



THE OCTAGON



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



Since 1957!



November 2020

Zoom Zoom!



About *The Octagon* and the MG Owners Club

The M.G. Owners Club, formed in 1957, is the Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club, formed in England in 1930. The Peninsula T Register was formed in 1973 and is now an informal sub-group of the MGOC. We receive a copy of the MGCC's *Safety Fast*, available to members on loan from the Corresponding Secretary. The club is also associated with the North American MGB Register, the North American MGA Register, and the New England MG T Register. The MGOC holds a business meeting each month at an event known as the "Natter and Noggin" in the style of English clubs. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the MG Owners Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or Board of Directors.

DIRECTORY of MGOC OFFICERS for 2018

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CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

Feel free to call these members, who have volunteered to help with purchase, repair, and restoration of various M.G. models, etc.
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COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to **Mike Jacobsen** at 415-333-9699 or MikesMuseum@yahoo.com. 2005 rates are: monthly (yearly): full pg. \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75).

All ads expire on Jan. 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, 10 Willis Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? The club roster is available from Steve Kellogg upon request.

MGOCSE.ORG

Upcoming events, MGOC history, photos, membership forms, *The Octagon*, and helpful links are posted on the Club Web site at <http://mgocsf.org>.

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The MGOC & the SSTS invite you to a Safe and Socially Distanced

SONOMA TOUR, **Thursday, Nov 12, 2020**

We hope you can join us for a picnic at Goat Rock Beach, Sonoma
Bring your own chairs and picnic lunch to enjoy at the beach.



IF IT'S RAINING THE TOUR WILL BE CANCELLED

Please wear masks and practice social distancing at all times.

Date: Thursday, Nov 12, 2020

Organizers: Andy and Marla Preston 707 795 3480

Meeting Place: Harvest Market, 155 San Marin Dr, Novato 94945, with a full tank of gas. There are no gas stations along San Marin Drive.

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

Tour: We will meet outside the Harvest Market in Novato where you can pick up a sandwich or lunch at their deli. We will drive out through Chileno Valley to our first stop at the Petaluma Creamery where you can buy a coffee, ice cream and cheese. **Only 6 people are allowed in the shop at a time and masks are mandatory.**

We will leave the Creamery and drive through Bodega Bay and along the coast to Goat Rock State Beach on Hwy 1, enjoying spectacular views. We will park and have a short walk to the beach where we can enjoy our lunch. Bathrooms are available at all stops.

Please RSVP: to Andy or Marla Preston at 707 795 3480 or marlapreston@hotmail.com by Nov. 10 so we can send you final instructions and tour directions.

(Flier by Andy)



From the Editor

Greetings, Members,

Hello again. Covid stays with us. We are beginning to see the long-term effects. But **The Octagon** must out! I do enjoy doing it though it is always a circus.

I have stepped through several projects in order of need. House repairs then work on my slumping hillside. Now I have removed the laminated flooring from my garage. It had been converted to living space and was a safety hazard for jacking my MGs. Now with the materials (1x4s, 2x6s, plywood) from the floor, I am building a close-fitting car shed for the MG PA. That will free up my large shed for more storage and shop space. And maybe be less hazardous to the MG in getting it in and out and climbing over it. I need "hard" storage to deter rodents.

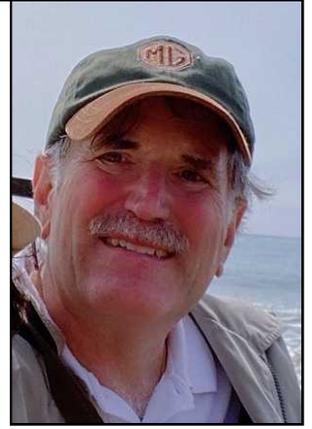
I hope to get back to MG work, perhaps do the MGA driveline swap that I wanted to do a year ago before my sinus infection wiped out November and December. With my forced confinement I have gotten a lot done to the PA this year. The new exhaust seems to be fine. I rubbed out the new paint and it is okay.

We took the PA to the TC clubs Conclave in San Luis Obispo in October. It was a small event this year with many folks deciding to sit this one out and not risk social contact in their old cars. It was good to go somewhere. I spent many hours working out how to load the PA in the bed of the pickup truck. I bought a base model F-150 18 months ago. It has a/c and a trailer hitch and everything I need. I like that it is built of so much aluminum. I started my career as an engineer for General Motors.

This was a test of hauling this way. It seems better for very long trips like to Colorado. For closer journeys a trailer or my tow dolly would be easier.

The newsletter is my love-gift to you. I miss you folks.

October 31, 2020



Dan



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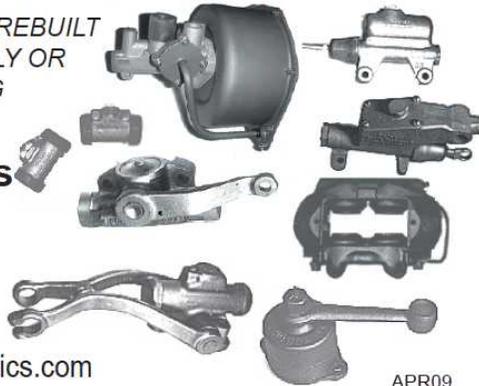
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Dan as Mr. Toad,
Oct., 2019



Member Notes

Welcome Chris Chandler of Yuba City with a Yellow Primrose 1967 MGB recently purchased from Don Scott

As an undergrad, circa 1970, I drove a '66 MGB for about 2 years. So, on the road down memory lane, I bought a '66 that looked just like it last September.

It is a good looking car that runs like a champ, but after considering cost of going forward with restoration, I become convinced of the benefits of a well documented car where someone else had done the work.

One thing leads to another, which led me to Don. The car will "live" at our place in Yuba City until I can sort out how to build a garage at our place in Point Reyes Station. I plan to take the car over there in the Spring, and look forward to meeting up for some of your drives.

I'll try to get you a few photos and a "blurb" in the next few weeks after we get a real yellow sun rather than the red imposter.

Thanks, Chris

Andy,

I think we spoke about a week or so ago and I may have misplaced information you provided me. I'm trying to get any background on a particular 1949 TC from the Napa, CA area. Any ideas?

Thank you, John Wilkinson, 707 732 62324

My name is Lynda Humphries and I am the newsletter editor for the Idaho British Car Club. I'm seeking some help to try to locate history on an MG TF.

By chance did you know a member, Richard Swain that owned an MG TF (1955)? I'm helping a friend in the South of France, Thierry Suchier, try to locate history on his car. He purchased the car from ebay in July of 2016 and the title shows that Richard Swaine owned the car from March 2005 to October 2015. He lived in Magalia, Ca. When Thierry received the car it had a cover with the MG Owners Club of Northern California logo. Any help you can give would be much appreciated! Lynda



Reply Mike Jacobsen:

We had a Richard Swain in San Jose until 2003, but he had a Midget at that time.

From Dave Marsh

Have you heard about this one? Cheers,

https://www.motortrend.com/news/rbw-ev-roadster-mgb-specs-price/?wc_mid=4035:20030&wc_rid=4035:146497&_wcsid=F24B6BCADF7A39E42E39377C1D9156F239C562EFF3F1063F

From Bill Traill

I will check with the paint store to see if they have paint planer or 'run razors.'

Check out this method using bondo to help remove runs. Just might be workable after reducing the runs with razor. [Amazing Trick for Removing a Paint Run](#)

From Jorge

Can you please let me know when is the next drive? Thank you,

Reply from Andy

Hi Jorge great to hear from you and I trust that you and Stephanie are staying well. I'm thinking of putting on a Sonoma tour for the MGOC in November although I previously cancelled it.

