



THE OCTAGON

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



Since 1957!



MGOC Picnic
Lovely MGs, lovely shade, lovely folks
by Mike Jacobsen



October 2026



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 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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COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to

webmaster@mgocsf.org. 2026 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://www.mgocsf.org>

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Blackhawk British Car Show

Sunday, Oct. 18, 2026



Mini Owners of America - San Francisco is excited to host the 36th annual All British Motor Show on Sunday, October 19, 2025 from 9am to 2pm. The show is held in honor of the late Nick Becker who conceived of and promoted the show for many decades.

The show will be held in the Blackhawk Museum parking lot in Danville.

Register your car or motorcycle online at motorsportreg.com beginning August 1st or go to the All British Motor Show website, download a pdf application and send us a check.

Since 2015 we've partnered with the Blackhawk Museum to support their Children's Education and Transportation Fund. Proceeds from our show and raffle are donated to the fund which are used to enrich the educational experience of local school children.

So come join us to celebrate all things British! The show is always fun and we look forward to seeing you there.

<https://www.allbritishmotorshow.com/#/home>

8-9 am

ENTRANT CHECK IN

From Camino Tassajara, drive up Blackhawk Plaza Circle to the southern mall entrance and receive your show packet with entry information. Haven't registered yet? You can if we have space available. We'll point out your assigned section for your marque.

9 am

SHOW STARTS

As an entrant you get to vote on your favorites in each class. Place your entry card on your windshield to make sure you get votes. Need a break? Enjoy the nearby restaurants or get some raffle tickets at Show Central in the center of the lot.

9 am - 1 pm

MEET FRIENDS OLD AND NEW

Enjoy fascinating conversations and camaraderie with the Bay Area's most discerning British car owners, drivers and collectors. Popular local clubs are represented, giving you a fresh new audience to tell lies to.

12 pm

BALLOTS DUE

Get your ballots completed and dropped off at the Show Central booth. Ogle the generous raffle prizes, but make sure you buy enough tickets. Proceeds of raffle sales go to the Blackhawk Museum's Children's Education and Transportation Fund as do major proceeds of the All British Motor Show.

1-2 pm

AWARDS AND PRIZES

Gather at the Show Central booth for awards presentations and raffle winners. Each class awards three places, and entrant classes may change depending on registrations. We hope your fine car is center stage.

Mic drop!

TELL US ALL ABOUT IT

We don't just want to see your car; we want to hear all about it. Your tales of blood, sweat and callouses will thrill show visitors with a couple-minute broadcast. Our roving interviewers can strike the unwary at any time, so be ready with the juicy details of your magnificent machine. You'll love it.



MGOC & SSTs Fall Sonoma Tour

Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026

Tour Leaders: Andy and Marla Preston

Meeting place: Starbuck's 1716 East Cotati Ave (Wolf Den Plaza), Rohnert Park, Opposite Sonoma State University.

Time: Meet at 9:30 for a 10:00 departure.

Tour: Our drive will begin in Rohnert Park and we'll driving on some of the lesser known and wonderful country roads in Sonoma County on our way to the Napa Valley. We will drive over Mt. Vedeer as we wind our way through the Mayacamas Mountains on Trinity Rd to an elevation of 2300 feet before we descend down into the Napa Valley. As we descend into Napa we are treated to breathtaking views of the entire Napa Valley and at other times we are well above the clouds.

Our first stop will at V. Sattui Winery and Market Place in St. Helena where we can relax and unwind for a short break and give you a glimpse of what they offer for the next time you want to visit.



We will leave V. Sattui and travel by country roads again through some of the premier wine growing regions of Napa and Sonoma Valleys, surrounded by numerous vineyards and wineries.

Our final destination and lunch stop will be at Café Bellini in Petaluma where we will be eating in a private area.

Lunch can be ordered from the open menu but there will only be one check for the entire group so please bring **CASH**.

RSVP by Nov 1, 2026 to: andypreston@att.net 707 799 2257.

From the Editor

Greetings, Wheeled Bipedes,

30 September 2026

What's new in your MG world? I had both MGs out for drives in the past month. I am very pleased with how the MGA is running – though it was hot inside with 92 degrees that day. The 1935 PA is running okay though it is burning a little oil. I got it to idle better by adding a spring to the front carb throttle. There was enough play that it would stick in a random location throwing off the idle speed.

The PA came with what I believe to be an original PB dash. The PA used a redwood veneer but they changed to walnut for the PB. (Redwood was made a protected species.) It appears the redwood did not hold up so well. MG added a speedometer to the PB dash changing its plan. An original PA dash came up for sale, complete with most of its switches and instruments and I jumped on it.

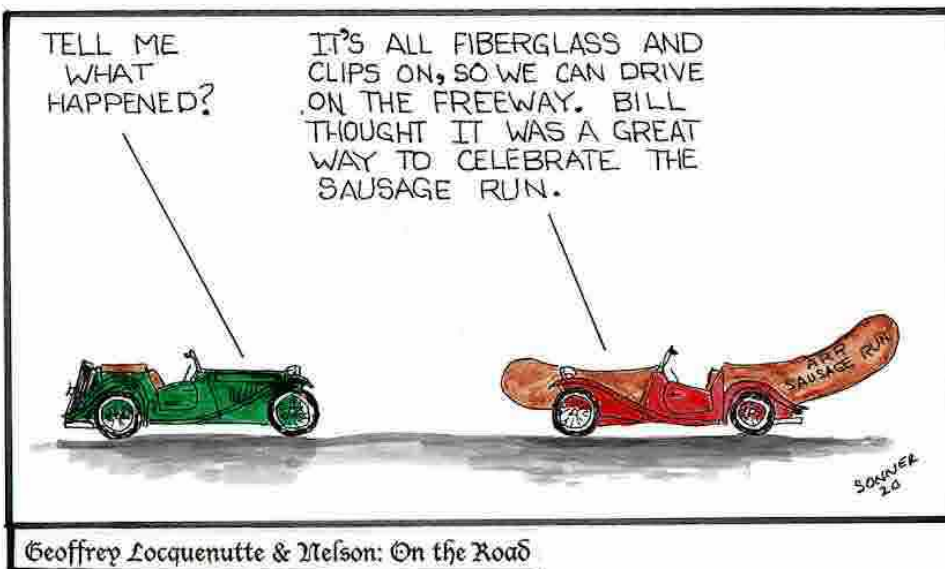
This dash is reported on good authority to have come from one of the three PAs that raced at LeMans in 1935. Eric Baker, a super-fan of that effort, is helping me determine if it could actually be the dash used during the race. People don't seem to often take photos of dashboards. We have not yet resorted to carbon dating. The racecars were immediately changed for trials with larger PB engines, dashboards adapted and things added and swapped around through many owners.

