



THE OCTAGON

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



Since 1957!



MGAs at the Blackhawk British Car Show by Don Scott



November 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.

DIRECTORY of MGOC OFFICERS for 2024

President: Doug Hollander, hollander.douglas7@gmail.com

Vice President: Andy Preston, andypreston@att.net

Treasurer: Marla Preston, marlapreston@hotmail.com

Secretary: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699,

MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Member-at-Large: Mark McGothigan, 510-333-6962,

mark.mcgothigan@gmail.com

Member-at-Large: John Hunt, huntsails@comcast.net

925-330-7849

Member-at-Large: George Steneberg, 510-526-8951,

j2george@pacbell.net

APPOINTEES

Commercial Advertising: OPEN

Corresponding Secretary: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699,

MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

Archivist: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699,

MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

Photographer: OPEN

Registrar: Steve Kellogg, 408-355-4125,

sfkellogg@verizon.net

T Register Director: Jim Carlson, 408-224-3992,

mgjim@comcast.net

The Octagon Editor: Dan Shockey, 309-696-0803,

magnut_dan@hotmail.com

Webmaster: Alan Havey, 925-922-2436, havey@pacbell.net,

webmaster@mgocsf.org

Regalia: Andy Preston, 707-795-3480, andypreston@att.net

CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

Feel free to call these members, who have volunteered to help with purchase, repair, and restoration of various M.G. models, etc.

MGB: Steve Lilves, 415-924-3173, slilves@sbcglobal.net

MGB Early & Originality: Don Scott, 707-942-0546,

Don@napanet.net

MGB V8 Conversion: Tony Bates, 408-666-6174,

avbates@yahoo.com

MGC: Tom Doyle, 520-220-6228, wtdoyleii@gmail.com

M.G. Midget: Christian Rowcliffe, 415-359-6319,

Car@rowcliffe.com

MGA Coupe: Andy Preston, andypreston@att.net

MGA & Twin Cam: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699,

MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

Z-Magnette Saloon: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032

mgpb36@yahoo.com

T-types: Jim Carlson, 408-224-3992,

carlsonconsulting@comcast.net

Pre-war Midgets-Magnas-Magnettes: Dan Shockey,

309-696-0803, magnut_dan@hotmail.com

PA/PB Midget 1934-36: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032,

mgpb36@yahoo.com

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>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Fall Sonoma Tour	3
MGOC Holiday Tea	4
From the Editor	5
President's Commentary	6
Ghost Track: Torrey Pines	7-11
MG Misc.	12
Old School Toe-In Tool	13
Rolls Royce Picnic	14
T Series Gas Leakage	15
Keep Planning; Brit Lingo	16
More Air Conditioning an MG.....	17-18
Evaporative Cooling an MG; Vents	19
Alternator Upgrade	20
Blackhawk Brit Show Reports	21
Automatic Disconnect Switch	22
Eye of the Needle MG	23
Mark Barnhart and the Nighthawk	24
Classifieds	24
Missing Club Members Poem	25
Back Page: Wiper Blades; Blackhawk	26



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.



Holiday Tea Party

And Toy Drive - Saturday, Dec. 5
Still in San Mateo!

Hosted by Elaine & Mike

Bring your favorite tea, teapot and favorite food treats
(All optional - come anyway!)

Bring a toy to share through the Toy Drive!



When: 1pm to 4pm, Board meeting at 12:30pm
Where: 2029 Kings Lane, San Mateo, 94402



From the Editor

Happy Fall, my fellow MGers,

31 October 2026

I hope this finds you getting ready for the Preston Sonoma Tour on November 7. It should be a fabulous drive. We are fortunate to have Andy and Marla plan such a tour for us.

Not much MG news for me. You can read about my air conditioning tests and thinking. Also I splurged (a little) on an aircraft chronograph that well fits my 1930s MG. It is from a Soviet MiG jet fighter (MiG-29) but is a close copy of a Smith/Jaeger/LaCoultré instrument from the 1930s. The USSR bought them in the 1940s then copied the design - and kept using them. LaCoultré is Swiss and made the movement for the British instruments.

As a chronograph, you can measure elapsed time like a stopwatch or as a time of flight. It was designed to be very accurate with, of course, a wind-up movement. Most of these units now come from former Soviet satellite countries. The one I purchased came from Ukraine, via eBay. These instruments were too expensive for most automobile owners at the time.

I had always wanted a stopwatch but never could justify spending the money. Then one day years later I came across one at a garage sale for \$1. They were useful in time-speed-distance rallies that we used to run.

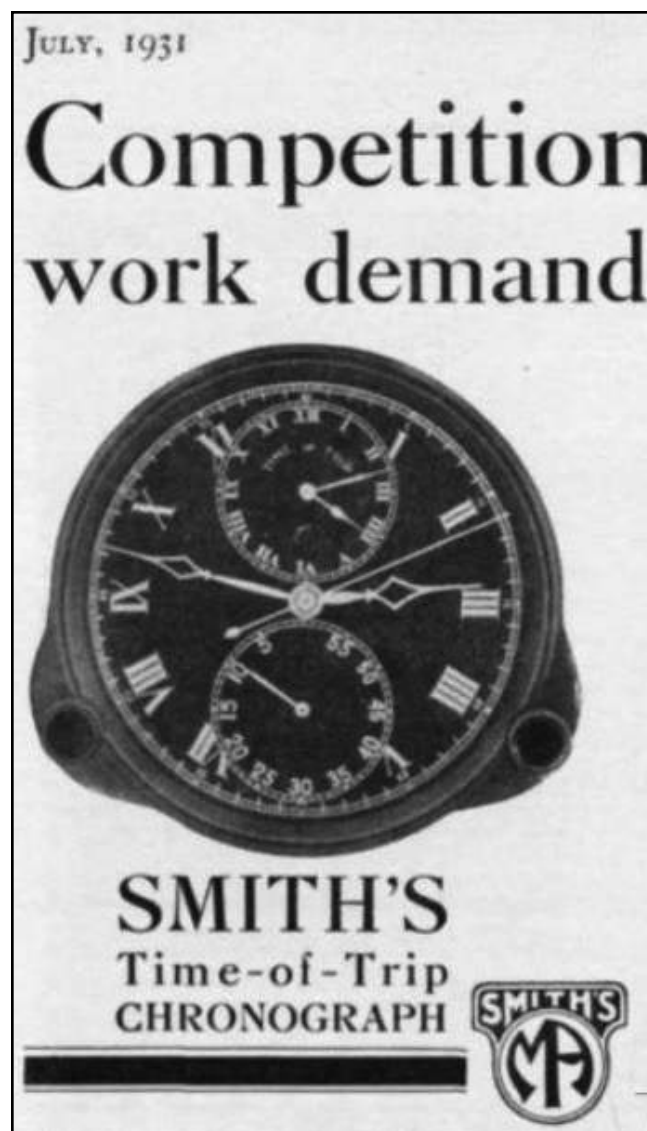
2027 marks the 70th anniversary of our MG Owners Club. This seems a good opportunity to commemorate what the club and sport has meant to us. How shall we celebrate?

Best to you!

Dan

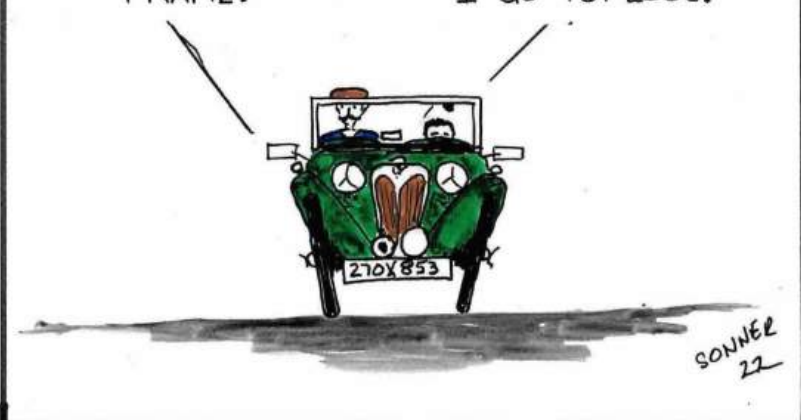


Thuy driving 1934 MG NE



I WANT THAT
LICENSE PLATE
FRAME.

