



THE OCTAGON

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



Since 1957!



Sonoma Tour at Goat Rock Beach. Photo: Marty Rayman



December 2020



About *The Octagon* and the MG Owners Club

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

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CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

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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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"Open Restrooms Run"

Saturday January 2, 2021

San Jose – Mt. Hamilton – Livermore

Meet: Target Store, Landess Ave at I-680 in Milpitas

OPEN RESTROOMS and Starbucks coffee there

Time: Meet at 10am, Depart at 10:30am

Leader: Dan Shockey, (309) 696-0803 cell

With COVID restrictions, we plan to arrange the tour around safe necessary stops. Our plan at this time is to head from Target on scenic back roads to the Lick Observatory at the top of Mt. Hamilton above San Jose. We may be able to stop for a post-coffee restroom break at Joseph Grant State Park along the way. (Park is open at this time.)



Lick is closed to visitors so we will make a short photo stop at the Observatory only, then continue over the hill and north to Livermore – to lunch and restrooms!. There are many wineries on the south side of Livermore that will be open to limited visitors. Dan will work to identify the best stop. Failing that, there are more Target and WalMart stores in Livermore as we head back toward I-580 or I-680. OPEN RESTROOMS.

Pack a lunch or get something at Target or a fast food drive-through.

An optional continuation will go west to Niles Canyon Road back toward I-880 or non-freeway routes back home. Dan plans to head home that way.

As always, we will help each other in the case of any car problems. No MG left behind! There is the option for you to return to San Jose from Mt. Hamilton for a shorter tour.

TOUR CANCELED IN THE EVENT OF CERTAIN RAIN

For planning, please advise if you hope to attend: DPShockey@Frontier.com or phone



From the Editor

Greetings, Members,

November 30, 2020

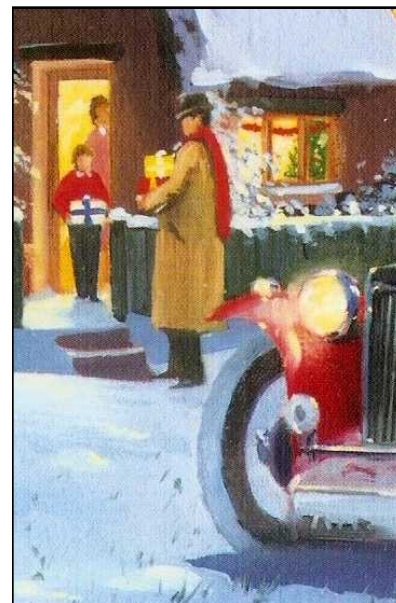
We have an event report and photos for this issue! An excellent tour and 'tournout,' I hear. I had to miss this one due to other plans. I decided to try leading one at New Years (January 2).

I spent some time chasing leaks in the MGA – oil leaks from the engine and gearbox and air leaks into the interior. The prior owner insulated the interior really well but I have found some small areas where heat can push its way in to cook us. Seals age and crack. Andy reports he has had success with this in his MGA Coupe. The Coupe I had in the 1980s and 90s was not especially hot inside.

I got a call from the guy with a 1956 MGA that he needs to sell. (See the Classifieds.) He bought it new then raced it at the very first race at Laguna Seca in 1957. He did 400 autocross events with it and many hill climbs including Virginia City. He is still very enthusiast about the MG – though he has let it decay on his carport since 1983. People are funny; with 5 acres, you'd think he could have gotten it inside somewhere.

Time for this funny person to finish the newsletter. I also wish you a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Dan



"KBO" - Winston Churchill's saying to his family members during the dark days of WWII - "Keep Buggering On" - an apt phrase in these pandemic times

Marty Rayman in his TD with appropriate facial wear on the Goat Rock Tour. KBO!



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Yet another of Phil and Joe's early Nigels



New Member!

Welcome back John Hutchison of Lafayette, with a 1972 MGB, 1967 XKE and a 1976 Triumph Bonneville.

"I grew up in an MG family. My father owned a BMC dealership (MG, Austin Healey, Jaguar, then Triumph, Land Rover, etc etc etc) from 1956-1976. His favorite was the TF1500. His favorite MG guys to hang out with at dealer meetings, etc., were Joe Huffaker Sr. and Merle Brennan, two names that all British car buffs should be familiar with. I have two British cars, a 72 MGB and a 67 XKE and a Triumph Motorcycle. I've had the MG for 34 years, the Jag for 38 years and the Bonneville for 20



John's MGB

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years. The MG was a pre-engagement present to my wife. I started SCCA Drivers School in a Bug Eye, which I blew up in about an hour and finished the school in another club member's - Ron Simi - MGB. Won the Drivers School race in that MGB. I had six hours track time in that B.