Great fall weather coming. Get that MG out!



Dan

Below: Thuy and Dan in 1957



Kei sports car in Japan
Pronounced "kay" (Kei-jidosha)

Cartoon by Brian Sonner of
Placerville

October Comments

September brought my brother and I to our long awaited Highway 36 trip. Highway 36 is revered by sportscar and motorcycle groups for its curves, terrain, remoteness and views. Our route was to be from Red Bluff to Fortuna. I gave the MG a major tune up in February so preparation centered mainly on checking hoses, fluids, air pressure and cleaning the car. I also take the time on long trips to review the spare parts I carry in the trunk – you never can tell when you might need them and you want to know what's there.

My brother Tom arrived from San Diego in his Fiat 124 Spider on Monday the 21st. On the 22nd we embarked on the first leg of our trip of 181 miles to Red Bluff where we spent the night. The MG ran well and cool, getting 33 miles per gallon. On our arrival I text Connie "Arrived without incident!"

Tuesday was what we came for, the 232 mile highway trek to Fortuna. We left about 10am in shirt-sleeve weather with tops down and arrived about 3pm. The road was well paved and fabulous and the car just sang. The mountains are beautiful and the terrain ranges from Sacramento Valley scrub oaks to mountain pines to coastal redwoods. It's truly a wonderful country and the views are spectacular.

You can make jokes about "British engineering" but they did a masterful job of gearing the MGB. The car ran well and climbed well in every appropriate gear. Even with the mountains, the car managed close to 25 miles per gallon. The text to Connie from Fortuna was again – "Arrived without incident!"

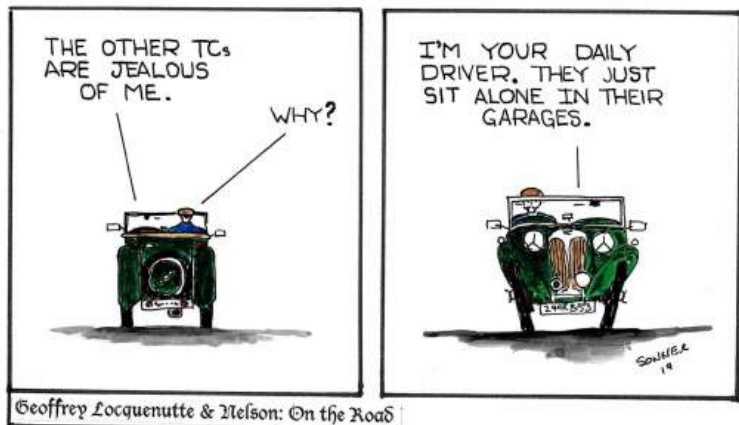
In Fortuna, we dined with MGOC members Bob and Jeanette Bartley. The Bartleys relocated to Fortuna from Lake County and Bob and I had been emailing back and forth to arrange dinner. Bob has a TD and he is the

"British Lone Ranger" in Eureka area car shows. Thursday was our 232 mile return to San Mateo where again we, "Arrived without incident." We both had a wonderful time and will probably do it again next year.

This past Saturday was the annual MGOC picnic at Padre picnic area in Tilden Park. It was well attended and everyone had a good time. I had to bring the Ford as we had passengers, food and coolers to bring but there were a number of cars there. My count was 5 MGBs, 2 MG TDs and 2 MGB/GTs. We were the last to leave and while leaving our site was visited by a lone coyote.

Coming events are Andy and Marla's Sonoma Tour on November 7th and the Holiday Tea at Mike and Elaine's on December 5th.

Doug



See more tour pics on page 22

Cartoon by Brian Sonner of Placerville

Sausage Run Adventure

By Bill Traill

Patricia Marcotte and I were on the way to the annual Rough Rider Sausage Run in Capitola.

Why the Sausage Run?

It is called the Sausage Run because: the group met up on Hwy 9 and Summit Rd or/and Woodside Road. We then toured along down the mountain tops to Corralitos; to the Corralitos grocery store. The store is noted for their meats, sides of bacon (yes, sides) and sausages. Some of us would load-up on their meats. We all then ordered wonderful sandwiches and would proceed on down to Nisene Marks State Park to picnic under the elegant redwoods. Later Jeff and Colleen Stobbe, took up sponsoring the 'Run'.

Oh, almost forgot...not!

The miserable Day.

I was vacillating whether to drive the Hyundai or the TC. I wasn't sure the TC was a good idea as Hwy 17 to Santa Cruz can be a hot slog. I checked the Waze website and Hwy 17 didn't look so bad at that time. So, I decided on the TC to support the event. Pat seemed to prefer the TC and in support of our reason for being... the MG TC.

The traffic on Hwy 17 thru' Los Gatos was BAD!

The Waze site didn't show 17 was choked when I started from home. We spent well over an hour & quarter in stop-n-lurch (mostly stop) traffic from Los Gatos to Summit Road and then to the San Jose Soquel Road. I had never before seen in 59 years, my TC's water temperature gauge needle anywhere near 100°C, but now, it was pegged.

I was very worried as we were locked into creeping traffic and no place to pull off the highway. I could smell hot oil cooking off from the old XPAG engine block and thought for sure there would soon be billowing steam and we would make the next traffic tied up headlines on our local KCBS radio traffic report. Glad we didn't have a radio.

My good old TC never faltered or steamed or ruptured a coolant hose nor lost any coolant: I later checked after I could touch the radiator cap.

Finally, we made the hard uphill steep off-ramp climb to Summit Road where I double clutched into 1st gear to pull to the Summit Road yield sign. Crossed the highway overpass to the San Jose Soquel Road stop sign.

Accelerating from that stop sign to an uphill left climb at 3000 RPM first gear... BAM! I knew immediately an axle had broken and we were blocking the West bound off-ramp where cars fly around the blind curve onto SJS Road.

Fortunately, there were several Cal Trans trucks having a pow-wow there. The crew immediately helped to push us off to a line of parked car-pool cars to the only open slot on dirt.

We called AAA.

After a litany of computer voices asking...please 'say yes or no' and 'describe your location and address'... address? ... yeah right, 'in the woods'... 'say again'...my personal radiator was beginning to steam.



