



THE OCTAGON

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



North American MGB Register



Since 1957!



Webmaster Steve Kellogg near Big Sur
November, 2020
Shockey photo

January 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 2018

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Member-at-Large: Mark McGothigan, 510-633-1981,
markmc3us@yahoo.com
 Member-at-Large: Ken Gittings
 Member-at-Large: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125,
j2george@pacbell.net

APPOINTEES

Commercial Advertising: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699,
MikesMuseum@yahoo.com
 Corresponding Secretary: George Steneberg,
j2george@pacbell.net
 Historian: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125,
j2george@pacbell.net
 Photographer: Mindy Hungerman, 925-838-7773
MindyHungerman@yahoo.com
 Registrar: Steve Kellogg, 408-355-4125,
webmaster@mgocsf.org
 T Register Director: Jim Carlson, 408-224-3992,
mgjim@comcast.net
The Octagon Editor: Dan Shockey, 309-696-0803,
magnut_dan@hotmail.com
 Webmaster: Steve Kellogg, 408-335-4125,
webmaster@mgocsf.org
 Regalia: Andy Preston, 707-795-3480, andypreston@att.net

CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

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

MGB 1962-74: Steve Lilves, 415-924-3173,
slilves@sbcglobal.net

MGB 1974-1980: Ed Adams, 510-483-6821
AdamsEddie77@yahoo.com

MGB V8 Conversion: Tony Bates, 408-666-6174,
avbates@yahoo.com

MGC: Kent Leech, 925-253-9757, kent@kentleech.com

M.G. Midget: and Overall Auto Technician: Craig Kuenzinger, 925-934-3130, mrccraig@aol.com

MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125, j2george@pacbell.net

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

mgpb36@yahoo.com

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

j2george@pacbell.net

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

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

mgpb36@yahoo.com

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

mrccraig@aol.com

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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Hoping for a better year, in hearts at peace....

Frontispiece of the book, "The M.G. Companion," by Kenneth Ulyett



Photo: courtesy Stuart Seager

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES, Berkshire

‘And laughter, learnt of friends;
and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an
English heaven . . .’—*Rupert Brooke*

From the Editor

Happy New Year, Club Members!

28 December 2020

With hopes for a return to something like normalcy in 2021, at least with regard to club events. Shall we consider a special New Years toast for these trying times? I think increased tensions of many kinds is the new normal.

I got the MGA out for a small tour with the Sorry Safari and again to visit Steve Kellogg. He trained me on using MailChimp to contact you good folks. (I prefer 19th and 20th century technologies.) It was a beautiful day so we packed a lunch and drove the MGs down the Big Sur coast.

I didn't start work on the MGA engine swap. Instead I started work on remodeling my laundry room. Many new tricks for this old dog. The laundry area in my house was carved out from the garage (unfortunately.) What MG work have you gotten to? Send a report!

With the aging British sports car enthusiast population, we are in decline and that is hard to bear oft times. So many good friends and comrades lost or moved away. Clubs depend on retirees to help manage but ours tend to move away due to living costs.



Dan

To a better year,



**"Tonight's December thirty-first,
Something is about to burst.
The clock is crouching, dark and
small,
Like a time bomb in the hall.
Hark, it's midnight, children dear.
Duck! Here comes another year!"**

—Ogden Nash

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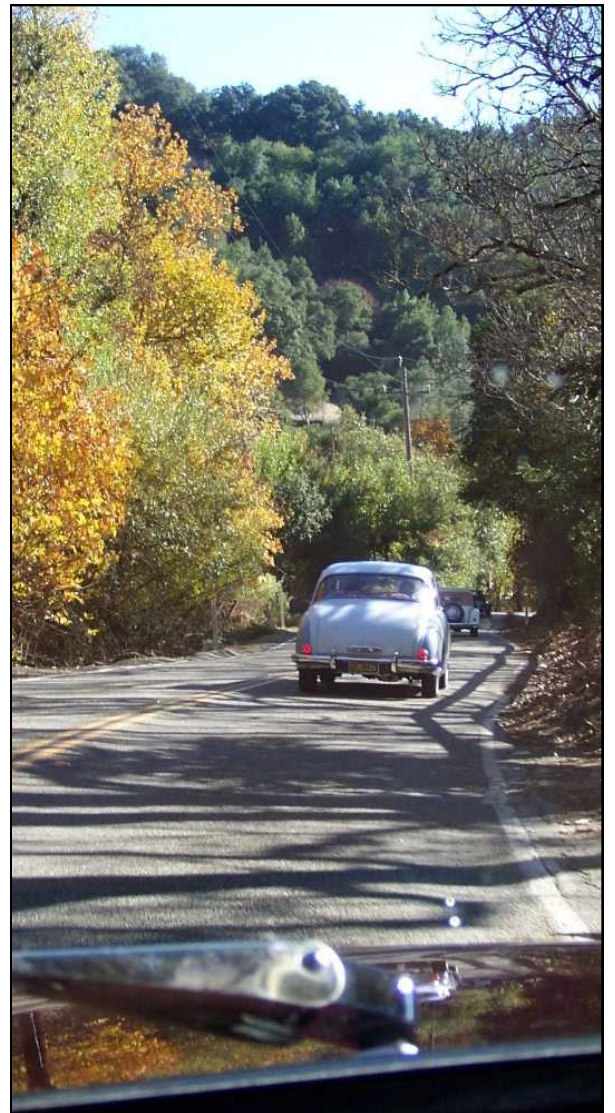


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A Hurricane fighter plane pilot in flight gear with his MG PB* shortly before his death in action, 1941 (*with a sloped L-type grill for some reason!)

Photo submitted to the MMM UK site by the pilot's grandson.

