



# THE OCTAGON

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



**Since 1957!**

**May 19: Skyline Mountain Tour! - See Page 3**



**May 2021**

# 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 2021

President: **Andy Preston**, [andypreston@att.net](mailto:andypreston@att.net)  
Vice President: **Kirk Prentiss**, [kirkprentiss@gmail.com](mailto:kirkprentiss@gmail.com)  
Treasurer: **Marla Preston**, [marlapreston@hotmail.com](mailto:marlapreston@hotmail.com)  
Secretary: **Mike Jacobsen**, 415-333-9699,  
[MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Member-at-Large: **Mark McGothigan**, 510-633-1981,  
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Member-at-Large: **Ken Gittings**  
Member-at-Large: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125,  
[j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

## APPOINTEES

Commercial Advertising: **Mike Jacobsen**, 415-333-9699,  
[MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com)  
Corresponding Secretary: **George Steneberg**,  
[j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)  
Historian: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125,  
[j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)  
Photographer: **Mindy Hungerman**, 925-997-4410  
[MindyHungerman@yahoo.com](mailto:MindyHungerman@yahoo.com)  
Registrar: **Steve Kellogg**, 408-355-4125,  
[webmaster@mgocsf.org](mailto:webmaster@mgocsf.org)  
T Register Director: **Jim Carlson**, 408-224-3992,  
[mgiim@comcast.net](mailto:mgiim@comcast.net)  
*The Octagon* Editor: **Dan Shockey**, 309-696-0803,  
[magnut\\_dan@hotmail.com](mailto:magnut_dan@hotmail.com)  
Webmaster: **Steve Kellogg**, 408-335-4125,  
[webmaster@mgocsf.org](mailto:webmaster@mgocsf.org)  
Regalia: **Andy Preston**, 707-795-3480, [andypreston@att.net](mailto: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 1962-74: **Steve Lilves**, 415-924-3173,  
[slilves@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slilves@sbcglobal.net)

MGB 1974-1980: **Ed Adams**, 510-483-6821  
[AdamsEddie77@yahoo.com](mailto:AdamsEddie77@yahoo.com)

MGB V8 Conversion: **Tony Bates**, 408-666-6174,  
[avbates@yahoo.com](mailto:avbates@yahoo.com)

MGCC: **Kent Leech**, 925-253-9757, [kent@kentleech.com](mailto:kent@kentleech.com)

M.G. Midget: and Overall Auto Technician: **Craig Kuenzinger**, 925-934-3130, [mrcraigk@aol.com](mailto:mrcraigk@aol.com)

MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125, [j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

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

[mgbp36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgbp36@yahoo.com)

T-types: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125,

[j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

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

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

[mgbp36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgbp36@yahoo.com)

S.U. Carburettors: **Craig Kuenzinger**, 925-234-3313,

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## COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

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

All ads expire on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

## MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO *THE OCTAGON*

Your stories, photos, tips, questions, and anything MGOC-related are always welcome in *The Octagon*. Please make your contributions by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to [magnut\\_dan@hotmail.com](mailto:magnut_dan@hotmail.com) or send them to: Dan Shockey, 10 Willis Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

## RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

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

## MGOCSE.ORG

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

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# Skyline - Mountain Tour Wednesday, May 19



**Meet:** 9:30am at Sharon Heights Center for a 10am departure, 1.2 mile from I-280. Go east on Sand Hill Rd. from the Sand Hill Rd. exit. GPS: 325 Sharon Park Dr, Menlo Park

Starbucks, Woodside Bakery and Safeway for coffee, snacks and lunch makings. Restrooms at Safeway and more might be open by then at Starbucks

**Gas:** If needed, there is a Shell gas station just as you enter Sharon Heights Center

A U.S. Gasoline station is convenient at the end of the tour

**Tour:** Short and easy. About 60 miles; all nicely paved, 2-lane roads, mostly through tall trees with more sunshine (or fog!) on Skyline Drive; Great views all along (sans fog!) The tour ends just a short easy drive back to I-280 or to Hwy 85

**Bring:** Lunch or buy something at Safeway and \$6 for park parking.

**Organizer:** Dan Shockey, Please call or email so we can plan on numbers. 309-696-0803 or [magnut\\_dan@hotmail.com](mailto:magnut_dan@hotmail.com)

Do join us for a casual tour through the Santa Cruz Mountains going up to Skyline then back down to the Steven Creek Park where we can lunch at a nice picnic area next to the lake.

There is a \$6 parking fee at the park if we pull into the picnic lot. No fee if parking in the large pull-in lot along the road. There are restrooms at the picnic area. Dogs are welcome!

These roads are low use on a weekday but there will be a few bikes, some wildlife and maybe a couple horses. Drive carefully, as always!

We will make a couple stops for photo ops, especially along Skyline with its Bay views. There may be some short stops for re-grouping and we will try to keep track of everyone. A route guide will be provided but it will be very simple. No MG left behind!

**PARK ALONG HERE**



From  
I-280

## From the Editor

Greetings, Sports Car Fans,

April 26, 2021

Happy May Day! That was a big deal growing up in Cold Country. It was a milestone in getting to better weather and warm events. Tours are now back on our calendars. Perhaps car shows and socializing will come soon.

I am busy planning a tour for May 19. The Covid restrictions are quite a bother when doing that. My plan is to keep it close, easy and short. At this time, Mike Jacobsen and I are still working out the details.

I feel great about some real progress today with the 1935 PA. It has always had a problem with the right rear hub being a slide fit on the rear axle when it is supposed to be a hard press fit. As a result I have always gotten oil onto the brakes and wheel and was concerned about the axle breaking. I picked up a spare axle and found the hub is a tight press fit on this axle.

I am working to get the early-MGB overdrive gearbox mated to the 5-main engine and using an MGA clutch. My original plan was to stay with an MGA gearbox to avoid the frame mods to make the later overdrive unit fit well. Since I was "retired," I think I can take the time to make those mods.

Send updates on you and your projects. Happy Trails!