Finally, a real voice! At that point Pat took over the conversation.

Eventually, AAA promised a flatbed wrecker in 45 minutes from Campbell... up Hwy 17 ... what...how is the flat bed truck going to get here in 45 minutes...by helicopter?

AAA called back about a half hour later to tell us that particular tow company declined to come to our aid. AAA promised another tow company would arrive in 90 minutes.

A half hour later.

Another call from AAA that the second tow company also declined to come to our aid. But a third tow company promised to save us but due to traffic, another 90 minutes. It turns out the 3rd towing company is an 'auxiliary AAA' contractor trying hard to become a 'primary AAA' towing contractor.

UGH.

If we had to spend the night there, at least we could survive on the berry pie Pat had baked to share at the event.

In the meantime, with no water and very little shade we waited and waited. We put the top up on the TC.

We then decided to try the deeper shade across the road. We did and sat down in the dirt. I then looked around and the foliage looked suspiciously like poison- poison oak as I remembered it.

We hastily recrossed the road back to the hot sun and minimal shade by the steep drop. I was getting thigh cramps and standing or getting up from sitting (on the partially shady ground) was nearly killing me.

At a little after 4, maybe 4:30, the finally promised flatbed appeared and we were soon loaded and on board heading home to my garage.

The flatbed truck was almost new, very comfortable with the air conditioning blowing on us. The driver was very patient and courteous; a good conversationalist. He was well educated but the income from being a tow guy was very good and he enjoyed the job.

On the way back...

In the cup holder of the truck was our driver's one-third full Big Gulp cola. I really wanted to grab that cola and gulp it down, but I figured Pat would fight me over it.

Arriving home our rescue-driver skillfully backed into the driveway and easily pushed the TC into the garage; I couldn't have done that due to the slope.

I brought out cold canned cola for Pat, our AAA driver and myself, and a good tip to our driver.

Then I drove Pat to her home and, after freshening up, we went to dinner at a nice restaurant, disappointed to have missed a great club event, but happy to be off the mountain.



My First Car Was An MGA

from Glenn Baldwin, Vintage MG Club

My first car was an MGA, not the TD of my childhood dream. That wouldn't be fulfilled for another fifty-four years. Fifty-eight years ago this month, one week before the start of my junior year at my new school, my mom took me to a car lot in Costa Mesa. Her mission: find me a safe, reliable (boring) car.

I had \$500 in hand and there were several cars on this lot that would leave change in my wallet. The salesman tried to show me a couple of them but his spiel faded away as I fell under the spell of the sexiest, curviest, brightest silver sports car ever! Of course I was familiar with the silver Aston Martin of the Bond films but this was better, way better. Its curvy rear fender hip sparkled in the sun and there were no door handles and there was no top. The top (hood) dropped completely out of view when not in service.

Look at those wire wheels and those shiny knockoffs. She was going about 40 just sitting there and if I didn't go catch her she might race off. I just walked away from the salesman mid-sentence. I knew it was rude and disrespectful to an elder and I felt bad for him, but I couldn't help myself. That car was MY car.

These cars are special and the art of them deserves to be admired and cared for. The joy they bring us and experiences we share with them are memories that last a lifetime.

Glenn with wife and TD, MGAs behind him!



Farewell to McGee

Denis McCluggage, *Autoweek*, Feb., 1992

I have a record of lasting relationships with my cars. I suppose you could get attached to dust devils under the bed if they stayed around as long as my cars do – seven to eight years on average. Then it comes time to part.

I remember specific scenes with only some of them. My black MG-TC, for instance. I suppose that's because it was my first really serious car (in that it came from a car store and cost more than \$100). I don't remember who bought it (a young man I think) or even how much I got for it. I know I sold it because I was leaving San Francisco for the East Coast and I needed money more than I needed a car.

The scene in my mind – a short film clip that reruns quickly like the movement of clouds in a TV weather forecast – is of the car climbing the last part of the steep incline that gave Hill Street its name. I was (no I am. Dream images like this play best in the present tense): I am standing at the curb in front of my basement apartment watching it drive away (more than being driven away). I rarely took that up-hill route, instead turning left at the cross-street and heading down to Market, so I am wondering if it can make it at the slow speed it is moving. It is in low gear, of course. As it nears the top of the hill it is at such an angle I can see much of the hood as well as the back end and the extra large plastic window. (Not authentic – who cared about such things then? When I'd had to replace the top I was more concerned about a better view outward than keeping the car original.)

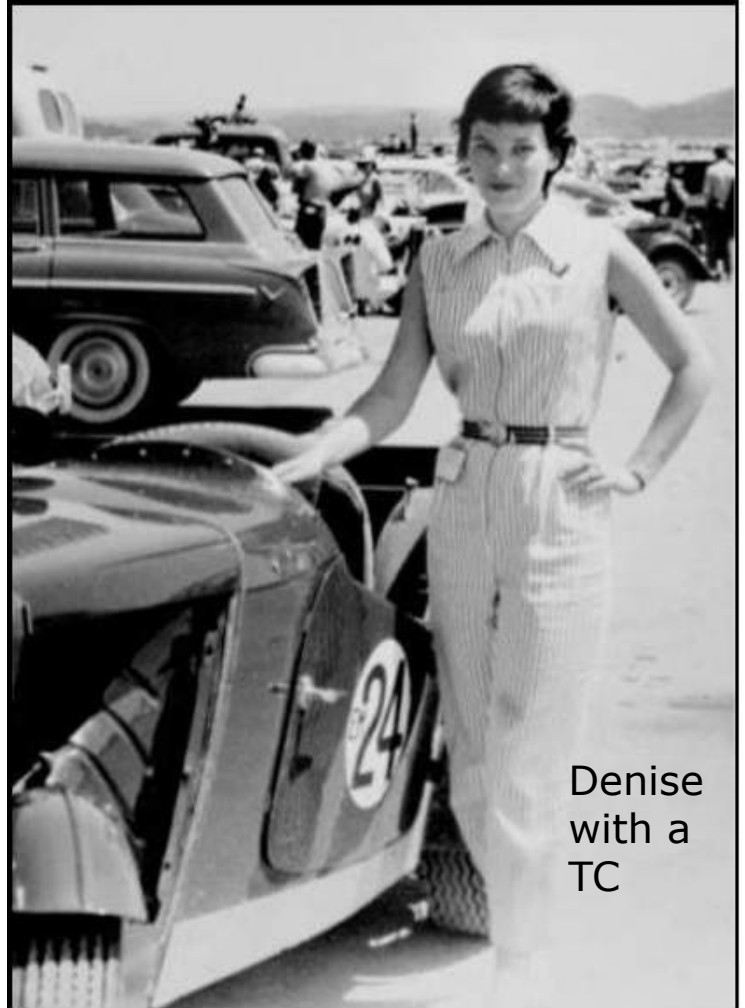
I see – with some odd pride – that McGee (I think it was the last car I ever attached a name to) is going to make the hill. It tops the crest and is gone. I stare at the empty spot a moment – letting air without color, without shape, obliterate the image. I sigh and turn. The scene jerks back to the beginning to replay.

