



# THE OCTAGON

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



*Since 1957!*



Dan's 1935 MG after conversion to front cycle wings. Model by Thuy  
Pic: D. Shockey

## June 2020





## 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.

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### COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to Mike Jacobsen at 415-333-9699 or [MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com). 2005 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. 1<sup>st</sup>, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to [magnut\\_dan@hotmail.com](mailto:magnut_dan@hotmail.com) or send them to: Dan Shockey, 10 Willis Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

### 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>.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Turlock Meet - Alternative Event .....	3
From the Ed.....	4
Members Notes; The Drive.....	5-6
President's Ponderings .....	7
Use for a Potholder .....	8
Barbara Cartland Race! .....	9-11
Brake Bleeding Options .....	12-13
Painting Update .....	13-15
New Member Alan Havey .....	15
Planning; Streets of San Francisco .....	16
Tale of Classic Sports Car.....	17-19
Classifieds .....	19
Barn Find MG Collection Story .....	20
MGB Photo Shoot .....	21
Back Page: MGB/GT Ad.....	22

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2020

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Fall Turlock Swap Meet, Sept 27, 2020

If you need a car fix in June, this appears a good option.

Always fun shiny bits at a swap meet.

MGOC events likely to restart with the **Annual Picnic** in August.

I enjoy the art work of these posters.





## From the Editor

Greetings from MG Haven, er... Home. I hope you have been able to keep your humor while sheltering. Even my 95-year-old father is finding stuck at home grating. I have gotten work done to the MG that I would not have gotten to this year. Even when working from home, I can get in a coupe hours on the MGs every day. I have the time and am not worn out by the commute. And with no club events on the weekends, I have been able to work whole days then.

We are starting to think about tentatively scheduling some events. Put the **Annual Picnic** on your calendar but be sure to check it is still scheduled before heading over. (Two more **Octagons** before then.) The Triumph club has a couple events scheduled for June but only one is in the Bay Area. Let us know when you feel okay about doing events, and what type of events.

Should this be extended, I may pull the engine from the MGA. I have the MGB engine ready to install along with the a/c. I better start by rebuilding a gearbox to use. The one in the MGA always grinds going into 2<sup>nd</sup>. I have an early MGB overdrive gearbox that really should go in as well. That involves changing the gearbox mount and drive shaft.

Thanks to all the contributors. I feel most successful when I don't include anything of my own. All the best,

**Dan**



*That's me in my first MG above. A few of you may remember me then.*

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Not models, these are real race drivers with their MG PB racer. Yvonne Morel standing and Dorothy Stanley Turner at the Crystal Palace in 1938



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# Welcome New Member!

Welcome Alan Havey of Sebastopol with a 1962 MGA Mark 2 and a 1979 MGB GT. (See page 15.)

## Member Notes

My "working on the car" shelter? It is to laugh. I haven't worked on a car for months. I should make one of those shelters! Then maybe I'd work on a car. Nah, probably not. I think if the sheltering rules get relaxed in time, our first event should be the Annual Picnic.

**Mike Jacobsen**

I agree with Mike and think that our next meeting will probably be the picnic. I spoke with Marcia last week (both doing well) and the Tilden Park picnic site is still reserved. There are lot of tables there so we can spread out and SD if we have to. If things clear up sooner I can always host a drive easily; even run the St. Paddy's Day drive.

**Andy Preston**

### Ford v. Ferrari review

Here is the article link

<https://classicmotorsports.com/articles/ford-v-ferrari-how-accurate-film-we-asked-people-w/>

I just received my complimentary issue, as two of my MGBs that were photographed by Phil are featured in the article about the MGB. What fun to see my cars in your magazine!

I am thinking, if you want, I would be glad to post on the MG Experience website, the SF Bay Area MG Club newsletter/website, and on the North American MGB Registry Facebook site, a mention of your August issue. Perhaps if you can send me a couple of photos to use? I can describe the article, and provide information on how to purchase a copy, or copies, of the magazine.

Let me know if that would be something you would like me to do. I am guessing that there will be no newsstand sales of magazines right now, so perhaps some mail sales might be helpful for you.

**Don Scott**

Hi Dan, here's an amusing article from a book called "Ask Click and Clack". Tom and Ray Magliozzi had a wildly popular radio show called "Car Talk," where they took questions, dispensed bad advice and made dumb jokes.

**Andy Preston**

<https://www.cartalk.com/test-drive-library/tommys-mg-td-1952>

### Tommy's MG TD (1952) | Car Talk

Tommy's (not so) fabulous MG TD. Because there are no controls, ergonomics are superb. The few switches that do exist are right where they should be, because there's plenty of room on the dashboard for controls and amenities that will only come decades later.

Sorry for the slow reply. I always see your messages and then think to myself, "I'll reply once I make exciting progress this weekend!" But then that never comes haha. Currently I'm dealing with a oil leak from the sump hole intended for the oil temperature gauge which isn't included in my car but may have been in the Morris Minor from which the engine was donated. Bill and I have tried many different plugs and each one continues to drip a cup of oil per day or so. I think the next thing I want to try is a version of this BSPT plug but with a head on it so that I can have a face seal rather than just the threads.

<https://www.grainger.com/product/GRAINGER-APPROVED-Chrome-Plated-Brass-Countersink-4CCP4?findingMethod=pendingOrders>

The next major project is the brakes and honestly the next step is to first figure out what I even need to do. Maybe this weekend...

Hope all is well for you!