Marla and I will be doing a trial run in the next couple of days and then will decide if we think we can make it safe for everyone. Presently it will start in Novato and finish up with a picnic on the beach so everyone will need to bring lawn chairs and sandwiches. Take care,

From Mike J.

Thanks, Andy. Gee, it's been nine months since our last meeting. Is that what they call a pregnant pause?

As of right now, since my local (cheap) copy shop is open again, printing the *Octagon* for mailing is no more of a problem than it was a year ago, except for one thing: I can no longer print the mailing labels. The printer is so old that ink cartridges are no longer available for it, and you can only refill a cartridge a few times. I *think* this is the printer that the club bought for Marty Ray way back in the last century, but I'm not sure. Yeah, I need to buy a printer, but haven't done so yet.

Here's an article from Classic Motorsports that I thought you might be interested in.

https://classicmotorsports.com/articles/mgc-coupe-recalls-glory-days-motorsport/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=What+s+Next%3F+The+New+Wave+of+Collector+Cars&utm_campaign=CMS+Daily+Newsletter+Automation+Email&vgo_ee=pocI%2BKfB71dXdDviPDA0X%2FuAsoVR7IgSptmlyrKWZxY%3D

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P.S. Your comment about promoting social distancing by wearing a MAGA cap couldn't have been more timely.

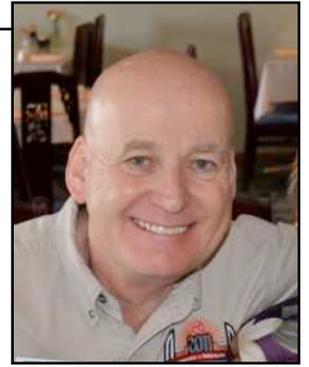
from Dan Neu

Review from Tom Doyle

Interesting article. And no I haven't seen this. Thanks for sharing. Interestingly enough I get this magazine but hadn't seen this article.

Upon review, this is the first photo of an MGC engine that has a valve cover painted in flat black which is similar to what mine is. I have been toying with the idea of reverting to the lime green valve cover which I believe was original but now having seen this maybe I'll keep mine the way it is. I did notice the three Weber 45DCOE carbs but tuning them must be a pain. The article states the three carbs ends up double the HP but that is incorrect as the 2.9l Austin engine produced between 145-150 HP out of the factory. So converting to three carbs (I have two 1.75 SUs) increases BHP by 25%. I was also pleased to see the same racing tires and rims setup that I have on my C. I'm not sure I like the nose and bonnet setup but it looks cool but probably is not very practical. My original color is the same as the one featured in the article - Tartan Red. And from what I can tell the interior is also exactly the same as mine with the exception of being RHD, radio, and head rests.

Alternatively, I could compare the Sebring car the article to my C to show the difference between a "stock" C and a Sebring one. Later,



President's Ponderings

Marla was in the Target parking lot in her 2018 Mazda Miata when a gentleman commented, "those are great little cars with none of the hassle and headache of their earlier English predecessors." As he walked away she said, "I have some of those too." He turned and asked "MG..? Triumph?" to which she replied "MG". He turned around and shook his head and said, "**Bless your heart, you must have the patience of Job.**"

This month we had our first Zoom Board and Club meeting and both were well attended and successful, although I'll need to buy a different camera for the next one. The club meeting was a few days before Halloween so Steve suggested a Halloween theme and most members were good sports and dressed up in costume, adding to the fun. Many thanks go out to Steve Kellogg for organizing it and to Kirk Prentiss for being the moderator. I thought that Kirk did a better job than any of the moderators in the Presidential debates! Great job guys! And we'll be having another one in about one month.

At the Board meeting the Board voted to extend the membership to all members at NO COST for another 6 months up to the end of June 2021. Hopefully by then all this craziness will be behind us and things can start to get back to normal. Our major ongoing expense is the production and distribution of the Octagon by mail so this will continue to be suspended and only available online.

That being said Marla and I will be running a "Safe and Socially Distanced" Sonoma Tour on Thursday November 12, providing it's not pouring with rain. You can read more about it in the flyer in this edition. All communications will be through email and final instructions and route directions will be sent out electronically. There will be NO driver's meeting; we just meet and GO.

I was planning on driving the MGA Coupe on the tour and dug it out of Covid quarantine a couple of days ago. It's been stored since the middle of February and is complaining about lack of use and has a miss on acceleration. I'm in the middle of trying to find the problem and hope to have it sorted before the drive. We'll see!

This is the time of year we seek nominations for Officer Board positions. Fortunately all the incumbents have kindly volunteered to run for another year but we always welcome new member nominations. If you'd like to add your name to the ballot please contact Dan Shockey or any of the Board members.

It's nice to be somewhat active again and involved in club business and hope to see you soon or at least in virtual reality on our next zoom meeting.

All the best and keep safe during these troubling times,

Andy



I was tempted to change Andy's usual photo. When asked who he was, he said this was him (Andy) 40 years ago. Scary! (Dan)



Understanding Ballast Resistance Coils

Excerpts from **MG Experience** and Barney Gaylor

You can't just stick any type of coil in as a replacement coil in your car, because coils can have differing resistance ratings for both the primary and secondary windings within. You need a coil of approximately 3.4 ohms primary resistance if you run a points ignition system without a ballast resistor in the circuit, and one of around 1.5 - 1.8 ohms if there is a ballast resistor in the ignition circuit. You have to understand what the ballast resistor is supposed to do, and why it was used, in order to answer your question. An easy coil ballast requirement check is to measure the resistance across the two coil terminals - if around 3 ohms, the coil requires no ballast, if about 1.5 ohms, then the coil will require a nominal 1.5 ohm ballast resistor in the run circuit.

An ignition system without a ballast resistor is designed to operate at full battery voltage (~12v). The problem comes when the engine is being started, perhaps under harsh conditions such as extreme cold. In cold weather conditions, it is much harder to ignite the air/fuel mixture in the chamber so a strong spark is required. Cold weather also affects the battery output. Even under good conditions, cranking the starter in a car will drop the battery voltage at the coil by a volt or two. Under harsh conditions, the voltage may drop much more - perhaps to 6V (or lower)! So, when you most need high output from the coil, it cannot provide it due to the weakened power from the battery.

The cure for this was the ballasted ignition system. In a ballasted ignition system, the coil is designed to run at a reduced voltage, say 6 to 8V. Since the car's electrical system is 12V, this creates a problem. If you ran the ignition at full battery voltage the extra current would eventually burn out the coil and probably fry the points. So, a resistor is inserted in the power line to the coil that drops the voltage to the correct 8V level. But what about starting?

When the ignition key is in the starter position, the circuitry bypasses the ballast resistor and applies full battery voltage to the coil. Even if the battery voltage has dropped significantly (say to 8V) the coil still gets its proper rated input power and is able to produce a hot spark to start the engine. The ballast resistor goes in series with the white wire from ignition switch (fuse box A1 terminal) to the ignition coil. You can mount the ballast resistor on or near the coil. You can run a new wire from the downstream side of the starter switch to the same coil terminal to apply full system voltage to the coil while cranking. And don't worry if the weather is warm and the battery voltage doesn't drop - running the coil at over voltage for a few seconds won't hurt it.

The Lucas Sports Coil is designed for a non-ballasted system. Of course, you could install it and remove (bypass) the ballast resistor, but if you do you will be getting lower ignition performance during start up. If you only drive your car in warm weather, and it is well tuned, you probably won't notice any difference.

