.....	165.00	80/85
MGA.....	89.95	49.95
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MGC brake master.....	\$175.00
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A Sandblaster for the Home Workshop

Have you have seen the recent Kragen ad for a sandblaster for \$69.95? Well, I bought one today and thought MG owners would be interested in my experience. I have been cleaning parts from my '52 TD (currently under restoration) on my 2 HP, 10" wire brush, but it's not suitable for small parts so I thought I would try the Kragen Sandblaster.

It's actually quite a useful tool. The inside dimensions are about 12" x 18", so most of the small parts fit in it just fine. The instructions say you need a compressor with 5 cfm @ 80 psi, and you need all of this. My 5.5 HP Sears compressor (with 25 gal tank) is rated at 6.4 cfm @ 90 psi, and it was running almost continuously. It comes with 3 ceramic nozzles, and I found the smallest one works the best. It cleaned paint, rust and scale quite quickly.

It's important to use dry sand, specifically made for sandblasters, and I found RMC Lapis Luster #1/20 sand at South Bay Materials (1781 Angela St, San Jose, off the Almaden Expressway). The price was \$6.99 for 100 lbs. In using the sandblaster, there are two recommendations I would make:

1. The instructions say to only put 6 lb. of sand in the bottom of the cabinet. I found that 2-3 times this amount was better, and kept the siphon hose nicely buried.

2. The siphon hose doesn't want to stay buried in the sand as you are moving the gun around, so I made a simple bracket out of 1/8" x 3/4" aluminum to secure the siphon hose to the bottom of the cabinet. There is a convenient screw there that can be used.

Happy restorations to you all!

Don Davis – 1953 MG TD & 1967 MGB GT
MGOC member

<p>Martin Hveem Automobile Restorations</p>	
<p>Tel: 570 520.6450 Fax: 570 520.6452 1520 Schwab Street Red Bluff, CA 96080 martinhveem@earthlink.net</p>	<p>Classic & Antique Restoration Service Repair</p>

Welcome New Members

Roger Bylund lives in Albany and has a '71 B roadster that he's owned for 14 years, and a '70 that he's had for 15 years. The '70 is not currently running. Roger heard about us from Hilary Reddy.

Karin Corrigan of Napa has a Sprite. She was invited to join by John Hunt.

Larry MacKenzie was recruited by David Wright. Larry bought his '49 TC 32 years ago with the intention of restoring it, but was never able to devote the resources to it. He hopes to finally start on it now that he's retired.



Member Bob Shook takes First MGA at the *Autumn Classic*, San Juan Bautista, October, 2004. Photo: Dan Shockey

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Post-1976 MGB Cooling System Emptying and Refilling

by Geoff Leggett

General

1. Filling the cooling system of post-1976 MGBs is made more difficult because some parts of it are higher than the thermostat housing filler plug which is the recommended filling point for coolant. The fluid fills the system only up to this level, leaving the top full of air. A second problem is the thermostat which, when cold, is closed and has only a very small opening through which all the coolant must flow as you pour.

2. It will make life easier if you lubricate hoses, clips, and fittings with a suitable rubber lubricant (e.g. MS4 silicone grease) before fitting. This makes them easier to fit, remove and manipulate and also helps prevent corrosion of the steel pipe fittings. Don't worry if the hose can still be rotated after normal tightening of the clips, it won't leak and will firm up later.

Draining the Coolant

1. When emptying the radiator, the instructions given in the MGB Repair Operations Manual do not suggest turning the heater control to HOT but you should do so to make that the heater is drained.

2. Use clean vessels for collecting and pouring the coolant so it can be safely reused.

3. The manual indicates that the pressure relief cap should be removed before slackening the clip and removing the bottom hose from the radiator. However, if you do all this, water sprays everywhere – except into the vessel you have carefully placed underneath. It is much easier controlled with the cap left on because the flow of water is much slower and can be directed where you want it; i.e., into your vessel.

4. Although not generally necessary, if you want to drain all the coolant, you must undo the engine drain plug. (On the right side on the engine block.)