**Dave Gallagher, MG J2**



## Member Notes (cont.):

Hey Dan! I never seemed to have gotten the previous email about the 2 MG's, However, a member of the club has a 1972 that he may be willing to sell! I'm currently going over things with him and am deciding on my actions moving forward! Thanks for letting me know! - **Andreas P.**

You are welcome. A young boy is restoring the two 1976 MGBs. Which is good to help keep them busy. The cars were "re-homed" just prior to the pandemic. Thank you for checking back with us. Hope all is well with you as well.

**Cindy**



## "The Drive" on Saturday, June 27

The Coyote Creek Concours d'Elegance will once again present The Drive! Although the Concours is cancelled for 2020, the current COVID safety guidelines allow us to get your cars out for a spirited drive and rolling Concours!

Join us as we team up with **Sports Car Adventures** and **On The Road Again Classics** for a drive from the Coyote Creek Golf Club through the scenic wine region of South Santa Clara County on our way to the world-famous **Laguna Seca** raceway. Thanks to our friends at **Hooked on Driving**, you will have the opportunity to drive parade laps on the track and experience the legendary Corkscrew!

Hungry? The event begins at 8:00 am at the **Coyote Creek Golf Club** with coffee and pastries before heading to Laguna Seca. Following will be a delicious lunch and then The Drive will continue after lunch to a finisher's reception at On The Road Again Classics. All that, and a group photo shoot, good times on the road, and a nice little gift from The Drive sponsor, Hagerty Insurance.

Attendance will be limited to 50 cars.

Contact [coyotecreekconcours.com](http://coyotecreekconcours.com) or Bill Hiland, info at left.



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## President's Ponderings

**"IS THAT CAR FUN?"** On the spur of the moment Marla and I drove out to Bodega Bay in our 1967 MGB roadster with the top down to get away for a couple of hours. It was a glorious sunny day and we parked on a quiet road overlooking the bay enjoying our sandwiches. I heard a girl's voice saying "Is that car fun?" I turned around and saw a teenage girl with her mom and younger sister and she said again "Is that car fun?"



**"BEST FUN EVER"**, I shouted back and she smiled and wished us a fun day. I thought about what I said and truly believe that this little car is the 'best fun ever' and I mean that. I think the early MGB is the best car to come out of Abingdon. The series 1 cars were made from 62 to 67 and have all the best attributes of a true British sports car. In fact they came to be the best-selling British sports car over its 18-year life. They're light, handle well and have sufficient power for such a light car and are just plain fun to drive. The engine is lively; the gearbox is smooth and the clutch nice and light. There's also plenty of room inside, in fact it seems big compared to a present day Miata. With many open cars there is a lot of buffeting from the wind from behind your head; so you feel like one of those "bobble-headed" toys that people used to have on the rear parcel shelf of their cars. Not so with the MGB, even with the windows down there's virtually no buffeting until you get up to highway speeds. It's very pleasant driving the back roads even at 60 mph; it's a wonderful experience, which is why I love so much.

If you're in the market for an MGB I think the early cars are the best ones to buy but unfortunately the supply of good ones is drying up and even ones that need some TLC are selling for good money. A very nice 1966 MGB recently sold on Bring a Trailer for \$15,500 and I thought that was a good buy based on the condition of the car. The days of the \$6000 car are long gone unless you're looking for a fixer upper.

I bought my MGB 18 years ago and had been looking for over 12 months because I wanted a 1967 mineral blue with wire wheels. I finally found one in Santa Monica which was being sold by the son of the original English lady owner who had recently passed away. Apparently she had used the car every day to go to the grocery store and must have parked by feel. Every panel on the car had a shopping cart or parking lot dent and the gearbox was missing a couple of teeth on first gear which made for a very noisy test drive but I loved the car from the first instant.

I had driven down to Santa Monica with my very good friend Dan Shockey towing his car dolly behind us. Dan had narrowed the dolly to suit his 1935 MG PA which made it a little tight for the MGB, so I added a couple more dents on the way home to the front fenders. It was great fun and we had a great time.

Let's all hope that the present situation will be over soon and we can all get back together and have some more fun in our little cars.

All the best and drive safely,

**Andy**

Photo: Andy Preston  
2002 photo of Dan Shockey checking out the car dolly straps before we headed home.

*I since trimmed back the inside of the tow dolly fenders to allow towing MGAs and MGBs without damage on sharp turns.*

*The trip coincided with the MG swap meet in Fullerton. We even had dinner with other MG folks. And we had a proper English tea with the seller before departing. - Dan*





## Another use for a Potholder?

### Tom's Tech Tip #1

I drive a 1969 MGC/GT which has a 2.9-Liter engine with a 4-speed transmission with electronic overdrive. When traveling on lengthy road trips of over 100 miles the MGC/GT transmission tunnel heats up pretty good. Being 6'2" with long legs I have a tendency to rest my right knee on the transmission tunnel. When it gets hot my knee gets cooked.

But I found a simple solution to this problem which isn't what the purest MG owner would consider stock but a good cheap innovated solution.

I went out to my local "Dollar" store and purchased a potholder in the same colors of my interior rug (black). I then trimmed off the loop off the potholder and placed the black side facing out just about at the spot where I would rest my right knee. After a few adjustments and some two-sided tape, I affixed the pot holder onto the transmission tunnel and presto no more cooking my right knee on long road trips. And you have to look pretty closely to see that the potholder is even there. Total cost for solving this problem was under \$4 dollars.