I don't think he could drive the MG in those big insulated boots. Note the blackout headlamp cover



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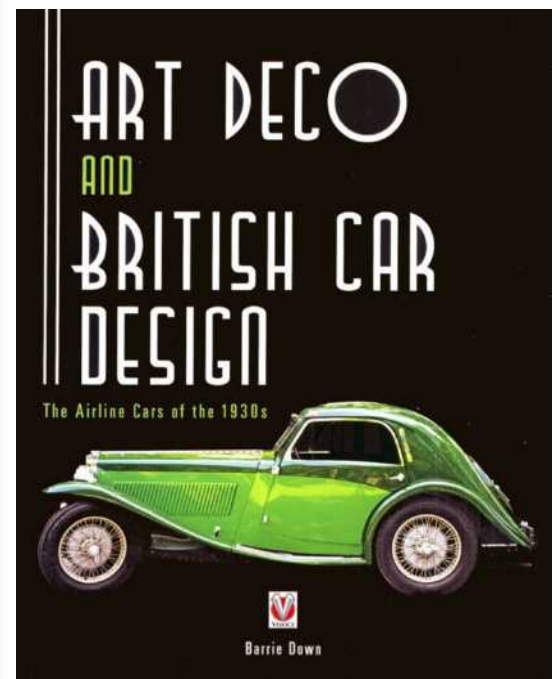


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President's Ponderings

And A Happy 2021 New Year to all

I hope that everyone had a safe and happy holiday season and were at least able to enjoy some holiday cheer. Marla and I stayed home most of the time and had a small family dinner on Christmas day with our close family and stayed home on New Year's Eve; just the two of us. I think that I speak for everyone when I say that I'm happy that 2020 is over and look forward to a better year in 2021. Thankfully the vaccinations have started so hopefully we might be back to a more normal way of life by mid-summer; let's hope so.

This is the time of year when we normally have our Annual Planning Meeting to plan our activities and events for the year. Even though things won't be back to normal for some I still think it would be a good idea to have a virtual Zoom meeting. This will give us a chance to catch up with each other and start planning some fun events. We'll need to be very creative with earlier events still maintaining social distancing and wearing masks but that's very doable. So it's time for you to put on your thinking caps and see what ideas you can come up with.

I have scheduled the Zoom Planning Meeting for Sat. Jan. 9th at 10:00. I will send out information on how to join the meeting by email to all members one week before the meeting. I hope that you can think of some creative events and look forward to seeing everyone.

In the meantime I've been still been working on my 74 MGB GT sorting out small things that you tend to get used to and live with. I had some wheel shimmy at 60mph so had the 2 front Rostyle wheels balanced by a local shop and all they did was add more weights to each wheel. They were 'Terrible' even worse than before. I then discovered that Rostyle wheels are even harder to balance than wire wheels but finally found a shop that could balance them correctly. I write an article on this for next month's *Octagon*.

Back in my garage I replaced my broken antennae and tightened the loose choke cable nut behind the dash, which is very hard to get to. I know it doesn't sound like much but on a 74 B you need to remove the glove box and center vents just to gain access and the center vents are nigh on impossible to remove. And of course one of center vents broke and so a relatively simple job turned into a major frustrating nightmare. Thank God for eBay where I was able to buy one in good condition for a reasonable price and now the dash is all back together and everything works. I can now listen to the radio and throw the clothes peg away that I used to keep the chock knob pulled out.

Take care and hope to see you at the zoom meeting,

Andy



Zoom Planning Meeting Saturday, Jan. 9 10am

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88260125222?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88260125222?pwd=emlxRVIBWkVTYXRmVXR2ZDh6U3BoQT09)
[pwd=emlxRVIBWkVTYXRmVXR2ZDh6U3BoQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88260125222?pwd=emlxRVIBWkVTYXRmVXR2ZDh6U3BoQT09)

Meeting ID: 882 6012 5222

Passcode: 368393

Pre-COVID: Andy and his Coupe on the Price Tour,
January, 2020

Member Notes

From John Hunt: Hello Everyone,

This is absolute gold, a very entertaining and insightful interview with Stuart Turner, former BMC Competitions Department manager based in Abingdon.

Only lightly touches on MG, however, wonderful look at the glory days of motor sport in the 1960s, enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnD3gObbTho>



From Don Scott of Napa:

I posted this on a thread on the MG Experience, where a MGB owner began a thread that he is contemplating buying a Miata.

I have the Miata magazines from the early 1990s and there was a series of articles that compared the new Miata with classic sports cars. Here's a link to the article that compares a '67 BRG MGB roadster with a new '91 Miata Special Edition. That new Miata SE was BRG with a tan interior, and quite attractive. Some years ago, I had a '67 BRG MGB roadster, albeit, it was a car that I towed home, never got running, and resold.

Miata magazine article:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KP9j4AoRWaJfgXAdBUxmSn-H4u1JEy3x?usp=sharing>

MG Experience thread:

<https://www.mgexp.com/forum/mgb-and-gt-forum.1/never-thought-id-say-this.4258463/>

Wow. Low mile SE or LE Miatas will be worth more than concours MGBs at this rate.



The following BaT Auctions listing has ended:

[8k-Mile 1993 Mazda MX-5 Miata Limited Edition](#)

Winning Bid: \$35,000

Want to get notified when another **Miata Mazda** is listed on BaT Auctions? [Click here to sign up.](#)

From Marja vdH:

The Metropolitan is getting close to coming home. I got a call from the Met folks and the car is running! I was happy to hear that all the electrics were okay as I had done most of the wiring. Rick and I had never heard of a Metropolitan until 2013.

They want me to come test drive it, but with the Covid restrictions I cannot justify driving up there to do this at the moment. They are giving the car a good shakedown so looks like I'll be able to drive it in 2021! Here is the car 2 weeks ago:



Marty's Bicycle Chronicles - Put Some Fun Between Your Legs

Bicycle riding has been a passion of mine for most of my life. I have fused it with my love of photography. I got a Schwinn Varsity Ten Speed road bike & a Minolta SRT 101 single lens reflex camera in 1972. Beer, coffee, camaraderie & a desire to explore on a bicycle are also part of the mix.

I have been intrigued by bicycling history, paraphernalia, photographs, posters, books, design & fashion & people on bikes, bicycle infrastructure, bike shops, watching races... The passion began at a young age on a NYC Parks Dept. playground in Arverne (Rockaway Beach), Queens, N.Y. If you flew into JFK from the Atlantic, you went over my housing project, which still exists. At about ten years of age I read a LIFE Magazine article about Davis, California. I thought "I want to live in a place like that" & I do.

Marin County, California has some of the finest bicycling in the world available to me by just rolling out my front door. It even has a world-class bicycle museum! From my garage I can be on the trails of Mt. Tamalpais, birthplace of mountain biking in 20 minutes, on wonderful roads, like around the Tiburon Peninsula & with a little more effort on the Golden Gate or Richmond San Rafael Bridges in about 45 minutes. I dreamed of being able to use a bicycle to commute to work, around my community & explore places near & far away. I have bicycled all around California, in Italy, Germany, the coast of Oregon & NYC.