Refilling the Cooling System

1. The Repair Operations Manual suggests a rather complicated procedure starting with refilling the system by removing the thermostat housing filler plug and pouring water through there. If you have ever tried this method, you will know that it is a very slow process, taking ages with much tedious topping-up to fill the system. This is because all the water you put in has to go through a very small hole in the closed thermostat. It is much faster to remove one end of the top hose from the thermostat housing and loosen the clip on the radiator end so that the hose can be rotated to leave the open end pointing upwards. (This is where the rubber lubricant helps.) Water and antifreeze can then be poured in almost as fast as you can go until the point is reached where a trickle appears coming from the thermostat housing pipe. At this point, stop pouring and replace the hose as quickly as possible before too much escapes.



MGA Race Cars at Laguna Seca, October, 2004. MGA #3 in center belongs to member Tom Morgan. Devin MGA at right. Photo: Shockey



James Brown, Dan Shockey & Bob Wall exemplify club teamwork as they answer phones for a KTEH pledge drive, July, 2004



William Shaw
(415) 924-1450
36 Industrial Way
Behind Cost Plus
Greenbrae, CA 94904

Your Expert Guide to MGB & MGB GT Problems and How to Fix Them Book Review

by Barry White of the *MG Monthly Motoring News*, Tasmania

This is a new book by Roger Williams. I have several publications by this author, *How to Give Your MGB V8 Power* and *How to Improve MGB, MGC, and MGB V8*, all of which are recommended by the MG Owners Club (of England).

The more knowledgeable and experienced MGB owner will have an intimate knowledge of the day-to-day maintenance requirements of their car plus an insight into any technical difficulties which might arise; however, for the not so initiated this book gives a very detailed and plainly written view of the normal and not so normal maintenance and trouble shooting requirements of the MGB.

It is in my view better than a workshop manual because it centres on the every day occurrences of using the car and is written for those who do not have a technically trained background. The text is aided by many sharp colour photos on the subject under discussion and is the sort of book I wish I could have owned in my youth when owning my first vehicles.

Format is the usual soft cover, 250mm by 210mm, with a very comprehensive index. If the MG Owners Club can recommend this book, then I for one think it has something going for it, especially for the newer owners of MGBs in particular.

From page 15:

<http://members.shaw.ca/tsmit/tachmod/tachmod0.html>

<http://members.shaw.ca/tsmit/tachmod/tachmod.html>

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2. If you are adding antifreeze, it is best to start with about 3 pints (2 liters) of water followed by the correct amount of antifreeze and only then to keep filling with water until the trickle appears. If you start with antifreeze, you will probably find a lot of expensive antifreeze escapes, more or less neat from the thermostat housing before you can stop it!

3. It does not seem to be a good idea to follow the instructions in the manual for topping up the expansion tank before refilling the system as this merely serves to restrict the flow of air and hence slow down the filling process. It should, however, be topped up nearly full after filling the rest of the system and before driving off. To remove as much air as possible from the system, both top and bottom radiator hoses can be repeatedly squeezed (preferably at the same time) with the pressure cap off until the bubbling stops. After this process, some coolant will have been drawn out of the expansion tank and into the radiator so check again whether the tank needs topping off.

4. Once the engine has been run and the coolant thoroughly heated, the air in the system will expand and most of it will find its way out through the expansion tank and the pressure cap. As the system cools down again, the liquid contents of the expansion tank will be drawn back into the system to take up the space left by the escaping air so do make sure to check that the tank is at least half full before driving off again.

5. Don't worry about putting antifreeze in the expansion tank in summer or if you are going to drive the car straightaway; the coolant will become evenly mixed throughout as it repeatedly expands and contracts from heating and cooling of the system. However, if you are about to put the car out of doors into the cold winter night without first driving it, please do put some antifreeze in the expansion tank to prevent it freezing.

Reprinted from *The Drip Pan*, Oct., 1997

Classic Motorsports VOL. 1

The New Magazine About Old Cars

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DRIP PAN

News and Articles from the Peninsula T Register

Auxiliary Fuel Pump

by Ken Palmer from the Paradise MGs newsletter

I have a box with a dozen or so “used” fuel pumps in it that I have accumulated over the years. It’s a testament either to the number and condition of the MGs I have owned, or the pumps’ rate of failure! Actually I have found the pumps to be pretty reliable: a new one can fail in a few miles and an old one can, if it is so disposed, run forever. I have had no luck rebuilding them, despite following to the letter the procedures in the manual. A reluctant fuel pump will seldom strand you, if you don’t mind pounding on it every few miles, or blowing in the fuel tank, but it’s a real hassle – one I can do without. The solution I have evolved is to install a cheap little electronic fuel pump in addition to the SU. Having just done that to my daughter’s MGB, I thought I would pass on the suggestions.