## Dan

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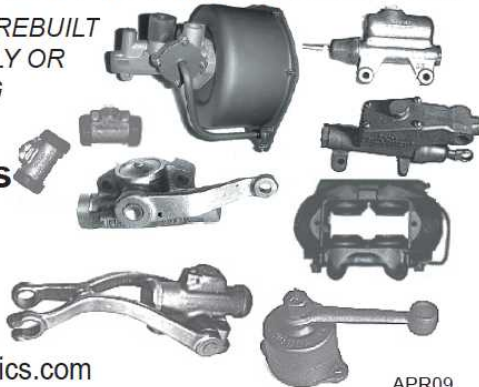
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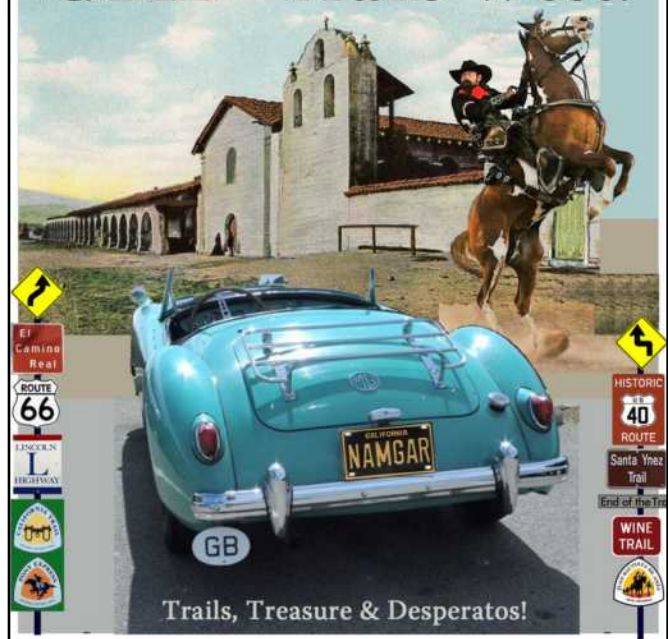
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APR09

### "Beyond the Sierra Madre" GT42 - Trails West!



Unused proposed poster for our national meet held in Solvang, by Dan



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# Prince Philip and His MG

We note the passing of a rather famous MG owner recently, the husband of the Queen of England, and father and grandfather of the future kings.

When the Duke of Edinburgh reviewed the MG Heritage Festival at Windsor in 2009 he stated in his message "I am much looking forward to the parade of MG cars at Windsor Castle. It will bring back happy memories of the MG TC which I bought in 1946 when I came home from serving with the Royal Navy in the Far East"

The TC, as listed, has been on on the UK T Register records for many years but in 40+ years of MG ownership I have never seen a photograph of it and to the best of my knowledge there has been no further reports of its survival or subsequent ownership.

I have never seen or heard of any reference to the Duke's ownership of a TD and think that may be 'license' taken by the producers of **The Crown** drama series. (See photo above.)

To add a wrinkle to (or conclude?) this thread, Peter Thornley's biography and memoir of his father, **Mr. MG** (2003), notes on p. 44, "While Prince Phillip owned an MG TC, he was courting our future Queen, John [Thornley] maintained that there were in existence some accident photographs that common courtesy dictated should not be published!" I see no reason to doubt that this is why the car has disappeared; certainly Thornley, of all people would know.

Tom Lange, MGT Repair



## London Man has Motoring Encounter

From **Road & Track**, December, 1964

"A man who now frowns on taking even the longest of chances is Mr. William Cooper of London. Mr. Cooper doesn't have a driving license & has failed the driving test 5 times. Unlicensed, in England, a driver must show a learner's permit & be accompanied by a person with a license. But Mr. Cooper thought he would be safe if he just drove to the pub one night. His auto collided with the car of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip."

While courting the queen above  
The Queen, her Corgis and a royal MGB at right.  
The Duke tries out a special Jaguar below  
See also **The Octagon**, Feb, 2018



# Welcome New Members!

**Steve and Melissa Ackart of Walnut Creek with a 1953 MGTF**

**Bob Bartley of Lakeport with a 1952 MGTD**

**Tom Wolfe of San Francisco with a 1980 MGB Limited Edition!**

Tom joined the club because would like some help with some mechanical issues. He has a nice looking dog!

**Steve Friedman of Portola Valley who once had a 1967 MGB and wants another one!**

Steve states: "My first car purchased in high school (Hillsdale in San Mateo) in 1973 was a 1967 MGB roadster in BRG with wire wheels and a roll bar - which I kept all the way through college. I am currently seeking to



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purchase a 67 B in good driving condition to enjoy and restore. Putting the word out to MGOC members for any leads. Thanks"

"I appreciate the welcome and look forward to participating in club activities soon as a once again owner of a B. Already have received a number of folks reaching out with leads and ideas. I recently lost out on a Bring a Trailer auction, an MGB that had some sketchy body damage and it ended up going well over its current value in my view."

**Jeff Stobbe of Capitola with a 1949 MGTC and a 1972 MGB/GT**

Jeff and Colleen are active members of the Abingdon Rough Riders (TC Club). He recently put an Buick alum 215 V8 in his MGB/GT - and installed a/c and an automatic. (He had done the V8 conversion once before decades ago and had saved two motors.) He brought the red GT (with original drivetrain) to our track day at Sears Point a couple years ago. Jeff has owned the TC on and off for 50 years.

Jeff is an artist, a figure painter in oils, built his own house, and builds sailboats and model sailboats professionally. They are active in the San Francisco Model Yacht Club. Colleen and Jeff have been married over 50 years. They like to travel and camp in a tiny travel trailer.





## President's Ponderings



### Good News

I have some good news for a change. The MGOC Board at their last virtual meeting in April voted to extend membership for another 6 months at no cost. This means that dues will now be due at the beginning of the New Year like other clubs. We also decided that Octagon newsletter would continue to be only available online just like it is at the moment. Obviously this is a reflection of the reductions in club events as a result of Covid and hopefully as restrictions begin to lessen we can get back to a more normal schedule, whatever that is now.

### Kudos to Mark McGothigan and Ben Lenci (SSTS)

I'd like to thank our own Mark McGothigan for organizing the "Drive In" movie night. It takes a lot of courage to try something new especially when you don't know how things will turn out, and Mark rose to the challenge and tried something new. And thanks to Ben Lenci (SSTS) for a very interesting "Bay Area Delights Tour" and true to their motto "Don't follow me, I'm lost" there were a couple of missed turns but only due to road work and a skateboarding event. Thanks, Ben, and please thank Jan for the Goody Bags. Please remember that all drives hosted by our sister club "The Sorry Safari Touring Society" are open to MGOC members.