So, you have to decide which trade-off you want to choose.

The original MGA coil has about 3.2-ohms resistance in the primary winding (draws about 4-amps). When using a ballasted ignition system (our MGAs never did), change to a 1.6-ohm coil and the 1.6-ohm ballast resistor in series (same 3.2-ohms total and same 4-amps). If you do not change the coil, the ballast resistor will reduce spark intensity for normal running (bad move).

T-series MGs and MGBs and Midgets up to 1974 did not use a ballasted ignition system but MGBs and Midget 1500s in 1975 and later used a ballasted system, thus a different lower-resistance coil.

One other advantage of the ballasted ignition system is that 1/2 of the waste heat is dissipated in the ballast resistor, and the other half in the coil, so the coil runs a little cooler.

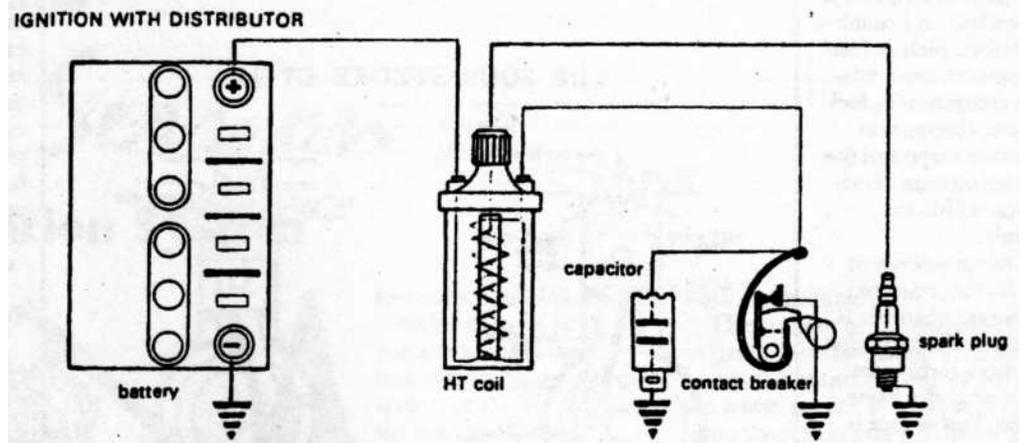
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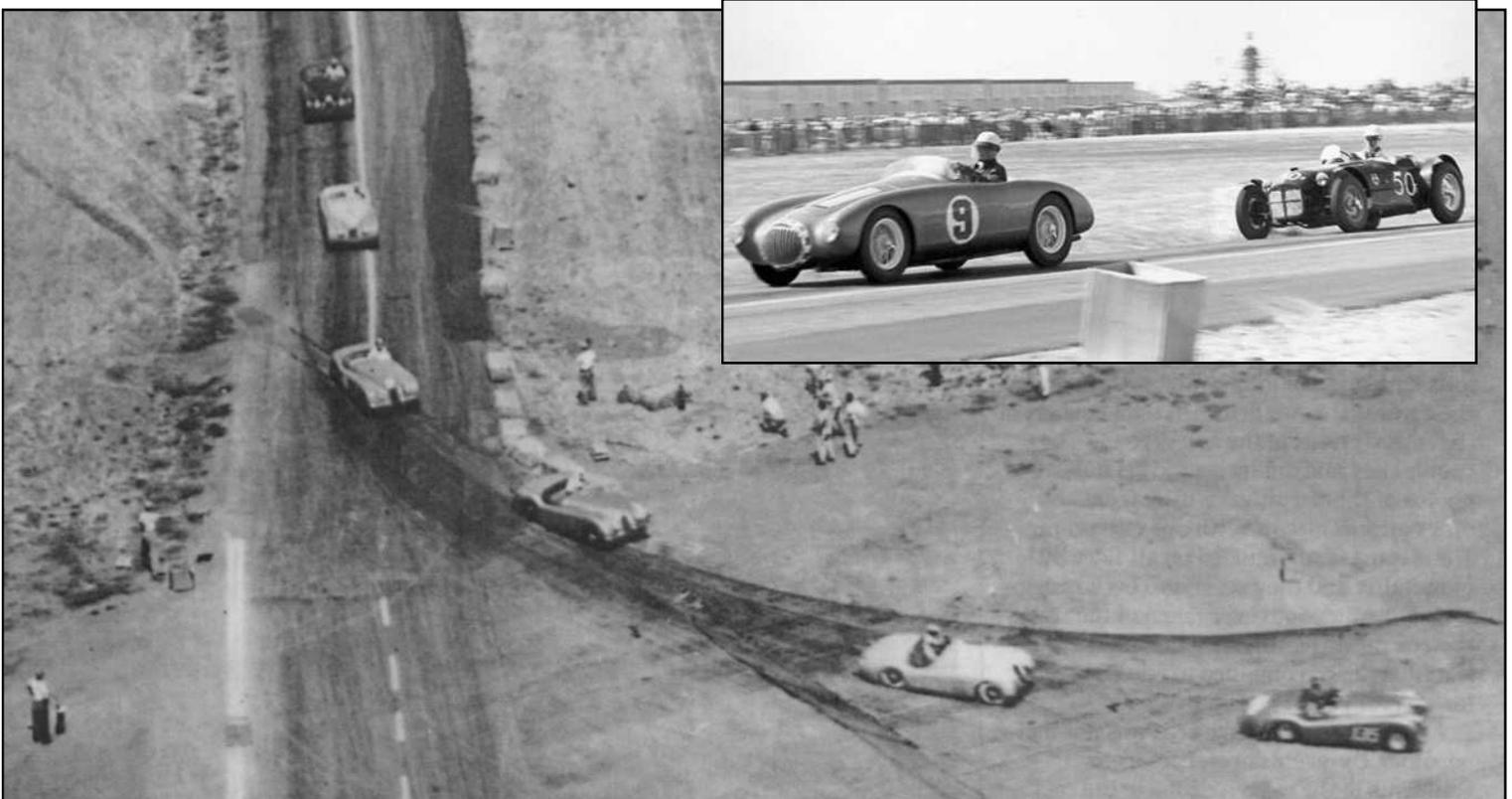
Ghost Racetrack

From the *SCCA Magazine*

Tales of another local Ghost Track sprang up, this time south of the Bay. This was none other than Moffett Field, site of San Francisco Region's major races in 1953.

Moffett Field has the distinction of having some of the most unusual structures of any SCCA course. That's because in addition to fighter aircraft, bomber and transport planes, Moffett was home to a fleet of military blimps. The huge hangar required to house and service a blimp is awe-inspiring, to say the least. The hangar served as a backdrop for the truly striking cover shot that graced the inaugural Moffett Field Road Races program. It shows a trio of sports cars alongside a Navy fighter.

It is easy to spot the long main runway that served as the start-finish straightaway for the course. A variety of narrower taxiways and access roads were used to snake the course from one end of the runway to the other, in the shadow of the huge hangar. Back in 1953, Bill Stroppe won the feature race in his Kurtis-Mercury after crowd favorite Phil Hill's Ferrari let him down again, this time with a broken axle. Home-built, pushrod-engined American racer beats European supercar!



Stop Knocking the MGB GT

Condensed from *Popular Classics*, April 1990

With a production life of 15 years, during which time 125,000 cars were manufactured (in addition to MGCs and V8 GTs), the MGB GT was undeniably one of the most successful – if not the most successful – GT sports cars of all time.