.... It was colder and later than I thought ... It often is.

On Acquiring a TC

Denis McCluggage, *Autoweek*, Feb., 1987

I read in a recent *Autoweek* that Kjell Qvale had retired. For all of Kjell's consequential endeavors in the automotive world this one stands out for me: He sold me my first Foreign Car. That's what they were called then – Foreign Cars. ("You know the guy – the one who drives that funny little foreign car?") I don't remember exactly when foreign changed to *imported*, let alone to *import*. (Or for that matter, when they stopped being *funny* and *little*.)



Denise
with a
TC

And in that era everybody who had a foreign car waved at everyone else who had one. And in the time of which I speak – the tailing off of the 1940s – that didn't mean all that much waving. Well, at the start everybody waved to everyone. But quickly protocol emerged and then only the gauche waved, for instance, at a Jaguar before being acknowledged by the Jaguar driver. (If a lift of a suede index finger off the Jag steering wheel could be called acknowledgement.) Of course *nobody* waved at a Hillman except another Hillman unless Christmas approached and a charitable spirit lighted every visage.

I was working for the San Francisco Chronicle, my first job out of Mills College across the Bay. At the Chronicle I was surrounded by car people.... It was Barney Clark who first took me to Qvale's car store. And one day I saw something there that I quite simply had to possess. Had to!

The MG-TC was a recent phenomenon in the U.S. I had seen a story about them in *Life*. (In those days *Life* was the authenticator of what was New, True, Good and Worthwhile.) In the pictures of the MG-TCs people were driving them wearing tweed caps. People were smiling and being clubby.

And one woman was, for the benefit of the photographer, driving the Hers of their His and Her TCs under one of those tall, gangly, lumber lifters on wheels.

Well, that very car, immortalized by **Life**, was there on Qvale's showroom floor. The rear fender that had been dented in the **Life** escapade with the lumber lifter had been repaired. And there it sat in Kjell's showroom, stunning in every sense. Low. Perky. Absurd. Black. Swoop-doored. Red upholstery. Walnut veneered dash. Bumpers like tiny goalposts. And all incredibly *there*. Immediately, I ached with a hankering I had not known since childhood.

Now, luckily, I carry within me a sort of reality-checking program that has, through my life, proven to be most useful – maybe even sanity-saving. It allows me to admire, to even desire certain things beyond the fringes of possible acquisition, but it protects me from painfully craving the patently impossible. That useful system must not have been operational that day the MG-TC entered my consciousness. Stark covetousness swelled. *I wanted that car!* I don't remember the price. Beyond a certain amount there is no differentiation. (One, two, thee – infinity.) It was a dollar sign followed by Impossible.

Will you accept that I was personally responsible for a British currency crisis? I must have

been. The very next day, the very *next*, the pound was devalued and the price of the car dropped precipitously. That new number, if I remember correctly, was \$1850. My folks back in Kansas, a comparative pushover after I'd done in the pound, agreed to lend me the money. I gave it to Kjell Qvale and I owned that MG-TC.

Ah, how we ate up the hills of San Francisco – McGee and me. Indeed, we consumed much of California. A theater type, in town from New York, (he dropped Tennessee Williams's name a lot) mentioned that he had to go to L.A. "Oh, I'll take you there," I said. And I did. Seven or eight hours of driving ensued, of course down Route 1, the coastiest of coast highways, but the only conceivable way to go from San Francisco to L.A. in an MG-TC.

I not only put the top down but lowered the windshield flat to the bonnet as well. Here, have some goggles. Have a hat. (Not a particularly appreciative passenger.) Might the little man huddled in the passenger seat (staring into traffic in this right-hand-drive car as if he were a driver in a nightmare which had denied him a steering wheel) have much preferred the enrailed comforts of the Southern Pacific? But he was my *raison d'être*. I wasn't about to let him off the hook.

Down the coast one day, back the next. A perfectly sensible thing to do in your first MG-TC.

Ray's New Car

"My name is Ray Davis and I am a car-aholic. Many of you know that not only am I a member of **Automobiles Anonymous** but I am also the President. I am sad (not really) to announce that I was left alone for 4 days without my sponsor and I succumbed to the taunting of Bring a Trailer. Yes, I purchased another vehicle. It is a 1932 BSA Three Wheeler (similar to a Morgan). It is currently being transported from Ohio to Castro Valley."



(Ray is also President of the Sorry Safari and a member of the MGOC.)

At least it is small, Ray! - Dan



A British Volvo?

From Andy Preston

For the first three years, from 1961 to 1963, the P1800 Volvo sports car was manufactured in England. This was at the Jensen plant in West Bromich, just north of Birmingham. The body panels were stamped at the Pressed Steel plant in Scotland. All the gauges were made by Smith's Industries and the carburetors by SU, both in Birmingham.

They call folks from Burmingham, "Brummies," and yes, Andy has a special interest in this model having been bred in Birmingham. Ray teased him a little about this last issue so I want to set the matter straight. (Dan)