"I was in the British Car business for 6 years and the car business for 43 years. I am retired now and starting to really enjoy my British vehicles again."

MG Best-Ever Q3 Performance

MG Motor UK remains the UK's fastest-growing car manufacturer as it registered a record-breaking month of sales for September. September was the worst month for new car registrations on record. The biggest winner over the month was MG, recording a huge 169% boost in registrations over 2019.

MG secured a 23rd consecutive month of consistent growth overall.

Daniel Gregorius, Head of Sales & Marketing, MG Motor UK, said: "Our dealers delivered tremendous volume and we handed over our first all-electric ZS SUVs. MG is on the up, and there's a lot more to come!"





President's Ponderings

I hope that everyone had a good Thanksgiving and were at least able to visit with some family and friends. This is a time when we think about what we are Thankful for and I'm sure that we can all come up with some positive thoughts in these trying times. I know I can.

That was one of the great things about the Sonoma Tour is; it almost felt like we were back to normal again, even though everyone was wearing masks and keeping a safe distance from each other. It was really great to see so many familiar faces and even more encouraging was the number of new faces that turned up. There were new members and members that have never participated in a tour before. Thank you all for coming and I hope that everyone had a good time. This year we have to be thankful for the little things in life that we normally take for granted.

Apart from organizing the tour which we both enjoy we've been pretty much home birds. I've been working on the GT again to try and resolve some niggling issues. I felt a slight vibration from the under the car while driving and checked the U-joints on the drive shaft and found some play in the front one. So I replaced both U-joints which seemed to take longer than when I had previously done them many years ago. However that did cure the vibration which was good news.

I know that MGs in general have a reputation for running hot and overheating but I have the opposite problem with the GT; it runs too cold and never gets up to temperature in the winter which should be in the 185° range. That's probably because I installed a 'Wizard Cooling' aluminium cross flow radiator when I added A/C to the car several years ago and a 160° thermostat. Unfortunately in the winter the engine never gets up to temperature because it's running around 160° all the time, which I think is too cool.

I decided to swap out the 160° thermostat and install a 180° one instead which should be very straight forward. I normally test them in a saucepan of heated water to ensure they open at the correct temperature before I fit them. This time I didn't and just put it in the engine, (maybe too trusting for something made in Israel). As you can probably guess it didn't work properly and hardly opened at all. When I tested it later it started to open at 195° and then stuck. So I went to different parts shop and bought a 'Stant' thermostat (also made in Israel) and this time I tested it in and it worked perfectly. So the GT is back on the road and so far seems to be back to normal, which is also something to be thankful for.

Hopefully there appears to be an end in sight to this pandemic so I keep positive thoughts and hope to see you all in the New Year.

I wish everyone a Joyful Holiday Season and Happy New Year,

Andy

2021 Officer Nominees

President: Andy Preston, Incumbent

Vice-President: Kirk Prentiss, Incumbent

Treasurer: Marla Preston, Incumbent

Secretary: Mike Jacobsen, Incumbent

Please send or email your vote to Mike Jacobsen

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

KNOCK OFF SPINNER TOOL for MGs and other British Cars

By Sarto Rocheleau

Tired of damaging spinners, bent spokes, and hitting the car body?

I know I was, and thought, there had to be a better way than beating the spinner with a hammer from the 19th century! Here is my latest re-designed, two eared tool, for a 42mm size MG spinner and other cars.

Short History: For some time now, I've not been able to make my original two eared tools. My machinist lost his home and shop and all of our equipment during the 2017 CA. fires. Everything was destroyed and it would have been too costly to rebuild and continue making any more of my tools. I tried several other versions, but fell short, until now.

My Final version: After having many starts and re-starts to replace my original two eared tools, the final tool is now in production. There will be no need to beat your spinners to death with a hammer anymore. I used a solid block of aluminum using CNC technology to create **a one-piece tool with no moving parts**. The tool's design has a leather lined bridge. You simply hang the tool on the spinner's ear that faces upward, push the tool flat on the other ear and turn. Attach my, included, socket to the hex shaft of the tool, then use **your** breaker bar or a torque wrench and apply force to tighten or loosen the spinner. **Yes, it's that easy and simple!**

The Kit contains: a leather lined tool, protecting all metal to metal contact, a plastic colored insert to protect the face of the spinner, a 1 1/4 inch socket with a 1/2 inch drive, to be able to attach a breaker bar or a torque wrench on to the tool, a wheel chock to block the tire from spinning on the floor, and a tough embossed black storage bag to keep the Tool Kit organized in the car. UNDO arrows are engraved into the back of the tool.



