



# THE OCTAGON

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



**Since 1957!**



## September 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.

### DIRECTORY of MGOC OFFICERS for 2018

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,  
[markmc3us@yahoo.com](mailto:markmc3us@yahoo.com)  
 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, 925-838-7773  
[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,  
[mgjim@comcast.net](mailto:mgjim@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

[mgpb36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgpb36@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,

[mgpb36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgpb36@yahoo.com)

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

[mrcraigk@aol.com](mailto:mrcraigk@aol.com)

### 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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## BFC Tour

Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>

### British Fall Classic 2020



## BFC Tour

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

Ready to get out for a SAFE and FUN Tour in October?

The British Fall Classic is presenting the BFC Tour on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>! Although the British Fall Classic Car Show is canceled for 2020, the current COVID safety guidelines allow us to get your beautiful classics on the road again for a safe and fun drive and picnic outing.

The event begins at 8:30am at On the Road Again Classics with coffee, juice and pastries. You will be given a pair of commemorative Roundels to place on your car prior to departure at 9:30am. We have planned a leisurely 2-hour drive through the scenic backroads as we head to the best kept secret around....

### Frazier Lake Airpark Antique Aircraft Display Day!

The Frazier Lake Airpark is a privately-owned, old-fashioned/throwback airpark featuring a turf airstrip and hosting numerous classic antique and certified aircrafts. We have been invited to their "Display Day" making this a perfect destination for a SAFE social distancing outing as you tour the individual hangers and meet the pilots.

A delicious picnic box lunch will be provided for you to enjoy on the lawn as you watch the incoming and outgoing vintage aircraft...bring your chairs and picnic blankets, a few picnic tables will be available for limited seating. A group photo will be taken to mark the end of a great day!

The BFC Tour is open to the first 45 British automobiles to register, registration closes on September 7<sup>th</sup>. More information will be available on the website.

[www.thebritishfallclassic.com](http://www.thebritishfallclassic.com)

Looking forward to seeing you on the road *again*...

\$55 car and driver  
\$25 per co-pilot

## From the Editor

Hi, estranged club members,

25 August 2020

I feel I have been sheltering from the virus, heat, smoke, fires, looters and cost-cutting execs at my job. (I lost some key support staff.) We are evacuated from our Scotts Valley home. But the heat has reduced and the fires appear to be contained. Thuy and I are at our house in Garden Grove near Anaheim. I was able to visit an MG friend down here and even help him a bit.

I seem to be continuing a theme of women drivers in MGs, even back in the 1930s. I like to include some info about new MG models. There is still hope we may see them in the States. I received a couple articles also about the MG J2 so have combined them into something of a feature. John Hunt sent an exciting interview. So we are looking forward and way back.

As far as my MG projects, I am working on the exhaust for the PA and replacing the steering wheel. The old wheel (1940s?) is a prime example of how far we have come with plastics. The wheel has shrunk and cracked hideously, hidden by a leather cover for the past 20 years. A guy in England offered an old-stock one that I will install. Nothing is ever a direct fit for these cars.

The exhaust used a skinny straight-through silencer (muffler) that is 30" long. My muffler bandage didn't last long. I decided to try one from an early 1960s Midget plus one from a 9N Ford tractor, in series. The Midget silencer is one that others have used and the tractor unit is cheap. A 2-part system was used on later MGs. I want to minimize the sound but not cut horsepower.

Keep the Faith!



**Dan**

p.s. I found a Mr. Toad ornament that looks good on a radiator cap. It is plastic so for show only!

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## The Breakfast Club Rally group:

Thanks to all of you for making the sold-out [August BCR](#) such a fun morning out- great cars & people, what else is there?

As promised, we're announcing registration for our [September Breakfast Club Rally](#) to our newsletter *first*. Registration is now available through our website only (no more FB event)- so, head on over and fill out a [reg form](#). Another change for this month: the exact route will remain unpublished except to rally participants, who'll receive a PDF with turn-by-turn directions by email the week before 9/5.

As always, we'll be done by noon, and you'll be free to grab lunch at one of Sonoma County's great restaurants or pack your own picnic lunch.

Please continue to spread the word about BCR to your like-minded comrades, and tag

**The September tour is also now SOLD OUT. Check for future tours.**



## The Drive, A Rolling Concours, Saturday, October 10, 2020

The [Coyote Creek Concours d'Elegance](#) will present The Drive on Saturday, October 10th! Although the Concours is cancelled for 2020, the current COVID safety guidelines allow us to get our beautiful cars out on the road for a spirited drive and rolling Concours!

With all the unknowns of Covid-19, WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca has made the difficult decision to cancel many large private track events for 2020. We know this is a disappointment for many. So, we are proceeding with our Drive in a different direction.

Our Drive Chairs have a full day tour planned that is sure to be fun!

We will start the morning at 8:00 am at the [Coyote Creek Golf Club] in Morgan Hill (<http://www.coyotecreekgolf.com>) with coffee, juice and pastries. There will be an abbreviated Le Mans style start, interesting stops, sites to see, time to kick tires, swap stories, enjoy a delicious lunch, and end with a Finisher's Reception at [On The Road Again Classics](#). All that, and a group photo shoot, good times on the road, and a nice gift from The Drive sponsor, *Hagerty*. The perfect way to get out with your car and enjoy great local roads with friends.