I have been privileged to contribute to my two sons & nephew becoming dedicated bicyclists. I remain inspired & awed by some of my pals on the mountain with the Bicycle Buddies or on the road with the Old Spokes. We range in age from the youngest in the mid forties to 89 years of age.

Check out Marty's blog or a subsequent installment of "Marty's Bicycle Chronicles."

Marty Rayman
Kentfield, California

Dawn and I spreading Christmas Cheer. Lots of honks, waves and photos taken!
A 2020 COVID appropriate Santa - Tim Mulgrew



New Member!

Welcome Ron Brazell of Vallejo with a 1952 MGTD



The MG K3

Andrew Fock delves into the history of one of the most famous MGs, the K3 from The PreWar MG Register of Australia

While the huge sales of the MGA and MGB in the 1950s and 60s made the name MG synonymous with British sports cars, there is one model of MG above all others that made the marque a legend, the K3 Magnette.

The success of the M-type Midget in 1929 had come as somewhat of a surprise to Cecil Kimber and MG, but had inadvertently not only saved the company from almost certain collapse with the onset of the Great Depression, but had actually allowed Kimber to expand to the old Pavlova Leather works in Abingdon with an loan of £100,000 from William Morris.

Morris had bought Wolseley Motors in 1927. Along with the sale came a newly developed family of engines. The smallest of these had gone into the Minor and the Midget. The next engine up was a small six cylinder of 1271cc. In its standard form, with duralumin cod rods (limiting the maximum engine speed to 4100 rpm), and Wolseley valve timing it produced about 35 b.h.p. Morris took this, placed it in a lengthened Minor chassis and called it the Wolseley Hornet.

With a 60% increase in horsepower over the Minor, the car performed well and sold well. Kimber once wrote, if you made a car 10% better you could sell it for 40% more. The Minor/Midget had proven this theory very well and the Midgets were highly profitable for MG. The arrival of the Hornet must have had them wondering if they could repeat the trick with the new six cylinder motor.

By this time, MG had moved on from the limitations of the Minor chassis. Record breaking and racing experience with EX127 and the C-types had seen the development of the underslung ladder frame chassis that was to be with MG till the demise of the TC some 20 years later. So, not unsurprisingly, the new engine, suitably disguised, was placed in a lengthened D-type Midget chassis. To save on costs the same track was used, allowing the use of common running gear. The engine was mated to a manual ENV 4-speed gear box similar to that used in the C-types, but unlike the C-types the rear engine mount was still on the engine and not via a cross tube through the bell housing. Bodies were initially four-seat tourers and small coupés but when the J-type was introduced, the body from the J2 was used to produce a very stylish two-seater known as the F2. The F2 was sold at a £60 premium over the J2 and given that it did not have any more power and was heavier, Kimber's adage was again proved, it really is all in the marketing!

The problem with the F engine was that it was not really suitable for development. Despite changing to C-type conrods and improving the valve timing, it suffered from poor breathing, cooling and inadequate oil flow. So, in 1931 MG somehow managed to convince William Morris to allow them to develop a completely new six-cylinder engine.

While the F-type engine was the starting point, the new engine utilised all the lessons that had been learned during the record breaking and racing to date and had no parts in common. The four main bearing arrangement was maintained but with much larger journals (now all white metal) and a full flow oil filtration system. The head was cross flow and followed the J-type but with a much larger diameter camshaft and positively massive porting. In fact, the whole engine was over engineered, this and the reduction in capacity to 1086cc while retaining the 12hp rating (i.e. only the stroke is reduced) indicate that the whole exercise revolved around racing. The hints of this are everywhere on the engine, from the plinth to hold a magneto on the side of the block to the oil take off on the nearside of the head to feed a supercharger.

The engine was to be used in two car lines, the K- and the L-types. The first was called the Magnette as the capacity of the new engine fell between the Midget (small) and the Magna (large). However, the Magnette chassis was actually substantially heavier and larger than the Magna that proceeded it with a track of 4'0", a wheelbase of either 9'0" or 7'10" and a much deeper, heavier, cross braced chassis. Brakes were 13" drums of Elektron (magnesium alloy) with a cast iron insert dovetailed in.

At the time, the annual car tax was based on the RAC rating and was a considerable amount. If we consider that the average wage was about £150 per annum and the annual tax on a Magna was £12 this give some idea as to why small capacity cars with long strokes were so popular. Supercharging a small engine was a potential way to compete with cars in an altogether more expensive bracket without incurring an increase in the road tax.

The close association between George Eyston, who was one of the owners of Powerplus Superchargers, and MG could easily explain how they justified the reduction in capacity with the increase in weight if they planned to have the K-types supercharged.

However, as would transpire, the Powerplus supercharger would not be the solution to this problem due to its unreliability and propensity to oil up plugs. The other novel feature of the K-type was the introduction of the Wilson ENV 75 Preselector gearbox. This gearbox, a forerunner of the modern automatic gearbox,

allowed for instantaneous gear changes without the need for synchronisation.

Disappointingly, whereas the J-type has seen a substantial improvement in horsepower over the M, the new K-type (partially due to the reduction in capacity) was only marginally improved over the F, managing some 41 hp when normally aspirated.