The two ear angles shapes are different for the left and right sided spinners. My tool has both ear angles milled into the side walls of the tool, making the tool work for both R&L spinners. This tool snugly fits and will not twist off under torque.

Photos using a wheel chock, the tool on an MG wire wheel, and using a torque wrench.



While using a breaker bar or a torque wrench, always push down to control the force.

Torque Settings: In my Lotus Elan's printed manuals, it posts a torque setting of 200 to 220 lb/ft. It is the only, and I mean the only printed torque settings I've been able to find. Some say it should be higher, others say, any higher would make it harder to remove. Over tightening could also damage the threads.

A local shop owner has always tightened his spinners with three good whacks with a lead hammer. We tested his "3 good whacks method", and he hit within 3 to 4 pounds of 210 each time. When he used my tool, he said that the added extension bar's leverage, caused the wheel to spin on the floor. He suggested I would need a block of wood to keep the wheel from spinning. That's why I've added a wheel chock to my knock off tool kits.

Chocking your wheels: In order to prevent damage to the threads it's recommended to jack up the wheel just until it starts to turn and then place the chock on one side of the tire to loosen and move the chock to the other side to tighten. **It's that simple!**

UNDO Directions:

FIRST, follow the UNDO direction on the spinners

UNDO right, turn clockwise towards the front of the car

UNDO left, turn counter clockwise towards the front of the car

To TIGHTEN both sides, turn towards the rear of the car

Sizing your spinners;

This is a question I get about what size spinner tool to order.

42mm MG and other British car spinners measures about 3 1/2 ", across the base diameter, not the ears.

52mm Jaguars measure about 4".

Storage for a Knock Off Spinner Tool Kits:

Included in all Tool Kits is a black embossed storage bag. An option is an Aluminum tool case.



Keep your spinners looking new!



Not like this!



Not all spinners are made the same, depending on who manufactured them. Some have thicker side walls, higher domes, and the ear angles are slightly different. My tool's design will fit all of the different shapes perfectly.

For additional information visit my website at www.knockoffspinnertool.com

Or contact Sarto Rocheleau at 707 481 6700 or sarto477@yahoo.com

A Salute to Don Hayter (1926 to 2020)

By MGOC Member John Hunt (That's John in the photo.)

I have had the good fortune to correspond with Don over the years and to see him and Mary in Abingdon, England for a very fun and memorable lunch several years ago at the Boundary House pub. The pub is the old home of the legendary Cecil Kimber who was a British Car designer and best known for creating and building the MG Car Company.

It was a pleasure to meet him. Don was the quintessential English gentleman. I remember his excitement and enthusiasm chatting about mechanical topics, especially anything related to MG. Talking with him, I really gained an understanding and an appreciation of how much the development & production of the MGB was a team experience from Syd Enever to Alec Hounslow and everyone that worked at Abingdon. Don always seemed like he thought often of others, for example, he always gave a big hello to everyone in the MG Owners Club of Northern California every time we exchanged letters.

I often wondered, what on earth do concept and/or record-breaking cars have in common with street cars? Don was kind enough to explain to me that line flow for the MGB was based off the record-breaking land speed record car, EX 181 (also known as the roaring teardrop), driven by Sir Sterling Moss in 1957. In his book, *The MGB Story*, there's a wonderful overlay sketch of EX 181 and the MGB where you can clearly see the relationship between these two cars. One fun fact he shared was that when designed years ago, the drag factor of the MGB at the time was only bettered by things like Lotus, however, it was equal to Ferrari!

Don's contribution to creating the MGB has helped create many smiles, great memories and friendships around the world. His memory and car will continue to do so for many years. Don will be greatly missed by the MG community. The Northern California MG Owners Club sends their condolences to his family, friends and a warm thank you to Don for all that he has done for the MG community over the years.



"Everything we did just worked," recalls Hayter, "and suddenly we had a prototype that looked absolutely marvelous. John Thornley and Syd Enever looked at the wooden model – with just silver paint on it – and then metal panels were made up. I was up and down to Coventry so often, I must have worn a groove in the road." (Quote and model photographs from **MGB** by David Knowles.)