2020 marks the 55th anniversary of the model's launch, for the 'MGB with a shed on it' was first shown at the Earl's Court Motor Show in October 1965. Despite now being out of production for nearly 40 years, the GT is still the most prolific GT sports car on the roads of Britain.

Yes the MGB GT has suffered an increasingly hostile press for 50 years. It begs the question of whether the scribes were right and the car is a poor performer, or whether the tens of thousands of people who own, use and love the GT know better than the typewriter drivers.

Launched in the middle of the swinging sixties, the MGB GT offered credible levels of performance and handling by contemporary standards. Indeed, the motoring scribes of the time were almost to a man enthusiastic in heaping praise upon the car's handling, which they believed to be slightly tauter than that of the MGB roadster, and all the better for it. The GT possessed a front anti-roll bar as a standard fitting (an optional extra on earlier roadsters) which also presumably made a contribution to the handling.

The press's praise was substantiated by the B's successes in both roadster and GT forms. The roadster had proven itself when, in 1964, it took a class win in the Monte Carlo Rally. With Mini Coopers taking outright honours in the event, however, the MGB's glory was very much diluted, even though it achieved many other class wins up to 1968, when Leyland took over and ended works competition involvement.

Five years after the launch of the GT, some motoring journalists were singing a different tune, dismissing the car as uninspiring and old-fashioned. By the mid 1970s, some elements of the press could apparently find no charitable words to describe the GT. The car was mercilessly berated on all counts: it was not only old fashioned, but also slow and possessed of ponderous handling.

As so often happens, published derogatory comment can be accepted unquestioningly by the reader. Over time, such rhetoric even becomes accepted as a truism by the motoring public and enters auto folklore.

People who had never driven or even been driven in the MGB (but had read derisory articles) would enthusiastically give the impression

of authority and pontificated that the car was slow and had the handling characteristics of a horse and cart.

Against this, many people who have owned an MGB will admit to their esteem for the car, often stated that it was 'the best car I ever owned', and that they would dearly love to have another.

Had the MGB's handling deteriorated to so great an extent that the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally class winner was now a dog? Had other, more modern, cars improved so much that the MGB was in a different league? The answer to both questions is a qualified "No." True, the 'rubber bumper' Bs with their raised ride height possessed higher degrees of body roll, until this was tamed with a rear anti-roll bar as a standard fitment; true, more recent cars showed general handling and power improvements over comparable 1960s cars. But neither circumstance offers a satisfactory answer.

The most probable answer appears to be a change – some would say a lowering of standards – within motoring journalism. The genteel integrity of the fifties and sixties was slowly being replaced by a needlessly aggressive, sensationalistic and often unbelievably pompous style that was probably encouraged in many instances by the editors of certain magazines, each keen to win the escalating circulation wars.



Let's set the record straight; in its ability to transport two people from A to B along typical open 'A' roads and observing speed limits, the MGB GT is hardly likely to be substantially bettered by modern cars, even if piloted by very skilled drivers.

The engine gives the BGT a turn of speed quite sufficient for most purposes. On winding roads the B's handling only proves a problem to unsympathetic drivers. Those weaned on modern hot hatches could easily get out of shape through lack of knowledge, but the experienced driver who becomes *au fait* with the MGB's cornering behavior will have no problems in adapting his or her technique and achieving rapid progress.

What, then, can the prospective MGB GT owner expect if his or her dream is realized? The car is practical transport for two people and a limited amount of luggage. It is not a sports estate (wagon) neither is it a typically cramped sports car – unless you are unlucky enough to sample the contorted delights of the rear seat.

At the most down-to-earth level, you can squeeze a couple kids, medium-sized dogs or a week's shopping into the back. The ease with which the car can be driven with minimal gear changes makes both long journeys and town driving equally relaxing, although at low speeds, the steering is on the heavy side. The car is neither so low as to give a worm's perspective of traffic nor is it so high that you feel you are in a saloon (sedan).

Overall running costs are comparable with those of most modern cars due to the MGB's lack of depreciation, which should compensate for the extra thirst of the old engine and sundry repairs. All MGBs are appreciating in value, and if this is taken into account a GT can be thought of costing little or nothing to keep on the road. Insurance premiums can be quite reasonable for what is, after all, a sports car.

The MGB's popularity maintains a healthy spares trade that is large enough for competition to assist in keeping prices down. Furthermore, the accessory/improvement market is buoyant and has already provided the option of 'green' cylinder heads for those who fret about the environment.

On the minus side, this is a true classic, and therefore aged – even the newest example is over 40 years old today – car, with all of those endearing foibles so familiar to the average classic car owner whose vehicle has to serve as everyday transport.

Major mechanical breakdowns are few and far between. The engine in this setting is among the most reliable and long-lived of all car engines. The gearbox and overdrive benefit from the simplicity and robustness of a bygone era.

The bodywork is another matter. While a paragon of efficient design, it possesses several areas that inevitably rust and can seriously weaken the car. However it must be remembered that the rust bug can strike any monoque-bodied car of comparable age, and in both this respect and in rebuilding costs, the MGB is neither significantly worse nor better than other vehicles. The abundance of new and used body panels is quite a benefit.

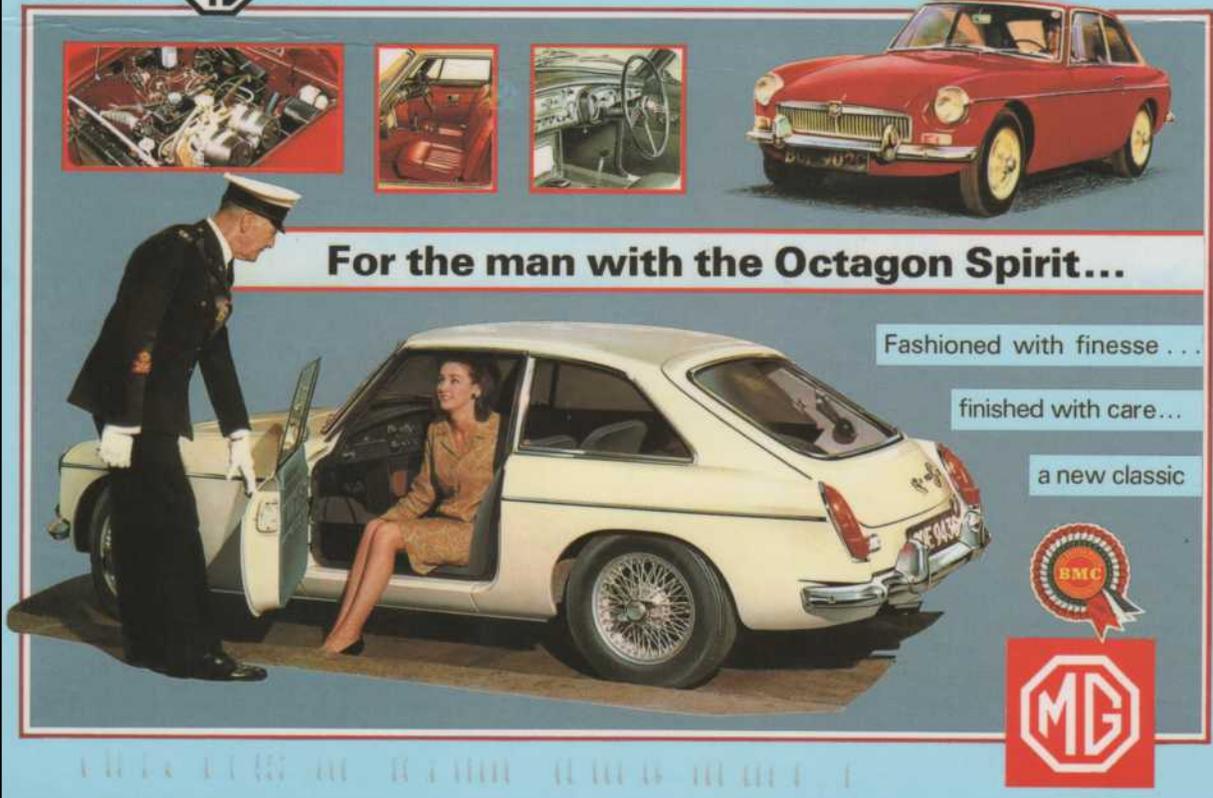
Driving

Ignore the pundits. Driving an MGB is always a pleasurable experience. The lack of bhp in today's terms is well compensated for by the torque produced by the engine. There are many options to increase the horsepower of the rugged MGB motor should that be desired. Overdrive and 5-speed conversions can assist with power transfer and improve freeway cruising.