*William T. Doyle, "Tom" is the proud owner of the 1969 MGC/GT. He has owned three MGs since 2009: a 1978 MGB Roadster, a 1976 MGB Roadster, and an MGC/GT. Tom lives with his lovely wife Heidi on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe and belongs to the MG Owners Club of Northern California, Sorry Safari Touring Society, The Reno British car Club, and the North America MG Register. He enjoys writing about British Sportscars but would rather drive one than write about them.*

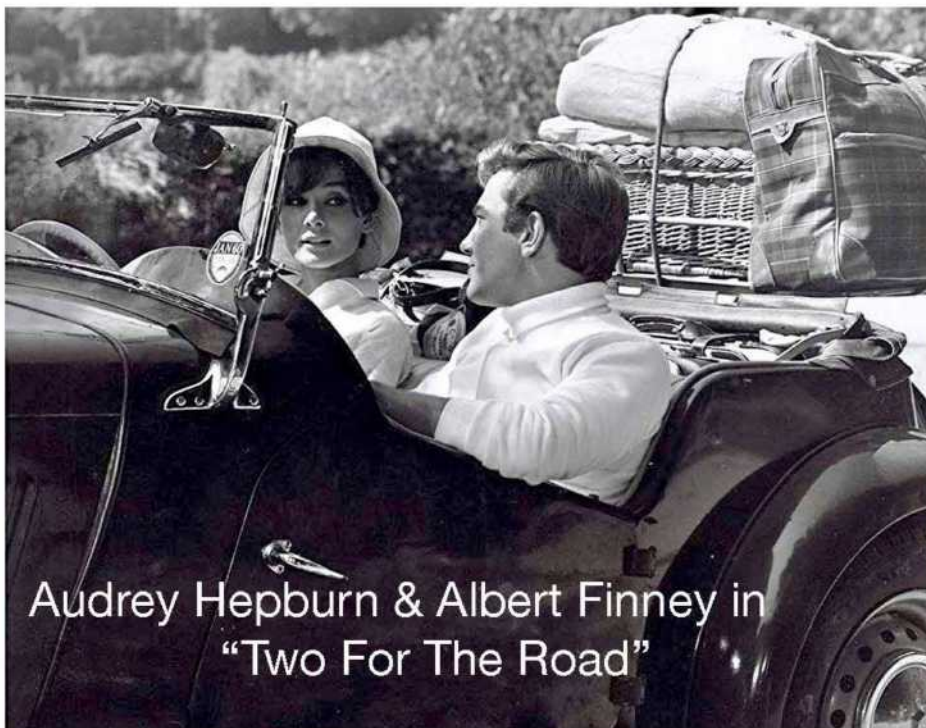
Hi Tom, when I first opened the email I thought you were making a Covid 19 face mask! BTW, face masks in the Bay Area are very difficult to find.

The tech tip is great and a really good idea that many members can use to reduce the heat in their own cars. How about a photo of the potholder inside the car? Thanks, Andy

Glad you liked my tech tip. I've got at least 3 or 4 more I can put together which are simple that ended up with good results. I'll start on another couple and send them your way.

Heidi and I went back east in the end of February and returned in early March before the virus really took off. I had decided to purchase some face masks before our trip at Rite-Aid and I am sure glad I did. I wore the mask both ways on the airplane ride and I am doing fine so far so I can't say it didn't do any harm. Not sure if they are still available at Rite-Aid but I haven't checked lately because I don't need to replace them just yet.

Sure, glad I took the MGC out for a spin yesterday we're getting slammed with snow today. Regards, William T. Doyle, "Tom" (5 April 2020)



Audrey Hepburn & Albert Finney in  
"Two For The Road"



# What do Barbara Cartland, Brooklands and MG have in Common?

By Dan Shockey



Dame Barbara Cartland is known for her prolific writing of romance novels, usually involving Dukes and Ladies, where the carriages are usually horse-drawn. She once set a record for the most novels written in one year – an incredible 23! We usually think of her as an old lady in pink dress with a small fluffy dog. However like most of us, she was young once.

Barbara persuaded the race organizers at Brooklands to host a "ladies only" race in 1932. This was still a novel idea though several women were racing at that time, several successfully in MGs. Lady Cartland had to get a group of equal cars for the race for the nine amateur women racers and she chose the still-new MG C-type race cars. The race was won tied in a dead heat by Princess Imeretinsky and Lady de Clifton. You can see the race and hear Barbara describe it on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPBWYKDRjU>

In 1995, as part of some filming done for the BBC series, "The Power and the Glory," MG enthusiast Ken Rees was asked to bring his restored MG C-type racer to Brooklands. The BBC wanted to get Lady

Cartland back into a C-type at Brooklands. Miss Cartland arrived on the day arrayed in her trademark pink outfit and lapdog, driven by her chauffeur. The BBC provided some steps to help get her into the tiny door-less car over the side exhaust pipe.

Most of the huge Brooklands track was demolished during WWII since German pilots were using it as a landmark when bombing London. A portion of the high banking still survives but is short and very bumpy in places. There is no windscreen for the passenger and practically no suspension in the race car. But Barbara was game for a go. The producer wanted Mr. Rees to drive flat out past the camera, which meant a lot of wind and a very rough ride indeed. The MG was completely airborne in places. Miss Cartland's hat stayed on but her eyelashes appeared flattened against her eyelids.

Getting the grand lady out of the MG was the next challenge. Mr. Rees recorded his impression of Miss Cartland, "a spirited lady who was not only professional but very pleasant. Her recollections of Brooklands characters were very interesting to hear."