Don Hayter's Career

- Don started at Pressed Steel in 1942 and worked on designs for airplanes during WWII. A lot of design work is transferring concepts to detailed drawings for production.
- Postwar at Pressed Steel, Don worked on the XK120 panels and later the MG Magnette ZA. This was MG's first unibody (monocoque construction).
- In 1954, Don hired on at Aston Martin with an early project there of designing a new radiator shape for the DB3. (Very critical work!) Don then drew initial styling lines for the new DB4.
- In February, 1957, Don moved to MG. His first job was to design the removable inner-fender panels for the MGA Twin Cam. Then he developed the styling for the Ted Lund MGA Coupe raced at LeMans.
- In 1958, Don did the first full-scale mockup of the monocoque body for a new MGB at Morris Bodies.
- The EX205 series of MGA replacement concepts was next for Don. He said the finished product was "looking like a war horse in full armor, heavy, nice and curvy, getting there but still wrong."
- Don started again from scratch. "I took a new EX number, and 214/1 was drawn quarter-scale straight onto the paper which I then gave to Harry Herring, our model maker, and that was the MGB all in one go." The pencil drawing was completed on 19 June 1958.
- Don also designed the MGB's interior. He styled the facia panel with its glove box. He designed the new aluminum-framed windscreen for the MGB as well as the hood (convertible top design). Don modified the heater from the Austin A40 for use on the MGB.
- In 1967, Don was responsible for revamping the GT body shell for the fast GTS MGC racers with their aluminum panels.
- Don took over the MG projects department at Abingdon in 1968 and was responsible for the ADO 21, the "MGD." This well-received design ultimately lost out to the TR7.
- Later Don was 'up to his eyebrows' in meeting American safety regulations which resulted in the rubber-bumper MGBs. Don was also responsible for creating the one-off MGB "Safety Car" of 1972.
- In 1973 Roy Brocklehurst left MG and Don became Chief Engineer.
- After the MG factory was closed, Don stayed on until 12 December 1980.

Source: **MGB, The Illustrated History**, Jonathon Wood and Lionel Burrell, 1988



Aston Martin DB convertible and coupe of 1957-58



Top right: EX214 Final Prototype completed mid 1960



Design Influences for the MGB

Don Hayter came to MG in 1957 from Aston Martin. According to John Thornley, the DB2/4 Coupe certainly influenced the concept and general design of the MGB and MGB/GT.

Syd Enever claimed that the MGB design was inspired by the EX181 record car. "The MGB shape, though you may not realize it, was basically borrowed from EX181 ... When we started the MGB we took this shell and developed it into a passenger car." Some thought that Syd exaggerated the influence to impart a performance pedigree to the MGB.

A response from Hayter, "I liked the Ferrari, which had 'pocketed' head lamps. We started with that headlamp style

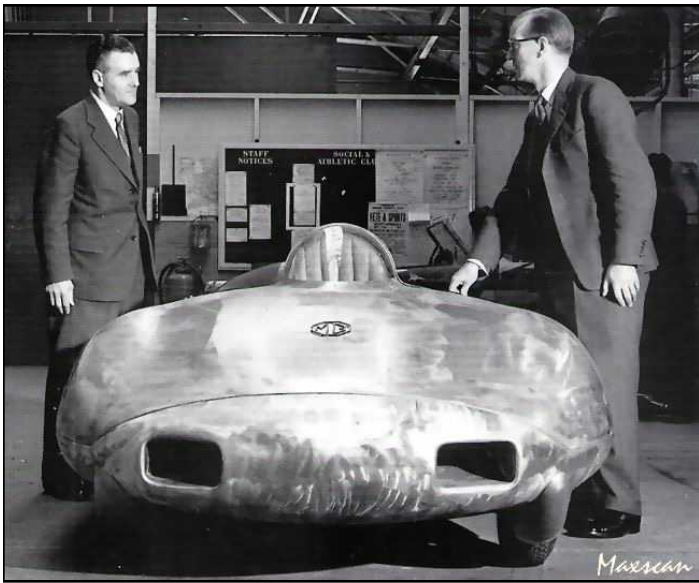


and cut down the car's nose. When I first saw the Floride, I thought, well, they've done our front end – but without a radiator in it." Renault claimed that MG had poached their design and Don kept the legal correspondence.

The Sunbeam Alpine caused quite a stir during the time (1959) that MG was deep into designing the MGB, because of its unibody construction, American styling and roll-up windows in a small sports car.



1957 Ferrari 250 at top. Sunbeam Alpine Series 1 at bottom. Whitewalls and fins!



MG EX181

EX181 at top. 1956 Aston Martin DB2/4 Touring Spyder at lower left. Renault Floride at lower right.



The Best Handling MG?

From the **MG Experience** BBS

This is an area where I have good experience, having thrashed my MGA to the breaking point in almost weekly autocross (Solo-II) with the SCCA for several years. I suspect I do more twists and turns in competition in one season than most road racers do in a lifetime.