Realistic on-road performance, where 30-60mph times count far more than standing starts, is quite sufficient to ensure that you need never lack for overtaking power.



MGB  GT



For the man with the Octagon Spirit...

Fashioned with finesse . . .
 finished with care...
 a new classic




THE MGB/GT combines the excitement of a sports car with the comfort of a touring car. New features for 1971 include the use of tinted glass all-around to minimize transmission of the sun's heat to the passenger compartment, and an interior courtesy light. There is also a light in the rear luggage area. More efficient warm air ducting is used. Heater and ventilation controls have been made easier to operate. A leather covered steering wheel, mag-style wheels and radial ply tires are standard equipment. Overdrive and wire wheels are among the many options available. The MGB/GT can be seen at the New York Auto Show.

#

BRITISH		AUSTIN-MG
LEYLAND		

NEWS

MGB-GT Song Lyrics

By Richard Thompson

Oh, I've got a little car and she might go far
She's the mistress of my heart now
She's a '65 with an overdrive
And I fixed her in every part now

Two in the front and two in the back
A hundred and ten on the old hog's back

My MGB-GT, she's a runner now
MGB-GT
Oh, my MGB-GT, she's a runner now

Oh, I welded the sills and the old floor pan
Cut the rust with the torch and the hacksaw
Took the Rostyles off, put the spoke wheels on
Got a brand new Salisbury axle

When I come to town the girls all smile
They say, "Here's the man with the retro style"

My MGB-GT, she's a runner now
MGB-GT
Oh, my MGB-GT, she's a runner now

Lockheed discs and twin SU's
Original chrome on the grill now
She looks like a dream in her racing green
Competition's standing still now

I sprayed up her body, I strengthened the frame
I stripped her right down and I built her up again

Now an Alpine's fine if you've got the time
And a Healey'll set you back some
And a TR4 costs a little bit more
But it don't have the same attraction

Hard top handy, in case of the weather
I don't care if it rains forever

In my MGB-GT, she's a runner now
MGB-GT
In my MGB-GT, she's a runner now
MGB-GT
In my MGB-GT, she's a runner now

Hear it at: <http://www.songlyrics.com/richard-thompson/mgb-gt-lyrics/>

eBay UK listing: Cecil Kimber's Desk

As featured in many photo's and books about the Man behind the MG Marque

Purchased from the closing down sale of the MG Factory at Abingdon in 1981. An original copy of the Auction Catalogue will be included. Still with the auctioneers catalogue number in place

Every piece of office furniture in the factory was fitted with a factory plant tag - This one has the tag 'MG 1'. as it was the very first item of furniture purchased when the MG Motor Company started. Can also provide other documentary evidence to prove that this was Kimbers' actual desk, year it was purchased by MG.

Attractive, usable piece of industrial heritage from Abingdon. Very sturdy, solid wood. 6 drawers, side flap and concealed large lockable side cupboard at rear of desk. Full set of original keys to all drawers and compartments.

Collection from Cambridgeshire. May consider delivery within the UK, depending on distance - please contact me for details and pricing - 07841 161 343



121A A quantity of unbound volumes of the Autocar.
122A An Xpelair Taurus electric fan heater.
123A MG 1. A PANELLED OAK ROLL TOP DESK ON SQUARE SUPPORTS with 6 drawers and side flap. NOTE: This was the original desk and the first made item of furniture when the MG Motor Company started and was the subject of many photographs accompanied by the Managing Director.
124A An oak writing table on square supports fitted 2 drawers.

Midget Mumblings

by Steve Olson of the Kansas City MG Club

British cars are well known to be leakers of oil. And the earlier cars were bound to do some of that because instead of using rubber lip seals like other cars did to keep lubricants inside the crankcases and transmissions, they chose to use a scroll on the shaft that at least in theory would push the fluid back in as the shaft rotated. And it mostly even worked when the shaft was turning. But once parked, especially if on a grade, the shaft wasn't spinning and gravity made fluids seek a lower level. Toward the end of things MG spent the extra few cents per car and used lip seals.

My 1976 Midget was a year too early to get a transmission with a lip seal on the input shaft. My attempt to install a seal with the crude tools I had on hand was not a success.

So the transmission leaks some around the input shaft. And being that I upgraded to a Spitfire transmission with overdrive I have more leaks. The overdrive uses a pump and that seems to whip the lubricant into a froth and that oozes out the vent on top. I even added some plumbing to raise the level of that vent a foot or so and tried to collect the stuff in a bottle that would catch the oil and let it run back into the transmission when the car was parked. The theory is excellent but my plumbing is not leak proof. Any attempt to address these leaks means removing the engine and transmission from the car. So for years I have been lazy and transmission lubricants are cheap.

Various "experts" have favored various lubricants for our transmissions especially those with overdrives. Motor oils either 30W or 20W50 are often touted. Gear oil leaks less and perhaps quiets the gears but especially the 140W makes shifting in the winter difficult and makes the synchros even less effective. The 75-90 weight seems a reasonable compromise. And I have used that mostly for many years. Conventional or synthetic seem about the same except for price. Various expensive additives haven't seemed to do much of anything. So I just got used to adding more lube every few thousand miles. If it gets low the overdrive won't engage. And I have also gotten used to having to sop up a pool of gear lube from the garage floor.

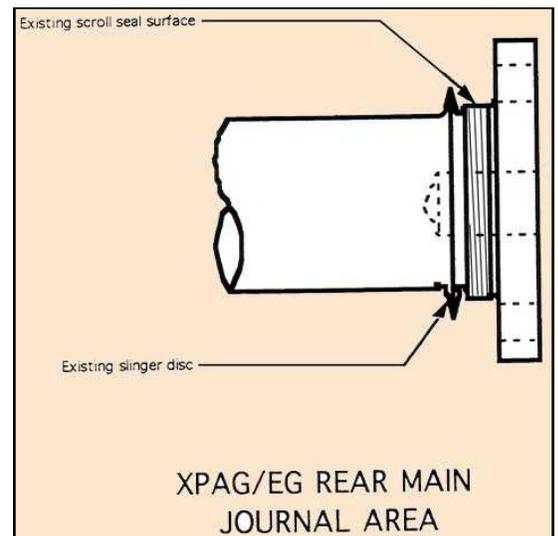
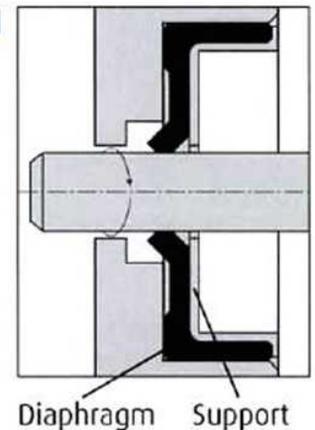
Then one day when I had the car up on jack stands to top up the transmission I discovered my bottle of gear lube was empty. Being too lazy to drive to the store and buy more I looked around for any suitable substitute. What fell easily to hand was some type F automatic transmission fluid that I use in the 5 speed on my TR8. That is what is generally recommended for the late triumphs so it must be OK. I pumped in about a pint of it and got on with my other chores. Next time I drove the Midget I noted it shifted more smoothly and the overdrive engaged more quickly.