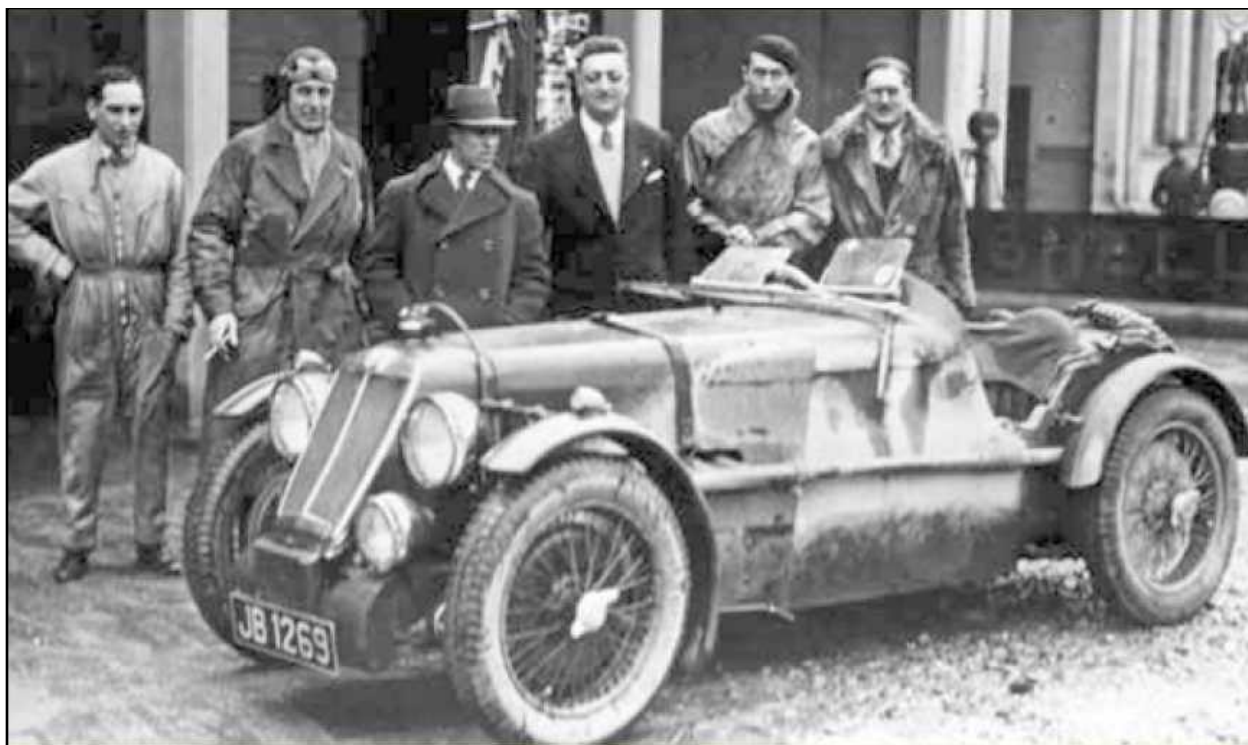
However, there was something big in the wings. In 1932, when the K-type engine was being developed, there was much lamenting in the press about the lack of suitable English racing cars to take on the "Continental Challenge" and uphold the flag. The last serious contenders had been Bentley, which had gone into receivership in 1930. Kimber was approached by George Eyston and Lord Howe, along with several of the Bentley Boys, to help them take on the Italians in what was one of the most prestigious races of the time, the 1000 mile Mille Miglia. For Kimber, this was a marketing opportunity not to be missed.

Late in 1932, two short wheelbase prototype cars were prepared. A Powerplus No.9 Supercharger running at 2/3 engine speed was mounted up front between the front dumbirons producing about 12 lbs of boost and giving about 100 bhp at the flywheel.

The first prototype, K3751 was built with a 7'6" chassis, the new K-type running gear, standard K-type radiator and a modified C type body. It was completed in October of 1932 and was promptly sent off to test with FM Montgomery on the Monte Carlo Rally. The second prototype, K3752, with the later standard 7'10" chassis was in the process of being built up when the decision was made to enter the Mille Miglia, which would be conducted in April of 1933. K3752 was hastily completed by the 3rd of January of 1933 and Reg "Jacko" Jackson drove it fresh from the Experimental workshop at Abingdon to Newhaven on the coast to be shipped to France where he would meet with Earl Howe and his mechanic Percy Thomas in his Alfa Romeo and Mercédès to travel to Italy where they would meet the rest of the team on January 10th.

At this time, K3752 still did not quite look like the classic K3 that we expect today. It featured the standard MG humped scuttle and a standard radiator in a sloping cowl. Much of the final body form that we associate with K3s today would be developed from the lessons learned from the arduous adventure of travelling across France to Italy and then on the Mille Miglia course all in the middle of a European winter.

Barré Lyndon recounted the adventure in his 1934 book "Circuit Dust". The route took them to Molsheim where they met with Ettore Bugatti and then on to Lucerne where Howe took over the car and got it up to 98 mph. After several adventures, they eventually reached Milan after battling heavy snow and ice. There they met with Captain Eyston, Count Lurani, Bernard Rubin and Sir Henry Birkin. The appalling weather had not given the car much opportunity to open up more than briefly, but the conditions had shown that the body needed some improvement to stop rain, snow and mud entering the cockpit.



K3752 outside Scuderia Ferrari, Modena. L to R. Eugenio Siena, Lord Howe, Tazio Nuvolari, Enzo Ferrari, Giovanni Lurani Cernuschi and George Eyston

In the team cars this would consist of dispensing with the individual humps and running a rain gutter along the scuttle to stop rain from collecting on the body and then rolling over the scuttle onto the occupants.

Attempts to run over the course during the next few days were scuppered by heavy snow in the passes between Bologna and Florence and so an alternate route had to be sought. Already, the issue of the blower oiling up the plugs had begun to rear its head. They had also determined that the car needed a stronger front axle, better steering lock and better oil cooling for the long climbs through the mountains. All agreed that the cowl over the radiator needed to go and a bigger radiator was needed.

The Italians were very excited about the English challenge and offered significant support. On their arrival in Rome they were received by both the King of Italy and Mussolini. On the way back to Brescia they stopped at Modena where they met with Tazio Nuvolari, Enzo Ferrari and Eugenio Siena. Alfa Romeo had apparently asked Scuderia Ferrari to help Earl Howe and his team as the Earl was a very good customer. Ferrari later arranged for the actual team to be put up at the Hotel Del Duomo in Brescia. When the team arrived there for scrutineering, they found all the linen to be monogrammed with MG! A good omen as it seemed.

After several more adventures, K3752 returned home via Monaco where they had joined up with K3751 which had just completed the Mote Carlo Rally. After watching the Mont des Mules hillclimb on the 29th of February in which K3751 won its class, the cars and the team returned to England. With six weeks required to ship the team cars to Italy for the actual race this left only a little over six weeks to build the new team cars incorporating all the lessons learned from the two prototypes.

K3752 was rebodied as per the team cars with the new pattern radiator shell derived from a spare cutdown 18/80 radiators. It would return to Italy for the actual race being used as a spare, driven by A Denly and kept the depot at Siena.

In a tale that reads like a "boy's own adventure", the team of K3s, K3001, K3002 and K3003 would go on to win the 1100cc class beating the Maseratis and Fiats, taking the team prize and becoming part of MG folklore. The oiling up of the plugs proved to be a huge issue during the race and the unreliability of the Powerplus superchargers would eventually result in the replacement with Marshall Roots type blowers in the 1934 K3s.

K3s would dominate light car racing in the UK for the next two years until superchargers were banned. Several would find their way down-under including the ex-Birkin-Rubin team car, K3002 that was imported by Lanes in 1933 for the Australian GP.



Above and below: George Eyston & Count Lurani during the Mille Miglia reconnoitre in K3752, January 1933.