Spots are still available, but are filling up fast, so don't delay registering. If you have asked us to keep your place we have you!

The entry form for The Drive, A Rolling Concours is available on our website [www.coyotecreekconcours.com](http://www.coyotecreekconcours.com)

Happy motoring-gas 'em up!



# The 97th International Oliver Arkell Day

Today, the 11th of August 2020, is International Oliver Arkell Day. This celebrates the occasion in 1923 when Oliver purchased directly from Cecil Kimber at the Queen St. Oxford showrooms, his Raworth-bodied Morris Garages Super Sports registered FC 5855, the earliest properly documented sale of an M.G.

The six cars carrying Raworth coachwork on specially modified Morris Cowley chassis were considered by Cecil Kimber, Cecil Cousins, F. Wilson McComb, and now-a-days most objective, intelligent, good looking, and well informed historians, to be the first sports cars of the M.G. marque. So, please join us with...

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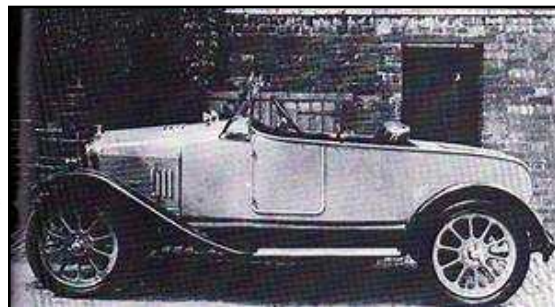
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## A REMARKABLE ARKELL ODE

Although your town is all locked down,  
There's good reason to be jolly.  
Fill your glass with Speckled Hen,  
And drink a toast to Olly.

by Tom Wilson  
Zionsville, Indiana

## New Members!

**Welcome Timothy Mulgrew  
of Martinez with a 1955  
MGTF**

**Welcome Brennan Cox of  
Berkeley with a 1974 MGB**

**Welcome Stu Mast of  
Murphys with a 1960 MGA  
1600 plus 2 more MGAs with  
one soon to be an electric  
vehicle.**

I am currently bulldozing.  
Proactively cleaning up old  
firebreaks on my property. I have  
been an MGA owner for 49 years.  
I'll write more when I have time.  
Stu Mast





## President's Ponderings

**When is it going to end?** It's been in the high 90s for most of this month and now we have the fires. The smoke is suffocating and there's ash all over cars and everything else. We are in no danger but there are lots of fires to the north and east of us. If the virus wasn't bad enough we don't need this as well and I count ourselves as lucky because we haven't been evacuated like Dan.

We are staying home most of the time and apart from taking the MGs out now and again for exercise are pretty much leading fairly mundane lives. In fact while I'm writing this, Marla is out in our 55 MG TF dusting off the cobwebs.

That being said I did buy another car, not an MG, but one with great British history. It wasn't my intention and I wasn't looking for anything but it just happened and I couldn't say NO. Maybe it was Covid, the heat wave, the fires, the smoke and ash; maybe I was in the right place at the right time or the wrong place at the wrong time. But who could pass up buying something with 420 screaming horses on steroids that really does go like stink? It's a 2007 Jaguar XKR.

I took my son John's 1995 Jaguar XJ6 to my local shop, British European Motors to see if they could see why it failed SMOG. While I was there I saw this gold colored 2007 Jaguar XKR Coupe in their parking area and said "WOW that's just gorgeous; is it in for service?" The owner of the shop, Mark said, "Yes and it's also for sale by its 90 year old owner who has trouble getting in and out of the car." I took it for a test drive and was blown away. It was not only stunning but incredibly fast. I said to Mark, "I need another car like a hole in the head," and left it like that.

The next day we were at Target that is just around the corner from the shop and I said to Marla, "Do you want to take a look at this Jag?" We had nothing else to do so and to my surprise she said "yes". She just loved the car, the color and especially the comfort. The body and interior look brand new and it only has 39,000 miles with maintenance history from new and has always been a California car. He had it up on the lift and it looks like brand new underneath, like it's never been in the rain!

Long story short Mark, who was selling the car on behalf of the owner, offered us a great deal, which was less than the price of a decent MGB; so we said yes and drove it away. He even threw in an oil change, brake flush and coolant flush.

So, we decided to sell the GT that we've had for over 20 years. Our daughter Ari and son John said, "NO you can't sell the GT; it has too many memories for us." So they both offered to keep the GT in their own garages!

All the best and keep safe during these troubling times,

**Andy**



## Gallagher J2 Update

Buckle up; the plot may be thickening on the history of our J2. In trying to get it back rolling again I gave a thorough cleaning to all the axles, hubs and, since they were attached to the hubs for safe keeping, the knockoffs. Once the grease was cleaned away I noticed that each of them had "WINN" scribed into them.

It's a fairly common name but a quick Google search turned up Russell Winn, a UK based car collector, inventor, and "brainchild of the electric bike," (one that actually moves unlike the electric bike in my garage), who in 1969 (the same year you bought the car) was getting started on renovations to a 100 year old castle in Ireland. It would make sense that he would be looking to sell off some of his collection that year and also that a moderately old sports car would survive being scrapped for the war effort as part of a collection. I also found some potential connections between him and New York that might explain why he may have thought to put an ad in the Times which you saw. I know it has been >50 years but any chance the name rings a bell with who you wrote the check to?