IT REALLY APPLIES,
"SOMETIMES
I GO TOPLESS."



November Comments

There is not much in the MG world for me to comment on as I was out of town for half of the month. Connie and I got the MG out for only one ride on Saturday the third. I had read that Tunitas Creek beach had just opened up as a new county park. 58 years ago, when I was in college, we had several beach parties there. Eventually, the property owner at the path down denied us access and the gatherings ended.

The day was wonderful, warm and clear on the coast. If you live in this area you know under these conditions not to take Highway 92. The highway and Half Moon Bay become a parking lot. Our route was down to Woodside Road, over La Honda Road and north on Highway 1.

The park is beautiful and first class and the beach is far larger than I remember. The parking lot is large and on the south side of Tunitas Creek. (58 years ago, access was on the north side, farther up the road.) You probably have passed this area many times, noted the high sand stone cliffs, and not given it much thought. I highly recommend a visit and may consider a tour for next year.

Our return plan, once again to avoid the Half Moon Bay parking lot, was to drive east on Tunitas Creek Road, take a left on Skyline with an eventual right turn onto Highway 92 and home. What we found on this twisting, basic narrow "two lane" road was that others were coming in 10 car numbers. We would have to either stop or squeeze by. About three-quarters of the way we came up on a 1940 Ford coupe that ran interference for us the rest of the way to Skyline. A nice day and a fun ride.



Events coming up for November are Andy and Marla Preston's Fall Sonoma Tour on November 7th and the Holiday Tea at Mike and Elaine's in San Mateo on the 5th of December. The Sonoma Tour meets in Rohnert Park at 9:30 AM so it will be an early start for Connie and I. Mike and Elaine are now in San Mateo with easy access off highway 92 at either De Anza Boulevard or Polhemus Road.

Safety Fast!

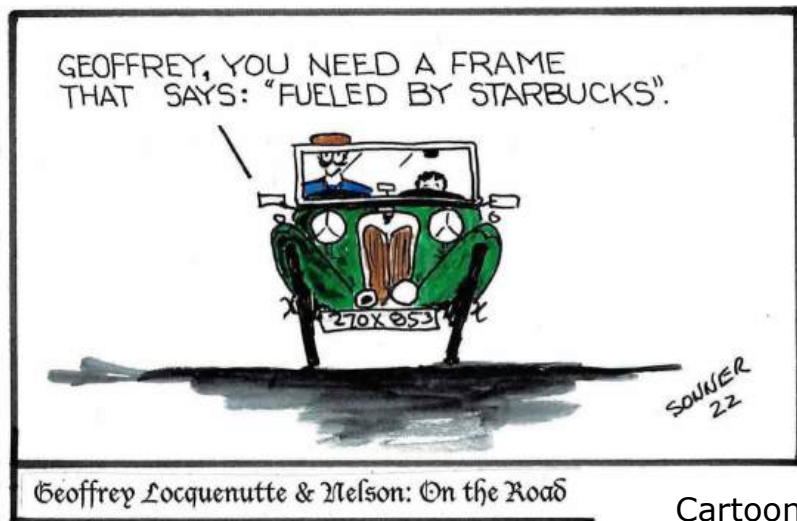
Doug



Tunitas Creek at its outflow across Tunitas Beach. Faint traces of the old [Ocean Shore Railroad](#) can be seen at top left center, between the road and shoreline. Gordon's Chute was along the cliffs at upper left.



Gordon's Chute, 1878

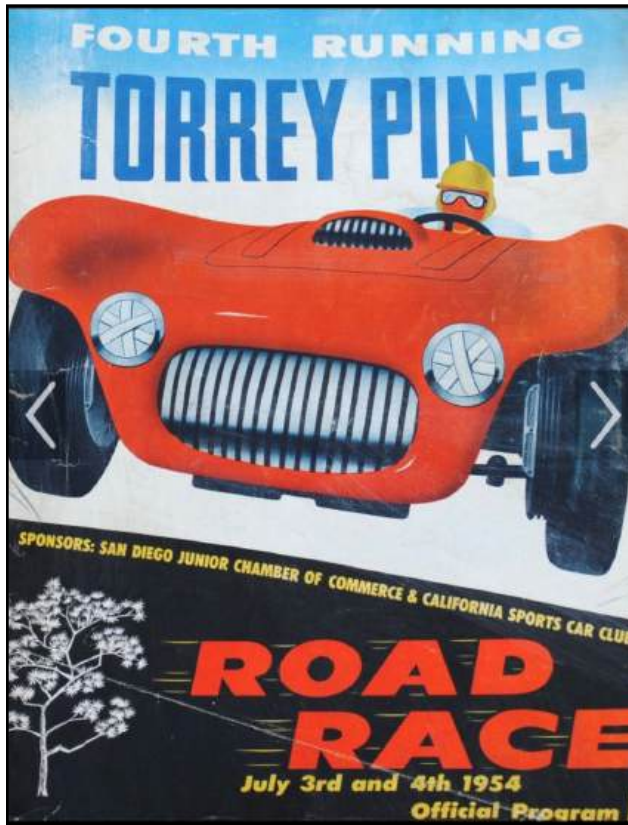


Cartoon by Brian Sonner of Placerville

Ghost Track: Torrey Pines

By Dan Shockey

I have run out of former sports car racetracks near the Bay Area. However there were all sorts of places used for racing and I often hear of more. Some were just used once. Most were not proper road tracks: airports, fairgrounds or even parking lots. Pebble Beach was a popular road track although tight and dangerous. These historic tracks belong to all of us that love sports cars and the 1950s and 1960s racing scene.



One of the best, now gone physically, was a track utilizing a former army base just north of San Diego. The use of this facility came about by chance and desperation. A race had been planned at a small town called Apple Valley north of LA but permission promised by the local sheriff failed to materialize. The organizers, the California Sports Car Club, scrambled to find another site with less than a week to go. In fact some racers arrived at Apple Valley on race weekend to be turned back to San Diego.

The army base, Camp Callan, had been deeded to the City of San Diego after WWII but nothing had yet been done to the site to make it an intended recreational area. One of the main organizers of California road racing was very familiar with the site. John Von Neumann did his basic training at the camp, now known as Torrey

Pines.

Remarkably the club arranged everything in just 5 days with practice coming on Saturday afternoon and the first races that Sunday. The date was December 9, 1950. A course was worked out using the existing roads from the army base. There was no protection for spectators, not even the hay bales and snow fencing they added for later events.

The event was a big success with plenty of competitors and spectators and no major problems. Road racing had found a new home. American road racing in those early years was different from other American racing and different even from road racing in Europe. Only amateurs could race and broad participation was encouraged. There were "powder-puff," ladies only, races as well. And it was a major social event. The parties sometimes outshone the races.

One racer later determined that 50 different makes of cars – not models but makes – had raced in those years. MGs were the most numerous and often they held races just for MGs. Home-built specials, some closely related to hot rods, were popular even after Ferrari racecars and other European sports racers came on the scene.

Many later famous racing drivers and owners came out of these races, particularly the West Coast races. Carrol Shelby, Phil Hill, Ken Miles, Bob Bondurant, Briggs Cunningham, Bill Harrah, Bill Devin, Gorge Folmer, Dan Gurney, Jim Hall, Jack McAfee, Bill Pollack, and Lance Reventlo started here or developed their skills here. Dan Gurney raced his first race in a TR2 at Torrey in 1955. Max Balchowsky raced a XK120 then bought a 1932 Ford and put in a tuned Buick engine. It was painted yellow and became the first of nine 'Ole Yeller' racecars.



Harold Erb's MG TC Special at Torrey Pines, July 20, 1952.