Ghost Race Track: Cotati Raceway

A storied northern California airfield course

Cotati was another northern California race venue of the 1950s and 1960s. The track was located about 45 miles north of San Francisco and was an abandoned, WWII Naval Airfield. The track layout of 1.9 miles, utilized three of the four legs of the "X" shaped airfield for the majority of events. (The aerial photo from 1957 shows the course in its standard layout.) Occasionally, the track was lengthened to 2.5 miles for enduro events, by using a portion of the fourth leg and a paved service road that combined to form the "long course."

Primary usage was for the annual Racing Drivers Club (RDC) drivers school; the year end RDC Enduro; SF Region SCCA club events; SCCA divisional, regional and a few national events. First race was in May, 1957, with Carroll Shelby the winner in a 4.9 Ferrari. The track continued in use through much of the 1960s but saw dwindling use when Sears Point opened in early 1969. It was finally closed and purchased by a real estate developer in 1972.

One side note, Steve McQueen rented the Cotati track during the filming of Bullitt in 1968 for practicing the chase scene.

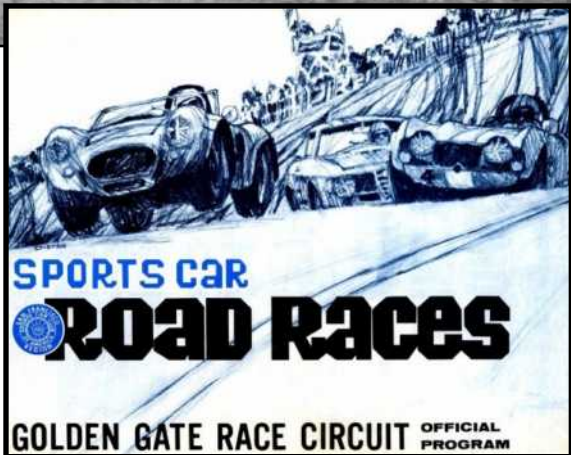
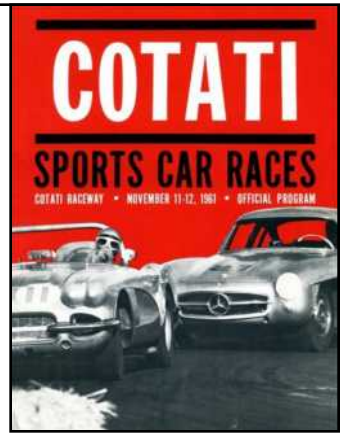
Nothing remains of Cotati today. The entire track area was plowed under and replaced by a mobile home park, shopping center and industrial park. Andy and Dan believe there may be a small section of paving left at the far northern end of the former airfield.

Occasionally, Cotati was referred to as the "Golden Gate Race Circuit." The original Golden Gate Race Circuit was the name given to the road races through Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, 1952-54. After Cotati opened in 1957, they used the name for various events, usually the more important regional or national races. For SCCA club events, it was simply Cotati.

Cotati Naval Outer Landing Field was a naval airfield during the period 1941-1945. The federal government purchased 142 acres of farmland in 1941 to build an outlying airfield supporting operations at Naval Air Station Alameda. A 4,000-foot asphalt-paved runway was crossed at its midpoint by a second 3,800-foot asphalt runway. NOLF Cotati started operations in June 1943. The U.S. Navy operated Cotati as an auxiliary landing field for the Alameda Naval Air Station and the Santa Rosa Naval Air Station. The site was primarily used for takeoff and landing exercises.

Information:

<http://www.tamsoldracecarsite.net/Cotati1.html>



Above: At the Start
Aerial view of the race course

Keep Planning for 2020 ... (2021?)



WINTER - SPRING

Saturday, Jan. 2, "Open Restroom Run," Mt. Hamilton,
Probably another COVID casualty

Saturday, Jan. 9, 10am, Activities planning meeting by
Zoom, Everyone welcome.

Jan. 30, Swap-O-Rama Classic Car Swap Meet, Tulare Ag
Center, Tulare 559-688-1030

Jan. 31, SJV Swap Meet & Car Show, Stockton
Fairgrounds, 209-948-5307



PLAN AHEAD FOR 2021

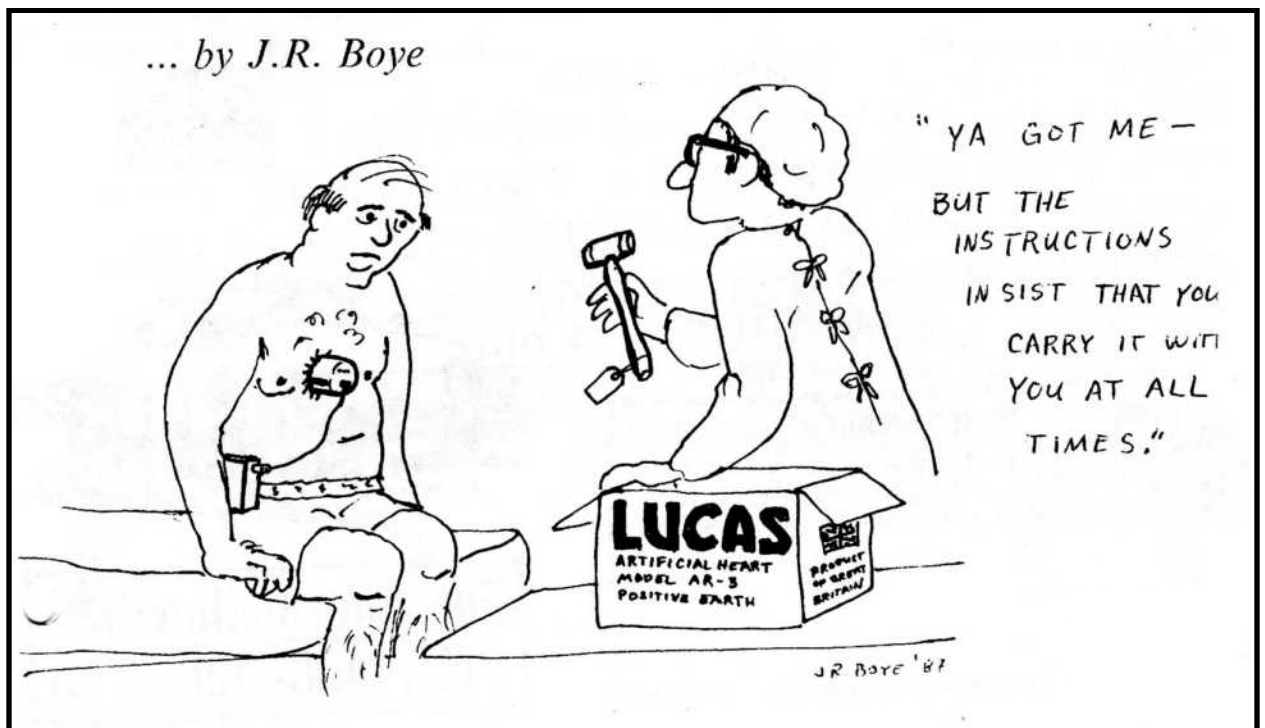
June 14-17, All-MG Meet, Atlantic
City - only 3000 miles away. See
the USA in your MGA!