Nothing conclusive I suppose but I would think this was an exceptional coincidence if he wasn't a previous owner. Maybe we can get in touch with his estate and see if there are any records of his collection that might include the J2?

David Gallagher  
MGOC Member

For more information, see the article in the March 2015 *The Octagon*.

## Update on Mechanical Rebuilds

Here's my best go at an update.

For many of you the last update you had on my J2 was when we were installing the engine into the frame at my shop and starting it for a bit with no radiator and fuel pump/tank. Since then a fair amount of progress has been made but still a long way to go.

After fitting the engine, the transmission was fully disassembled, cleaned, and given a once over. All the gears were in good shape and after reassembly the shifting was smooth. It was then mated back to the engine with a new clutch plate and pressure pads but I still need to adjust the clutch fingers to the proper clearance that I know is a tough job where you risk dropping the wrench into the transmission. Bill Traill gave me the recommendation to have the wrench on a string just in case.

Moving aft, the next hurdle was the drive shaft which had a rear flange that was warped against the differential flange like a potato chip such that spinning it would cause quite a bit of wobble of the drive shaft. Bill helped put it on the lathe and with the flange true it was easy to install back onto the differential.

I'm not sure if it was done before or after the engine was installed but the differential was also cleaned and inspected but not disassembled, since everything seemed OK and wear was minimal. Both rear axles and hubs were removed and one axle had a shoddy weld repair break free from the hub and the other had bearing issues so it needed some work. I ended up replacing the one axle/hub as well as some commercially available 6208ZZ double-shielded bearings for each side.

Back on the front end, when my dad was in town we did a complete rebuild of the steering box which again was in good condition but was filled with coagulated 50 year old oil. While dealing with the steering we also took apart the linkage and replaced some of the worn ball joints that had become flat over time.

Brakes were removed and are the next challenge.



Dave at left with Bill Traill



Also when my dad was in town we had a small short circuit in the fuse box where one of the ground wires was pinched onto the un-fused side of the fuse terminal of an always-hot terminal and led to some smoke. After quickly disconnecting the power supply I later found and rectified the issue and the fuse box is back mounted on the no-fire-wall. Bill mentioned that he installed an emergency cut-out switch which I'm starting to think is a good idea. When powered the headlights / dipper, fuel pump, and even tail lights and license plate lights are working.

I'm getting ready to move out of my warehome and so I put the car back on wheels and tires for the move but once it settles into its new home the next steps are to redo a few things with the rear axles and then handle the brakes and tires/tubes. After that the radiator and fuel tank are all that prevents it from being driveable in theory so rebuilding the interior would be the last step for me. Light at the end of the tunnel!

Dave Gallagher

## Another J2 Story

Dan's report of unloading his MG from the tow truck reminds me of a story... Way back in the 1980's Barry Swack had just finished a lot of rework on his J2. It was a nice J2 but needed some engine and clutch work and other details. Barry's home then had a very steep and short driveway.

We both drove the J2 around the neighborhood (the 2nd time I drove a J2). We returned parking the J2 'up hill' on the steep driveway. We were well inside the garage as I asked Barry for a block of wood or something to chock the wheels. Why the J was not left in gear, I do not recall.

Just then I heard the 'thunk' that the handbrake makes against the rubber stop if it is released straight from the on position (like the TC, TD and MGA).

I don't recall taking an instant of thought as I ran to the J2 as it was increasing speed going backward out onto busy Hamilton Avenue. At full run I was just able to catch up to the driver's side, turned 90 degrees and flopped my butt down onto the driver's seat being wedged behind the steering wheel; legs dangling out over the door.

I grabbed the handbrake and pulled for all my might and came to a screeching halt (thanks to Barry's good work). Fortunately the J2 handbrake lever operates on all four wheels.

With a few feet to spare from cars whizzing by on Hamilton Ave., I looked up into the face of an elderly woman on the sidewalk staring down at me. She shook her head and with a grimace proceeded on around... but with a new story to tell.

From Bill Traill, San Jose

Bill Traill is making good headway on his J2 restoration, in progress for 60 years (and counting) started with his father. He has the bodywork almost done and is close to laying on paint. He is still agonizing over the colours.

We have a few J-type MGs in the Owners Club. We are well acquainted with George Steneberg's J2. In recent months, George has been fighting engine issues with it. Dan Roberts has shown his very-rare J3 racing version at **MGs by the Bay**. He had it out for our last pre-COVID drive in February. Bill mentioned Barry Swackhammer who is active in other clubs in the area, often driving his J2 to events. Another is owned by a man in Oakland. There are 60 or more J-types in North America.

The J2 was quite a sensation when it appeared in 1932. Old-timers say it was an even bigger sensation than was the post-war Jaguar XK120. The J2 looked like a race car and could reach 80mph, all at an affordable price. It was very competitive in rallies and "trials," rough hill climbs that were very popular in Britain.