The MGA does indeed have very good road holding suspension, especially for the period when it was built (and allowing for the mass of the live rear axle). Give it some sticky tires, put it down on a smooth surface, properly tweak a few suspension adjustments, and you can make it do damn near anything you like, limited primarily by adhesion of the tires to the pavement. I have a house full of trophies to back it up, and those wins came rather naturally for a 40-year old car competing against much more modern machinery.

There will be a few qualifying remarks. If you hit a seriously bumpy road the heavy rear axle will dance a little, especially with some particular frequency of excitation. The front suspension is better with not so much (excessive) unsprung weight, with the spring pans and shock arms being minimal.

- Barney Gaylord

Barney...I don't have anything like your experience in pushing the car to the limit but I have owned a massive range of cars over the years, often 'performance cars' and the MGA is a delight to drive. It sticks to road like the proverbial on a blanket and my conversion to a 5-speed box last year seems to also have given it a new burst of energy and the ability to put it on precisely when needed. Non standard mods have been an anti-sway (roll) bar and wider/lower 195/60R15 tyres fitted on strong 72 spoke 15 by 5 wheels.

- Neil Ferguson

To back up Barney's significant empirical testing of the theory that the A is the best handling MG, I saw a comparison of MGs in a magazine last year, and the A came top, even compared to the modern Z series and the MGF/TF. I believe test was a modern day head to head comparison. It lost out on other aspects like fuel consumption, 0-60, cost to run, but blitzed the handling section.

- Grant Hudson

Of course the MGA is a pleasure to drive and, of course, as Barney points out with some "modification" the handling can be made far better. But the fact remains that in standard trim an MGA would be no match for a semi-elliptic Spridget as an example and it would be a long way behind a simple modern saloon car. Don't confuse driving pleasure with handling.

Just as a point I remember racing many years ago at Pembrey a circuit in the UK at a meeting organized by the Jaguar drivers club. Racing that day were some highly modified E Type Jaguars. A competitor turned up in a standard XJ220 complete with CD player, seat belts and a roll cage. It absolutely slaughtered everything and it is only to be expected from a car designed to modern standards.

By the way we had a similar discussion some time ago about Midgets. Some of their owners believed the cars were so good they compared them to the handling of a Formula 1 Ferrari.

- Bob Turbo Midget, England

I don't suppose there is anything magic or superior about either the MGA or Midget model. Both with front engine, rear wheel drive, near 50/50 weight distribution, and similar suspension. In theory the Midget should be quicker through a slalom because it is narrower and can follow a straighter line (but a lot of Midgets have been embarrassed trying to prove it).

Also don't confuse horsepower with handling. If we were all power hungry no one would own an MG with a standard 4-cylinder engine.

- Barney Gaylord

I think MGAs in Autocrosses in the USA must be entirely different animals to the ones we have here. In the UK and Europe a Midget defeats the MGA on almost every occasion. (It is far more nimble). Maybe due to our language difference, I think it is time to beg to differ or maybe my MGA has something wrong with it but most modern cars have far better handling.

- Bob Turbo Midget England

Similar situation in Oz. We keep getting beaten by Midgets in motorkhanas. Maybe a difference is that there must be a change in direction every 20 metres with our motorkhana rules.

Mike Ellsmore

Never ceases to surprise me that people don't look at the power to weight ratio as being the most important anyway - but - on the subject of autotesting MGAs vs Midgets - all I know is that, the MGA made me ache in places I never knew I didn't have muscles ... :)

- Rachmach

Continued on next page

Keep Planning for 2020 ... (2021?)



FALL - WINTER

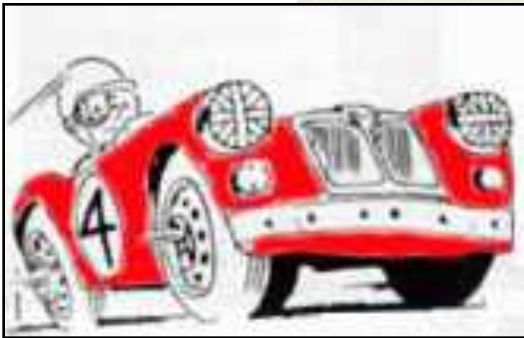
Saturday, Jan. 2, "Open Restroom Run," Mt. Hamilton,
Dan Shockey, see page 3

Other events 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.



The Miata is what the MGA was 50 years ago. Nimble and fun with relatively low horsepower. The Miata is so well set up it is in a class of its own. The tighter the course, the better for them. On tight courses, the bigger, high horsepower cars just slide around like pigs on ice.