A few weeks later I was mucking out the garage and noted that the pool of grease under the car was not as deep and it even cleaned up more easily. I think I may be on to something. The transmission still leaks around the input shaft some but isn't blowing nearly as much out the overflow. I now theorize that the approximately 50/50 mix of ATF and gear lube doesn't foam up as easily. And the gears and bearings don't seem to be any noisier so perhaps they aren't any worse for wear. I have never seen anyone recommending ATF for our old 4 speeds but I plan to keep using it at least till my supply runs out and I substitute something else slippery.

I believe that lip seals are a more recent innovation than the design of many of our MG engines and gearboxes. It took some time to create and prove materials that could survive the rotational speeds and extreme conditions in the automotive environment. MGB engines, for example, benefit greatly from the large lip seal at the rear of the crankshaft. Lip seals can often be retrofitted during rebuilds though it may require machining. I have added them at front and rear of the crankshaft of my PA - Dan



Single-Lip Seal



Keep Planning for 2020 ... (2021?)



FALL - WINTER

Thursday, Nov. 12, Sonoma Tour, MGOC, Marla & Andy Preston, see page 3

Sat., Dec. 12, MGOC Holiday Tea, San Francisco - Canceled!



PLAN AHEAD FOR 2021

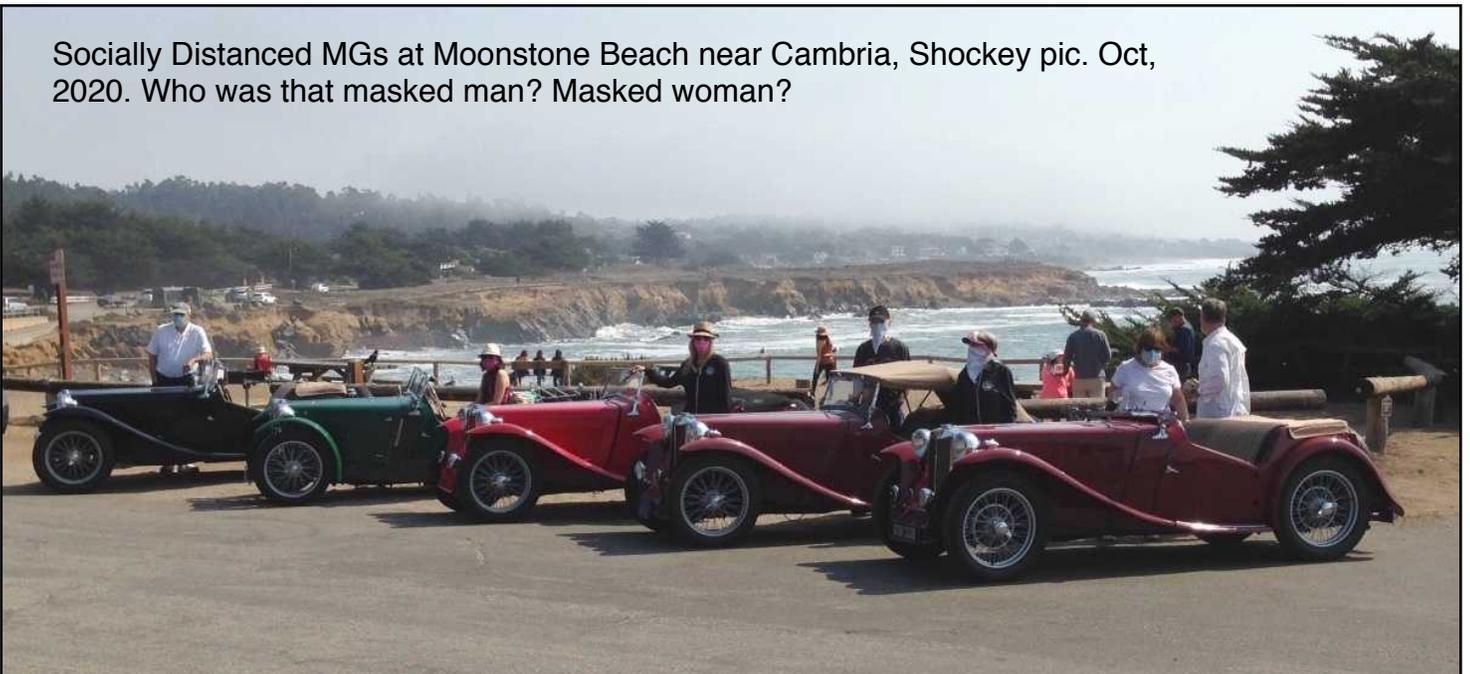
June 14-17, All-MG Meet, Atlantic City - only 3000 miles away. See the USA in your MGA!

July 26-30, GOF West, Mt Hood Resort, Oregon, MGOC Caravan, All welcome.



Dan's PA at the Conclave. Hauled it in the bed of the pickup as a test for long-distance travel. They rode in the cab...

Socially Distanced MGs at Moonstone Beach near Cambria, Shockey pic. Oct, 2020. Who was that masked man? Masked woman?



MGOC Board Meeting using Zoom at 10:00am, Saturday Oct 17, 2020

Minutes

Call to Order: Andy Preston at: 10:06

Meeting Protocol and Time Constraints: Kirk Prentiss (moderator): Explained using Zoom

Attending: Ken Gittings, Mike Jacobsen, Steve & Vickie Kellogg, Mark McGothigan, Kirk & Amy Prentiss, Andy & Marla Preston, and possibly George Steneberg.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: Feb 15, 2020: Moved: Mike, Seconded: Kirk

REPORTS

President's Report: Andy Preston Nine months since our last meeting! Thought this would be over by now. Thanks to Kirk for setting up the meeting and thanks to Dan for holding the club together by continuing to publish the newsletter. Marla and I have been staying home and working on the cars. (*Ed. Note: Maybe Marla's not working on the cars.*)

Vice President's Report: Kirk Prentiss: Wants to rename the days of the week, possibly to Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. Attended four California Melee Breakfast Rallies – well-run, socially distanced, a drive & coffee stop, 30 to 50 cars. Pack a picnic lunch. Finding an open bathroom stop can be difficult. Installing door panels & trim on his GT, it goes back to paint shop for final polish on Monday.

Treasurer's Report: Marla Preston:

Account	October 2020	February 2020
Checking	10,618.84	9,547.17
Savings	9,665.21	9,589.07
Total	20,284.05	19,136.24

Since our last Treasurer's report we have had several renewals and new members' dues paid.

Secretary's Report: Mike Jacobsen: \$14 bill for newsletter postage. Recommended a Yesterday/Today/Tomorrow plant to Kirk. Nothing else to report.

Registrar's Report: Steve Kellogg: Membership report:

- 154 Members
- 41 Family members
- 195 Total Regular and Family members
- 14 Corresponding members
- 4 Family corresponding members
- 28 Total Corresponding and Family members
- 213 Total Members**

16 new members so far this year.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: George Steneberg: Nothing to report.