George's J2 above  
Dan Roberts with his J3 at upper right  
Barry Swackhammer J2 at right



## Women J2 Racers

Women competitors were among 76 of the 318 entrants in the Royal Automobile Club rally that started from the Ace of Spades garage on the Great West Road.

The finishing point of the rally was Torquay. All cars had to cover about 1000 miles at a fixed average speed of 24 miles an hour of arriving at Torquay on Thursday. There were eight other starting places besides London.

The first photo shows, Miss E M Dobson filming her sister Miss M J Dobson who is fixing the RAC flag to their MG. They are watched by another woman competitor, Miss J Hughes, 24 March 1936.





In the weak sunshine of the second photo, Mrs. Sheerer & Mrs. Dobson, dressed for battle, push their MG to the start of the thousand miles at the Ace of Spades by the Kingston Crossroads, March 1936.

The car was J3611, colour green (looks like a duotone) with green upholstery. It was sold through Jarvis & Sons of Wimbledon and was first registered on 11 October 1933 to a Miss M.J. Dobson of Burton on Trent. As far as I can determine, nowt else is known of the car.

Note that this J2 has the full "swept wings" (fenders) of the later production J2 cars.



## MG Racer Dorothy Stanley Turner

Petite and determined with a cheeky sense of humour, Dorothy Stanley Turner was born on November 12th 1916, into a military family. Her father had an 'adventurous disposition.' While her father was a student he had taken part in the Graeco-Turkish war and been made a Knight of the Royal Order of Saviour of Greece for his services.

Then in about 1910 he went to the Falkland Islands as an assistant surgeon, and within a few years he had become the Deputy Governor and commander of the Falkland Islands Defence Force with the rank of major at the time when the German fleet put into the Falkland Islands at the beginning of WWI. He was awarded the M.B.E. for his services and later he served in France with the 47th and 58th Divisions.

He transferred to the RAF in 1918 and in 1919 he was posted to Egypt as principal medical officer at Middle East Headquarters, taking his family with him. He returned to England in 1927 and went into private practice in Surrey. Even her mother had a Naval upbringing. It was thus unsurprising that the young Dorothy not only inherited her father's adventurous disposition but that she also had an ultra-disciplined approach to life and any problems that it might throw up.

Her father was a keen motor racing enthusiast and was friends with Cecil Kimber, the driving force behind the MG car company, and a number of other racing drivers including Charles Jarrott, Selwyn Edge and Joan Chetwynd, who used to race under the non de voltant of the Honourable Mrs. Chetwynd. So when it came time for Dorothy to learn to drive, Chetwynd was enlisted to help with the task.

Her first competitions were as a navigator on a number of Trials sometimes partnering Mrs Kimber but she wanted to try circuit racing and, equipped with a set a pale blue overalls started practicing at Brooklands. Coming from a wealthy family she was able to acquire a J-type MG Midget built for Le Mans and a single-seater Q-type 750cc MG. The cars were prepared by the well-known Brooklands duo of Thomson and 'Uncle' Taylor.

She found herself best suited to long distances races and raced in the Nuffield Trophy at Donnington in 1937. Unfortunately just as the prospect of a good finish seemed on the cards she was hit in the eye by a stone thrown up by another car. After receiving attention and a dressing, she returned to the fray only to be flagged as the organizer felt that to continue with one eye bandaged shut was not a good idea.



It was fortunate as the injury proved more serious than originally suspected. However no permanent damage was done and in June she tackled the le Mans race partnered by Miss Enid Riddell.

The drive was arranged by Ceil Kimber in one of the MG Miget PB's run by Capt. G. E. T. Eyston. They finished a respectable 16th overall and second in the Rudge Cup but not without a little drama. They encountered a problem with one of the fuel fillers which had come adrift. Since this needed to be sealed they had to persuade the 'Plombieur' (the men who had to seal and unseal fuel tanks during pit stops) to place his seal on an orange which Dorothy had wired into the neck of the tank! By this time they were running second for the Rudge Cup behind the works Aston of Mort Morris-Goodall and Robert Hichens. Now Mort and Robert needed only to finish to win the Rudge Cup, however a few hours before the end of the race the Aston dropped a valve and Robert pulled over out on the track. The team needed to get a message to him to persuade him to limp the car back to the pits where they could wait until just before 4.00PM before crossing the line to take the Cup. Dorothy volunteered to find the Aston, stop and give the message to Robert who duly limped back with one cylinder out due to the bent valve. The Aston thus won the Rudge Cup and Dorothy and Enid finished second.



She raced in Ireland, taking part in the national Handicap, part of the Cork Grand Prix meeting, and at Phoenix Park later in the year. She also took part on the Paris-St Raphael Trial and the Monte Carlo Rally.

She raced at Brooklands at the Easter meeting in 1938 where she won the Second Easter Road Handicap driving a MG Q type at an average speed of 61.27mph. In June she would have raced at Le Mans again but was still suffering from the after effects of contracting diphtheria so she asked Elsie 'Bill' Wisdom to take her place with Arthur Dobson. Unfortunately a slipping clutch put paid to a good finish and they retired after 48 laps. Later in the year she finished 3rd in the first August Road Handicap after being delayed when another car crashed at Hill corner and took second in the second August Road Handicap just behind A.F.P. Fane in a Frazer Nash BMW 328. In September she raced in the Tourist Trophy at Donnington Park with 'Bill' and in October at Crystal Palace in the Imperial Plate.