A newspaper later asked Mrs. Cartland about her experience and she replied with her perspective, "I have very fine memories of MG, though when I went back to Brooklands to be photographed with the (MG), the track's broken up now and very bumpy. First of all, it blew my eyelashes off, and secondly it was frightfully bumpy. We had an awful crash over one thing and I thought, 'Oh, my goodness, there's my spine gone.' It was most frightfully difficult to get out of too – it took four men to help me."



In the race film, men are along as riding mechanics, a standard practice at the time, and often required to keep up the fuel pressure and watch the gauges. They also refueled the car during the required pit stop. Riding with Miss Cartland was race driver Lord de Clifton, probably in his car. The C-type she drove was likely the winner of the 1931 Irish Gran Prix and the first British car to participate in the Mille Miglia.

The C-type played a very crucial role in the development of MG sports car with the first MG designed Midget chassis using the Morris-based mechanicals of the M-type Midget. This chassis became the basis for MG sports car designs until the TD. Lady Cartland's C may have been the one that



ran well in the 24-hour Belgian Gran Prix in 1932 but sheared a pin in the valve-drive three-quarters of the way through the race. It posting a faster lap time than the 6-cylinder K3s the following year.

Barbara was also a creative innovator. In 1931 she and two RAF officers

designed the first aircraft-towed airmail delivery glider. Eventually the gliders were used as troop transports during D-Day and were considered vital to the success of the Allied invasion of Normandy. Photo: Winners below.



Below:

"I think we only hit 87 mph but I saw someone turned right around." - "That was me, I fear, did it twice."







Winners and all nine lady racers at left.  
From British MovieTone film

Below, *Outrageous in Pink*, Lady Cartland with her chauffeur and lap dog. I fear the Rolls is also pink, hopefully not the dog...

With her glider at lower left. Also pink? Thank God for glorious black & white!



OMG that pink jacket sleeve is so close to the exhaust pipe! The hat appears to have come off.



*Barbara Cartland in C0261 at Brooklands*

*Ken Rees*

# Brake Bleeding Methods

By Dan Shockey with Notes from Barney Gaylord (in red)

The brakes in my 1500 Coupe have seemed weak (plan ahead!) and when I found fluid in a puddle under a rear wheel, I decided it was high time I acted. The rear brakes needed replacement but the fronts seem okay.

Older drum brakes can feel a little unsatisfactory if there is too much travel in the shoes due to wear in the drums or the wrong curvature to the brake shoes. However properly set up drum brakes can be as effective as disk brakes and the duel-leading-shoe ones on the TD and MGA are particularly good and resistant to fade. Barney has driven hundreds of thousand miles on his MGA 1500 and sees no need to change to disks.

Brake bleeding can be a problem however. Some time ago, I helped a friend with a Healey 100-6 try to get the brakes bled on his all-drum brakes. Other folks helped also and he never got them where he wanted them. He ended up putting in disk brakes and those bled right away. I think the problem was his master cylinder though he had tried replacing that, too.

There are different ways to bleed brakes. Barney gives a nice summary below. I have red-lined Barney's words. He is considered something of a guru and his web site is something of a Biblical reference for MGA mechanicals.

"Yes, there are several alternatives."

"Open bleeder, have helper push pedal, close bleeder, release pedal, and repeat as necessary to flush the line, hold pedal down and close bleeder when finished." This is what I call the old-fashioned, good-ole way to do it. I have often drug my wife to sit in an old car and pump the brakes on command. It gives you a good feel for what is going on and when the bubbles are gone from the system.

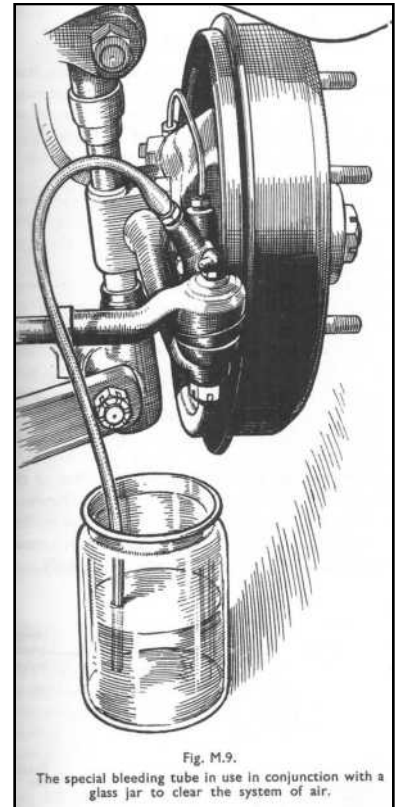
"Open bleeder, put finger over bleeder to serve as a check valve, have helper push pedal repeatedly as required to flush line, close bleeder." I have not tried this approach. It sounds like the way to go in an emergency situation but not a desirable approach otherwise.

"Open bleeder, attach hose, position hose in bottle with a bit of fluid and hose end below fluid level, pump pedal as required to flush line, close bleeder, (no helper required)." This is what I have been doing with my MGA recently. It generally works but you do not have the advantage of seeing what is happening and making sure the hose stays in place.



"Install check valve bleeders. Open a bleeder and pump pedal as required to flush line, close bleeder (no helper required)." I bought a set of these for my BGT and they seemed to work well. I should get a set for the MGA. I like the concept but wonder about how well the little valve works. These are available for the MGA, MGB and Midgets. Not sure about earlier MGs.