Regalia Report: Andy Preston: Nothing to report.

The Octagon Report: Dan Shockey: Unable to participate.

Website Report: Steve Kellogg: Running well; coordination with Dan needs improvement.

PAST EVENTS: All cancelled due to Covid 19 since Feb 22, 2020.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Discussed what we should do for the remainder of the year. Several other car clubs are holding drives with no lunch spot or a picnic lunch.

Nov TBD Sonoma Tour: Andy and Marla. This was previously shown as cancelled in the last *Octagon* but we're rethinking if we should put together some sort of drive with a picnic somewhere perhaps at the beach. After discussion, decision is to run as a weekday event, possibly Thursday Nov 5. Rain cancels. Bring a picnic lunch.

Dec 12 Holiday Tea SF: Elaine Chan: Cancelled.

Jan 2021 Planning Meeting: As of now it will be a virtual planning meeting.

Zoom Meeting for the Entire Club: After discussion, decision is that we'll try it as a social meeting, not a business or Board meeting. Meeting to be Wednesday, October 28, 7pm. Steve to send an email blast with participation information and Kirk to be moderator.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers: Officers for 2020 must be listed in November *Octagon* for voting. All current officers will re-up. Steve suggested posting a notice that we're seeking candidates.

Bylaw Changes to Reflect Payment of Dues: Currently renewal is in January by prior Board decision. The renewal date is now July 1, 2021 by Board decision today granting another six months of extended membership, and eliminating the need for a Bylaws change. (The Bylaws specify that dues are due annually on July 1.)

There was a follow-on discussion about people paying the premium for a printed newsletter but not currently getting one. The decision is that for newsletters, the printed option will be discontinued, anyone that's joined in 2020 and paid the premium for printed copies gets their premium refunded, and the four current printed copies for members without email will continue. For renewals, checks mailed to the Registrar are still acceptable.

New Tool for Removing Knock-Offs: Andy wants to run an article in the *Octagon* about the tool, written by inventor Sarto Rocheleau.

BUSINESS RESOLVED ONLINE SINCE LAST MEETING: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

NEXT MEETING: An online January Planning Meeting is to be scheduled.

Meeting adjourned at: 11:10
Submitted by: Mike Jacobsen



Terry Sanders is having a clear out of TC, TD and other MG parts. Many of these parts are not available from vendors.

TC steering shaft - box and sector shaft in good shape, \$75 The sector shaft and worm look good.

New steering worm gear (TC) \$75

Complete TA steering - shaft column, box, drop arm, \$150

New distributor, complete (TC). \$250

Another new distributor case and shaft only (TC), \$100

Windshield wiper motor for restoration, \$45

A rare crossover bar for rear nerf bars, needs clean up and chrome. (TC) \$25

Luggage rack, good shape, may need to be adapted \$50 (May be TD)

TC EXU or TD headlight bucket, no Lucas emblem - needs chrome, Lucas glass, plus three reflectors, \$25

D shape tail light base, new, with gasket, no cover (TC) \$10

Four Armstrong TD rear shocks \$40 for a pair

TC rear end spider gears, \$25

Steering column chrome spring, in nice shape (TC), \$10

Rear axle retaining straps. Need rubber, \$5

4 stainless steel knockoffs from Oz (New Zealand) w/MG engraved, \$25 each superb

1 Lucas spot/driving light, see moss 162-700 used good cond. \$100

Nice Mota Lita steering wheel for TD and TF

Under fender plate for the TF

Air cleaner aluminum manifold, in good shape, needs cleaning polishing (TC) - 'unobtainium', \$50

Newly chromed rear bumper bar, with brackets, \$50

Brand new old stock FT 27 driving light - early TCs and TAs, \$400

Knock off nut complete for the spare tire, medallion has a little damage but chrome is good, \$100

Complete new set of side curtain chrome, w/hardware -pointed not cut ends at corners, \$75

Newly refurbished TC starter armature - \$100

Both Bendix gears for the TC starter, \$10

One front engine mount bolt, no flaws, \$15

Two new front engine mounting brackets that rivet to the frame, \$10 each

Four rear spring mounting brackets that mount by rivets. New, \$10 each

One right side radiator brace, \$60

Nice British tire pump, \$25

See photos. Contact Allan Chalmers in San Francisco.

allanchalmers@yahoo.com, 415-566-9796



Some parts may be already sold.



News from England: Football in a Pandemic Year

Having just completed extensive wiring on my MG, I thought I would pass on this tip which has made the job much more comfortable and life more bearable.

I am particularly referring to working behind the dashboard whilst lying on your back, which can most uncomfortable to say the least. This is rendered much worse when the subject happens to be over 6' tall, over 70 and suffers with neck and back pain.

One day, whilst enduring this horrific state of affairs lying in pain looking up at the dash in pure misery I had a rare eureka moment and realized the grandson's sponge football was lying a few yards away at the back of the garage. The result, heaven!! With the ball comfortably placed under my neck I now actually find I no longer dread the thought of carrying out work behind the dash.

Unfortunately for grandson Harry, he has lost his football which has found a new home in my now unusually large toolbox.

I have no connection with the sales of sponge footballs! (*Is this an American football or a soccer or rugby ball? - Dan*)
Chris, U.K.

MG Car Club Podcasts

This week's podcast may be of particular interest to prewar MG folk, as it includes an interview with Triple-M President Mike Allison:

It's here:

<https://www.mgpodcast.uk/allepisodes/erg1kjbunbub98slnfva3t9zf9g4wj>

On this episode of the MG Car Club Podcast, we have a truly fascinating insight into the heyday of MG production in the 1960s from the Former Chief Quality Engineer at that time, Michael Allison. Michael has been a life-long MG fan and also founded the Triple M Register within the MG Car Club. Here, he talks about what it was like to work at MG under John Thornley, the changes he saw during the transition to British Leyland and some memories of his own MGs and the early days of the Triple M Register.

Also, Wayne Scott has been to his first show of the year, hear how that went and Adam describes what the line up of cars from MG looks like at the Beijing Motor Show this week.

Plus, from the Kimber House archives, an amusing guide to piston removal!

Dick Morbey

Frieth, Oxon, UK

EX257 For Sale!

One of the EX257 Team Cars that raced at LeMans. Should you have a King's Ransom going spare, you may want it:

<https://racecarsdirect.com/Advert/Details/106871/2001-2004-mg-lola-aer-ex257-lmp675-002>

This iconic car was originally one of the only two MG works campaign Le Mans 24 hour cars, subsequently raced in LMES and Le Mans 24Hr 2004 by RML. It is the only Lola MG EX257 chassis to have competed at Le Mans 24hrs three times and has a class pole position at Le Mans to its name in 2001.

In 2018 the car was bought out of retirement and underwent a full strip down and rebuild to the highest standards by industry experts, MJ Tech who have since run the car in the 2018 and 2019 Masters Endurance Legends Championship. It won its class multiple times and has had impeccable reliability over the last two seasons.

The car will be sold with a large compliment of spares and the car will be in a completely ready to race condition with a new refresh on the MG AER engine.



Driving in Modern Traffic

Always enjoy reading the on-line "Octagon" magazine which you very kindly send me, and in this month's issue I noticed a reference to Barry Swackhammer. The J2 I once owned, has connections to his car which I learned when researching the history of my car.