In 1939 she won the first Mountain Handicap in the Q Type beating Aitken in the Aitken-Alfa, the old Alfa-Romeo Bimotor with one engine removed, in what turned out to be the last meeting at Brooklands before the outbreak of WWII. That year she also entered the RAC Rally in an Alvis and took the Shelsley Walsh Ladies' record in a borrowed Alta, setting a time of 43.4 seconds. Apparently she always carried a lucky white elephant mascot.

With the outbreak of war she became one of the first women to become an officer in a barrage balloon unit. By July 1942 she had become a Section Officer and in January 1945 she became a Flight Officer. That year she married Major H. C. 'Peter' Dryden but the following year she bumped into Air Commodore Geoffrey Tindal-Carill-Worsley, who she had first met while in Washington in 1941. Aside from her racing, she was a keen and accomplished shot and had kept competing after she stopped racing. And it was while competing at Bisely in 1946 that she met up with Geoffrey again. They married five years later.

She finally relinquished her commission in the WAAF on 12th October 1959. She died on July 8th 1995 aged 78.

I am not sure which of D.S.W.'s MGs is in the photo above.



East vs. West Article

Photo courtesy of the British Motor Museum  
web site



# East Coast vs West Coast?

By MGOC Member William T. (Tom) Doyle

## A Question of Origin

I was chatting with one of my fellow car club enthusiasts from Reno, NV the other day, and he mentioned to me that west coast classic cars are more valuable than east coast cars. I asked him how he came to the conclusion. He informed me that "since the east coast tends to get more wet weather than the west coast, your east coast cars are more prone to rusting out. Salt, snow, sleet all contribute to getting rust started. And rust is the bane to the value of any classic car". This got me to thinking: I wondered what is the origin of my 1969 MGC/GT? What port of entry did it come into and when? Who was the dealer who first sold my MGC and for how much? What was the original color and how was it equipped?

If I really wanted to find out about my MGC I would need to do some research. A couple of years back while attending United British Car Club of Sacramento All British Car show in Dixon, CA, one of the participants had Heritage Certificate for his British Car. He had it framed and proudly displayed it with his car. That got me to thinking – how can I get one of these documents and what exactly did it consist of?

## British Motor Industry Heritage Trust

I began to do some research and found out that most the records for classic British cars were archived by The British Motor Museum in Warwickshire, England. If you know a bit of history of the British automotive industry, you would know that it consists of a constant series of take overs, closures, and consolidations. That's where the British Motor Museum came in and formed a Charitable Trust to gather as much of the corporate information as possible before those records were lost forever. Starting in 1983, the Trust began the arduous job of digitizing the manufacturing, export, and sales records. They currently have records for cars dating as far back as a 1901 and as recently as a 1995 and everything in between. From Austins to Wolseleys they seem to have gathered quite extensive catalog of British automotive records. I found their web site while doing some research and it is: <https://www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk>

After visiting their site, I found out that before they can issue you a Heritage Certificate you will need to provide them with the VIN and Engine numbers of the vehicle. In my case, I had that information readily available and filled out their forms online with the appropriate payment of 43 Pounds plus shipping and handling (about \$60).

So after about 6 weeks, I got my Heritage Certificate in the mail and it had nearly all the information I was looking for. My MGC was built between 2-11 July 1969 and departed the UK on 23 July 1969. It is unknown when it arrived in the states but my guess is around September 1969 and most likely the port of Benicia, CA. My MGC was originally "Tartan Red" (still is) with a black interior; had a 4-speed manual transmission with overdrive; it came with chrome wire knock-off wheels, a heater, and a "cigar lighter" (why anyone would smoke a cigar in a MG is beyond me). According to the certificate, my 1969 MGC/GT was ordered by a dealer in San Francisco. The MSRP in 1969 was \$3,715 without the options noted above.

I continued to do some additional research and found out that my 1969 MGC/GT was sold by the present-day British Motor Cars Distributors LTD, of San Francisco located on Van Ness Street in heart of San Francisco. The current dealership has changed hands many times in the last 51+ years according to a salesman by the name of Rory who has work there for some time but he confirmed to me that they did sell MGs until 1980 or so.

According to the Autoblog website, 9 out of 10 most expensive places to buy a used car are west of the Mississippi River with two out of five most expensive places to buy a used car are in California. So, after doing all this research on my 1969 MGC/GT is it worth more or less than an east coast version? I would think my car club buddy is right that it is worth more but who really knows? All I know is I love to drive my MGC on the backroads of the California and Northern Nevada.

William T. Doyle, "Tom" is the proud owner of the 1969 MGC/GT pictured above. He has owned three MGs since 2009. He enjoys working on his British sportscar, attending car shows and club events. He lives on the shores of Lake Tahoe and belongs to the Reno British Car Club, the MG Owners Club of Northern California, Sorry Safari Touring Society, North American MG Register, and the North American MGC Register.



# New Member Stu Mast's MG Story

I'm happy to share my MG story. MGA's have been a part of my life since 1971. A young man from Denmark, Torben, was working on my family farm in Yolo County. I am 5th generation on that farm. About 1967 Torben spotted a 1961 MGA 1600 in a neighbor's barn.