Many Hollywood celebrities raced as well. James Dean won a race at Palm Springs. There were many races held that allowed drivers to develop their skills.

Torrey Pines was especially liked by drivers. It was a real road course with run-off lanes and enough width, with few trees to run into. One turn however, if missed, could send the racer over a cliff to the beach below. (No one did.) The course was right on the ocean and easily accessible to teams and to spectators from San Diego and LA.

The races were organized by the California Sports Car Club, which competed with the fledgling SCCA at the time. One SCCA "National" race was held at Torrey Pines though the others were by the Cal Club. Motorcycles also raced at Torrey Pines. Al Moss recounted seeing a course worker killed there by a sliding motorcycle.

The first race, in 1951, quickly organized as it was, featured four races. The first two races ran at Torrey Pines were both won by MGs. And the under-1500cc main event was won by a Simca but 2nd and 3rd places were taken by MGs, a TC and a TD.

In Stock Sports Cars, up to 1500cc, first was taken by a TC and third by a TD. In the Ladies Handicap Race, the race was won by Jose Von Neumann in her TD with a TC in second. In the main event for larger racecars, a Cadillac-Allard came first followed by two XK-120 racers. Phil Hill raced a TC well-known as "2Jr" fitted with a V8-60 flathead Ford engine. Phil led the race handily until the motor let go.

The second event at Torrey Pines attracted over 100 entries. Of these, 46 were identified as MGs though there were other MG-based specials. The first race in 1952 was for modified sports cars up to 1250cc, with "junior" (novice) drivers. MG TDs took the first four places.

The second race was for unmodified cars, both large and small. A Porsche won the under-1500cc class with two MG TDs in 2nd and 3rd. The over-1500 class was all Jaguar XK-120. The feature San Diego Cup race was won by Phil Hill in a 2.6 liter Ferrari. Two MG T-series cars with V-8 engines qualified 2nd and 3rd. Finishing second behind Hill was a Mercury-engined special.

The third running at Torrey Pines

was also in 1952, in mid-December but there were no races in 1953. There were 125 entrants this time with 48 identified as MG, some with other engines. There was one with an Offenhauser engine and another with a Willys engine. Many were identified as Mk. II TDs. Lars Jacobsen from Pasadena entered his special MG NA. Carrol Shelby made his first appearance from Texas and made LA his home for racing.

In the under-1500, an MG TD finished third behind a Jowett Jupiter and a Crosley. In the San Diego Cup, Phil Hill won again, this time in a Jaguar XK-120 C-type. In the Ladies event, a Mrs. Lowe of Santa Cruz gave Mrs. Von Neumann a hard fight with her Willys-powered MG TD. This was reported as the most exciting ladies race yet seen on the West Coast.



The 1954 race attracted 204 entries. A separate race was run for MG novice drivers and there also a standard race for MGs. TDs took the top positions in each of these races. The regular under-1500 race was won by Porsches. However in the modified under-1500 race, an MG special won driven by Cy Yedor. And in another modified under-1500 race, two MG TDs came in first and second. Ken Miles won the modified over-1500 race in a (not MG) special. There were 18 races including consolation races. In the Torrey Pines Trophy main event, a Jag special won followed by Allard and Kurtis racers with American V8 engines. Phil Hill raced a stock TR2 but did not place.



Photo: Cliff Emmich, Jr.

The fifth Torrey Pines event was in late 1954, again with nearly 200 entries. This event featured a 6-hour endurance race with a LeMans start. (Drivers line up across the track and run to jump in their cars.) MGs placed in two races. The enduro was won by a C-type Jaguar.

In 1955, the SCCA sponsored a national race at Torrey Pines. The Southern California group and Ken Miles were in disputes with the SCCA at the time. The SCCA ran cars in performance-based classes. Stock MGs did not have to compete for prizes with Porsche factory racecars. Two Jaguar XK120M came in ahead of a Corvette in the San Diego trophy race. In the Torrey Pines Road Races, MGs won F Production with the TF now in the first two places. E. Forbes-Robinson competed in an MG Magnette. Both Elliot Forbes-Robinson's ('EFR') parents competed in road racing.

An early historic demonstration race was also held featuring pre-WWI racecars. Another San Diego Trophy race was the main event. Carrol Shelby won this in a 4.5 liter Ferrari.

The 6th Torrey Pines road races

were held in October 1955. (They didn't count the SCCA race.) The 6-hour enduro was back, won this time by a C-type Jag over Phil Hill in a Mercedes 300SL. The top MGs were the new MGA model, one driven by Ken Miles and Cy Yedor. They were beaten by three 1500cc racing Porsches (Speedsters). MG TF racers were close behind and also beat all the Triumph TR2 racers.

In the under-1500 road race, an MGA finished 3rd behind two Porsche Speedsters. This event featured Ken Miles winning the modified under-1500 class in his R2 Flying Shingle. This was the last time Ken raced his MG specials.

This was to be the last race at Torrey Pines. "Everyone took what was presumably a long, last look at the only respectable road circuit in Southern California." (**Road & Track** quote)

But – one more race weekend was allowed, the 7th (8th) in January 1956. "This will be the finale for the famed seaside course near La Jolla, which will be converted into a golf course next month." (**Motor Racing**) 65 entries were allowed into the 6-hour enduro, popular with spectators. Top cars and drivers were attracted to this event. Three of the new D-type Jaguars competed. One of the D-types won the enduro with two Porsches behind. MGAs finished 9th and 10th.

So ends the story of the Torrey Pines racetrack, long gone but passed into the realm of legend.

An effort was made to make the Torrey Pines site into a multi-function facility that included racing. Race courses like Laguna Seca have golf courses. Other road racetracks have come and gone since Torrey Pines. Most have something left to visit. Some have streets you can still drive or remnants of pavement you can walk. We can have a moment of remembrance as you race past on the former 101 or I-5.



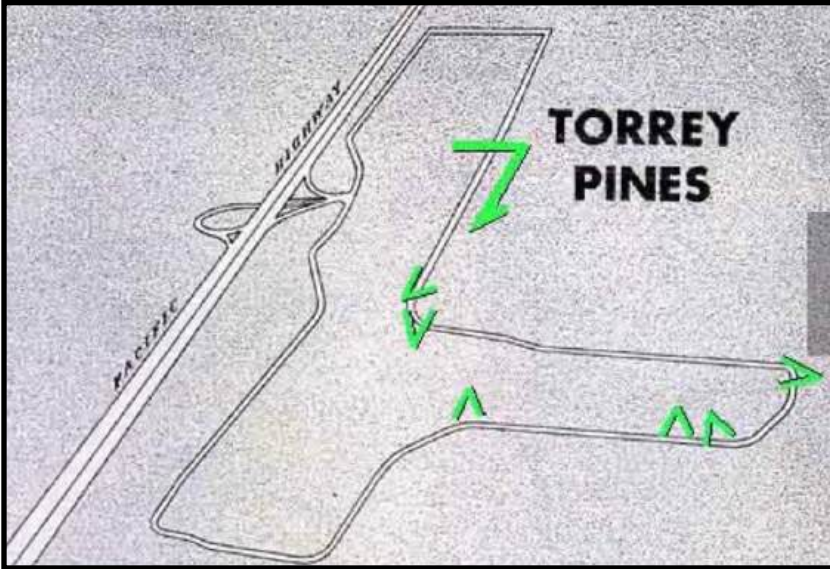
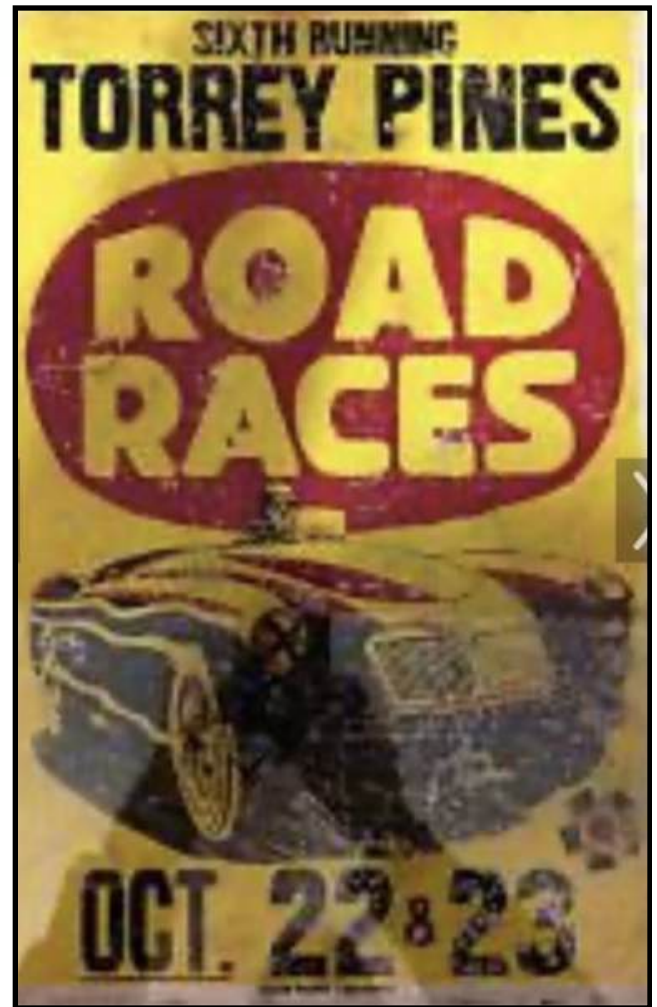
Ken Miles at Torrey Pines
above and below