### More drives needed

We still need more drives to fill out our calendar and I'm pleased to say that our own Dan Shockey has stepped up to the plate and has organized a wonderful "Skyline Mountain Tour" that will take us along Skyline Blvd on the Peninsula. This is one of my favorite drives south of the GG Bridge with spectacular views on all sides. We'll be finishing up a wonderful lakeshore venue for our picnic lunches. Sign up early; this is one not to miss. Thanks Dan.

### Brakes, brakes and more brakes (cont. from last month)

Yes, I'm still working on the front brakes on my 74 GT. Hopefully this will be the last time I have to bore you with the brakes on my car. I installed the new Brembo rotors and ceramic pads and at long last the brakes are working well; at least far better than before. I spoke to Jim Brady about the tandem master cylinder and he assured me that it doesn't have the same "initial bite" as the single MC because of the proportioning valve and smaller bores; hence the pedal movement is greater, which makes sense to me. At least now I can brake with reassurance and confidence.

Next month I'll tell you about the exhaust system I ordered from the UK; hopefully it'll have a happy ending.

Take care, and see you on Skyline.

**Andy**



# MGB: 1976 Was a Big Year!

By Graham McCann, MG Car Club of Canberra, April, 2003

There are differing views about the appearance of the "Rubbernose" series of MGBs, although everyone who buys one seems to quickly come to the opinion that the appearance was modernized such that it can be called, "the poor man's Porsche." That the younger generation of today is inevitably attracted to the design is a further proof that it dragged a 1960s design into the current time. In 1975 it was way ahead of its time.

But the appearance is only a minor element in the appeal of a rubbernose, especially one produced for the 1976 model year or later. The improvements under the skin were enormous, some in comfort, some in performance, and others in pure engineering. The result is a much more driveable and safe car than its predecessors (although this is less true of the stock USA specification version).

In this article many of the changes in the 1976 model year are listed. A few may have appeared in earlier cars, especially the V8, but most were part of the greatest upgrade the MGB received in its production life. There were a few in later years but most came in 1976. In late 1980, for example, a redesign of the headlamp rims allowed adjustment of the beams without removing the frames. Another was the fitting of a proper 'across the top' battery clamp rather than the diagonal edge clamp. The list is in no particular order and probably misses a few items I have yet to discover.



- Quartz-Iodine headlamps
- Quartz analogue electric clock
- Standard brake booster
- Overdrive switch conveniently located on the gear stick
- A device to hold the doors open rather than crashing closed on your leg
- A redesigned instrument panel with internally lighted switches and controls
- Smaller soft-feel collapsible steering wheel with changed rack-and-pinion ratio to give feather light steering and easier entry and exit for the driver
- Brake and clutch pedals repositioned lower and large accelerator pedal fitted, to facilitate heel-and-toe driving and generally ease use of the controls
- Ignition switch raised up the steering column for easy access, with the headlamp/parking light switch immediately above it for ease of locating in the dark
- Hand brake warning light which doubles as a loss of hydraulic pressure warning
- Seat belt warning light, which only goes out when the driver has fastened the belt
- A windscreen wiper one-sweep feature – a sort of poor man's intermittent wiper
- A heavier front stabilizer bar and the fitting of a rear stabilizer bar
- A capacitor fitted to the fuel pump to minimize burning of the fuel pump contacts
- Rubber mounting of the fuel pump to almost eliminate pump noise
- Radiator cooling by power-saving electric fans
- Radiator coolant expansion tank
- Arm rests on doors
- New small neat speedo and tach, with speedo dual marked in kilometers & miles
- Gauges all back-lit with pleasant green light
- Two-speed heater fan
- Press-button catch as well as locking facility on the glove box
- Inertial seat belts with stalk connectors
- Standard in-line replaceable fuel filter

**A great classic sports car,  
refined.**



**Introducing  
the 1977 MGB.**



- Increased capacity alternator (1978-on)
- More comfortable seats with velour trim
- Split brake system (1978 on)
- A 25lb strip of steel behind each innocuous rubber bumper to keep other cars at bay
- Engine timing marks visible from the engine bay to aid engine tuning
- Electric windscreen washers, operated by a steering column stalk
- Four-way flashers – hazard warning
- Simplified linkage for choke control, i.e. not connected to the air cleaners
- Electrically-sensed water temperature, i.e. no capillary tube to the gauge
- Non-glass vanity mirror on the back of the passenger's visor
- Cockpit fully carpeted – internal sills included
- Door radio speakers and aerial fitted by the factory (1978 on)
- Handbrake lever redesigned to be less agricultural in construction
- Aluminum sill covers beneath doors to prevent scuffing of the paintwork
- Door mirrors standard; tonneau standard
- A spring-loaded feature to allow brief operation of the turn indicators which limits wear on the switch mechanism
- The fuel pump pickup inside the tank is from the centre of the tank bottom to avoid fuel starvation with low fuel levels and uneven ground
- Trunk light added
- Improved convertible top with zip-down rear window
- Revised heating controls for easier use
- Raised bumper heights protect the car in parking and some accidents

Not a bad list, is it?

(Note: Dan added the last four items and deleted a couple GT items since the GT was not sold in the US after Dec. 31, 1974. Mike Jacobsen notes that many of these features were in his late 1974 rubbernose GT.)



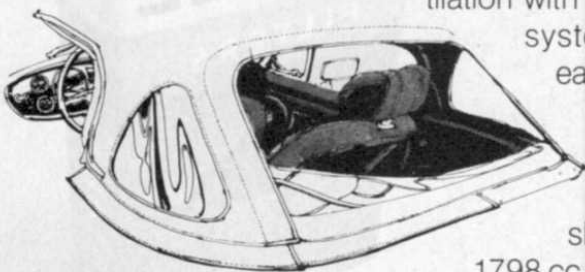
This year, for example, we have redesigned the instrument panel to make the tachometer, odometer and gauges more clearly visible. The car handles even better than previous MGs because we improved the rack gearing to reduce turning effort and made the padded steering wheel smaller in diameter for quicker response. We also added anti-roll bars front and rear for increased handling stability. We've added small but welcome improvements in the form of a zip-down rear window for better ven-

tilation with the top up. There's also a new system of heating controls that is easier to use.