I'm not sure how much he paid but it was a fairly low mileage, the problem was it had a broken crankshaft. He managed to tow it into one of my Dad's barns and there it sat until he was about to head home to Denmark. So in 1971, he gave it to me.

I started looking for parts for this car and quickly realized most of the car guys wanted muscle cars and you could pick up MGA parts cars or well used drivers for \$300 - \$400. At one point I had five.

My brothers and I have always been spoiled by having plenty of empty barns to store cars. These had been animal barns for previous generations but the family farm transitioned to irrigated row crop and rice farming in the late 1950's. Today those barns are still full of old cars and trucks.



I pulled a rebuilt 1600 engine out of a wreck and drove the MGA most of my college years. It still has the red paint job and Dan Gurney aluminum wheels from 1974.

My older brother liked to drive my MG so while attending Cal State Chico, I spotted a 1960 MGA in beautiful shape for \$450 and told my brother Bill he needed his own. He drove that car for about 10 years then parked it in his barn in Eastern Washington. Four years ago I managed to trade a case of wine for that car and today I am doing a ground up restoration. Last month an engineer friend showed up with an inverter, transaxle, and electric motor anxious to convert one of the MGA's to EV. We still need to source batteries but we are moving forward on that project.

MGAguru Barney has visited here overnight three times. The last time was to use my shop to replace engine bearings after losing oil from a broken oil cooler hose.

I was driving my original car when I met my wife of 44

years, Dolores. In 1976 she and I were married and two years later moved to her family ranch near Murphys where we planted grapes, began a winery, Brice Station Vineyards, developed an event center and raised our family.

My Danish friend and his wife have visited numerous times over the past 40 years. They often take the original car over the Sierra or down Highway 1.

These days I spend my time split between winemaking and restoring MG's. I recently added a five speed to a 1954 TF for a good friend who has been driving that car since her high school days and is now in her early 70's.

I try to avoid freeway driving most of my miles are heading up and over Ebbetts Pass, Hwy 4, or a quick trip into town.

- Stu Mast





# Keep Planning for 2020 ... (2021?)

## SUMMER - FALL



Sept. 18-19, Southwest Idaho Brit Meet

**Sat., Sept. 19, MGOC Tour, TBD**

Sat., Oct 3, British Fall Festival Tour, Bill Hiland

Oct. 4-8, Golden State Tour, Classic Motorsports, Based in Calistoga

Sat., Oct. 10, The Drive, Coyote Creek

## FALL - WINTER

Oct 11-13, Sea-Air-Ahh Tour, SSTS, Jim Brady, Kirk Prentiss, MGOC welcome! Virus permitting.

**Sat., Nov. 14, Sonoma Tour, MGOC, Marla & Andy Preston**

**Sat., Dec. 12, MGOC Holiday Tea, San Francisco**



The Southwest Idaho All British Field Meet, scheduled for September 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> is still on. Registration is low, however, so they are asking that you register as soon as possible.

You can find out more here:

<https://swiabfm.idahobritishcars.org>

... and register here:

<https://www.idahobritishcars.org/swiabfm-reg/>

# Special Guest Interview

## with Racing Legend Paddy Hopkirk

By MGOC Member John Hunt (JH)

*Hi Everyone,*

*Exciting news, I connected with and interviewed Paddy Hopkirk! Attached is a copy of the article I sent him and I would like to have it run in **The Octagon**. I would like to have it run along with the attached picture as that is what was reviewed with the Hopkirks.*

*Cheers, John*

A gentleman who really doesn't need any introduction is Paddy Hopkirk, MBE. Paddy and co-driver Henry Liddon put Great Britain and the Mini Cooper "S" on center stage of the world with their David vs. Goliath victory in the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally, edging out a Ford Falcon and beating 119 other cars. After the rally at the height of Beatlemania, the Beatles sent him an autographed picture saying, "You're now one of us, Paddy!"

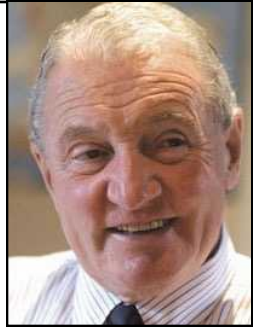
Many racing fans have wondered over the years, where did Paddy get the idea for his signature hand-brake turn. Turns out it goes back many years to his childhood in Belfast, Ireland; when a local priest left him in his will a motorized invalid carriage where he learned the basics of car control. It also only had one way to stop, a hand-brake, and with that as a foundation and having the powerful, light-weight and versatile Mini in his hands, the hand-brake turn was born!

The Mini was produced by the British Motor Corporation (BMC). BMC's competition department—prepared and maintained the Mini, and was based at the MG Works in Abingdon. As a BMC team member, Paddy raced many other BMC cars, including the MGB during the swinging sixties. Since then, Paddy has become an honorary member of the MG Car Club of England.

JH: You raced the MGB a number of times at 12 Hours of Sebring in the early 1960s. What was the Sebring experience like?