The pumps I use are little square jobs, 1.5" by 1.75" by 2.5". I have bought them from discount auto emporiums and from the J.C. Whitney catalog. The last one was about \$30 (in 1994). Unlike the SU they are not an “on-demand” pump, meaning that they run all the time and can be annoyingly loud, so I don’t use one as my primary pump. What I do is simply hook it in line with the existing pump, run a hot wire from the battery through a 15 amp fuse and a switch that I mount on a little homemade bracket under the rear cockpit trim rail. If the car sputters, hit the switch and drive home!

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Solving Electronic Ignition Tach Woes

From: Theo Smit <tsmit@shaw.ca>

Subject: **Octagon** 2004-07 issue

Hi, I just came across your online Octagon and read Keith Ansell’s tach woes after replacing the points with a solid state ignition. I’m a Tiger owner and faced a similar issue after installing a MSD-6 ignition. Rather than cobble together a system using the MSD “adapter” box, which I’d heard didn’t work all the time, I designed a circuit to replace the original electronics and allow direct connection of the MSD’s tach output signal to the tach. This generated sufficient interest that a follow-on version was developed which included inputs for the original current loop sensor and allows installation of the module without any external case modifications.

Like the original circuit, a single potentiometer is used to set the calibration, which leaves you somewhat at the mercy of the meter movement drag. About 60 of these modules are currently making tachs go in Tigers, Alpines, a few MGs, and soon, a Volvo P1800. The module seems to have no problems at all with current-mode sensing of optical or retractor type (Pertronix) aftermarket ignitions, and has been installed in voltage-sensing mode on Jacobs, MSD, and a couple of other ignition systems without problems, but direct (voltage-sensing) coil connections on some ignitions are “dirty” enough to cause multiple triggering.

I have circuit boards, parts kits, and assembled modules available, and can also do module installations and calibration if the owner sends their tach. See sites (page 16) for installation/ordering information, or for the background story. I’ll also answer any questions via email to tsmit@shaw.ca.



Member John Milsap at Laguna Seca, October, 2004. Shockey photo.

Grille Wreaths and Lights

Continued from page 13

to prevent problems later. Because the wires are awfully small to wrap well with electrical tape, I coated the splices with Plastic Dip and a small brush. Silicone would probably work too if you were careful. The finished harness should resemble Figure 3. This is the time to test the lights by touching the ends of the duplex wire to the battery terminals. The lights should come on, but if they don't you'll need to check your connections. If none of the lights work, the problem is probably where the strings attach to the duplex wire or at the fuse holder. If only one string refuses to light, it's probably because of a bad connection where its leads were lengthened.

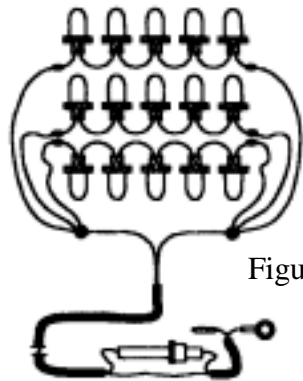


Figure 3



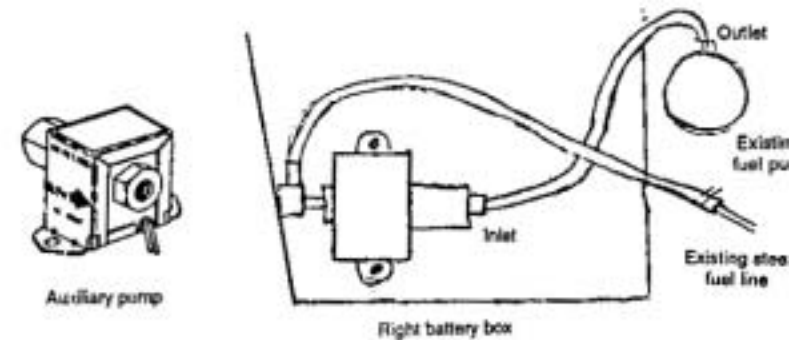
Once the lights work, arrange the lights on the wreath, and use the zip ties to attach them. Make sure that there are no loose wires or lights to flap in that 60 mph breeze. Now you can go out to your car and fasten the wreath to the grille, feeding the supply wire through the grille. Once the wreath is securely attached, you can hook up the power.