And it all comes wrapped in the brisk, lithe, responsive sports car America has long loved. The 1977 MGB comes equipped with decisive disc brakes, quick rack and pinion steering, short-throw four-speed stick, race-proven suspension and a gutsy 1798 cc engine.



Refinement:  
a redesigned instrument panel and cockpit.



Refinement:

# Carmel Tour

Marja van den Hende

Saturday, April 3rd, I met up with some of the Santa Cruz British Motorcar Club members for a drive from Watsonville to Carmel Valley.

It was overcast and cold (upper 40s) when we met off Hwy 1 in Watsonville. The group of about 15 cars (various British makes) included the Kelloggs - Vicky in her TF and Steve driving the B.

About half the cars drove an independent rally with the freedom to make stops wherever one wished. The other portion followed a leader (with limited stops) to the destination at Baja Cantina. The Kelloggs and I drove as a sub-group of the independent drivers. After a produce stop at the Pezzini Farm Stand in Castroville (artichokes in peak season) we followed Nashua and Reservation Roads east and south thorough fertile farmland to Hwy 68 along the east side of Fort Ord then onto Laureles Grade to cross over the range onto Carmel Valley Road.

In spite of the cool temps, the scenery was beautiful and our organizer had set up a lovely drive on pleasant roads. It almost seemed like "the good old days"...

Below: Baja Cantina, our lunch destination - where we ate outside

Vicky and Steve Kellogg at right

Photos from the author



## Note:

The Little Car Show will be Wed., August 11. Entry fee is \$75. Entries are limited. Collector cars 1500cc or under. Info:

[www.marinamotorsports.org](http://www.marinamotorsports.org) or  
[www.facebook.com/MarinaMotorsports](https://www.facebook.com/MarinaMotorsports)

## An Overdrive Story

from Glen Lucas

Overdrives are nice to reduce noise at highway speeds so you do not need to turn up the radio. In fact, a bunch of us were returning from an eight hundred mile weekend a few years ago when one of the drivers pulled over to the side and stopped. Of course, the practice is everyone stops and offers advice. The problem was his O/D had cut out and his wife was complaining angrily about the noise. She did not want to go further. We tried to convince him to leave her on the side of the road and just enjoy the sixty remaining miles to home. Oddly, he did not think that was a good idea so he endured the growling sound from his wife for the hour to get home. Her declaration was that she would not ride with him again until the O/D was repaired. You know, I do not recall if he ever repaired that transmission and the problem was just a loose wire.

Names withheld to protect the guilty.



# Troubleshooting Guide

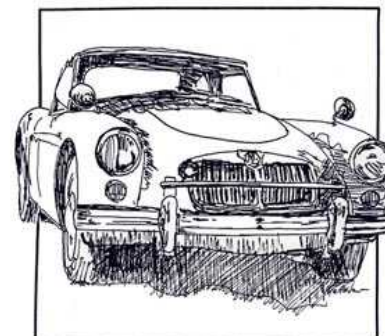
From David Lively (Sacramento), original author John Wright (now of Solvang) and the **Michigan Rowdies**

The hardest part of working on a car is correctly diagnosing the problem in the first place. After I came across this guide in the A-Antics Tech Tips put out by the Michigan chapter of the North American MGA Register, I always like to keep a copy handy. Hope you find it as useful as I have. - David

1. Lumpy, rhythmic idle, dark/black tailpipe – Usually caused by rich carburetor mixture or possibly a stuck choke.
2. Can't get engine to idle at correct speed
  - a. Loose carbs
  - b. Burned or broken intake gasket
  - c. Worn throttle shafts  
(i.e. an air leak somewhere messing up the fuel mixture - Dan)
3. Missing at high rpm –
  - a. Point gap too close
  - b. Bad spark plug wire
  - c. Spark plug gap too wide
4. Fuel starved
  - a. Clogged filters in carb float chambers
  - b. Clogged fuel pump filter
  - c. Crimped fuel line  
(or a fuel pump issue – Dan)
5. Smokes at idle and on accelerating from a stop
  - a. Valve guides worn
  - b. Oil too thin
6. Engine idle rough and gas coming out of float chambers
  - a. Worn needle and seat in float chamber (needle should have a smooth taper and not a step worn near the point)
  - b. Float partially sunk because of crack or small hole. (Shake to hear fuel inside - Dan)
7. Engine stopped dead; no spark at plugs but voltage to coil and distributor – Tug on small flimsy wire in distributor (pig-tail wire), the wire may be broken.
8. Slight miss on acceleration – check oil in carburetors dashpots; use same oil as engine or special dashpot oil. 20W works well
9. Oil pressure fluctuating at idle, this is fairly normal but check the following:
  - a. Idle speed too slow (below 1000 rpm)
  - b. Low on oil
  - c. Wrong oil viscosity
10. Dead miss; a dead miss is caused by lack of spark, fuel or compression
 

To check for a miss with engine running, short out each plug with a screwdriver till no noticeable change is seen in the engine. When you have decided which cylinder is missing, pull the spark plug wire and hold it ¼ inch away from spark to look for spark.

  - a. If you have no spark, check plug wire. If you have spark, pull plug and check to see if fouled or a piece of carbon is wedged between the electrodes. If oil fouled the engine may have a broken piston ring, cracked valve guide or glazed cylinder wall.
  - b. If fuel fouled (black, usually velvety, smells of gas), your carbs may be set too rich, or carb jet did not return. To remedy, push upwards on the choke at bottom of carb.
  - c. Low compression is usually caused by a burned valve, a valve adjusted too tight (no clearance), or a blown cylinder head gasket (usually between #2 and #3 cylinders).



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# MGOC Board Meeting Minutes – Saturday April 3, 2021

## *Held in Cyberspace*

**Call to Order:** Andy Preston at 9:40

**Attending:** Marcia Crawford, Ken Gittings, Mike Jacobsen, Mark McGothigan, Kirk Prentiss, Andy & Marla Preston, Dan Shockey, and George Steneberg

### Approval of Minutes of Previous (Zoom)

**Meeting:** Feb 27, 2021: *Motion:* Marcia, *Second:* Kirk

### REPORTS

**President's Report:** Andy Preston: Commended Dan & Kirk for their newsletters. Andy has been contacting new members and finds that they are pleased with the group. He also noted that high-octane gas without ethanol is available to the public at Sears Point race track on non-race days.