I must agree with Barney here. As a vintage racer of 2 MGAs for over 10 years, we are qualifying and finishing on the pointy end of the grid each weekend. It has taken us nearly 8 years to fully develop the suspension to get our cars to where they are now with the help of Huffaker Engineering. We still use lever shocks, factory rear leaf springs, and all pickup points are to factory spec. The Porsches and Corvettes that drive away from us at tracks like Laguna Seca and ThunderHill don't stand a chance at more technical tracks like Sears Point. When properly sorted, the corner weights are within 2% giving you amazing balance at the highest of speeds. Our 'vintage' lap times put us in the middle of the grid for a Spec Miata race. For those of you who need HP in your MGA, you can get a reliable 120hp to the wheel with a proper motor. As for 1275cc Midgets... yep, when prepared properly, they will always be quicker than a MGA, on a AutoX or Road Course.

- K. Brown



Ghost Race Track: Golden Gate *from the SCCA Magazine*

Golden Gate Park. The events, sanctioned by San Francisco Region, were sponsored by a local group called The Guardsmen. They used the proceeds from ticket sales to support their charitable efforts to provide facilities and programs for underprivileged youth.

The program for the event carried one of the most striking covers that I have ever seen from that era. The photo, a quartet of sports cars racing uphill and around a bend with the city's trademark Golden Gate Bridge in the background, is so well done that it was also used as a cover for *Road & Track* after the event. However, after traversing the old circuit I came to the realization that there was no way on earth the cover photo came from Golden Gate Park. Unearthing yet another Ghost Tracks mystery, Wendy and I took off driving in and out of all the roads along the shoreline until we finally found the location of the cover photo. It turns out that it was staged in Lincoln Park. Unfortunately, the fantastic overlook is now reserved for the owners of a large two-story home that has been constructed, blocking the view from the road.

Back to the Golden Gate circuit, we wandered among the woods, floral gardens, Dutch-style windmills, zoo, ponds and streams. Soon we understood why *Road & Track* said of the first event, "Standing amid the lush greenery of Golden Gate Park—watching the sports cars scream, mutter, roar and crackle around the beautiful artificial lakes, seeing these neat machines wind their way through the bison, elk, and deer pastures—spectators were forced to admit that The Guardsmen and the

San Francisco Region SCCA really have something." The article went on to rave about the excellent staffing, the communication system of phone lines laid around the circuit, and the efficiency of the event schedule.

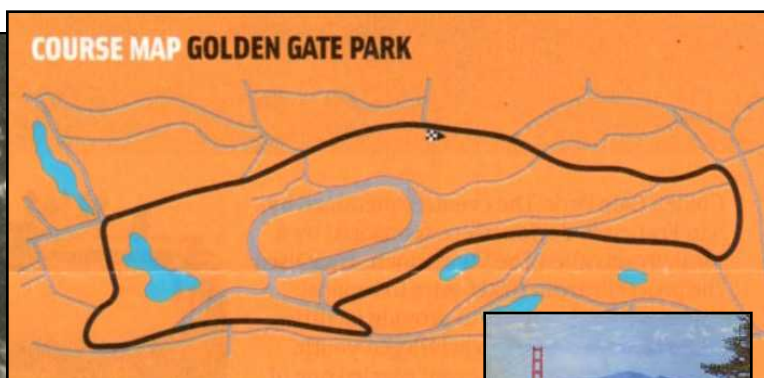
The race report indicates that the crowd was on its feet during the feature race in 1952 when local favorite Phil Hill, driving a 2.6-liter Ferrari for the first time, gave chase to the Cad-Allard of Bill Pollack. Pollack got a better start, but Hill came up from his sixth-place grid spot, and started clicking off faster and faster lap times, zipping by the start/finish line at speeds up to 117mph (through the park, remember!). He reeled Pollack in slowly but surely, until the two were only car lengths apart. Unfortunately, a coil wire fell off on the last lap, robbing Hill of six of his 12 cylinders, and forcing him to limp home to a second-place finish.