When I purchased J2556 in 2001, I was just the seventh owner, quite remarkable when you consider the car was by then already sixty eight years old, but this low number of owners was really helpful when piecing together the history, as all but the first two were alive and happy to talk to me.

Once the car was refurbished, up to speed, and fully serviceable however, I simply never enjoyed driving it as I originally thought. It was our intention to tour the continent as we have many times in our 1966 MkII Midget, the engine and chassis work carried to such an extent it would be perfectly possible, but driving since the late sixties with hydraulic disc brakes and synchromesh gearboxes, had simply not prepared me for 1930's motoring, finding that now in the 2000's, the whole experience was somewhat worrying and indeed scary at times. The car in itself was fantastic, once used to it the steering was lovely, the new engine powerful enough to spin the rear wheels in third, with sixty five/seventy mph cruising easy, the gearbox was lovely too, it was even fairly comfortable, a few hours driving no strain whatsoever, but the brakes were something else.... Told by several experts my brakes were the best they had tried, what I wondered were the others like?

Large SUV's and similar beasts racing me into roundabouts and then slamming on the their ABS dead in front, nigh on caused me heart failure on many an occasion - thank goodness for the handbrake - and folks just pulling out of side turnings to beat the approaching "old banger," never gauging my speed while doing so, did nothing for my frayed nerves! But being forced into the hedge by an idiot overtaking in his BMW M3 on our way home from a lovely autumn meeting at Prescott in 2009, made me consider how much longer we might survive. It was an extremely close shave, and when we finally arrived home, pulling on the drive and cutting the ignition my wife Lin made the never to be forgotten remark; "Please don't take this the wrong way, but I never want to get into this bloody thing again"! Point was neither did I, and to make matters worse, I also owned a BMW M3 just like the one which had nearly killed us, so knew the driver need never have pulled that manoeuvre.

The following year I sold the J2 to a chap who like me had promised himself one all his adult life, but within a year he sold it on to a buyer in Holland.

I think the size of the J2, in fact all small sports cars, in today's traffic are their own handicap. If our car had been larger, the M3 driver who very nearly killed us, would, I'm certain, never had attempted to make a third overtaking lane down the centre of a narrow two lane country road. The people who stopped to see if we were OK afterwards, remarked that but for my reaction in seeing him approach from behind at probably 90-100mph, we would have been history. Once we'd pulled the car from the scenery - lucky no ditch - we carried on..... Shaken but not stirred! (*James Bond reference!*)

The driver of a Fraser-Nash died a few years back following an accident with a modern Bentley in very similar circumstances to our own. And I'm sure that due its green coachwork, no bright work on the rear, and the dark green hedgerows and trees all around, this conspired to effectively camouflage it against its surroundings.

Although at one time we had three MG's, our Midget of forty-eight years, the J2, and also an MGB GT-V8, advancing years have seen me less inclined to roll around on the floor under cars these days. So my toys now consist of just the Midge and my Porsche (a retirement present to myself), both of which sit in the garage alongside our BMW 325iM Sport Coupe so I can't complain!

All best wishes, take care, stay safe, and thanks again for sending me **The Octagon**. I always look forward to receiving it.
Dennis Wharf, UK

I believe these concerns keep many of our members from enjoying their MGs as they would wish. - Dan

Right: Dennis's Midget in lovely surroundings





Dennis and his J2 at the Prescott
Vintage Hill Climb



Free MGA Stuff from Tom Morgan.
See ad below.



Classified Ads

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

FREE STUFF! Sport exhaust system is off late MGB but can be modified for any MGB. The jack stands are 2 ton. Contact Ben Lenci: mgbguy@comcast.net (SSTS member, Posted 11/20)

Wanted: Rear louver cover for a MGB (or C) GT with mounting brackets. Do you have one or know where to get one? Also have spare MGB/C parts: for sale. Tom Doyle for a list at wtdoyleii@gmail.com. (Posted 11/20)

XK150 Roadster: All parts there. Much work done. Beautiful new black paint. New leather interior done. Work by top-notch car enthusiast and mechanical engineer. Friend of Dan Shockey's. In Oregon. Loren, loren.humphrey@gmail.com (Posted 11/20)

Needed: MGB Left Front Fender, 69-74 preferred. Help save a barn find. Member Mark, S.F., 415-963-2356; MarkmcsSF@gmail.com (Posted 9/20)

MGA Parts: 5 Alum bonnets, 2 styles, gas tank, leaf spring, 1500 driveshaft, new fiberglass front valence (race), front frame extension, master cylinder sleeved, 1500 engine block. Member Tom Morgan (650) 740-4116 (Re-posted 8/20, see free stuff shown above!)

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

Enclosed Trailer for Rent: Enclosed car trailer for rent (16' x 8'). Trailer has integrated braking system and lights, 12 volt Electric Winch. Reasonable rates. Eric Baker (510) 517-2165



We list ads for 3 months. Advise if you want them extended. For additional ads, see prior issues of *The Octagon* or MGOCSE.org

MG T- Series – Clocks

By Shaun English

From the **Octagram**, MGs of Baltimore

As we all know the MGT-Series have clocks not known for their reliability. I finally grew tired of hearing the old saw "they are right at least twice a day" so decided to see what might be involved with having the clock work again. Thinking my experience of collecting and repairing clocks from the mid-1800s would be to my advantage as our MGTs have clocks less than half their age.

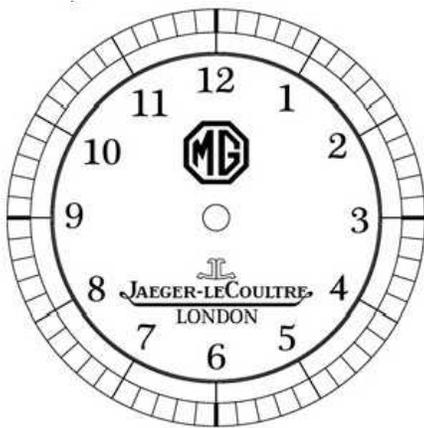
To my pleasant surprise prior experience is not needed. The skills required in setting ignition timing or adjusting the valves on an MGT are probably more demanding.

Although there are probably other sources to fix the clock made by Smith Motors Association, I decided to use Clocks4Classics in Staffordshire, England. Their website <https://www.clocks4classics.com/>, which I found listed on www.mgexp.com, has everything one needs to successfully do the repair. After following their instructions to determine if the clock can be fixed there are detailed printed instructions for disassembling and reassembling the clock with photos as well as videos of actually doing the repair and a flow chart for diagnosing any fault should one occur. If all else fails, the clock can be sent to them and you will be credited for the parts already purchased.

The most likely cause of failure is the electrical contact powering the clock mechanism. This shortcoming is replaced with a solid-state sensor and microcontroller chip that leaves the clock movement intact. Yes, it still ticks. The only tools you may not already have are small jewelers' screwdrivers which can be bought at Home Depot, Staples etc. for 5 to 10 dollars. A methodical disassembly and reassembly are all that is needed for your success.

To determine if the clock is keeping accurate time you can either do it through trial and error or download a clock regulator app on your smartphone or computer thus cutting down on guessing at the correct timing. The clock's balance wheel oscillates 5 times per second so that is what the regulator should be shooting for.

Overall, I have been satisfied with the results.



Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!

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




North American MGB Register



MGOC *The Octagon*
320 B Monterey Blvd.
San Francisco, CA 94131-3141



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

We have a tour scheduled for Nov. 12. See page 3.

Stay Safety Fast!



Fall colors. MG TC at the Conclave, San Luis Obispo. Howard and Carolyn from Davis. Photo: Thuy Nguyen