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



... by J.R. Boye

Not sure why
J.R. decided to
poke fun at
Lucas rather
than S.U. who
made most of
our fuel pumps.
Perhaps it is
the Lucas
wiring to the
pumps. - Dan



Tom's Tech Tip #3: In Search New Lights

By William T. "Tom" Doyle

My Old Faded Tail Lights

I drive a 1969 MGC/GT and while attending a late summer classic car rally that runs along the north shore of Lake Tahoe, one the participants informed me that my tail lights were rather dim. While parked in Kings Beach with all the other rally participants, I asked a nice woman (who was smitten with my car) if she would be willing to sit in my car and depress the brake pedal so I could test my tail light and she happily agreed. Sure enough, my tail lights were very dim. I then asked her to turn on the head lights and the rear running lights they were also very dim. I then asked her to click the turn signals and again they were also dim! I thanked her for the help, and thought I really needed to give my rear lights some attention not only for me but other cars on the highway. In the back of my mind, I was worried it had something to do with my Lucas wiring and I really didn't want to deal with that issue.

MGOC Sonoma Coast Tour

In mid-November, I attended the Sonoma Coast Tour which was hosted by the MG Owners Club of Northern California. In the morning of 12 November, we met up with the other club members in Marin and then we departed to Petaluma; then drove west to US Highway 1; then continued north along the Sonoma coast past the town of Bodega Bay with the final destination being Goat Rock for a picnic lunch on the beach. While on the tour, the MGB convertible in front of me (see below) appeared to have its running lights on and they shone very brightly. This MGB is owned by MGOC club member Steve Kellogg. While in Petaluma, at our first tour stop, I asked Steve about his tail lights and he did in fact have his running lights on. I mentioned to him they were rather bright and he told me that he had replaced the tail lights with LED lights to include wiring and tail light housing. He had it done by a firm in Oregon that specialized in LED car light conversion. They replaced Steve's MGB entire tail light assembly which required some rewiring back to the fuse box to make all it work properly. Steve said it wasn't a simple job getting into the wiring of a MGB and that is why he outsourced his to this firm in Oregon.

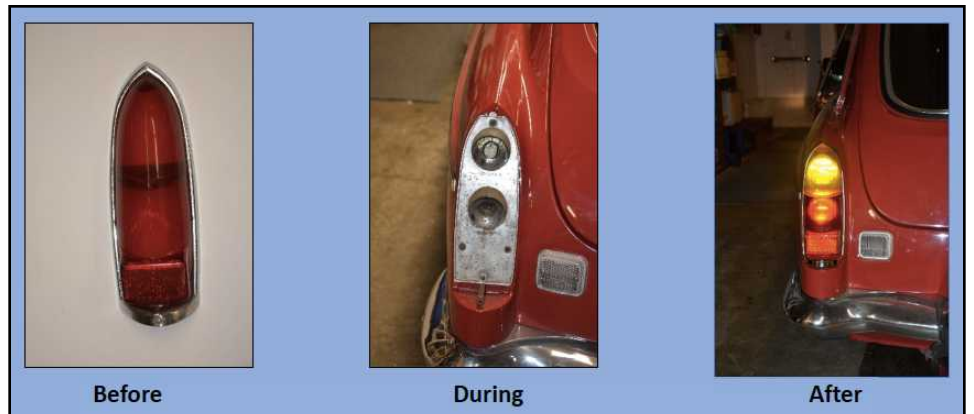


Steve's Bright Tail MGB

The Fix

It wasn't until late November that I finally decided to give my MGC/GT tail lights some attention. I didn't want to replace my tail light assembly and rewire the connections like Steve had done. All I wanted to do is clean up the ones I had to improve their reflectivity. At first, I removed the tail light lens with a single flathead screw at the bottom of the housing rim. I then and cleaned the dust and grim from the interior of the plastic lens. I did notice that the reflective tape on the interior of each tail light lens was either faded or just plain missing. So, I got some foil at the local hardware store and reaffixed new brighter ones. I also removed the light bulbs and cleaned them. I then reinstalled the lens and with the help of my wife, we retested the tail lights. The result was they were the tail lights were brighter but by no means I could consider them satisfactory.

I got to thinking: Could I replace the tail light lens with new ones? Mine were 51 years old and faded due to the sun exposure. I searched the Moss Motors web site and they had them in their inventory but they were backordered. I called British



Parts Northwest and they didn't even carry this item in part in the inventory. I was a little concerned I wouldn't be able to replace the tail light lenses I had.

I decided search eBay and found a firm by the name of Sport Cars Parts, LTD, and they had the tail lights I needed in stock. Oddly enough, the ones they had in stock were intended for the European Midget models. While reviewing their compatibility table on their webpage, I entered my car info for the MGC and up came a message that these tail lights were NOT compatible with my car. This seemed odd, because they looked to me that they would work, so I contacted them directly to determine if they would work for my MGC and the salesman told me the information on their web page was INCORRECT.

They told me MG used the same tail lights for MGBs, 1100s, Midgets and MGCs between 1962-1969 and this part would fit fine on my MGC. I wasn't aware of this factoid. I did notice that the only difference between European and US tail lights is that the turn signal plastic was amber rather than red.