Photo: Lester Nehamkin



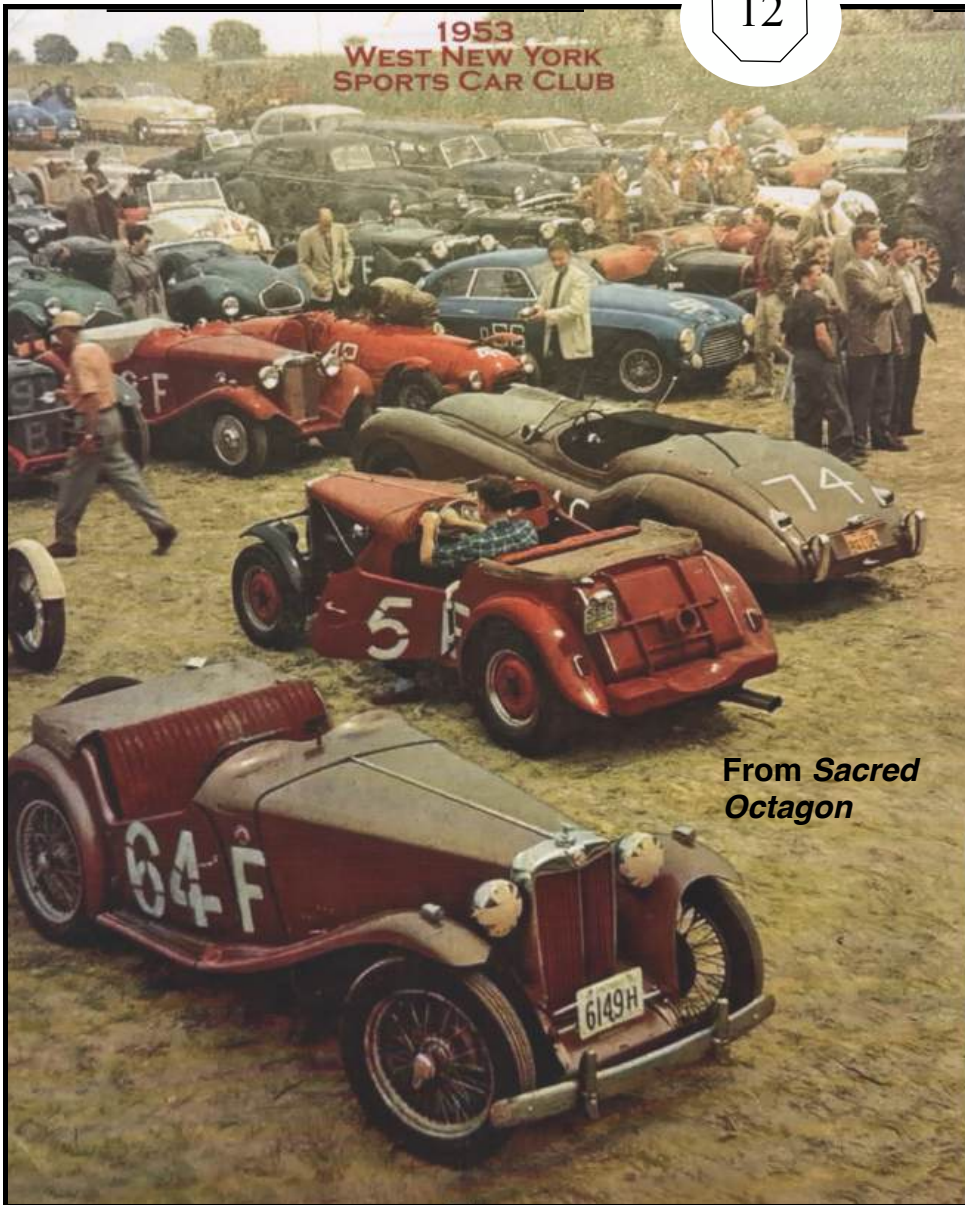
The Torrey Pines course laid out on the current golf courses. Dan effort





Lars Jacobsen taken by son Mike at Torrey Pines





From *Sacred Octagon*

NOT Torrey Pines

But representative of the cars raced at the time - in a rare color photo.

We were born too late!

A few of us were there attending races in the 1950s.

Much later I crewed for a Corvette and a Sunbeam Alpine at road races in the 1970s. - Dan

Below: This guy put in a special section in his drive where he could mount his two-post lift - and roll it in the garage when not in use. Lots of headroom!

Below: Bimini style sun shade on a TC. (Airplane wing above the top in the photo)



Limited room for home shop space makes it tough to **tinker with cars** in a big city. But ...

Old School Toe In/Out

By Dan Shockey

I attended a tech session recently where John Seim, the presenter, used a nifty tool to check and adjust toe-in and toe-out. There are various ways to achieve this (see **The Octagon**, Sept., 2026) but this method is very easy and you can quickly check toe on your or your neighbor's car. What I like most is that it is old school and totally mechanical – and you can still buy the tool new. Plus it breaks down into two and stores very small unlike the toe tool bar I have now.

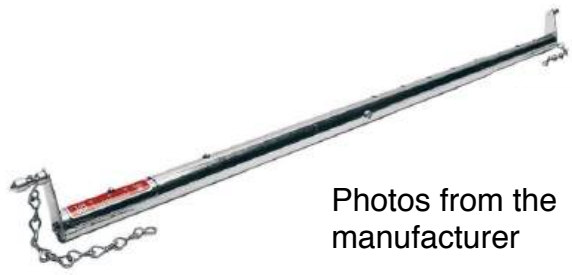
The tool is spring loaded and you set each end at the junction between wheel and tire at the front or back of the tire. Short chains tell you when you are at the right height. You set the tool then move the car forward or back until the chains again just touch the floor. The tool will then read the amount of toe-in or toe-out.

Toe-in is very important for the good handling performance of your MG. Too much toe-in and the car will want to turn sharper than you want, perhaps even spin out. Too little toe-in (becomes toe-out) will make the car hard to control in corners, unwilling to turn and make it feel like an old truck.

A friend had way too much toe-out on his Healey 100-6. It never handled well, never like a sports car. Finally I helped him check it. It appears that the car had an accident at some point in his long history and someone had replaced the steering crossbar with one that was too long. Once we got that corrected and the setting right, the car was transformed.