**Vice President's Report:** Kirk Prentiss: Announced an SSTS drive on April 24. Dan will send an email announcement. Triumph Travelers have a drive on May 1. If you signed up for GOF West and didn't leave your payment from last year you'll have to re-register.

**Treasurer's Report:** Marla Preston: We have money; no substantial changes from the last report.

**Secretary's Report:** Mike Jacobsen: Nothing to report.

**Registrar's Report:** Steve Kellogg: Absent, report via email:

168	Regular members
46	Regular Family members
214	Total Regular and Family members
13	Corresponding members
4	Corresponding Family members
17	Total Corresponding and Family members
<b>231</b>	<b>Total Members</b>

**Corresponding Secretary's Report:** George Steneberg: Very quiet; nothing to report.

**Members at Large Reports:** Mark McGothigan, Ken Gittings, George Steneberg: Mark said the newsletter was good, Ken said he hoped to be driving again soon, George congratulated Andy & Marla for a wonderful tour.

**Regalia Report:** Andy Preston: Sold one lapel pin for \$5 and it cost \$4 to mail!

**The Octagon Report:** Dan Shockey: Nothing to add.

**Website Report:** Steve Kellogg: Absent, email report: Added events and a new ad.

**PAST EVENTS:** Andy Preston: We had an amazing turnout for the St. Paddy's Day drive which was great. We need to hold more events like this over the next few months.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** (MGOC sponsored events are in **bold text**) Andy said we need more MGOC and SSTS events to fill the calendar.

<b>Sat Apr 3</b>	Movie night Mark McGothigan – Godzilla vs Kong. (Kirk had a Godzilla tee on and a Godzilla model.) Mark has Godzilla tattoos for all attendees. He says it should be cold at the movie.
Apr 9-11	Vintage races Sonoma Raceway – We don't know if they'll allow spectators.
<b>Sat Apr 24</b>	SSTS Bay Area Delights Tour
May 1	Joint Mt Hamilton event with Triumph Travelers
July 26-30	GOF West, Welches OR. Who's organizing a drive from the Bay Area? SSTS? Looks like mail-in registration only for the event; no registration for individual activities yet.
Sept 19	Dixon car show
<b>Oct TBD</b>	MGs by the Bay – Andy will check with Bon Air if Oct 9 is available.
<b>Nov TBD</b>	Sonoma Tour The Prestons
<b>Sat Dec 4</b>	Holiday Tea Mike & Elaine

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

### NEW BUSINESS

#### Annual Dues

1. Do we start to collect annual dues again in June/July 2021, or extend suspension of dues until Dec 2021?

We have about \$19K in the bank. Marla said our largest annual expense is the Brunch and that we don't need the dues money now. A poll showed that:

- Dan had no opinion
- George agreed with Marla
- Mark thought suspending dues would help grow the club
- Mike said we should let dues go until the end of 2021
- Ken reminded everyone that George doesn't pay dues, and added that we leave dues in abeyance for 2021



Kirk made a motion to not collect dues for 2021, seconded by Marla. Mark moved that we move the membership year to Jan-Dec, requiring a Bylaws change.

1. Do we start printing and mailing the *Octagon* again or keep it "electronic only"? It costs ~\$20/year/member to print and mail each copy and we collect an additional \$15 from each member receiving it on paper.

Andy said no one has complained about not getting a printed copy. We currently print three copies for the three members that do not have email addresses on file. We can continue sending the *Octagon* via email, and change the website to remove the printed copy option. Dan noted that if we dropped the printed format the *Octagon* could take on a new format for online-only. Mike moved that the *Octagon* will be electronic only in the future. After some discussion, he added that the three existing printed copies should be grandfathered in. Kirk seconded. Andy will ask Steve to update the website.

### Blackhawk Event

Kirk will look into an event at Blackhawk, possibly subsidized by the club. Andy will check with the JAG club to find out how they organized their event.

**BUSINESS RESOLVED ONLINE SINCE LAST MEETING:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**NEXT MEETING:** TBD

Meeting adjourned at: 10:36

Submitted by: Mike Jacobsen

What that little dash mirror is for....



### Buyers Guide MGB from Hagerty Insurance



Thinking of buying an MG? Danny Hopkins, editor of Practical Classics Magazine, uses a beautiful 1975 MGB GT Jubilee edition to illustrate what to look for — including typical trouble spots — before you make a purchase. This is the latest in a series of videos we filmed during a recent visit to our UK offices.

Watch the video at:

[http://www.hagerty.com/Articles-Videos/Articles/2015/02/03/MGB-Buyers-Guide?utm\\_source=ExactTarget&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=&utm\\_content=&utm\\_campaign=Hagerty%20Weekly%20News%202-04-2015](http://www.hagerty.com/Articles-Videos/Articles/2015/02/03/MGB-Buyers-Guide?utm_source=ExactTarget&utm_medium=email&utm_term=&utm_content=&utm_campaign=Hagerty%20Weekly%20News%202-04-2015)