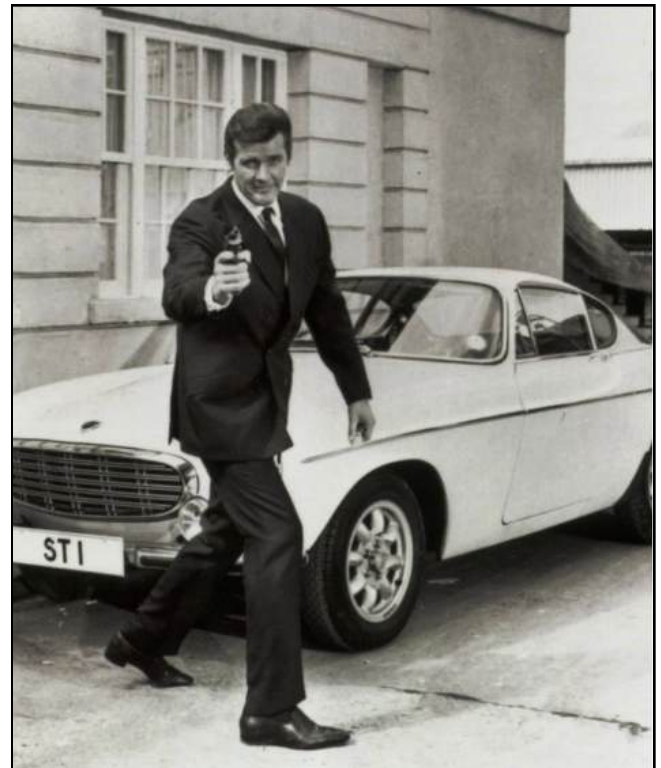
The P1800 was featured in the British TV series, "The Saint," in the 1960s featuring a young Roger Moore who drove the car during the show and also owned one himself. (The show was very popular in the States as well. And still fun to watch for the cars and fashions.)

In 1964 Volvo moved the manufacture of the car to Sweden and it was renamed the Volvo 1800S. This particular car is a 1968

1800S model, but it still retains the Smiths gauges and SU carbs - and its British roots.



Below: Looks British....



Leaves from the Diary of an MG Owner

Being the chance impressions of one who motors for the sheer love of motoring

By Bernard J. Farmer, *The MG Magazine*, January 1935

Today my lovely lady is like a woman with a new hat.

There is fresh oil in engine, gearbox and back axle, the battery is topped up, the tyre pressures are correct to a hair; and the chassis, carefully greased, rides like a Featherbed at speed.

In actual figures there maybe very little difference; I am perfectly willing to agree with this. But the psychological difference is enormous. I feel everything is right, and the car seems to go twice as well. I sailed down Fitzjohn's Avenue with the engine off, and positively luxuriated in the beautiful, smooth running. The feeling reacted on my driving, and my benevolence to pedestrians who seemed bent of suicide was wonderful to see.

I felt I could afford to be benevolent. The time spent in slowly down could easily be made up again with the car running like a charm. "Pass along, sir," I murmured politely to an elderly gentleman, who, with a clear road before and behind, must start to cross immediately in front of me. He bowed, I bowed. He bowed again. I nearly got out of the car to shake hands with him, and enquire after his wife and family and whether he thought we should have good crops this year. We positively beamed with politeness, and I could feel him thinking: "These courteous motorists!" His eye to my lovely lady, chaste and beautiful among cars; and I felt the least I could do was to admire the way he walked, or the set of his coat.

We should be there now, complimenting and admiring each other, but for other traffic, uninspired fellows who wanted to use the road.

So we parted, the elderly gentleman to flirt with other forms of death, I hope with continued success; myself to proceed towards the City. I changed up gently and my lady roared with sudden

delight. I made up time like lightning, and feeling so virtuous had no hesitation in taking the S-bend by St. John's Wood as if I were in a race. The car was a delight. I felt I could check her again and again, yes, even for a gentleman who cut in on me and honked outrageously in doing so, just to show what she could do when the road was clear.

I have talked to other owners, and they have felt the same way, Greasing the springs, for instance, which no one can pretend to enjoy doing, as it means much groaning and grunting, for the common advice, "Jack the car up under the frame, pry open the leaves, and insert a mixture of grease and graphite with a knife," is not always as simple as it sounds, yet

gives, when the job is done, the feeling that the suspension is perfect, and the car is holding the road like a cat.

Cleaning the plugs, or, indeed, any little attention will have its reward. I never knew a car which would so insult its owner as to break down when it had been lovingly attended to. It is grudging attention that ruins a car; and one dark night, when the rain is pelting down, the car may have its revenge.

Sensitiveness to a car means twice the joy in driving. Some people say that a car runs better at night, and probably because they feel it strongly the car actually does; though there may be little scientific grounds to back up the argument. One Saturday afternoon, my day for greasing up, I was interrupted before I had really started; consequently for the next week my lovely lady ran without its usual attention. Mechanically it could not have made much difference, but, believe it or not, I felt guilty; and could not with decency call upon the usual terrific acceleration when I felt like driving like the wind. The car would have done it, but I could not make her do it.

Needless to say, there was a touching reunion the next weekend, and if ever a J.2 has run better than my lady did that Sunday morning before half the world was awake and the road was clear for speeding, well, I should like to meet the owner.

This idea that a little attention makes a car feel twice as good received striking confirmation a few days later from a friend of mine who has just bought a second-hand car. He is a solemn soul. Driving he sits bolt upright. And not even a thunderbolt would dare to ignore his signaling.

The other evening he decided to give attention to running adjustments, as required by the maker's handbook, and came down to the garage complete with overalls and rubber gloves.

He began with the tappets, and after trying one and pronouncing it quite correct, that one rose can make a summer as

far as tappets are concerned, and turned his attention to plugs. He extracted one (no other word will describe the process) and cleaned it carefully. Then he screwed up a nut on the chassis. Finally he climbed under the car in true mechanic's style and tightened something or other there. Then he took the car out.

Half an hour later he returned. "Do you know," he said to me, "she's running miles better. It's simply amazing."

It was. His car must have very generous instincts.

But I feel ultimately it will benefit. His enthusiasm has been roused. He will adjust all the tappets, clean all the plugs, grease all the points. And the improvement will be real. There will be no psychology about it.



Around the Bay Tour

By Don Herrick

Saturday, September 12, was a lovely day in the Santa Clara Valley. MGOC and SSTS members enjoyed a 50-mile tour through the southwestern and southern areas of San Jose. Turnout was light, with six cars and eight members participating: a TD, an MGB, two MGB GTs, an MGA, and a Midget. The members were Mike, Rod, Sue, Ray, Don, Jeanne, Max, and Robert. Steffan came to see us off. Sue noted how unusual it was for a club tour to include only small British cars, with no one driving a modern car.