I ran the wreath lights off of the car's fog light switch. That meant that I had to disconnect the fog light while the wreath was on the car, but I figured that was OK. On an MGA, the lead is in the harness somewhere in the left front corner of the car, and is red with a yellow tracer. Of course, if you already have a light mounted, it's easy to find. Just attach the fused lead from the wreath to the lead with a Lucas tubular connector, and connect the other lead from the wreath to a ground, such as the attachment bolt for the carburetor fresh air hose clamp. On a Midget, it's a bit more complicated, since the grille is attached to the hood. Run the leads from the wreath back to the clip that holds the hood prop rod, and zip tie them to it. Then run the leads down, behind the battery, and along the harness on the inside of the right fender. Find the lead to the right hand fog light (it's purple with a green tracer), and disconnect it from the light and reconnect it to the wreath's fused wire. The other wire can go to any ground. (I used a washer bottle bracket screw.)

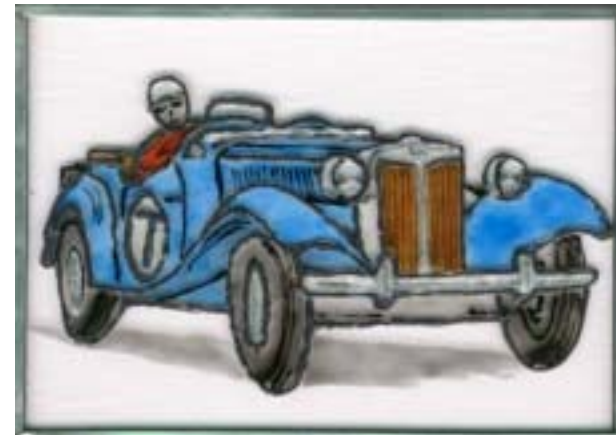
Now the wreath will light up with a pull on the fog light switch (plus you can still use the left hand light on a Midget) and you'll be so cool that Santa himself will ask to borrow your car. Happy Holidays!

Below is a little diagram of the installation on Jonna's B. The mounting is especially easy on the B. Mount it on the back corner of the battery box with the bottom mount hole about an inch from the bottom. The existing fuel outlet line is then disconnected from the fuel line, and routed to the auxiliary pump inlet. You then need to put an elbow in the auxiliary pump's outlet, and buy about a foot of fuel line to connect it to the car's steel fuel line. Simple as it sounds! The SU will pump right through the auxiliary pump when it's not running and vice versa. On the B, you simply run the wiring through the trunk floor wiring grommets and into the rear of the cockpit. Oh, one thing, these things only come in negative ground, so if you haven't made the switch you will be out of luck.

I have installed one on an Elva and on an MGA, as well as the B. In the case of the A, it's a bit more work, as it works best to mount it in relatively the same position as the B, but bolted to the inside of the rear fender. It's a little cramped in there but will end up being a nice neat installation. Happy motoring!



(Terry Sanders put one of these on his TA, mounted at the back near the tank so it isn't seen. He reports that the SU has not yet dared to fail with the back-up unit in place. – Dan)



Glass art made as thank you gifts for MGOC officers and other contributors.

Art & photo by Dan Shockey

Grille Wreaths and Lights

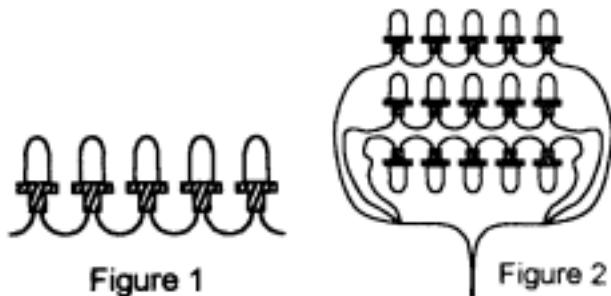
by Mike Jacobsen, from the NorCal NAMGAR Newsletter, September '97

Do you decorate your home for the holidays? Why not decorate your car too? Some cars just cry out for the festive treatment, especially cars with vertical grilles, like T-types or Magnettes. Even an MGA has enough chrome in front to be able to gracefully handle the addition of a wreath. Still, while I liked the way a wreath looked on my Mulette, I felt that it would look even better if it had lights. Once I got the lights hooked up, I received enough comments that I decided to write up this description, so that everyone can have an illuminated wreath on the front of their car. (And I bet that you didn't even realize that your car needed a wreath.)