Improper suspension settings of all types can lead to bad tire wear of course. Check the settings for your MG. Most require a little toe-in, 1/8" to 1/4" but the MGA spec is for zero (straight ahead). I found with my PA, some wear or give in the suspension can result in unwanted toe-out. They make a spring tool to hold the front of the tires apart while setting it, or just make sure you check for that.

A condition known as "bump steer" can occur depending on the suspension design. With toe-out, this can be very disconcerting and even dangerous. For those interested in suspension design, a book "Chassis Engineering" by Herb Adams is great and



Photos from the manufacturer

readily available used. (Abebooks or Amazon) He makes it easy to understand.

The tool that John owns is labeled, Ideal Wheel Alignment Gauge, The Wheel-A-Matic Corporation, Hooksett, NH. You might search for this name if looking for a used tool. I cannot find it new under that name but it is readily found under a new name. It is called a Toe Measuring Gauge by the Specialty Product Corp. You want the shorter model that goes down to 39". I do not know if they still make a larger big truck model. The best price I found was \$100 from Eastwood. They currently (October, 2026) offer a \$10 discount coupon for new customers. I have not seen any offered used on eBay so folks likely hang onto them. I would.



between front
tires position gauge between the front



the Wheels roll the vehicle forward
until the gauge comes into position

Rolls-Royce Club Picnic

From Steve Lilves

Saturday the RROC invited MGOC members to join them for their Picnic at Stafford Lake Park. Five of our members took part in what was a fantastic day to be out there in nature!

Ed and Rowena DeMayo, Mike Jacobsen and Elaine Chan, and Andy Hunt were there and so were we, Steve and Gayle Lilves, although Steve was hosting the event on behalf of the RROC! The weather was perfect and the atmosphere was great. Many of the Rolls and Bentley members had MG's and for some MG's were there first car! I know that was my first car, and I still have it today!

We had a delicious lunch, from Chick-Fil-A that included a fruit cup, chicken sandwich, fries, Mac & cheese, and a delicious brownie! Beverages were Pellegrino Limoncello and sparkling water!

Everyone had a good time and met a lot of great people. Too bad more of the members didn't come! Maybe next time!

Photos: Steve Lilves



Gas Leakage Issues for T Series

By Michael Bond

Larry wrote from Tacoma regarding an MG TF issue, a leaking gas cap. Larry noted that he has installed both a new cork sealing gasket and an aftermarket fuel level dipstick as seen the photo. In theory, the dipstick appears to assist in preventing fuel escape from the neck of the tank.

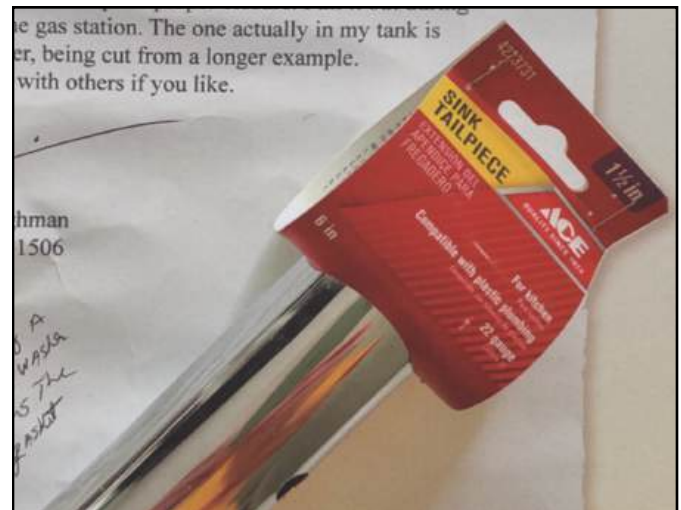


I certainly don't see any obvious issues with your gas cap arrangement. I can relate that I have the same problem with my TC and TD if I'm not careful to leave a 6" air space at the top of the gas tank. This is especially true when driving in hilly terrain. MG's designs around the "sealing" of gas tanks seems to be geared toward a speedy opening and closing. Thus, all we "T" owners have to do is touch a level and presto, the cap flips open. The bad news is that the neck of the gas tank is short and fuel can easily find its way out of the top.

The venting feature of the cap consists of a small hole drilled into that little metal "lid" that contacts the cork ring in the neck of the tank. The lid is adjustable to allow contact with the cork seal. This tiny vent is essential for allowing make-up air to enter the tank as you drive, but can also be a source of leaks. You could try a thicker cork gasket around the

tank's ring, however you run the risk of the cap popping open when the conditions are right. So, my best suggestion for eliminating fuel leakage out of the top of a "T" series gas tank is to always leave a generous air gap at the top of the tank.

One responder uses a piece of 1.5" kitchen sink plumbing with two holes added to help with venting and a thin 1.5" rubber washer. The flat washer covers the cork gasket. Just drop it into the filler hole and adjust the cap for proper closure. Pull it out during a fill-up. (See photo.)



MGOC member Don Davis found an O-ring and flat washer solution (See **The Octagon**, January, 2022)





Keep Planning for 2026!



Phil Hill in 2Jr MG with V8-60
Photo: Dean Batchelor

FALL

Oct. 30-Nov 1: CSRG Rolling Thunder at Thunderhill Raceway, Willows, CA, Spectators welcome.

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



WINTER

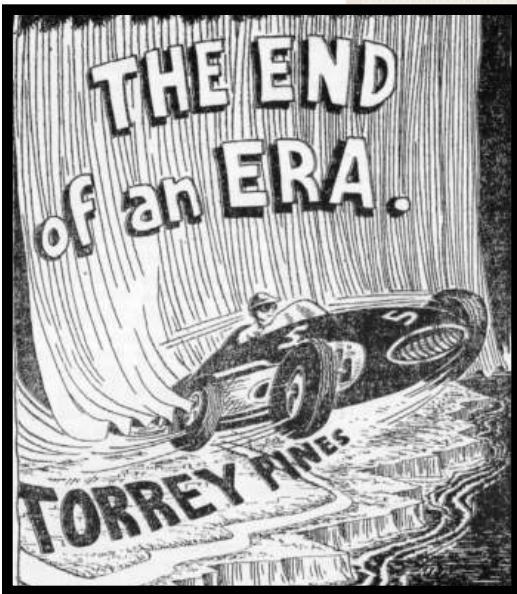
Sat, Dec. 5: MGOC Holiday Tea, Mike & Elaine

Dec. 13: SSTS Holiday Party, Golden Gate Yacht Club

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

2027: MGOC 70th Anniversary, Events to Come!

The curtain comes down on Torrey Pines. Bill Harmer



BRITISH SLANG LESSON

Crikey

"Crikey" is an old-fashioned British exclamation of surprise or amazement. It's a euphemism for "Christ," and it became popular in the late 19th century as a milder way of expressing shock without being blasphemous. It's a bit dated, often heard in older British TV shows or period pieces, though it's still used today in a humorous or exaggerated way.

Borrowed
from the
TC
Motoring
Guild



More A/C for MGs

More ramblings by Dan Shockey

In further evaluation of portable A/C units to cool MGs on hot days, I bought one of the inexpensive portables (\$250, rated 3200 btu) and tested it. I decided to try mounting it in the trunk. An MGA has a large passage between the trunk ('boot' to the Brits) and the interior. The hot air can be passed out a slightly open boot lid.

I tried this on what I hope was our last very-hot day this year. It was 95 outdoors and my garage was at least as hot, especially with the clothes dryer running next to it. My concerns were these: Will the compressor start at that temperature? Will it keep running for some period of time? Will it cool the interior to a significant degree, enough to be able to keep the windows closed? I connected a 4" tube to the cold air output and ran that up between the seats. I just plugged it in to 110VAC.

The info for one of the portables said not to keep it inside a closed car in the hot sun since the compressor would not start above 90 degrees. (Thermal shut down circuit.)