Meanwhile, Michael Graham and Don Parkinson were having a similar battle for third in another Cad-Allard and a Jaguar XK, respectively. As these two approached the finish line, a couple of eager spectators, celebrating Pollack's win, ran onto the course without regard for the still-oncoming cars. Graham had to drift wide to miss them, and Parkinson, in the midst of an attempted pass, had to drift even wider. This put him on a collision course with a couple of course judges, forcing him to snap the wheel right, causing contact with Graham's car, just as it crossed the finish line for third. Graham fought the car for control along the main straight, lined with spectators on both sides, until he cleared the crowded area and left the course, impacting an unprotected tree. ▶

Observing the nearness of the trees to the road today, and comparing them to the pictures from the fifties—with nothing but snow fence barriers in sight—I could easily see how harrowing Graham's ride must have been. It's also easy to tell why the races only lasted for three years. However, I can also see what made Golden Gate reportedly one of the prettiest race circuits SCCA used in those early days. The park is a beauty, and is still the scene of much sports activity. During our Saturday morning visit, we encountered numerous kids' soccer clubs at play, several packs of joggers, a significant quantity of bicyclers, and one group that stands in my mind as truly unique. I encountered them climbing out of their van on the section of track that was temporarily closed to traffic. They were wearing rollerblades and bathrobes. After a brief discussion and a few stretching exercises, they dropped their robes and streaked off down the road, wearing nothing but their skates. This caused me to think that our races may not have been the most unique sport that the roads of Golden Gate have been witness to across the years.



Coppe's Osca and Dick Lyon's MG Special lead the start of the Mayor's Cup Race at Golden Gate Park in 1954.



See map detail
on page 21





MGs parked at Goat Rock State Beach

We got very lucky with the November weather and had one of the best days of the year along the Sonoma coast. You probably get fewer than 20 days in the year when the temperature is in the mid 60s, the sky sunny and clear and you can see for ever. And we lucked out and had one of those rare days. Kirk Prentiss exclaimed “The Best Tour of the Year” and I agree with that but it was also the only tour of the year! Hmmm, thanks Kirk.

We had around 20 cars and 30 people on the drive and from all over and several came a long way from home. Steve and Vicky drove up from Pebble in their MGB, and Tom and Heidi Doyle came down from Tahoe but wisely drove their SUV rather than the MGC due to snow and ice over the summit. Tim and Dawn Mulgrew drove over from Martinez in their 54 MG TF with the top down all the way. In fact Tom said that they always drive with top down; that’s true British spirit! Also attending were; Bob Bundy, Mark Darley, Doug and Connie Hollander, Marty Raymond and Andrew Levin, Ron Simi and Sarah, Bill Thompson and Jean Behse, George and Marcia, Kirk and Amy, Christian Rowcliffe, John Hunt, Brian Leary, Tom List, John Hutchinson, Rod and Sue Schweiger and Andy and Marla.

We left Novato and travelled in sunshine through farmlands of the Chileno Valley which at this time of year is resplendent in its winter gold hues and colors. We climbed to the top of Wilson Hill and were rewarded with one of the best views of the Sonoma Countryside below us; I never tire of that view. Our first stop was the Petaluma Creamery which as always was welcoming and cheerful. Marla stood her post as monitor only allowing 6 at a time in the shop.

We travelled on along the coastline road enjoying endless views of the Pacific while the sunlight danced off the water. I think this part of the coastline is one of the prettiest and most photographed of anywhere along Hwy 1 and we drive it all the time. We descended down to Goat Rock State Beach and were able to form another parking aisle in the area next to the beach with all our cars parked side by side. What a site, especially in November!

We ate our picnic lunches on the beach and enjoyed the breathtaking views. It couldn’t have been a more picture perfect day. Thanks to everyone who attended and made it a day to remember, during these crazy times.



Photos this page by Andy Preston





I'm still recovering from Thursday's drive to Goat Rock Beach! My co-pilot Andrew took all the images while we were moving.



Photos this page by Marty's friend Andrew

The three dudes in hats are Old Spokes, "As fast as the slowest spoke." We bike ride together on Fridays.

When we got to the top of Whites Hill, we where stopped for 45 minutes. A car had gone off the road. Bob Bundy, who was in front of me, had slipped by.

Photos by Marty and his friend Andrew



Classified Ads

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

1956 MGA: Original owner. Ran at 1st ever race at Laguna Seca in 1957. Racing parts and spares. Under car port since 1983. Offer. Aptos. Scott, 831-688-5577

1955 MGTF 1500: Named Murgatroyd. Right hand drive, imported from New Zealand, mechanically very sound and runs well. New top not installed. MG Red and tan leather upholstery. \$20,000. Kathie 503-422-8450. (Oregon club member)

1973 MGB Roadster: Fully restored 12 years ago, wire wheels, overdrive, Weber, Damask Red, quite reliable, \$4700, 248-535-1901 (Michigan club member)

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)