"Apply a pressure bleeder (style of your choice) on the reservoir, then open each bleeder in sequence to flush the lines (no helper required)." I have tried this in the past and had trouble with blowing brake fluid everywhere. Hard to get a good seal to the master cylinder and be sure to use low pressure, like from a spare tires.





"Use a low pressure injector (trigger pump oil can or Mityvac in reverse) to push fluid into a bleeder to flush air backward up to the reservoir (no helper required)." I have used this method and forgotten about it. It seems to work best with a clutch (single line).

"Connect a hose between clutch slave bleeder and a brake bleeder (hose clamps advised), open both bleeders. Pump brake pedal to reverse bleed clutch circuit. Pump clutch pedal to reverse bleed brake circuit. (No helper required)." I had not heard of this. Sounds interesting. Basically use you solid clutch to bleed the brakes!

Another approach I have tried and had success with is to not loosen anything but get in and start pumping the pedal like you are riding a bicycle. Do it for 100 cycles. I find this does work for hydraulic clutches. I have not tried it for brakes, mainly because the pedal doesn't travel much after the first couple pumps!



Please send your success and failure stories with the other techniques. - Barney and Dan!

## Painting Update

By Dan Shockey

Yes, I did finish the bodywork and painting I talked about recently. This was for my 1935 MG PA Midget. Now I wish I could do it over with what I have learned.

**Bodywork:** This went pretty well. However I discovered that the lower portions of the body had new metal laid over and bondo'ed in. This metal did not have a nice smooth curvature, as it should. It also will pop in and out in places making it hard to sand flat. For a good result, I would have been better off to rip it off and start over. I used epoxy glue to fill holes and fibreglass putty for areas that needed some strength and water resistance. That seemed to go well – though time will tell.

Bondo plastic filler should be grated off soon after applying it. I did not do that and ended up doing more sanding. I either wore out my arms or built them up.

Glazing compound now comes in two varieties, one with a hardener like Bondo and the other without. So I presume it stays soft. It is rather like thick paint. I used both, with the hardener version more as a fine plastic filler, then the non-hardened version as a defect filler.

I should have sprayed on some cheap gloss paint to look for defects. It is easily sanded off again. I would have found some areas that needed more work but looked and felt fine with flat primer.

**Lung Protection:** I was pleased with my approach to a forced air respirator. I used a cheap 110V air blower located outside my paint booth. It blows too much air so I used a T with an open side to reduce the flow.

Probably makes the \$15 pump last longer, too. The full-face respirator allows clear vision. The only problem was I was always twisting up the two hoses, the air hose for the paint gun and the large hose for my breathing air. For the spray can painting I used a full-face respirator with new filters.

At the suggestion of Bill Traill, I used our EZ Up shelter to make a paint booth for the loose fenders, doors and side panels. I bought a roll of clear plastic sheeting, 50' x 12' and wrapped that around the booth and the outside of the MG. It did well to keep down



breezes and birds from affecting the paint. Temperature affects how the paint sprays on so watch that and use the right thinner or reducer.

**Paint:** I had a quart of acrylic lacquer that was supposed to match the paint on the car. You thin lacquer about 1:1 so I expected to have enough to paint all both sides and doors with it. However after mixing it, it was only about a quart still and would not cover all the body sides. So I did not paint the doors with it. Instead I used some polyurethane I thought would match pretty well for the doors and the new cycle fenders. I really liked how that came out but the color did not look well against the rest of the body. I then re-sprayed the doors with some spray-can urethane that was mixed to match the body color. You have to use a clear coat with that which changes how the color appears. So the match is better but not great.

Oh I did spray on a coat of sealer before the paint. This helps fill and sand-scratches and makes sure the topcoat doesn't eat the paint you are spraying over. The primer in spray cans is lacquer so not too susceptible but still a good idea.



I found that the spray cans just do not do a good job for a whole panel repaint. But I was able to sand and polish the clear coat to get tolerable results. Get one of those spray can triggers as it does help.

I found I had lost my new paint gun in my move. I tried using my old guns for the lacquer but they did not work well with my small compressor. So I made a sheltering run to Harbor Freight and bought their basic HVLP gun on sale for \$10. A pro painter friend of Bill Traill says these guns paint as well as an expensive gun – but only do well for one paint job. He has friends that buy a new \$10 gun for every job.

I still did not want to buy a large air compressor. But I have a 20-gallon air tank. I teed that into the air system. That worked well to give me enough air to spray a panel. I would then wait a few minutes for the pressure to build up again.

So in retrospect I should have had urethane mixed to match the color on the car and painted everything with that paint. I can still do that, of course. But I wasn't sure what would work. The car looks pretty good with clean smooth paint free of rust and bad paint areas. I call the green color name "legend" as in Roman or in "many demons." Does that make it a "legend-ary" color?

**Interior Panels:** While the doors and kick panels were off the car, I recovered them with brown leather to match the new seat covers. That came out well. I still have a couple more back panels to recover sometime. I bought the seat covers from a guy who had them made for his PA 20 years ago but changed his mind about the color. I bought it from him along with a lot of extra leather for \$300. His father-in-law in Ohio had covered them and done a proper job.

How do I like the cycle "wings" (fenders) on the MG? Well, I am not sure. I think I like them but haven't had time to study it in different light and surroundings, or to drive it. I know it will fit into the bed of my pickup truck now without having to raise the car a bit to clear the fender wells. The "swept" wings (full fenders) and running boards were a little too wide although the wheels fit well. There should be a little less wing drag now. Anything to lessen impediment to forward movement is good with this low-powered car.