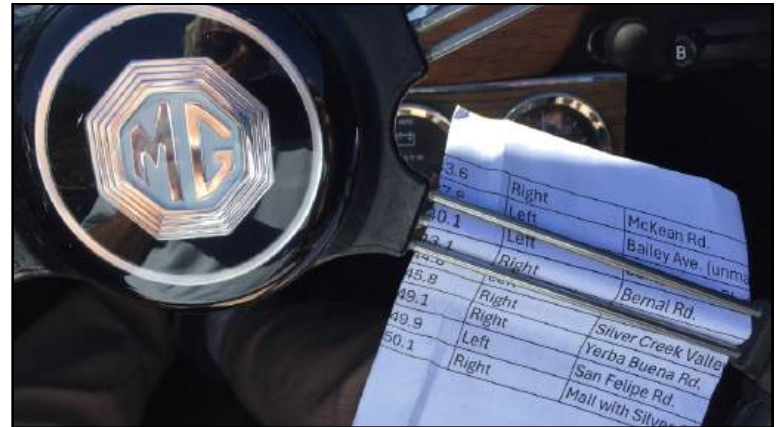
The goal of the tour was to enjoy some of the twisty, shaded, less travelled back roads in the foothills and end the day at a barbecue place. Ray commented that we went through parts of San Jose he didn't know existed. Sue mentioned that in 50 years belonging to local MG clubs, no club tour she had attended had taken a similar route.

We began by viewing Saratoga and Monte Sereno mansions—some rather gaudy—along with charming Victorian homes in Los Gatos. From there, we entered the urban-wilderness interface and the scenic foothills of the Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve. We also visited several reservoirs that supply the valley, including Guadalupe, Almaden, and Calero.

Then we headed to the top of 3,486-foot Mt. Umunhum, the highest point of our tour. This mountain is sacred to the indigenous Ohlone and there is an area for ceremonies at the peak. About half the tour participants braved the final 159 stairway steps to the peak for the 360-degree view of the Diablo Range, Santa Clara Valley, Santa Cruz Mountains, and the Pacific Ocean. A large cold-war era radar tower base, visible from the entire valley, is also at the peak.

We then continued to the charming former mining town of New Almaden. The New Almaden Days festival happened to be taking place that same day, so we drove by to have a look. The festival was very well attended. Tim Moriarty, driving his red MGA, served as grand marshal of the town parade.

Next came our second stop, a visit to the New Almaden Quicksilver Mining Museum,



located in a beautiful 21-room building and grounds called Casa Grande. It was built in 1853 as a hotel, but taken over by the mining company. The museum explores the history of mercury mining in the area and the diverse communities that worked the mines. Ray mentioned that the museum provided context around the tiny homes in the town.

The tour continued through the Santa Teresa Hills, Coyote Valley, and Silver Creek area before ending at Silver Creek BBQ, where everyone enjoyed lunch in the restaurant's air-conditioned comfort.



Photos from Don Herrick



Fabulous roads and great views!



Greeter at the Museum



Scottish Highland Games

From Mark McGothigan

MG MGBs and MG TDs were shown at the Alameda County Fairgrounds over the holiday weekend. Both days had a nice turnout for the Scottish Highland games in a distinctive British car lineup consisting of multiple car clubs. I attended Saturday. Thanks to Andy Duncan for putting this together.





Keep Planning for 2026!

FALL



Thurs., Oct. 8: TR Club Altamont Drive, Niles. See the August Octagon

Oct. 9-11: CSRG Sears Point Challenge, Sonoma Raceway, Free for spectators

Oct. 10-12: TC Clubs Conclave, San Luis Obispo, Everyone welcome

Sun., Oct. 18: Blackhawk British Car Show, page 3



WINTER

Nov. 7: Sonoma Tour, Marla & Andy Preston, Rohnert Park to Petaluma, page 4

Sat, Dec. 5: MGOC Holiday Tea, Mike & Elaine

Jan. TBD: Planning Meeting, Marcia and George's

2027: MGOC 70th Anniversary, Events to Come!



MG Photos by Mike Jacobsen

Borrowed
from the
TC
Motoring
Guild



BRITISH SLANG LESSON

"Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs."

You may hear someone more senior in years saying this to a younger person when they feel the youngster is being disrespectful by thinking they can teach the older person something.

MGOC Picnic 2026

By Andy Preston

Many thanks to everyone who attended this years picnic at the Padre picnic area in Tilden Park. This is a lovely spot for the annual club picnic with plenty of picnic tables in the shade, plenty of parking, and most important of all, proper bathrooms. It can be a little tricky to find but it's almost next door to Tilden Park golf course.

The weather was warm and sunny and the turnout was wonderful with 24 members in attendance including new members which we love to see and welcome. In attendance were: Doug, Connie and Thomas Hollander, George Steneberg and Marcia Crawford, Mike Jacobsen and Elaine Chan, Andy Hunt and his dad Bob (visiting from England). Mark McGothigan, Eric Baker, Don Herrick, Jim Brady, Doug and Chally Flett, Sue Schweiger, Larry Delorefice and Maureen, Stewart Friedman (new member), Rolando and Marietta, Max and Gail, Michael, and Andy and Marla Preston.

We had a wonderful showing of MGs with 5 MGBs, 2 MGB GTs, and a record number of 3

TDs. Don Herrick drove his newly acquired 1953 TD up from San Jose, its first long drive with no problems. Way to go, Don!

Doug and Connie brought tablecloths, water and drinks and Marla brought snacks, cookies, napkins and plates. Other members brought items to share. I really enjoyed the brownies (made by Jeannie, not Don, I might add.)

We had a short "meet and greet" where everyone got to introduce themselves and their cars, which is always illuminating. You get to learn that many members have multiple cars or different makes and also work on them. Members were advised that the next club events will be the Fall Sonoma Tour on November 7 and the Holiday Tea on December 5 in San Mateo.

The thing I like most about picnics is that you get to move around and talk to everyone and catch up with new and old friends, which is really nice.

Once again, many thanks to everyone who attended, brought goodies and helped make this another great picnic.





Photos:
Mike
Jacobsen



Mike Jacobsen, Reporting

We had ten MGs and a smattering of other cars up in Tilden Park, but the most interesting thing was the Korean group we shared the site with. As we were setting up, three ladies came over and asked if they could share our site. They'd reserved a place up the hill, but it only had two tables and they needed three, plus a flat area for some dancing. They happened to ask me, and since none of the other Board members were there yet, I said to go ahead. I think the others might have said "No."



They offered to share their picnic with us but we all declined, though Elaine & I might have since their stuff looked pretty good. And they did do some dance practice after their lunch. They also cleaned up very well so we're not worried about losing our deposit. It made for an interesting picnic.

Doug or Andy did bring up the 70th anniversary topic so maybe some ideas will come from that.