The car was already hot but lacked additional sun warming (greenhouse effect). But there was no wind to assist, either ambient or from speeding down the highway. The unit started and continued to run until I turned it off after 2 hours. The airflow was low but cool and dropped the interior temperature to 72 degrees. It was 75 degrees after 1 hour. Much cooler than 95+. No water was generated since the air was dry.

I found I could set the unit to one side of the boot and still put the space-saver spare inside the boot. I only temporarily set it up with some cardboard and some cloth so the cooling was not as good as it would have been with a better sealed system.

The tradeoff seems to be between low power use and the amount of cooling available. I believe



that more cooling is required but that will still be within the capability of the alternator. (Higher current to initially start the compressor then lower current to run it.) A steady 30-40 amps is an acceptable output for a standard alternator – but a peak of 70-80 amps is too high for the normal Lucas unit. (See separate article.) However the battery can provide part of that initial boost.

I think a higher power portable (5000 btu or more) would work for an MGB/GT. The exhaust could be run out a rear side window. Most of these are 110VAC so you would need a converter. Some more-expensive portables run on DC voltage.

I believe electric cars are the source of DC-voltage, electrically powered A/C systems. These are often 48V to match the voltage from the electric or hybrid car's battery pack. The other source is these small portables for tents, small rooms, camping, or parked RV applications. These are generally 110VAC powered.



Shockey
pics



There is also a range of all-in-one units for truck cabs and RVs that run on 12VDC and can be mounted on the side or roof of a vehicle. I tried the look of one on top of my coupe. It would work well there but be un-aesthetic (ugly!) My thinking now is to mount one of these rooftop units on a trunk lid for the MGA (or MGB or Midget). This would be on a 2nd lid that can be mounted only when needed. It would have to bring its output cold air forward to the cockpit. That might be relatively easy with the big passage in the MGA and could be done with tubes into the interior of a B or Midget. A fan can help push the air forward.

The unit I am looking at (see image) is very close to the size of the MGA trunk lid although the hole thru the lid is 10" by 14." It is rated at 10,000 btu of cooling with a draw of 33/66A. Of course you need to be careful routing that much current to the unit, wherever it is mounted. These units come with a remote so you can adjust temperature from the cabin.

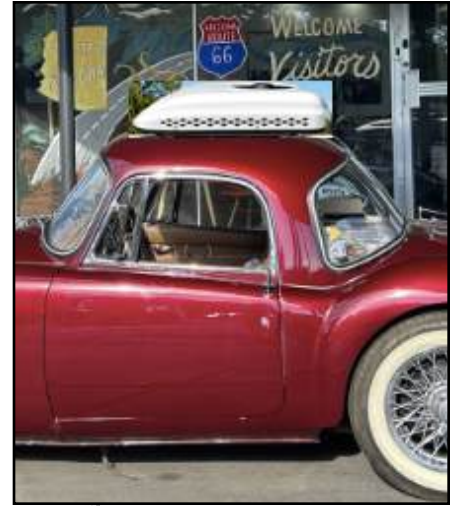
Or, another thought, put the rooftop unit entirely in the trunk with only the top fan vented through the boot lid. The spare could then be

carried on the luggage rack. Perhaps cool the entire trunk along with the interior. There will still be room for other items. The unit could be removed when not required. Only the 12V power lines would need disconnected.

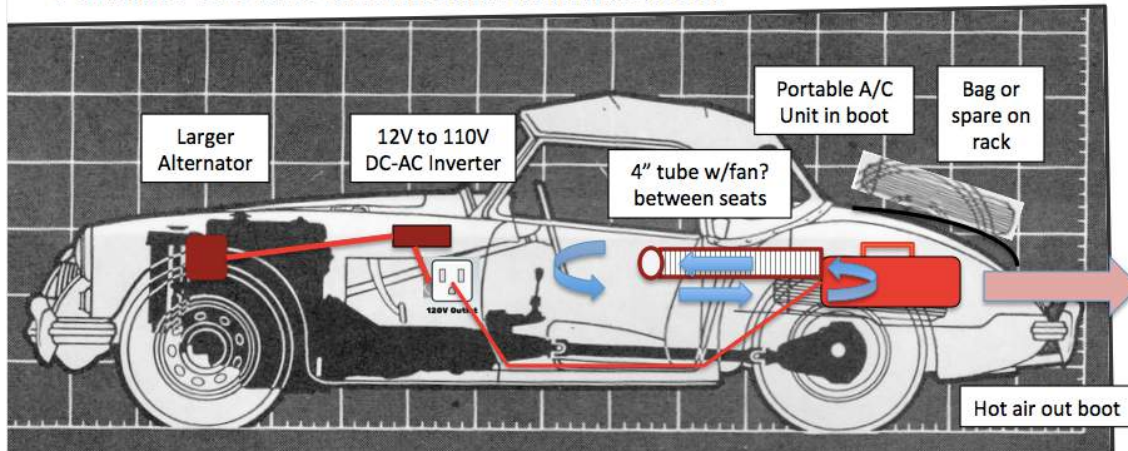
An advantage of an 110VAC unit is you can convert the power in or near the engine compartment then use a standard 110VAC outlet – perhaps in the inner footwall and use the standard plug wire from the A/C unit to that outlet.

This is only "bench racing" so far – though I did the test above. Thoughts and comments welcome. See the article on evaporative coolers.

Right: No way!

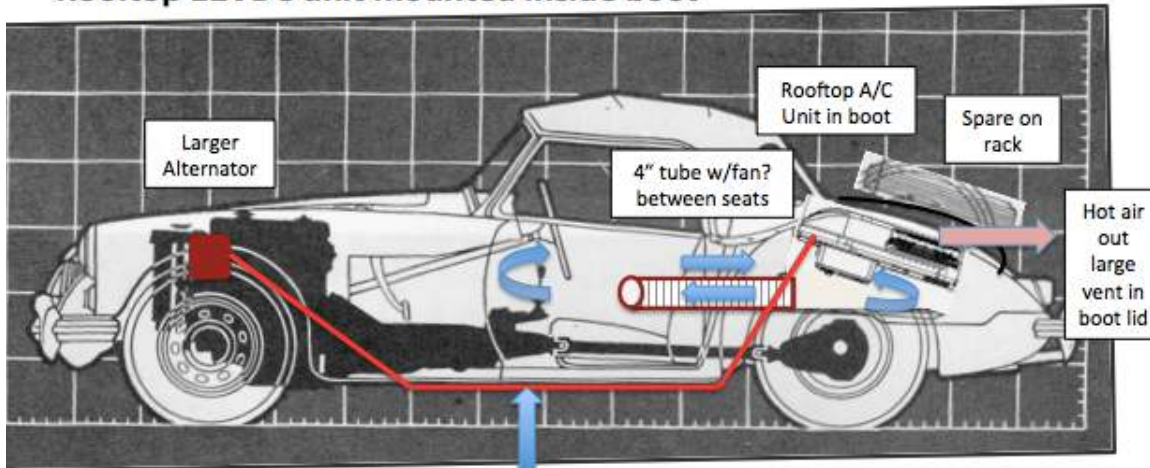


Portable 110VAC unit mounted inside boot



Cooling Capacity	9500 BTU
Brand	Treeligo
Function	Cool only
Type	Rooftop RV Air Conditioner
Interchange Part Number	rv air conditioner
OE/OEM Part Number	rooftop air conditioner
Manufacturer Warranty	1 Year
Voltage	12V
Applicable	Truck, Minivans, Construction Vehicles, Sanitation Vehicles
Features	100% Leak Tested, Durability Tested, No Drilling/Modification Needed, Patent Part
Rated Current	40-60A

Rooftop 12VDC unit mounted inside boot



4 gauge cables for 12VDC, connect to battery as well

Photos and art by Dan Shockey

Original art from Road & Track

Evaporative Cooler

By MGOC member Scott Eldridge

Hello again. I recently acquired a 1971 MGB GT. It has the pillow dash and no airflow other than the windows. The engine has been modified for performance, and when stopped, the car itself heats up faster than an oven in the sun. And I am sensitive to heat. I rigged up the setup shown with an inexpensive evaporative cooler that runs on 12V. It puts out air that is about 5 degrees cooler than ambient (more if you put ice in it). It's not a lot, but I can direct a nice flow right at my upper body that's a relief even if not cooled. It's ungainly but works well.