New door panel at right.





Sheltering on my patio....

Door color not quite the same. Glossier with the clear coat. Cycle wings a different color yet.

I am thinking to paint the wheels another green...

Maybe a green hood, too (convertible top)?

Shockey pics

Below: The MG SA was a strong competitor with Jaguar in the late 1930s

## New Member Alan Havey

I'm looking forward to whatever the club looks like after this pandemic! I attended the MGOSF show in Kentfield last year and enjoyed it. Everyone was friendly and helpful.

Yes, I have 2 MGs, a 1962 MGA Mk II that I bought last year. Always loved them and had a couple of friends that owned them. They always loved their MGAs, so I got one when I got the chance. It is great fun to drive and a real beauty. I've done a couple of things to make it mine, but it was in good shape when I bought it.

I have had my 1970 BGT for almost 3 years. A car I lusted after as a kid. That one I bought in great condition and have been able to just drive and enjoy it.

I also have a 1971 TR6, 1973 240z, and a 1992 Miata and enjoy all of them in rotation, though I love the British Cars for their great heritage and personalities.

I live on 2.5 acres in Sebastopol and have a barn that I have renovated to house the cars. Hope to meet you all n person sometime soon. Cheers, Alan



# Keep Planning for 2020 ... (2021?)



## SUMMER - FALL

Sat, 6/27, The Drive. Coyote Creek Concours, Gilroy to Laguna Seca, Bill Hiland, 50 car limit. See page 6

Sat., 8/22, MGOC Annual Picnic, Tilden Park, Virus Permitting, Marcia & George

Other events prior to September canceled until the situation with the virus becomes clear.



*A Brooklands' mechanic fastens the buckle on Miss Dorothy Turner's helmet, July 1923.*

## OTHER MEETS

NAMGAR GT46, Colorado Springs,

MG2020, NAMGBR Annual Meet

GOF West, Welches, OR

**All Cancelled! To be held in 2021 or 2022.**



Above: More of Dorothy Stanley Turner at the Chrystal Palace, 1938

Trivia question: Did an MG ever run a major race wearing whitewall tires?

Left:  
The Streets of San Francisco from Allan Chalmers. His was the Minor ragtop.

How boring our streets are now!



# The Tale of a Classic British Sports Car: The 1967-1969 MGC

By William T. "Tom" Doyle, MGOC member

Some call the MGC a sleeper car, others call it an engineering and marketing disaster but, in the end the MGC is one awesome British sports car. The MGC, with its straight six-cylinder 2.9-liter engine, was targeted to replace the Austin-Healey 3000 but met its demise when The British Motor Holdings (formerly known as British Motor Corporation, (BMC)) merged with Leyland Motors to form British Leyland Motor Corporation in 1968. Leyland Motors, who owned Triumph at that time, had on the drawing board the six-cylinder, 2.5-liter TR-6 Roadster and the new management at British Leyland decided they did not need two British sports cars with similar engine sizes competing with one another, consequently the MGC was scrapped in the Fall of 1969.

The engineers at BMC had always felt that the MGB with its 1798cc four-cylinder engine was sorely underpowered and hence they began the design process (code named AD052) in the mid-60s to bring a new MG sports car into the market. We now realize that AD052 (Austin Drawing Office #52) became the MGC. Even before the smog control equipment was installed, the maximum horsepower (HP) an MGB could attain was 95. The MGB power dropped even lower to around 62 HP after the Department of Transportation (US) implementation of smog control equipment starting in 1968. The engineers at BMC looked to increase the MGB's HP by dropping the Austin-Healey 3000 engine into an engine bay of an MGB however, Donald Healey, noted English car designer, did not approve of this idea and thus that idea was shelved. The BMC engineers searched for a straight six-cylinder engine which was considered to be the preeminent engine design of the day. In 1965/66 the BMC engineers found one in an Austin Motor Corporation designed 2912cc straight six-cylinder engine. This engine was originally targeted for the Austin



A40 Farina saloon/sedan and the engineers at BMC determined it would fit nicely in the engine bay of an MGB with some relatively minor frame and body modifications.

The Austin engine, with its dual Skinner Union (SU) HS6 1 3/4" carburetors, could produce 145 horsepower at 5,400 RPMs. The BMC engineers opted for a 4-speed manual transmission with electronic overdrive as an option and you could add a 3-speed automatic transmission at an additional cost. BMC decided to use the same body styles of the MGB, and they mass produce two

"C" models: A Tourer (or convertible) and a GT. Although this idea of reusing the MGB body styles helped to save production costs for BMC, the result in the long run only served to damage the MGC's reputation as a wholly different sports car than the MGB.

Referring to Table 1, you can see that the MGC would become the most powerful MG that the company would ever build at the Abingdon factory. The MGC was even more powerful than the MG-V8 with its Rover-sourced (GM-designed) engine.