To do this, you'll need a wreath, a string of miniature outdoor lights, some 18 gauge duplex wire (3' for an MGA, 10' for a Mulette – I used brown lamp cord), about a dozen 4" zip ties, solder and a soldering gun, an inline fuse holder with a two amp fuse, and insulating tape or liquid plastic. I also recommend using bullet and ring terminals for easy connection to the car's electrical system.

First, the wreath. Get an artificial one, made out of fake greenery wrapped around a wire armature. Remember, the wreath is going to be out in a 60+ mph breeze on the highway, and a real pine bough wreath won't stand up to that treatment. You can also use a fake one again – mine is on its third season, and it looks fine. Get a wreath that is small enough so that it won't hang out past the edges of the grille. This looks better than one that hangs over, in my opinion, but it's mostly to prevent the wreath from scratching the paint. (Those wire ends may be sharp.)

Next are the lights. I used miniature Christmas tree lights, because they were inexpensive and any other size just overpowered the wreath. Unfortunately, you can't buy twelve volt light strings. The battery powered strings I found all operated off of two flashlight batteries, meaning that they were set up for a three volt system, and they came wired in parallel, which made the string awkward to convert to twelve volt operation. Instead, buy a short (35 light) string meant for outdoor use. These are easier to convert than a battery string.



Now comes the electrical engineering part. Skip this paragraph if you believe that electricity is actually magic, and you'd rather start making the string for your car's wreath. If you look on the box your string of lights came in, you'll probably find a place where it says to only use 3.5 volt (35 and 70 light strings) or 2.5 volt (50 and 100 light strings) light bulbs. This is because the electrical service in your home is rated at 120 volts. So, if you have 35 lights at 3.5 volts each, the total voltage multiplies out to 122.5 volts. It's similar for a string of 50: 50 lights at 2.5 volts each

makes 125 volts. The math works out this way because the lights are wired in series, just as an MGA's two six volt batteries are connected in series to make a twelve volt system. This is also why the directions caution you to not leave burned-out bulbs in the string: It makes the voltage at the remaining lights too high. (Imagine a 35 light string with five lights out. If you divide the 120 volt supply by the remaining thirty lights, it comes out to 4 volts per light, which will appreciably shorten their life.) The 70 and 100 light strings are just two 35 or 50 light strings connected in parallel. (If you look at the middle of the string, you'll find the spot where the wire that went from light to light changes. The third wire is used so that you can plug one string into another to chain them together.)

What we want to do is take the 120 volt string of 35 lights and make a 12 volt string out of it. First we can perform the calculation above, using 12 volts instead of 120. That is, 12 volts divided by the 3.5 volts per light, which gives us about 3.4 lights. I'm going to round that up to five, because a car's electrical system (even an MG's) runs at closer to 13.5 volts, and because I want to have some margin in case a light should burn out in use. Fine, but five lights is not enough to properly illuminate the wreath. I decided to use fifteen, and the way I did it was to connect them all in a series-parallel arrangement, which is just three strings of five lights connected side by side.

First, cut out three strings of five lights from your Christmas tree string. Set aside the two loose wires, leaving three short strings, each looking like the example in Figure 1. Next, lengthen the leads on each string so that you'll be able to spread them around the wreath. (Not being sure how I was going to arrange the lights, I added about eight inches on each end, using leftover wire from the original string.) Then gather the wires at each end and attach them to the ends of your duplex wire (lamp cord, in my case, though you can use two individual wires) as shown in Figure 2. Finally, splice in the inline fuse holder to the hot, or supply, side of the wire (I used the ribbed half of the lamp cord as the hot side) and attach a ring terminal to the ground lead and a bullet connector to the supply lead. If your fuse holder will fit between the grille louvers you can attach it to the wire wherever it's convenient, but if the holder is too wide, you'll have to splice it in near the wreath. Solder and insulate every connection. The soldering may be overkill, but I wanted

Continued on page 14