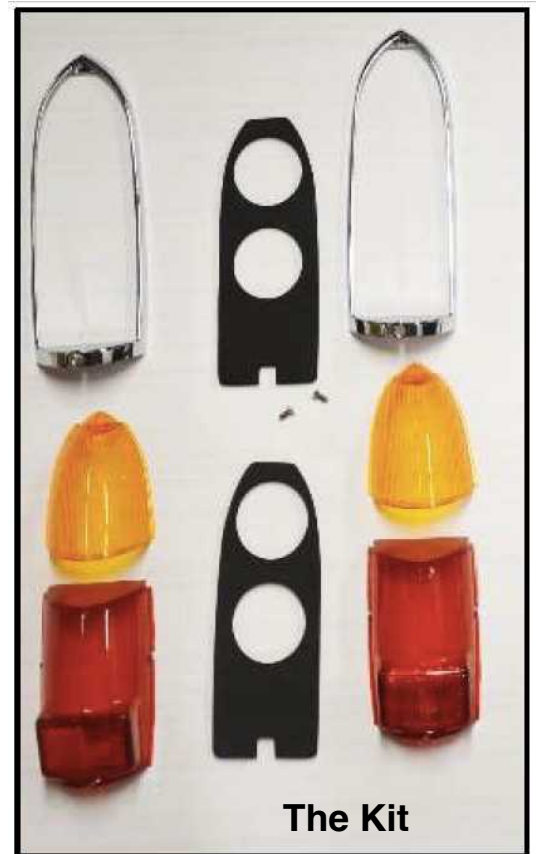
Unfortunately, Sport Cars Parts, LTD, only offered the tail lights lens as a complete "kit" which included the chrome rim, black rubber gasket, and the upper amber tail lens and red lower tail light lens. The "kit" cost \$74.95 plus tax and shipping which ended up being \$90.33 in my case. Since my chrome rim tail light housings were pitted, and my tail light plastic lenses were faded, I decided to replace the old ones I had, so I ordered the "Kit."

While the part was being processed and shipped by Sport Car Parts, I got to thinking, could I also install LED tail light bulbs to go with the new tail light assembly? I decided to give it a go and removed the turn signal bulbs (which are called single filament 1156 bulbs) and took them to my nearest Napa store. I handed my 1156 bulb to the salesclerk and he handed me a replacement set of two 1156 LED bulbs for around \$25. I brought them home and easily installed them on my MGC, and what a difference they made. No one will be complaining about not seeing my turn signal ever again.

I then decided to try replacing my brake/running lights bulbs with LED replacement bulbs. I removed the bulbs (these are called dual filament 1157 bulbs) from the lower light socket and took them back to the Napa store and he handed a set of LED 1157 replacement bulbs. Upon installing them I had all sorts of problems getting them to work correctly. The LED running lights were very dim but while the brake pedal was depressed, they were very bright. I fiddled with the 1157 LED bulbs for about an hour and gave up and returned the LED bulbs back to the Napa store. I then purchased new 1157 regular bulbs at my local hardware store for \$1.69 each (plus tax) and installed them into the running/brake light socket and they work great. So, I had a hybrid solution, LED bulbs on top; regular dual filament bulbs on the bottom and they seem to work great as pictured at the top the article on the far right.

Total Time and Cost

To summarize it took me 2.5 hours to restore my tail light rims and lenses plus a couple of trips to the Napa & hardware stores. If you subtract my work to restore the old tail light assembly, you could knock off 90 minutes of labor and the result would be about an hour of my time. I spent \$90.43 on the tail light assembly kit, \$25.00 for two 1156 LED lights, and \$3.64 for dual filament non-LED 1157 bulbs, and \$2.15 for the foil for the old tail lights that resulted in a total cost of \$121.22. I think this is a pretty good price for totally restoring my faded 51-year-old tail light rims, bulbs, and lens. Between the new tail light assembly, LED 1156 turn signal bulbs and new 1157 dual filament bulbs my running/brake lights my tail lights look as good as new. Anyone interested in some used tail light assemblies for a sixties MG?



William T. Doyle, "Tom" is the proud owner of the 1969 MGC/GT. He has owned three MGs since 2009: a 1978 MGB Roadster, a 1976 MGB Roadster, and an MGC/GT. Tom lives with his lovely wife Heidi on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe and belongs to the MG Owners Club of Northern California, Sorry Safari Touring Society, American MGC Register Association, The Reno British car Club, and the North America MG Register. He enjoys writing about British Sportscars but would rather drive one than write about them!

An Uncommon MGB

By Dave Dobbins

Courtesy of the Kansas City MG Post

1974 was a transition year for the MGB. U.S. auto safety regulations were beginning to have their effect. MGBs were offered in three different configurations throughout the year as regulations evolved. The initial 1974 MGBs had the same chrome bumpers with rubber inserts as the previous year's models. To meet more stringent crash resistance requirements, British Leyland retained the chrome bumpers, but replaced the over-riders with large square blocks of rubber often referred to as "Sabrinas" (an homage to the rather well-endowed British actress, Sabrina).

Lastly, the chrome bumpers were replaced with composite black "rubber" bumpers and the ride height was raised to meet U.S. crash standards. This bumper was kept until the MGB ceased production in 1980.

In 1974, the newer emissions requirements did not yet apply, so the 1974.5 MGB still retained the twin SU HIF4 carbs as previous years. All future "black bumper" MGBs would be fitted with single Zenith CD175 carbs and catalytic converters to reduce emissions, but the 1974.5 did not yet require these. This makes the 1974.5 a mix of past and future MGB features.



"Black bumper" MGB roadsters are fairly common since the exterior remained unchanged for the remaining years of production. Distribution of the GT version, however, was very limited in the U.S. The "black bumper" MGB GT was only imported to the U.S. for three months from September to December 1974. Only 1,248 1974.5 MGB GTs were imported in the U.S.

After December 1974, the MGB GT was discontinued from sale in the U.S. (*To not outsell the new TR7 - ed. note.**) It continued to be sold in the U.K. until the discontinuation of MGB production in 1980.