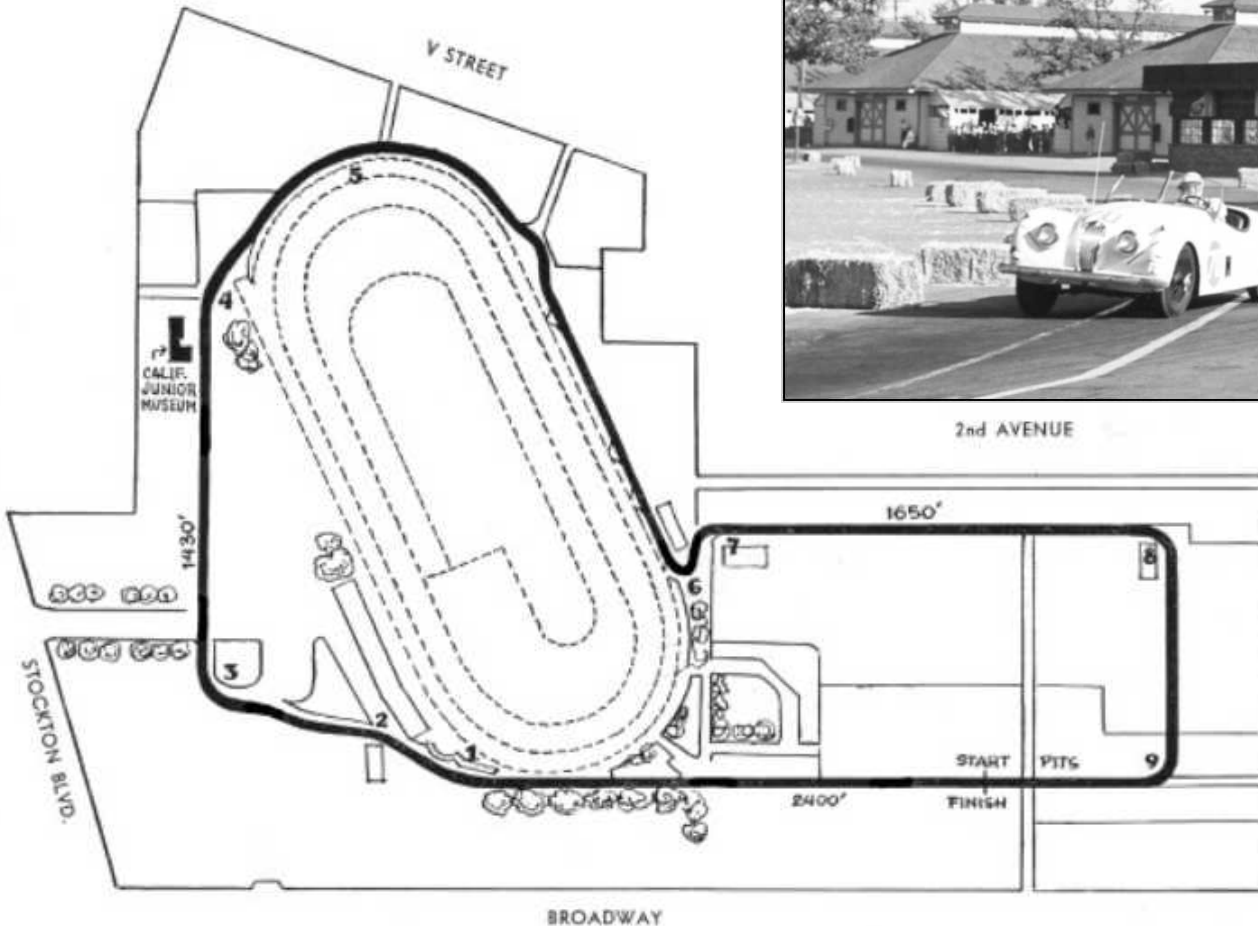
# Ghost Race Tracks: Fairgrounds

## Sacramento & San Jose

I have found a couple photos of sports car racing at these unusual venues but little actual information. Anyone know anything of them? This shows how wide-spread such events were in the 1950s and 1960s.

Dan Shockey

- Photos this page from Sacramento



2nd AVENUE





# Keep Planning for 2021



## SPRING

Sat., May 1, Joint SSTS / Triumph Tour, Mt. Hamilton,  
<https://triumphtravelers.org/Activites/actperp/activityList.php>

May 19, Skyline-Mountain Tour, Dan Shockey, See page 3

June 20, Tune & Spoon, SSTS

July 26-30, GOF West, Mt Hood Resort, Oregon, MGOC Caravan, All welcome. It's on!

Aug. TBD, MGOC Club Picnic

## SUMMER

Aug. 11, Little Car Show, Pacific Grove

Sept 4-5, Highland Games, Pleasanton

Sunday, Sept. 16 , Dixon All British Show & Swap, MGOC Caravan? Virus permitting, of course

Sat., Oct. 9, by the Bay, Greenbrae

Oct 15-16, Sierra Tour, Chico, SSTS



MG TC breaks front side at the 1952 San Jose Fairgrounds event.

These photos from the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose. Hard time for hay bales!

That fencing will really protect spectators

Photo at top from Brands Hatch, April, 2021. See <https://youtu.be/uEdev7K0R7E>



????? -- MG TC / ?????? -- MG Special

Unfortunate MG TC at rest after breaking axle. Driver of #61 (probably an MG Special) takes a look.

# Petrol Flex Pipe Failures

After replacing everything on my MG intake, on switching on I found petrol squirting out of the flexible petrol pipe leading between the shutoff valve and the carburettor inlet through the wire braiding. This pipe was only six years old and not subject to any rough use or vibration.

After it was replaced I removed the outer wire braiding to look for the fault. I was amazed to find that the bent part of the pipe that was subject to a two inch radius bend had cracked up badly and was the cause of the leak. The degradation can be seen in the picture.

I spoke Burlen Services (SU pump manufacturer) but the answers did not entirely satisfy me. He said that the flexible pipe was changed from what he described as a R7 spec to a R9 spec four years ago but would not admit to a failure problem with the older pipe. The type of pipe cannot be determined without effectively destroying the pipe to see surface identification by removal of the braiding. When asked what the life expectancy was there again was no commitment and of course there is no manufacturing date on the flexible petrol pipes at all.

I was questioned about the car itself and he offered the following comment that the car should not be left with petrol standing in it as it may be subject to the liberation of chemicals from the petrol itself.

When I pointed out that I would expect a flexible petrol pipe to hold petrol and be flexible that this one did not do after six years there was little constructive response and certainly no request to inspect the pipe.

To my mind this raises serious questions about the design life of such pipes and the absence of any manufacturing date or specification of materials. I believe that the picture shows an accident waiting to happen and if petrol changes and unidentified material changes take place the full possible implications should be made more open.

I have taken the decision to write this post as current pipe materials and fuels seem to be fully compatible and as the supplier chooses not to state a minimum service life for these items, it is a case of buyer beware. So if you are going to move "flexible petrol pipes," have a spare at hand and possibly a fire extinguisher if the engine is hot or running. Perhaps any more examples of sudden failure might be helpful to the membership.

**Roger Cadogan, MMM Register, UK**

It may help to read: <https://www.gates.com/gb/en/fluid-power/engine-hose/fuel-line-hose.p.4219-000000-000001.html>

**Bruce Sutherland, UK**

Degradation of Viton tipped needle valves seems to be another issue. I know several people who have had a problem. I have just had flooding problems with my Mini Cooper carbs. The needle valves were replaced a few years ago but had deteriorated and were leaking again. If anyone is suffering from poor starting, bad running, rich mixture or wet plugs, I suggest that you check your valves. They are the same ones as fitted to our MG cars.