In an effort to provide full disclosure regarding MG power plants, there were more powerful MGs than the MGC but they were not manufactured in the MG Abingdon factory but rather at the Rover factory in Longbridge, UK. These cars were designed and manufactured under a consortium between BMW and Rover Group from 1994-2005. These non-Abingdon models were the MG RV8, MG-ZR, MG-ZS, and the MG-X and they were never imported into North America. These models had at the top end power between 160-308 HP which far exceeded the horsepower of the MGC, but these MG

MGC Specifications:			
Engine:	ohv straight 6-cylinder, 2912 cc, 145 bhp @5250 rpm, 170 lbs-ft @3400 rpm		
Transmission:	4 speed manual (overdrive optional) or 3 speed automatic		
Suspension:	Front: upper & lower A-arms, longitudinal torsion bars, anti-roll bar		
Brakes:	Rear: live axle, semi-elliptical leaf springs		
Wheelbase:	front disc brakes/rear drum brakes		
Weight:	Tourer: 2460 lbs	GT: 2610 lbs	
Top Speed:	120 mph		
0-60:	10.0 seconds		
Overall Production:	Tourer: 4,550	GT: 4,449	
North American:	Tourer: 2,483	GT: 1,773	
Automatic Trans:	Tourer: 453	GT: 776	

Years	Model	Body Type	Engine Size	HP
1945-1950	TC	Roadster	1250	54.5
1950-1953	TD	Roadster	1250	57
1953-1954	TF	Roadster	1466 <sup>1</sup>	63
1953-1968	Magnette	Saloon	1622 <sup>2</sup>	68
1956-1962	MGA	Roaster	1622 <sup>3</sup>	108
1962-1980	MGB	Roadster/GT	1798	95
1962-1980	Midget	Roadster	1493 <sup>4</sup>	75
1962-1971	1100/1300	Saloon	1275 <sup>5</sup>	70
1967-1969	MGC	Tourer/GT	2913	145
1973-1976	MG-V8	GT	3528	137

<sup>1</sup> MGF engine sizes ranged from 1250cc-1466cc with max HP listed

<sup>2</sup> Magnette engine sizes ranged from 1489-1622 with max HP listed

<sup>3</sup> MGA engine sizes ranged from 1489cc-1622cc with max HP listed

<sup>4</sup> Midget engine sizes ranged from 948-1493 with max HP listed

<sup>5</sup> 1100/1300 engine sizes ranged from 1100-1275 with max HP listed

iterations were more modern fuel injected automobiles and therefore cannot be compared on par with an aspirated 1960s sports car. The North American MGB Register considers these class of MGs as "Post Abingdon" models since they were not made in the original MG factory in Abingdon, Oxfordshire England.

In the fall of 1967, the MGC debuted at the Earls Court Motor Show with considerable fanfare and an ample amount scorn from the automotive press. The automotive press and sports car enthusiasts were expecting the next version of the Austin-Healey 3000 and they were sadly disappointed.

For the uninitiated, the exterior the MGC and the MGB appear to be the same car. Upon closer inspection the only real exterior differences are some slight bulges in the bonnet to accommodate the larger radiator, and the twin SUs. The interior of the MGB and MGC are basically the same. One media reporter commented "why would you pay an additional £100s for the same looking car and then get penalized by Ministry of Transportation (UK) for the larger engine size in the form of a road tax year after year".

In addition, the BMC road crew had set the MGC up with under inflated tires at the 1967 Earl's Court Motor Show before the media took the MGC out for a test drive. This resulted in severe understeer for the MGC. With the added weight of a six-cylinder engine (+ ~430 lbs. curb weight), the MGC was truly "nose heavy". Sales of the MGC were mediocre in 1967 and 1968 and with the merger with British Leyland in 1968 the fate of the MGC was nearly sealed.

BMC and British Leyland produced 8,999 MGCs between 1967-1969 of which 2,483 were North American (NA) specification Tourers and 1,773 were NA specification GTs (or hatchback) models. The remainder of the production 4,743 MGCs in all types and models was spit up between UK (to include Australia) and those bound for the European market.

Of the grand total of 8,999 MGC produced, only 1,320 were offered with a 3-speed automatic transmission. To break this down a little further for the NA market they produced 453 Tourers with automatic transmissions (or 18% of NA imports) and 776 of the GT models with automatic transmissions (or 43% of NA imports) for the years 1967-1969. These ratios seem to indicate that the GT model was intended for the American Interstates where an automatic transmission would make traveling at high speeds very comfortable.

In contrast, Triumph Motor Company began mass producing the TR-6 in 1969 with a slightly smaller six-cylinder 2,498cc engine. The TR-6 basically had the same engine as the TR-250. The TR-250 was made in limited quantities 1967-1968 and had the same body style of the TR-4 but with a 2,498cc engine. So, the TR-250 became known as the "beta version" of the TR-6. When the TR-6 debuted with such a different body style than the TR-250 the media British went batty for this car. TR-6 sales figures for 1969 skyrocketed to 15,317 vehicles which was over 4 times that of the MGC sales (for both body styles) for the same year. In addition, according to North American Dealers Association Blue Book the Manufacturer Suggest Retail Price of the 1969 TR-6 was \$75 cheaper than the 1969 MGC Tourer. The sagging sales of the MGC, similar body style as the MGB, and a higher cost were yet another set of nails in the MGC's pervertible coffin.

But what turned out as a BMC engineering and marketing failures is now one of the most sought-after classic British sports cars on the market today. If the MGC is setup properly, with upgraded front suspension, and fitted with the proper tires (such as the Pirelli P6000 185/70/R15s) the handling and ride are as good as any comparable European sports car of the day. In fact, in an article written by Richard Gunn in 2006, he road tested a 1968 MGC Tourer against a 1974 TR-6 and concluded the TR-6 edged out the MGC due "a more enjoyable ride." Not knowing how each were set up or where they were driven, I would call this road test a draw.