**The other reason I've seen is that the GT weighed enough more than the Tourer to require separate crash & emission testing for the US market, and the volume wasn't seen as enough to justify the expense.- from Mike Jacobsen who owns a 1974.5 GT*

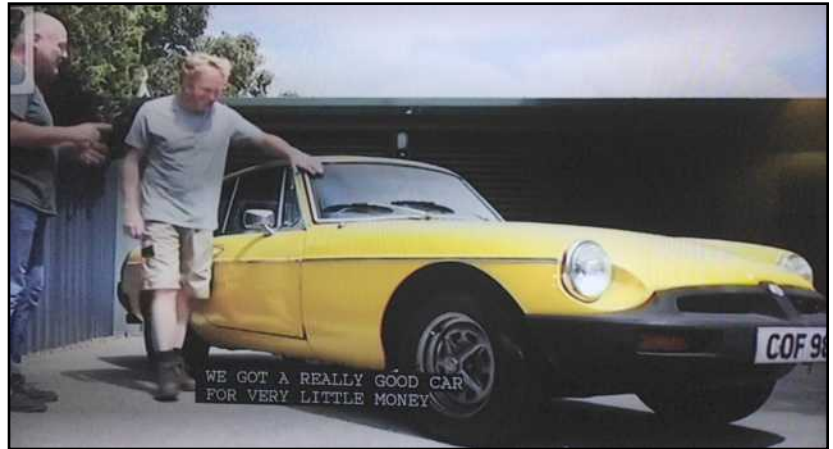
Flipping Bangers – MGB/GT

A new car guy TV show features a couple guys buying and selling inexpensive cars to make a living. Hopefully they get money from the TV show. They bought this nice-looking BGT from an auction site. It was running but did not pass the UK MOT testing. That always drops the price.

For some reason they drove MG around a field but did not crawl underneath it to check for rust. Of course they found the sills and supports very badly rusted. They managed to weld up the MG from underneath without dismantling the sills. (Hmmm.) Then they proceeded to paint the whole car using rattle cans. I can't believe that would stay shiny long unless they used a clear coat system. I don't know why they didn't use acrylic enamel with hardener, sprayed from an air system. Cheap and easy to do and adds value.

A couple interesting things were their visit to the MG Club to purchase parts and their information on what should be included to sell an MGB today.

They did manage to resell the car for a small profit, or so we are led thus to believe. The repairs they made should keep the car on the road, at least.
by Dan Shockey



K3 on the 1933 Mille Miglia



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 (Post 12/20)

1979 MGB: White. Everything good. Passed smog last year. Motivated to sell. William Kaufman, 510-381-0756 or uncascroog@aol.com (Posted 01/21)

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)

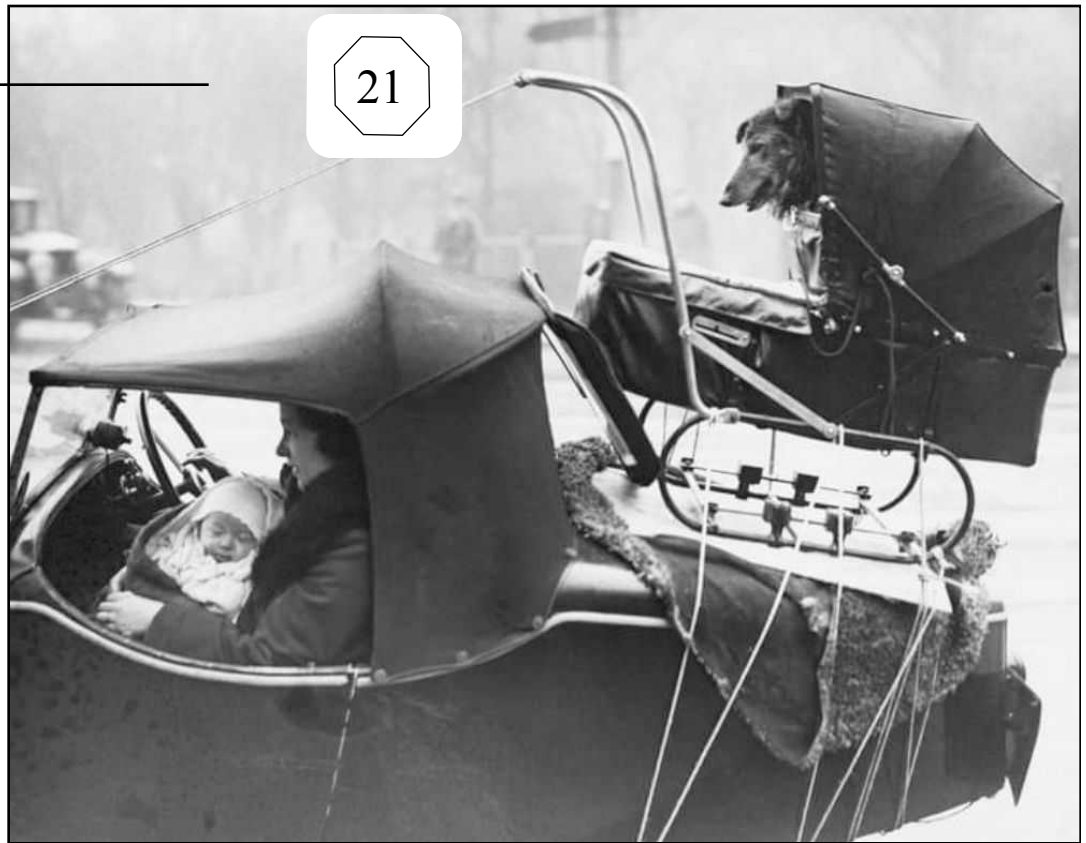
MGA Parts: 5 Alum bonnets, 2 styles, gas tank, leaf spring, 1500 driveshaft, new fiberglass front valence (race), front frame extension, master cylinder sleeved, 1500 engine block. Member Tom Morgan (650) 740-4116 (Re-posted 11/20, see free stuff shown last issue!)

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



Early Motor Transport - In the Snow!

Rivals those photos from Asia of a family of 5 and their chickens riding a moped.

From Nigel H., UK - "Looks like a very sensible arrangement. Presumably neither the brakes nor the horn is operational and the dog is there to bark loudly to warn approaching vehicles and pedestrians."

From Coracle, UK - "You would probably find the dog was there to keep the baby's twin brother warm!"

From Blue M, U.K. - "Don't take the radiator cap off or we'll lose the dog." (Issue of balance.)

From George Eagle, U.K. - "Brings a whole new meaning that you can do it in an MG.....!"

From Sam Christie, U.K. - "Is it a BSA three wheeler?"

From Robin Macmillan, U.K. - "Tail wags dog ..."

From Dave, U.K. - "Either way, at least they seem to have had the sense not to leave the baby in it."

"When, with my Dad away at sea, Mum moved in 1946, the removals men threw the carry cot into the back of the van. 'Hey, there's a baby in that,' cries Mum. Some people might say that accounts for a lot!"

From Dick Morbey, U.K. - "I always found those quick release pram wheels a boon when transporting our sons' prams and carrycots around back in the 70s."

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



**Zoom Planning Meeting
scheduled for Jan. 9.
See Page 7.**

Stay Safety Fast!

***TC Birthday Card -
Thinking of better times,
come Spring and
vaccines***