Air Conditioning an MG

By Dan Shockey

Many MGs have been air conditioned, even here in Northern California. We have discussed it before. (See *The Octagon*, March and April, 2021. Also June, 2019) It involves adding many components including an compressor mounted on the engine driven by a fan belt and an condenser in front of the radiator, thus requiring many non-original changes and additions to the MG. The air conditioner adds a lot of heat under the bonnet, so much that it often shuts down just when you need it the most.

There have been advances in a/c technology and equipment. Can any of them make cooling an MG any simpler and more effective? I am not yet sure but am game to try.

The aspect that most interests me is using an electric motor to drive a small a/c unit, rather than the car's engine to drive a powerful compressor. We do not have to cool much area after all. There are two types of electric motors being used, the traditional AC house-voltage (110V) motors and the increasingly popular DC motors (often 12V).

Development of small a/c units has been the portable units used to cool single rooms in homes. These are self-contained units that run on AC house voltage and require a large exhaust tube for the hot air. I have seen these units used totally outdoors such as in open-air markets in Tokyo. I saw some advertised for cooling tents. Cool air blows one way while the hot exhausts the other.

For campers, RV and truck cabs, they now make DC motor units that mount totally remotely from the engine. These are often two-part units with one mounted outside the cab or camper and one inside. You can also buy DC motor compressors that mount much like a belt-driven compressor but do not need to be belt driven. There is room under the hood for these on older trucks and larger cars.

They also supply all-in-one units that mount on the roof of a cab or trailer. But these are large, intended for larger area cooling. They run about 28" square. I suppose they would also shade your cockpit mounted on top! But they are over-kill for a tiny MG and would cover the top of my MGA coupe, for example.

What I think we need is a small unit – like the 'tent' one – but driven by a DC motor, rather than

AC, for more efficiency when driven by a car alternator.

The alternator is the other major piece to this. A normal Lucas unit is only capable of 45 amps or less. Most car alternators will supply much more than that in a form factor not much larger. A popular conversion has been Delco/GM units. I see on eBay that folks in the UK are offering various alternators for MGBs with current ratings of 90 to 110 amps. Low cost but the shipping cost is high. Various articles have been done on converting inexpensive popular alternators for MG use. I picked up a 100A Delco alternator as an "open box" unit on Amazon for \$28 total cost.

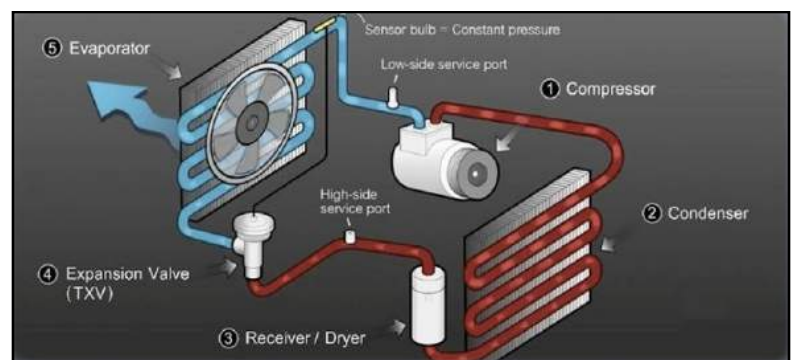


2-part DC motor drive unit for truck cabs, RVs

Look, Ma! No fan belt drive!

Driven by 12V DC motor underhood

How AC system works - below
All these components must be mounted somewhere



With the 'tent' a/c I mentioned, driven by a 110V AC motor, you need a power converter and you lose some efficiency. But that inexpensive converter (\$30 to \$70) adds isolation between the alternator and the a/c motor, protecting the alternator and the a/c unit.

Electric motors are essentially short circuits when you first start them so that they briefly draw a lot of current. Should the motor be so loaded that it needs more current that you can give it, it will stall and continue to draw a lot of current since it needs to rotate to build up the magnetic field to reduce the current. A/c units require a large start up current but then only about half that current to continue to run and even less when the unit cycles off, drawing only fan power.

For the 'tent' unit shown, they specify 300 watts normal operation, with 600 watts as maximum during start up. At 12V (or better: at the 14V of a running engine), that means you need a reliable source of 60 amps or more. More would be better to ensure you do not stall the electric motor under all conditions. The 90-110 amps (1200+ watts) of higher output alternators should do that just fine, even factoring the DC to AC conversion loss.

Alternator current rises with engine speed so not a lot may be available at idle. So you should not turn on the a/c unit at idle - rev the engine - but there should be enough current output to keep it going at idle once it is running.

Look at "Portable Air Conditioners" on Amazon. There are various form factors and prices. Most have higher power and one I saw runs on 24V DC. I saw one portable that runs on 12V DC but is higher power and much more expensive.

But where would you put such a 'tent' all-in-one unit? The one I am looking at measures 18" deep by 11.4" wide and 9" high. Plus a 4" vent tube needs to run from the back of the unit to outside the cockpit. I believe this size unit would fit in a foot-well of many MGs or behind the seats. The foot-well might work if you drive the MG alone or if you had a small limber passenger. The unit might even fit under the dash if the heater is removed.

The unit is portable and weighs 29 pounds so could be on board only when necessary. A power converter could be mounted under the hood, under the dash or inside a fender. Mounting the converter to metal should be enough cooling.

Running a higher power alternator will draw more power from the engine when the a/c is on and may make the engine run a bit hotter when in use. But most the time, your engine is underloaded. The first step may be to make sure you have good cooling for the engine. In my case, I put in a larger American-made aluminum radiator. The next step is to source and fit the larger alternator and test out the DC/AC power converter and the small a/c unit itself. A way to route the large exhaust hose is required as well, though you could test the unit with it run out a window.

If it is successful then the unit would cool even with the top down (windows or screens up).