When I tried to order some more I found everyone was out of stock. I called Burlen who I believe are the only source of supply and they told me they had been out of stock since middle last year and cannot currently get fresh supplies made. They are apparently looking at making these themselves to solve the problem. Alternatives are available but have mixed reviews.

Fortunately I had two spares in my SU box so was able to resolve the issue. Thanks for the warning on the flexible hose Roger. You have reminded me I have one on another car that has been in use for over 10 years so will now change it. Do we know who supplies the hoses with fully compatible rubber?

**T. Holden, UK**



## 4219BG BARRICADE™ CARBURETED ENGINES FUEL HOSE

Low-permeation fuel line including gasoline, ethanol blends, 100% methanol (no blends), diesel, biodiesel (including all blends of SME, RME or PME). Recommended for carbureted engines in cars, light trucks, off-road vehicles and small engines on which a barrier fuel hose is required.

- Temperature Range: -40°C to +125°C and -40°C to +100°C for biodiesel up to B100.
- Working pressure: 0,34 to 0,24 MPa.
- Barrier: Thermoplastic liner.





This is a timely reminder for us to all be very careful and to inspect these pipes regularly. This is much easier said than done though as it is impossible to see the damage until the danger occurs, due to the braiding. The answer, unfortunately, means we have to give up on the undoubtedly desirable appearance of the braiding and fit plain hoses. Of course, we could just replace the braided hoses every two or three years ... if we remember.

It doesn't surprise me that Burlen were unwilling to comment though as product liability is a minefield in our modern litigious society, indeed it is often cited by our club as the reason for not selling spares. I had the same experience some years ago with the short hose which joins the two SUs on a factory B V8. This hose is difficult to inspect or replace even without the braiding and I will never fit anything but an unbraided hose there now. I am not convinced, however, that it is due to either age or petrol content.

As Roger F. points out, older hoses do not necessarily exhibit this problem and indeed I myself have a selection of old hoses which, though stiff, are un-cracked. The bend will, of course, exacerbate the problem but, rather than blame alcohol as the convenient scapegoat, I feel that it is just as likely to be poor quality rubber. I have noticed a great difficulty in getting rubber components which have anything near the same life expectancy as in days gone by. How many of us have fitted seals and bushes recently which have only lasted a few years without coming anywhere near alcohol?

We are at the mercy of suppliers who keep their costs down in the knowledge that we cannot tell good rubber from bad when it is new and are not imposing the same quality control on their supply chain which the car manufacturers were able to when such parts were in general use and manufactured in huge quantities.

The story about Viton-tipped valves is worrying though as Viton, I believe, should be reliable. Maybe we have to go back to the original plain brass valves.

**Ian Thomson, UK**

Of course, one problem is the additives in our fuel, especially the high levels of alcohol. MTBE was awful stuff, too. After a 'young' flex hose failed on the MGA on a tour, I recommend carrying spare flexible fuel pipes for your MG. For myself, I have begun to go to un-braided hoses so I know what I got and can inspect their condition easily.

**Dan Shockey, USA**

## MGs at the Movies

Will Handley of the [Bakersfield British Car Club](#) in California sent us a link to a YouTube video of clips of MG TDs used in a number of movies - including the amazing driving skills of Archibald Leach driving with Marilyn Monroe 😊.

You can see the YouTube video on the right, but it also triggered the remembrance of other MG in the Movies websites, which really are for die-hard enthusiasts!

So if you do want to take a look try

<http://gothere.com/mg-world/mg-movies/movies.htm>

and

[http://imcdb.org/vehicles\\_make-MG.html](http://imcdb.org/vehicles_make-MG.html)

Make sure you choose your car for the latter!



# Alternative Fuels - Less Than They Promise

## Electric and Hybrid Cars:

Why are electric cars making such a strong comeback? Most people incorrectly believe that the electric car is better for the environment. Wrong! Google some of the sites where lithium is mined. They look like a nuclear dump site gone bad. And it takes a great amount of energy to mine and produce the materials for the batteries. Most of that energy is produced from coal and gas-powered power plants. As more batteries are demanded, more lithium will be needed. It takes 500,000 gallons of clean water to make one ton of lithium. And there are no lithium deposits within the US. It will all need to be imported and that takes energy to transport it.

Someone once did a thorough analysis of an early Prius and a Hummer, from birth to final death, as to which was more economical and which was more environmentally friendly. The Prius lost. The batteries for the Prius had the minerals mined in Canada in an area that was totally destroyed for most future use. This material was flown to Europe where it was converted into battery use. Then it was sent to Japan to be made into batteries, which were then sent to the US to be installed in the Prius. Just the battery materials made an around the world trip before they were ever installed in the cars.

Using the life expectancy of the Prius from Toyota and the Hummer, the Hummer would last a lot longer, making it more economical to own over a longer period of time. Your cost per mile of driving was lower for the Hummer! When it came time to get rid of the vehicle, again, the Hummer brought a bigger return as scrap and did not have the great expense of disposing of the batteries that the Prius had.

The Lithium-Ion battery is a near-ideal battery - once it is made and while it lasts. Mining, processing and disposing of lithium is a major problem for the world and the environment. Many interests promote the electric alternative to attempt to push the technology along. There is research work being done on batteries that do not use lithium - though we don't know what side effects those technologies will challenge us with. Li-Ion batteries have a limited lifetime as you have seen with your cell phone or laptop. Keeping your old MG going in comparison is not so bad for the environment. - Dan

## Hydrogen Fuel:

Another form of fuel is hydrogen. Hydrogen can be burned in an internal combustion engine the same as gasoline or it can be used to produce electricity onboard the car as it is driven. There have been experiments setting up hydrogen stations where one could refuel the tank as quickly as you do with gas.

There are lots of problems with this. One, it costs a lot to produce hydrogen. Plus, it takes lots of electric energy to make the hydrogen. Most commercially available hydrogen now is produced from methane gas and very high temp steam (over 1500 degrees) or splitting the water molecule into hydrogen and oxygen, which requires electricity. So, it still takes oil production to gather enough methane and it requires a lot of energy to make the steam required. Or, you need a large electric power source to separate water.