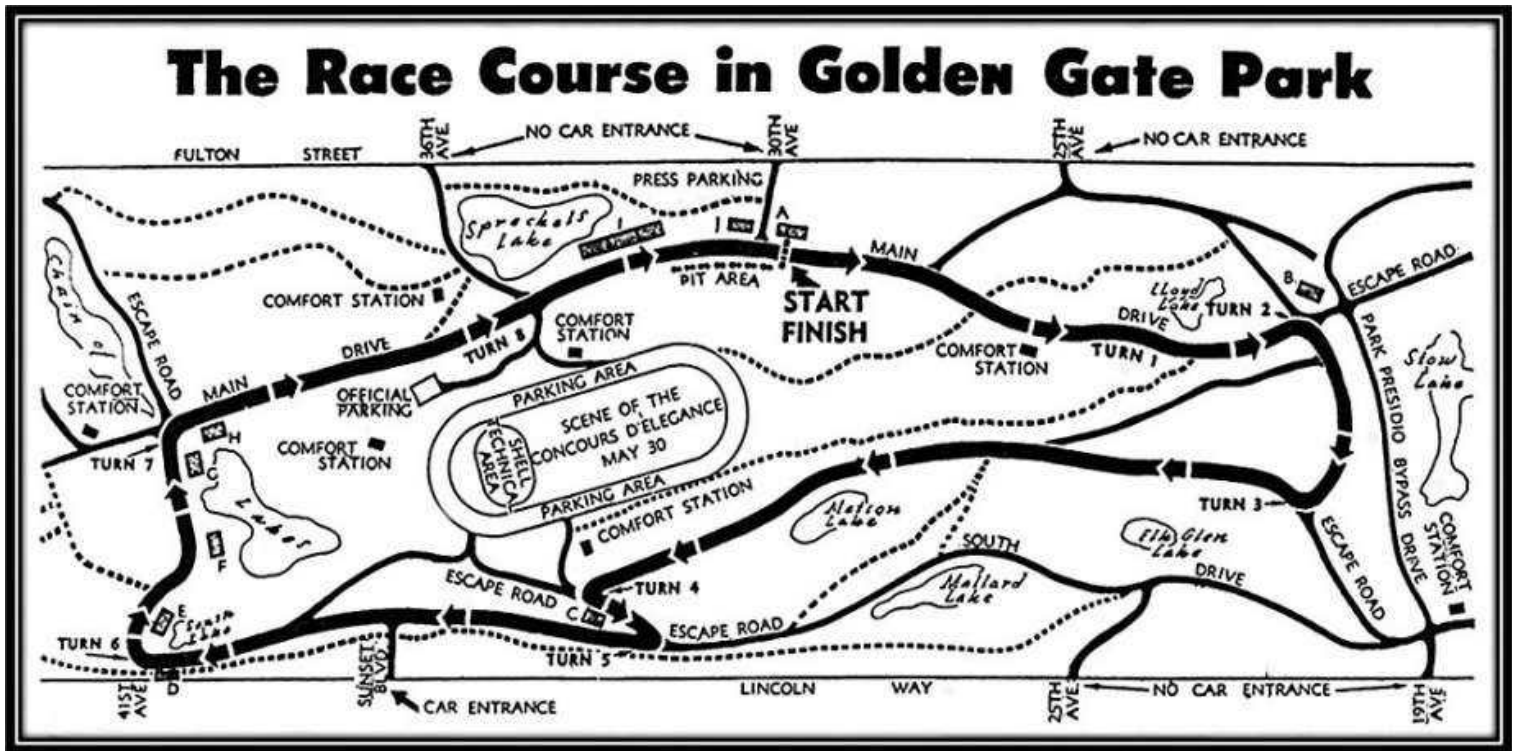
MGA Parts: 5 Alum bonnets, 2 styles, gas tank, leaf spring, 1500 driveshaft, new fiberglass front valence (race), front frame extension, master cylinder sleeved, 1500 engine block. Member Tom Morgan (650) 740-4116 (Re-posted 11/20, see free stuff shown last issue!)

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)

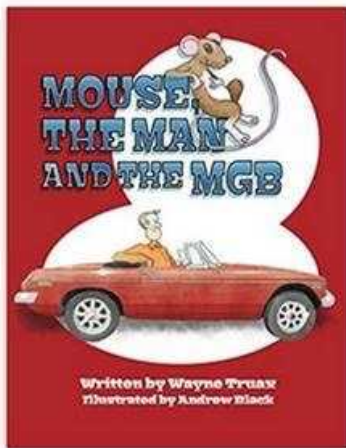
Enclosed Trailer for Rent: Enclosed car trailer for rent (16' x 8'). Trailer has integrated braking system and lights, 12 volt Electric Winch. Reasonable rates. Eric Baker (510) 517-2165



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



How did you get to the parking area? From Sunset only, I think. In place before the start perhaps?



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We have a tour
scheduled for Jan. 2.
See page 3.

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