The straight six-cylinder engine can easily cruise on today's Northern American interstates and drivers never have to worry about getting stuck behind a semi-truck or slow-moving vehicle. And although I haven't experienced it, I'm guessing that the MGC would keep up on today's German autobahn traffic with little trouble. So, if you ever get a chance to test drive an MGC in either models you won't be disappointed. And if you are ever lucky enough to own one you won't regret the purchase.

Typical examples in excellent to "concourse" condition, can fetch between \$22,000 and \$35,000 according to **Hemmings Motor News**. California rust free models can fetch even higher prices. So, in hindsight, what were BMC untimely failures resulted in delivering an awesome automobile for those looking to own or drive a classic British sports car.



William T. Doyle, "Tom" is the proud owner of the 1969 MGC/GT pictured above. He has owned three MGs since 2009: a 1978 MGB Roadster, a 1976 MGB Roadster, and the MGC/GT pictured above. He enjoys working on his British sport scar, enjoys going to car shows in the Northwest and has received numerous awards for his cars. Tom lives on the shores of Lake Tahoe and belongs to the Reno British Car Club, the MG Owners Club of Northern California, Sorry Safari Touring Society, and the North America MG Register. He enjoys writing about British sports cars but would rather drive one than write about them.

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## Classified Ads

**Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members.**

**Parts on sale:** Dave Laughlin is clearing many parts at good prices. He has engines and gearboxes; a good pair of MGA rear fenders; tons of parts to sell! Contact Dave at 510-234-6624 (Richmond)

**MGA Parts:** 5 Alum bonnets, 2 styles, gas tank, leak spring, 1500 driveshaft, new fiberglass front valence (race), front frame extension, master cylinder sleeved, 1500 engine block. Member Tom Morgan (650) 740-4116 (Posted 5/20)

**For Sale:** Full Tonneau for an MGB roadster in excellent condition, \$150. Contact: Tom Doyle at [wtdoyleii@gmail.com](mailto:wtdoyleii@gmail.com) or via phone at 530-546-9924 (Posted 04/20)

**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](http://MGOCSE.org)**

# MG Collection - *The Rest of the Story!*

Compiled by Dan Shockey

In the early 1960s, Dave Morrison was called back into the US Army. He had to sell his beloved MG TD at that time. Beginning in the late 1970s, Dave began to search for his original TD. In shopping for it, he came across other MGs and his collection began.

The MG interest began when Dave was in his teens. His wife Terri also became interested in cars in order to win Dave. Terri says it is bitter-sweet to sell the cars for her and her daughter Jill who also has found memories of the MGs. They were used for weddings and other occasions.

Dave said that cars connect people and dreams.

You can see an interview with Terri by Mike Hennessey who purchased the

car collection. Here is the Youtube link to the show about the MG Collection from last issue. The short clip is about 4 minutes.

Full length: <https://youtu.be/M2DhJCF63og>

Short Clip: [https://youtu.be/C2XnIh\\_kDi0](https://youtu.be/C2XnIh_kDi0)

In looking at the make-up of the MG collections, I suspected the collector may have started with a TD or TF and gone forward and back from there (in model years). There were two TDs and two TFs.

Photos from the video and the collection of Terri Morrison



Terri above. Wedding TD at right.

Below: A love set in concrete.





# MGB Photo Shoot

By member Don Scott

In late December of 2019, my friend Andy Preston (president of the MG club for SF Bay Area) emailed me to tell me that Phil Toy, a photographer from Collectible Automobile® magazine, was seeking some photo-worthy Mk1 MGBs for an upcoming article in the magazine. I proceeded to get in touch with Phil, who lives down in Walnut Creek, and after quite a few exchanged emails and submitted photos of my cars, he gave me the good news that my two MGBs were deemed worthy of appearing in the magazine article. The editor wanted only cars that were as original spec as possible, and mine are pretty close to that. I had to scramble a bit as my blue '65 refurbishing had not been completed, so I needed to do some detail work yet to get it up to snuff.

Next challenge, to find a setting for the photo shoot. My own rural yard (near Calistoga) is pretty, but not quite up to the aesthetic task. I scoped some nearby wineries, and also put in a request to a friend who lives nearby, and has a gorgeous yard. The wineries wanted no part of it, but my friend Dick was happy to oblige.

After some negotiations on a suitable day, we settled on Sunday, February 16th. As luck would have it, even the weather cooperated. Phil drove up to my place, and parked his '57 Cadillac, and then we caravanned to my friend Dick's place about a mile away.

The photo shoot took about four hours! Phil had me moving the MGBs about the yard, trying to optimize the sun and shade. It was also my task to hold these big metallic reflecting devices in order to get the right lighting effect. (See photos last issue.)



It was a few days ago, when I got a complimentary copy of the August Collectible Automobile. My MGBs had made the cut! My two cars were among pictures of several other current-owner MGBs and some period factory photos. The article is twelve pages, entitled "Built for Success: The Story of the MGB," authored by Graham Robson, who does a great job of telling the MGB saga.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the magazine, you can order a copy from their website [www.collectibleautomobile.com](http://www.collectibleautomobile.com).

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**North American MGB Register**



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**Note that mailing of the newsletter has  
been suspended until the Shelter in  
Place order has ended.**



The MG Owners  
Club has temporarily  
suspended all  
activities that do not  
meet the social  
distancing  
guidelines.

This is especially to  
protect our seniors.

**Stay *Safety Fast!***



Let's see; Shall you chat up the gal in the modern MGB/GT or work on the  
old relic MG PA in the back?