The car I have was a friend's project that had to be abandoned near completion. It had been destined for a Nostalgic Air AC unit that actually came uninstalled with the car. The engine modifications had made a stock installation unworkable without some custom work that didn't happen. I've thought I might investigate what the installation would entail, perhaps for next summer, but I've begun to think the extra load on the system might not be worth it, as most of my driving is local and near the coast. The engine already produces extra heat from the modifications. Even with an auxiliary fan the engine and I ran hot recently when I had to drive slowly uphill for several miles in 90-degree heat.

Just finished the current newsletter cover to cover. Good reading. I liked your AC article; I learned things. I looked briefly at Amazon. I'm a little skeptical of their cheapest units. Would have to research.

No, the small portable AC units aren't much bigger. The smallest I found was the S1 Pro Portable

Air Conditioner. But it was \$700 (dropped to \$600) and enough bigger to matter: 18 x 9.5 x 13 vs. 12 x 11 x 8. I'd have to check if it would actually fit in front, and it likely wouldn't run well or at all at idle without other changes. The cooler I have uses the type of fan you get on a large desktop computer, and even it slows noticeably at idle. I might still consider such a unit like the S1 if I find myself venturing into the heat more. Might be preferable to a custom install of my under-the-hood unit.

Evaporative coolers are inexpensive and come in many form factors. There are small units that fit on a dash or could mount under the dash. As Scott says, they need ice to work. They also require low humidity. They work based on evaporation – hence the name – so do not work well in a humid environment. I never saw them in Illinois growing up. They also draw little power – just the fan. – Dan

Front Vent Windows

By Dan Shockey

We are fortunate that many of our MGs have these. These and those great fender-well vents of the old American cars helped quite a bit. My 1965 Mustang had floor vents that brought lots of outside air right up my pant leg. (Designers stopped using these vents since they were a source of rusting and most folks went to a/c.) I also liked the big opening vent that TR3s had at the base of the windscreen. I saw someone adapt one of those to fit his TD.

My MGA coupe also has front vent windows. The problem I have with them is that I have to hold them open at highway speed. I have been thinking of some simple attachment to hold them open. I suppose I could take the door panel off and try tightening the vent window. For my MGB/GT rear swing-out windows, I cut short pieces of 1x2 wood and stuck those in at the latch. That worked very well to keep the windows open.

Anyone come up with a solution to hold front vent windows open? Maybe a short of piece of notched wood would work there, too. "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck would chuck wood?"

"How much wind would a notched wood chunk vent if the wood chunk would stay in?"

Photo: Scott Eldridge. This one holds a lot of ice.

Also known as a "swamp cooler"

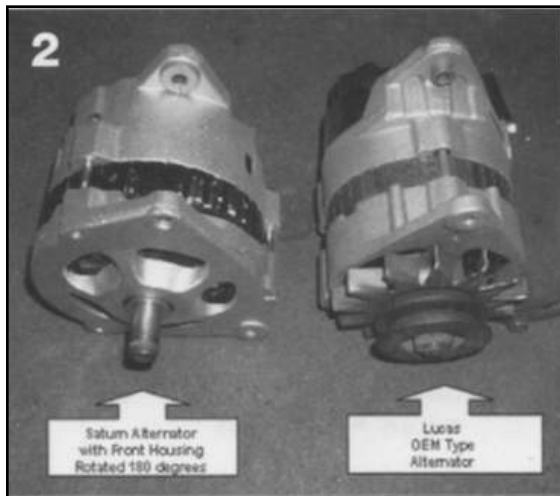


Alternator Upgrade

From Dan Shockey

In 2004, **Classic MG Magazine** published an article by Darryl McLendon regarding an upgrade to the alternator for his MGB. He said the Lucas units had not lasted well (18-24 months) for him, perhaps because he was running extra accessories. He had a high-watt stereo plus a 10-disc changer in his daily driver MG.

Darryl worked with a Bosch electrical specialist, another Darryl, Darryl Beech of Charleston Import Automotive in South Carolina. Darryl recommended a common (at the time) alternator application for a 1995 Saturn. You could get a variety of manufacturers in new or rebuilt units for significantly less than a Lucas unit.



These units for the Saturn are rated at 96-110 amps. They require changing the pulley and "clocking" the unit to mount correctly in an MG.

In searching for a larger alternator, I started with the Saturn model on various car parts sites and then Amazon. While on Amazon, I found a Delco/GM unit of the same variety. Then they popped up an open box alternative that cost me \$28 total delivered. And then I bought a V-belt pulley. I had to buy a connector as well.

I used an electric torque gun (a great tool to have) to remove the old pulley. I used an oil filter wrench to hold the fan so I could zip off the nut. I found the unit did not need "clocked" as it was already set the right way round to fit on the motor.

There are four wires on the connector to this alternator. Jerry Felper, MG electrical guru, said I need to use one of the brown wires to connect to the ignition then the high current comes off the large stud. Darryl recommended attaching the red wire to the stud as well. I suspect the terminals are connected internally.

As an alternative, you can find higher-power Lucas alternators. I have one I picked up

somewhere. Jerry says he tested those and they are good for 90A but best not to exceed 65A in the MG arrangement.

You can tell the higher power Lucas unit by looking at the thickness of the central plates. The higher power ones are thicker. I measured 11/16" vs 1/2" (approximately). Very obvious side-to-side. I suppose these units came from a Jaguar or other larger Brit car. I cannot tell from the Moss site if this is true. They list an upgraded alternator that is NA (not available) as well as the standard 45A Lucas.

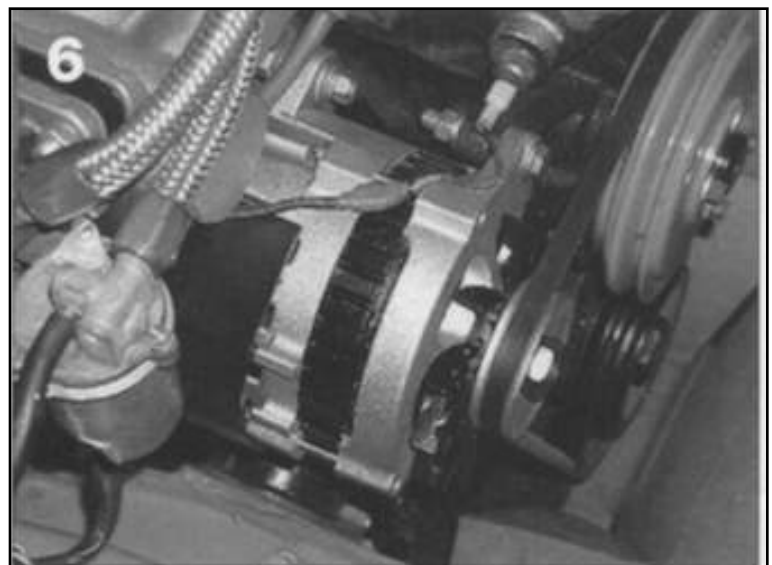
Jerry says you may have to grind off a little of the front attachment to get the pulleys to line up, depending on your MG set-up.

These "Delco" alternators have been a common MG upgrade for decades. So far I have only used Lucas units from swap meets but there appears no reason not to boost your power, replacement availability and reliability.

Unit info: I have seen alternators that look the same for very low cost on Amazon and eBay, new for \$70 or less. These are likely imported. The following are what I purchased.

- Delco alternator: ACDelco Gold 335-1036 (88877246) Alternator, \$105 (many options)
- Delco style connector: Alternator Lead Wire Repair Harness Connector Replaces CS130 Fits 1986-1996 GM, \$13 (many suppliers)
- 2.5" V-belt pulley: Fits Delco 10SI Series Alternator 1939886 1961291, \$15 (many other options)

As I reported last issue, there are alternators on the eBay UK for MGB that are higher power and low cost. But shipping cost is high from the UK. One is chrome plated!