PH: *Sebring was a 12-hour endurance experience around an airfield with many different types of cars, so a real dolly-mixture event. It was great fun however with such a variety of cars and drivers (including Steve McQueen and Carl Shelby plus their girlfriends) and we were all racers. The social side of the race away from the track was great fun too. You probably won't like this but we always viewed MGs as reliable tractors. Not the best handling but very strong and reliable and meticulously prepared by our wonderful team of diligent mechanics from Abingdon.*

Andrew Hedges (left) with Paddy Hopkirk after another win.





JH: No offense at all with tractor reference, MG has a great record of outlasting bigger and strong cars on the track. Besides, Aston Martin and Lamborghini both have roots with tractors.

In 1968, you raced the Targa Florio in a steel-bodied MGB GT where you and Andrew Hedges placed second overall next to a fiberglass-bodied Porsche Carrera Sixes, an outstanding result. What are a few aspects of the race that you remember?

PH: *Targa Florio was a great race for rally drivers as it was just like one long special stage. It was a difficult course to remember 40+ kms. Andrew and I went out a few days before for practicing and painting the*

*kilometre stones with rally note signs defining the corners speeds - F = flat, M= medium etc. The*

*Lancia team copied and the night before the race marked our stones with their own Italian language signs so our work was all in vain.*

*Also raced MG at Bridgehampton in US. Probably 1964 LeMans was Andrew and my best result. We won the Motor Trophy for highest placed British car and averaged 99.9 mph for the 24 hours - 139 mph on the Mulsanne Straight - the car had a streamlined body nose.*

*Very happy memories with MGs for simplicity and strong reliability.*

JH: You often raced with Andrew Hedges. Although he was a great driver not much is written about him, other than he was born in Oxfordshire, in South Moreton, near Abingdon and when not racing cars he was a part of the British Olympic bobsled team in the 1964 Winter Olympics. Could you share a few insights?

PH: *Andrew sadly died some years ago but he was a great character and actually introduced me to my present wife Jenny in London in the mid-sixties. So many drivers were boring socially, so sharing with Andrew was like going*

*on holiday.*

JH: Paddy, many thanks for sharing your memories and insights.

Mr. Hopkirk is very active today and he is always giving back to the motor sport community and a number of charities. For example, he is currently serving as a Vice President of British Racing Drivers Club, along with Damon Hill, OBE; Nigel Mansell, CBE; Sir Jackie Stewart, etc., and he also supports Kop Hill Climb event which raises funds for grants to various charities in Buckinghamshire county (<https://www.kophillclimb.org.uk/charities/>). On the professional industry side, he is a brand ambassador for Mini Munich.

If you have Amazon Prime, you can watch Paddy take the wheel of a Mini with AC/DC front man and fellow gear-head, Brian Johnson in his "Cars That Rock" series. If you would like to be able to heel-and-toe properly, you can add a Paddy Hopkirk throttle pedal for your car. If you have a Mini, go to Mini Sport at: [www.minisport.com](http://www.minisport.com) and for various other British models you can go to Moss Motors at: [www.mossmotors.com](http://www.mossmotors.com). If you are looking for resources to help keep your Mini or BMW safer, check out McGard wheel security locks. Paddy is an ambassador for them: [www.mcgard.co.uk](http://www.mcgard.co.uk). Best wishes to all for care-free driving!



## Member Notes

Last week Hagerty had an event called "drive your classic car at dawn". They wanted people to get up about 6 am and take your car for a drive, then take a photo and send it in. I did this so now they have promised to send a "drive at dawn" hat.

I thought maybe you would like to a photo of this for the next newsletter. - Jim Carlson

Hi All,

Sorry to hear the news about our Annual MG picnic at Tilden Park. Always one of the high points of the year. Just wanted to say thank you to you and all the other members that help make things happen for the MG community.

Things will get better in the future and like everyone else looking forward till we can meet again!

I have a flat tire in my MGB and have traditional knock off wire wheels. I normally go to Riteway in Walnut Creek which handles these types of wheels and does a great job at a great price. However, they are closed due to C19.

Stay safe, well and rock on! - John Hunt

John, We all regret it, but in the interest of safety (fast?), it's for the best. Things WILL be better in the future! The Highland Games have also been cancelled. Makes sense because of the number of participants.

Fun? HA! Fun is mostly "on hold," as with most everyone. Trying to keep my attention on finishing the GT. Amazing how quickly time melts away though, just crazy.

Hope you are staying safe! Cheers, - Kirk

Hey Daniel, so just checking in to see if you have seen or heard of any MGB's for sale in the area! I've been searching around for the '64 for quite some time with no real luck so I figured I'd contact you! I hope you are staying safe and healthy through these unusual times!

Thank You! - Andreas P.

I've had the TF out a few times on runs to Scotts Valley and back for errands. The Metro sits (I tend to ignore it).

I evacuated to beekeeper friends at the top of Bear Creek Road. All was well there until Bonny Doon burned and they lost internet and cell phone. When they learned of a fire in the Zayante canyon, they opted to evacuate last night and I am now at other friends on the east side of 17. I got the TF moved to a friend's place in Cupertino - glad I got it moved. Otherwise rather stressed as we all are.

My friend Ian Coulson has two Morris Minors. He managed to get the soft top evacuated from his property at the top of Pinecrest in Boulder Creek, but he had to leave the other behind -parked in a small grass clearing near his house. He wrote that while the fire took everything else, it refused to take her. She has been re-named Phoenix.