\$275 on Amazon -
free shipping



Beware: cheaper
units add \$100+ for
shipping



On dash, for tent,
or as a way to keep
the interior cool
while parked

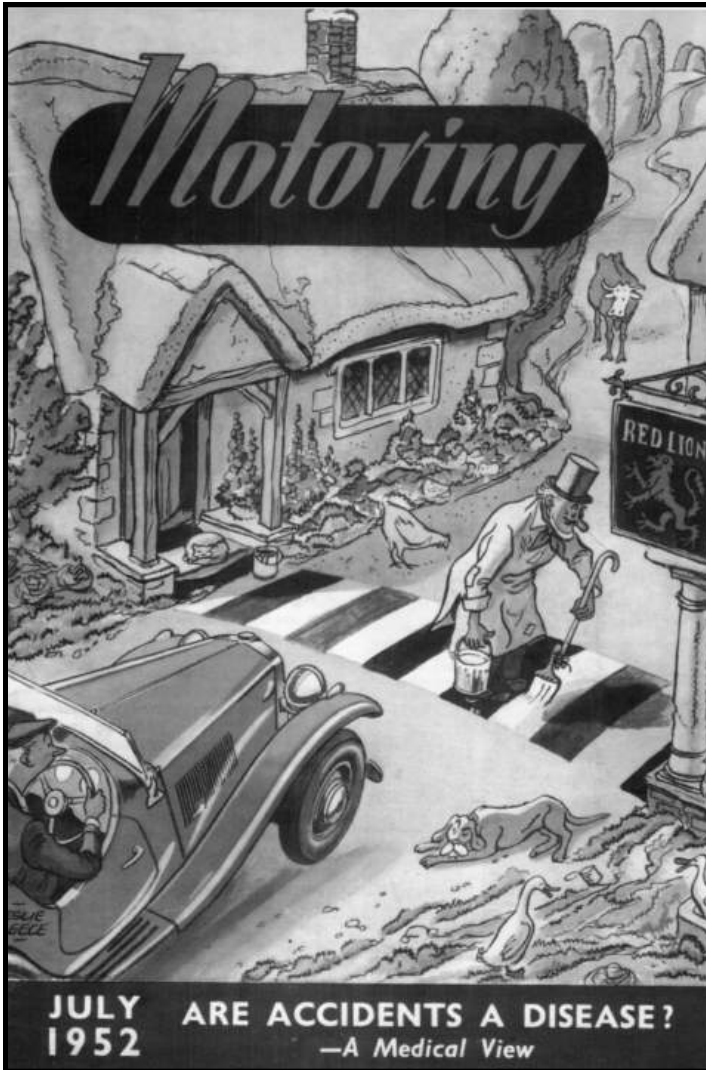


Hollander Tour Pics

From Brother Tom

I didn't catch any dramatic shots (well, except for the vultures circling), but hopefully there's something you can use.





What to know about the Morris Commercial JE Van



Picture showing Morris JE Van driving on the road - Guy Martin/YouTube

We should linger at least a minute on the looks of the Morris Commercial JE Van, as it was one of the most distinctively unique vehicles on the road upon its debut, and remains just as unique in its modern form.

From **Safety Fast** magazine

Leno's Law Passed!

After decades of car enthusiast efforts to get relief from smog testing for older collector cars and after action by Jay Leno in putting his name and influence to the latest effort, California has finally and belatedly passed a bill that will exempt certain older vehicles from smog testing requirements. Governor Newsom visited Leno's garage/warehouse to sign the bill on September 16, 2026.

The law creates a carefully-phrased exemption covering collector vehicles from 1976 to 1985 models. Coverage will advance one year each year. The change is not immediate however, not taking effect until January 1, 2028!

However this covers the MGBs and Midgets produced from 1976 through 1980, exempting them from smog testing. There are some strings attached (of course.) Vehicles must be used primarily for activities such as shows, parades, charitable functions, historical exhibitions, display, maintenance and preservation, rather than serving as the owner's primary transportation. I am sure we will need to perform a lot of 'maintenance' driving of these older cars to keep them 'preserved!' Collector car insurance is required although there appears to be a path around that through filing documents with the DMV.

I fear too many late-model MGs have already been crushed as a result of the, "We know what is best for you," attitude of the majority of California legislators.

The standard US ammo belt was 27 feet long (nine yards) this is where the expression "the whole nine yards" comes from



Seems I have heard other explanations...

Classified Ads

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

1970 MG Midget: Complete, non-running. All original. No rust. In San Ramon, 94583. Make offer. Non-member Herlander Nobrega at nobregaha@yahoo.com (Posted 9/26)

1953 TD: Matching numbers survivor. Solid wood. Rebuilt brakes, New tires and dynamo. Runs well. In Lafayette. Member Jerry Burr, zero260@comcast.net (Posted 10/26)

1955 TF 1500: Parked since 1960s. Stored on a platform under tarps. Car is complete but body is disassembled. RHD. Wire wheels. Will not pari out. Preference given to someone who will restore it. Non-member Andy Kirk, in Los Altos, andrewk962@yahoo.com, 650-224-3527 (Posted (8/26)

Enclosed Trailer for Rent: Enclosed car trailer for rent (16' x 8'). Trailer has integrated braking system and lights, 12 volt electric winch. Reasonable. 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



New Wiring System for MGs

I've acquired a white 1973 Mk3 1275 Midget. The wiring has been hacked around something rotten!

I was an electrical engineer at Austin Rover in the 80s-90s and know I can update the electrical system, rather than just repair specific issues. I want a reliable car with better lighting and visibility to other vehicles.

To this end I intend to:

- 1 - replace the wiring harness with a proper fused system.
- 2- improve the connectors and earthing.
- 3 - add/ replace certain components:
 - Electric fan
 - LED headlamps with DRLs
 - front and rear fog lamps
 - electric washer pump
 - inertial fuel pump cut off
 - hazard flashers
 - etc

It may be blasphemy, but I'm using Chat GTP as an assistant in designing the harness. It takes the laborious work out of generating diagrams and schedules, and I have the knowledge to thoroughly check its output (never trust AI if you don't know the subject).

Follow this journal if you're interested!

Roly, UK

[Roland H](#), [The MG Experience](#), August, 2026

Comment from [Down Under](#)

Same here, I'm re-doing the harness on my 1961 Mk 2 Sprite, using a modified harness from a classic site. I have always been horrified that the car only came with a fuse box with only 2 fuses, one for the horn and the other for everything else. if that fuse blows, everything

stops. My solution is using an old generator regulator box and replacing the non-working internals with a blade fuse holder, and new connections. That way, it looks original from the outside but has 6 internal fuses.

Cheers, Michael Dwyer, Brisbane



NEW Dummy Voltage Regulator
\$215.66

PART #	APPLICATION
RB340X	Dynolite Alternators, Multi Marc Conversion

QTY ✓ In Stock

[ADD TO CART](#) [SAVE TO](#)

Or make your own, fuse blocks are readily available on Amazon.



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North American MGB Register



From
**Enjoying
MG**
magazine

MG Owners
Club (UK)



"STOP GRUMBLING DORIS, WE MUST PRESERVE THE
INTEGRITY OF THE ORIGINAL LIGHTING SYSTEM"



Around the Bay Tour
by Don Herrick