Photos from Classic MG article

Saturn Alternator Installed on my 1980 MGB Roadster. (Darryl's MGB that is)

Blackhawk Show Reports

From Don Scott

These were the three MGAs at the show, the middle one being the white Twin Cam, whose dashboard is in the separate photo.

It is a lovely '59 Twin Cam restored by Jim Alcorn. I spoke with the owner who said he had spent about \$80k, which included buying the car before having it redone by Alcorn.

There were some MGBs I liked at the show. A black exterior with red interior makes for a very attractive color combination on an MGB.

From Ray Davis

I was the only one from SSTS who attended. John Hunt from the MGOC was there. I showed 2 vehicles. The 1938 MGTA Tickford placed first in the T Series Class and the 1932 BSA 3 Wheeler placed second in the motorcycle class. There were over 100 participants.

From John Hunt

Another fun show in Danville this past Sunday. We had all the usual British cars and bikes there, which was wonderful to see. A few Northern California MG Owners Club Members there such as Ray Davis with his glorious 1938 MG TA Tickford which is the personification of grace and elegance, Craig and Kimberly Kuenzinger with their MG Midget that looks like it just rolled out of the factory in Abingdon and my 1971 MGB GT.

Other interesting vehicles include Ray Davis's BSA three-wheeler, a modern MG TF from Canada (yellow car), a red Daimler SP 250 roadster and a British postal bike that is red as well

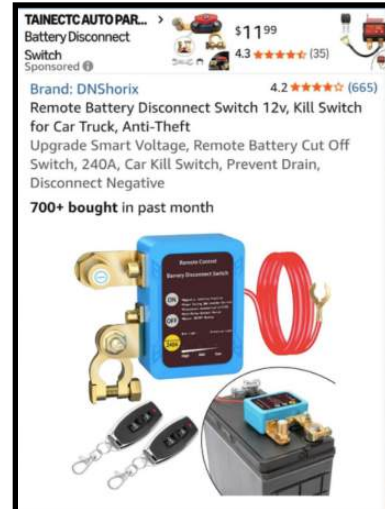
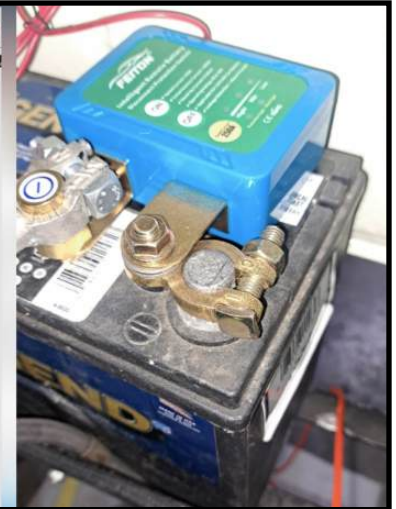


Ray's cars pics by Ray
MG interiors by Don Scott

Automatic Disconnect

Note from Bill Trall

You might consider this remote battery cutout switch, I have one on the J2. It is a safety in case something shorts while parked. It is also useful while doing wiring work. It will cut off the power should sparks or smoke appears and I am wedged in a tight place. \$28 on Amazon. Might save your MG one day!



Sports car enthusiast **JACKIE COOPER** says:

"It pays to change your Oil Filter regularly"

Jackie Cooper, star of Motion Pictures, Theater and TV.

Jackie tunes his cars for road racing and day-to-day driving . . . says, "15 years of working with all kinds of cars have convinced me it pays to keep a clean oil filter on the job."

MG



Safety **MG** Fast!

"Eye of the Needle" MG

The TA (or TB or possibly a TC in the movie) appears early in the movie. The RAF Hurricane pilot drinks too much following his wedding and kills himself on the road.

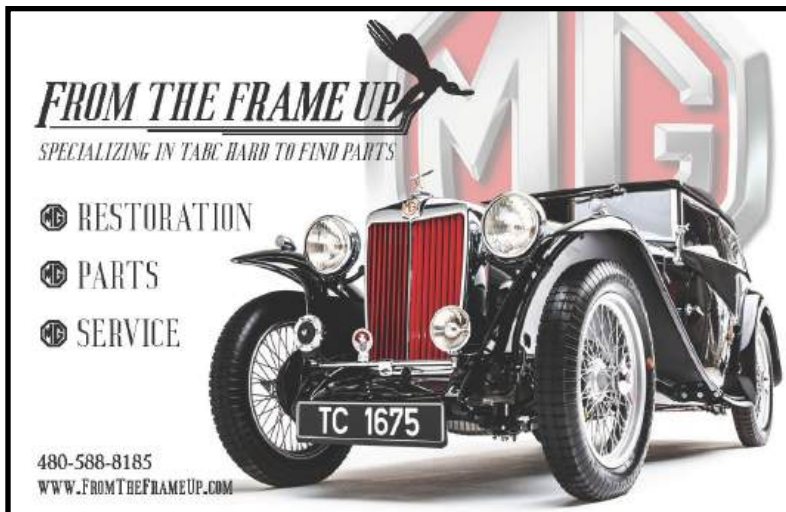
The MG appears to have been carefully laid on its side with crude cycle wings (fenders) in front that can be bent for the photo.

Fun to see – not the wreck however



Love the period costumes!
Note the crude front fenders ready to be "wrecked."
Standard rear wings.

Copied from TV. Blue screen.



Mark Barnhart Passes Creator of the Buick/MG Night Hawk

Mark Barnhart was a long-time member of the Michigan Rowdies. We lost a great man and MG enthusiast. Mark was 83.

"I worked at General Motors Institute, a technical college in Flint, Michigan. A friend I worked with a student who was coop-ing out of Buick Engineering. We all owned MGAs and were all members of the North Eastern Michigan Region of the SCCA and active in racing. When the Cobras started running circles around the 'Vettes, we thought GM needed something that would change that. We formed a company and modified our own 3 cars into something we thought could run with the Fords.

"It was our student who discovered the crankshaft switch that was became the "stroker" mod and gave the 215 CID motor its 260 cubes. There was very little machine work to accomplish the change. When approached, Buick loved the idea and came up with the name Night Hawk. They designed an emblem with the Buick Triple Shield Inside the MG octagon. We had contacted MG about supplying us 110 MGA frames and bodies as they still had the MGA line even though BMC were now making the MGB.

"When they found out what we were doing they said if we could give them prints for the mods on the frame they

would build them to our specs. We pointed out to Buick that with the price we got from MG we could sell the cars for \$200 less than the Fords.

"GM had the cars for 3 weeks and when we got them back, they had obviously been driven hard. We got a call from Buick to come in for a meeting. A very frustrated Buick General Manager read us a letter from Corporate informing us that they felt the traditional Buick customers saw the brand as a luxury vehicle and would be offended if they built a sports car. The letter was then thrown onto his desk and he said, 'They are afraid you will hurt the sales of their plastic pig!'"

We are seeing the passing of good friends and I fear, the passing of a generation of sports car enthusiasts.



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)

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



Missing Club Friends

An unexpected Star
You blazed across my sky
From Space, from Mars, the Moon?
A fireball that touched and
Glor'fied.

Yes - no man is Good
But some men are great
To be honored and missed
So be remembered and
Mourned.

My mentor, teacher, friend
You taught me joy in work
Inspired endless fervor
You ennobled me to
Laughter.

Your bright and burning path
Like meteors before and since
You fought our Gravity,
Burned out upon the last
Frontier.

Cold stone scattered on earth?
E'er blaze across my sky
Brighten my dreary night
And leave your crater on
Us all.

By Dan Shockey



MG Car Club Luxembourg

Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!



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




North American MGB Register



From
**Enjoying
MG**
magazine

MG Owners
Club (UK)