At least, when burned, hydrogen leaves behind water, not pollutants. At this time, it is not practical to produce hydrogen in sufficient volumes to power all the things in which we now use petroleum products. Add to this the hazard of carrying a tank of hydrogen in your car or storing it underground in tanks, and hydrogen's future as a fuel is still some time off.

Tech Article: March; 2021,  
Barry Rosenberg  
British Car Service

from the ***Peachtree Registry***



## - RACING AN MG MIDGET - *Those Halcyon Days*

*Carole Borgers*

I raced a 1963 MG Midget at Western Speedway (oval track) along with my pals in the Victoria Motor Sports Club. We began as half-time entertainment for the stock-car enthusiasts there to watch those racers. We were quirky entertainment until the realization of our competitiveness. We would set up hay-bales as a chicane on the grandstand stretch, to make it more interesting for all.

We also had events such as gymkhana, autocross and hillclimb up and down Vancouver Island, all of which I participated in and generally won my class or fastest time. Most events I drove to, but for some up-island competitions, my MG was trailed behind my boyfriend's car. I recall sitting in my open MG with umbrella up against the falling snow, awaiting my turn on the gymkhana course in Courtenay. At the Mt. Douglas Hill Climb in Victoria my MG was not swift in going up the hill and I always thought I should take a book to read on the way. Also there were numerous autocross events held in the old Butler Brothers gravel pit outside Victoria, where we would tape our glass headlights, tape a number on the door, and blast up and down and through the gravel trails in the giant pit, rocks and gravel flying, rain or snow falling, one car against the clock and in the mud. Oh those Halcyon days!



And no, I never raced at Westwood, but we would attend to support a friend and Victoria Motor Sports Club member who did. Any thoughts I may have had of racing there disappeared when that friend was killed on the track during a race.

Moving to San Francisco meant I left the MG behind in Victoria. Commuting daily across the Golden Gate Bridge was necessary and my trusty Austin Healey 3000 made it enjoyable. I soon drifted into the world of the Porsche Club of America and racing once again was of interest. My 1963 356B Super 90 Cabriolet was just too unblemished to do more than Porsche Concours, but the next in line, a 2-Litre Porsche 914, had the perfect power-to-weight ratio to undertake more challenges.

How life gets in the way of such fun pursuits. After a time car racing was replaced with breeding and showing of Doberman Pinschers, and the Porsches were replaced with vans for transport to dog shows and events. If I thought more racing was in my future, not so. The addition of Irish Wolfhounds necessitated even larger vans to travel to shows.

Do I miss the racing? You bet. The simplicity of peeling off glass masking tape Sunday afternoon and driving the car to work Monday morning - another of those memories of Halcyon days.

Local enthusiast Bob Ford is at it again!



He writes: *XPEG motor, preselector box, 12" brakes, slab tank, Andre Hartford Telecontrol dampers, Hobson fuel and oil gauge, Jaeger chronometric tach etc* Trying to get it relatively period correct and still looking for some parts, and fabricating many others.

## Classified Ads

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

**1953 MG TD:** Owned since 1997. 77k miles, 5 speed transmission, alternator, & rebuilt engine. Cared for by British Automotive in San Rafael. Everything about it is great. I am now looking to replace it with a Mk. II MGA. Member Marty Rayman, 415-250-6299 (Posted 3/21)

**2012 MINI Roadster:** One owner with 21,000 miles. Cared for by MINI of Marin. Member Marty Rayman, 415-250-6299 (Posted 3/21)

**1979 MG Midget:** Original condition, no rust, dents, or upholstery damage. Needs engine work. Includes new replacement top, windshield, and radiator (all brand new). Motivated, asking \$4000. Cloverdale (Sonoma). Ken Collins (707) 894-3830 (Posted 3/21)

**Midgets for Sale:** In Michigan. (From other club newsletter.) **1974:** 30k original miles, Red with tan interior, excellent, original top and tonneau, Jim at 248-547-9050. **1972:** 99% renovated, Dad passed away before finishing, \$3900/best. Lane, 248-660-2134, [lanerup@aol.com](mailto:lanerup@aol.com) (posted 05/21)

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

**We list ads for 3 months. Advise if you want them extended. For additional ads, see prior issues of *The Octagon* or [MGOCSE.org](http://MGOCSE.org)**







# Reader Notes

## Feedback from Stuart Mumby:

Registrar, MGA Register, MG Car Club

Thanks very much for another superb edition of The Octagon, which I must say is beautifully put together and makes the UK MGA Register effort look positively amateurish by comparison.

## Report from Mark McGothigan:

The club drive-in event went well for a trial run. A very small group but we made the most of it. Was top-up cold, but adventurous and fun. Cheers (See photo back page.)

## Suggestion from Don Scott:

Merv's Radiator Service in Petaluma may be a great resource for old car radiator work. Merv inherited the shop from his dad, and has been doing this kind of work for a very long time. He's very personable which helps when we are dealing with businesses. It's a one-man shop, looked like a time-capsule as it's in the 1st story of an old house, and there was a big old '59 Chrysler Imperial in the shop bay. He said he started working there as a kid, and luckily he owns the building. Otherwise a business like his wouldn't be viable.

Maybe the MG newsletter could include a feature on these (rare now) types of shops that we need to keep our cars going.

Also, Andy helped me install the hardtop on the MGB. My friend Mike painted it in OEW when he painted my car. Never had it on before, so I wasn't sure it would fit properly, but it did, and it looks nice, albeit with old somewhat tired rubber gaskets.

## Update from Marty Rayman:

The MGA deal has been consummated & all we have to do is wait for transport home from Iowa. The seller, Gary in Iowa, has been a delight to work with. He's given me all sorts of information, tidbits & tips about the car & is including lots of little extras. And, he'll always be available to give advice & answer questions about the MGA. TeD is at Cars Dawdyak in San Francisco.

Thanks guys. We can't wait to share our new treasure with you. Cheers,



### 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](mailto:registrar@namgar.com).

## North American MGB Register



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



*Many of us were saddened by the passing, at age 99, of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Unbeknownst to most, the Duke, a longtime Land Rover aficionado, commissioned and designed this Defender to carry his mortal coil on its final journey.*



**Skyline Mountain  
Tune - May 19**

**Stay *Safety Fast!***

**Pre-WWII MG  
race at Brands  
Hatch, April, 2021**

**Wow, so  
many!**