Stay well! - Marja

Boulder Creek (evacuated)

I would like to ask about my MG TD tach. It seems to read low and it doesn't go above about 2200 rpms in 4th or 5th gear. With the 5-speed installed, I would expect 5th gear to be lower, but I'm not seeing the rpms in 4th. Where should I start looking? The tach itself seems ok; and, I had a spare which I installed with no change in the behavior. My late model TD has the magnetic tach. Is the gear reduction box the problem? Is it the cable? I am looking for some ideas on how to fix.

Thanks - Jim Carlson





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**Report from the *Morris Gazette*, the Arizona MG Club, August 2020**

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***President - Steve Strublic***

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Life slows down during an Arizona summer. Even when the A/C's on high and you have all the comforts of home in the garage, the heat just saps your energy. It is a time to hide away if you can. Not that it's all that tough to hide these days, with COVID still rearing its ugly, invisible head... I hope everyone's staying safe and healthy.

While I haven't gotten to the test drive like I hoped in last month's letter, I have managed to make good progress in my five-speed conversion saga. I have everything assembled and buttoned up—rods and pistons, head and rockers, all torqued and ready to go.

I verified that the transmission will fit in its space and the new rear mount lines up exactly like it should.

I took the engine off the stand, installed the fly-wheel and clutch, and mated it with the five speed. Everything lines up and all clearances check out. This is a very nice kit.



(Continued on page 2)



*President Steve Strublic with Julia and daughter Juliette*

# The Racers – Movie

I saw this movie in 1955 while I was in high school. Loved it then and love it now. The story is typical sappy Hollywood but the racing scenes are wonderful. Real 50's racing at Mille Miglia, Spa, Nurburgring, Monte Carlo and Monza. The number 555 Ferrari was actually competing in the Mille Miglia when the footage was taken.

The rear-projection scenes were pretty crude even in the 50's but I can tolerate them because of the real cars on real tracks. The number 10 HWM-Alta that Gino (Kirk) wrecks at Monte Carlo was later given a Chevy V-8 engine and became the "Stovebolt Special." It is now in England but was a competitive sports racer on the West Coast during the 60's.

This is an absolute time-warp classic with a story line that seems to draw on aspects of the life of the great Tazio Nuvolari. If you have any love of the golden years of Grand Prix racing back in the fifties before cars were stripped of their character, this is a feast of beautiful machinery never to be seen again. Forget any niggles about Kirk Douglas playing an Italian with no accent...he does a decent job in the role, the story line and the cars make that inconsequential and there's enough convincing performances by Gilbert Roland, Caesar Romero and the beautiful Bella Darvi to be going on with.

The Spanish release of The Racers on DVD is very welcome as you need no longer fear VHS tape degradation or the disappearance of VHS machines. Provided your player accepts PAL and multi region playback, it's simply a matter of sorting out the menu selection for English language and no subtitles.



Kirk Douglas & "knockout" Bella Darvi - how can you go wrong?! This is a racing movie, so the plot is a little thin - but well acted by the two main stars, who are aided by a stellar supporting cast (Gilbert Roland, Cesar Romero, & Lee J. Cobb). Yes, more than a few of the racing scenes are studio shots, but the cars from this "Golden Era" of auto racing are simply marvelous to see, on or off set! It all works because of the top notch editing which smoothly mates the obvious studio shots with actual racing footage, of which there are plenty. The special effects used in the crash scenes are especially well done. Oh, if one could only see this movie in a movie theater right now!

Although the production and storyline are pure Hollywood 50's melodrama, it's definitely worth at least one viewing if you're an enthusiast of F1 and sports car racing in the 50's in Europe. The cars are all real - Ferrari, Maserati, Mercedes et al - and the track action is genuine, although with a lot more rear-screen filler shots than you would see later in the 60s. Shooting was done at several classic circuits including Monaco, Nurburgring, the Mille Miglia, Spa, and a climactic race at the great old highway circuit at Reims, France. There are in-car shots, though not many, including a shot going through Eau Rouge at Spa that was duplicated by Frankenheimer in "Grand Prix" 11 years later.

## Classified Ads

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

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

**1959 MGA Roadster.** Purchased by current owner in LA in 1964. Original engine, no rust, always been garaged. Asking \$20k negotiable. Sharon, [sharonrossie413@gmail.com](mailto:sharonrossie413@gmail.com), (408) 332-1701 (Posted 7/20)

**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)

**MGA Aluminum Flywheel:** Fidanza as sold by Moss. Fits MGA and 3-main MGB. \$350. Dan (309) 696-0803 (Posted 7/20)

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

**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)**



## "Original Owner" Supremo!

Thanks for the email. I was planning to share some new member info and a few pictures. The car has been with me since the beginning, it's was the first car I ever rode in, it's the one car I've known my entire life. See the video attached. Dad and Mom squeezing into the MG leaving the hospital. The little bundle is me coming home in the MG.

Brennan Cox



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**North American MGB Register**



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

**Note that mailing of the newsletter has  
been suspended until the Shelter in  
Place order has ended.**



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

We hope to start up again soon.

**Stay Safety Fast!**

