



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!



**BLYBNYN =
Ballybunion G.C. (in
Kerry, Ireland)**

**Original Owner
Ed Loughrey**



February 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, mrcraigk@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,

mrcraigk@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>.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| MGOC 2021 Calendar | 3 |
| From the Ed | 4 |
| MGOC Planning Meeting - Minutes | 5 |
| New "All Creatures" | 6 |
| President's Ponderings | 7 |
| Rostyle Balancing Act | 8 |
| Oakland J2 Report | 9 |
| MGs and Spitfires | 10-11 |
| Ghost Race Track: Candlestick | 12-13 |
| Tim's Winter Vacation | 14 |
| Planning; Blaze EV Classic | 15 |
| The Midget Story | 16-17 |
| The Car of My Dreams | 18 |
| Don Cowgill | 19 |
| New Members; Classifieds | 20 |
| Member Notes | 21 |
| Back Page: Locke Wins! | 22 |



MGOC Calendar 2021 (Preliminary)

Non-MGOC events in *italics* - All dates and events subject to change

| | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Mar 17 (Wed) | St. Paddy's Day Tour | Andy & Marla |
| Apr TBD | Drive In Movie | Mark McGothigan |
| Apr 9-11 | <i>CSRG Vintage Races, Sears Point</i> | <i>Spectators allowed?</i> |
| <i>May 16 (Sun)</i> | <i>Dixon Car Show</i> | |
| June 5-6 | <i>CSRG Vintage Races, Laguna Seca</i> | <i>Spectators allowed?</i> |
| June 11 (Fri) | Envelope stuffing MGsbTB | George's House |
| June 12 (Sat) | MGsbTB, Greenbrae, Bon Air | Mike & Andy |
| <i>Jun 14-17</i> | <i>All MG Meet, Atlantic City (only 3000 miles)</i> | Mike Jacobsen (flying) |
| <i>July 26-30</i> | <i>GOF West, Mt. Hood Resort. OR</i> | MGOC/SSTS attending |
| <i>Aug 11</i> | <i>Little Car Show, Pacific Grove</i> | |
| <i>Aug 14</i> | <i>Concours de Lemons, Seaside</i> | |
| Aug TBD | Marin Tour | John Hunt |
| Sept 14 | Mt. Hamilton Tour | Dan S and Ken G |
| Oct 1-3 | <i>CSRG Vintage Races, Sears Point</i> | |
| Oct 2 | Annual Picnic Tilden Park | Marcia & George |
| Nov 10 | Sonoma Tour | Andy & Marla |
| Dec 11 (Sat) | Holiday Tea Elaine's House SF | Elaine & Mike |
| Jan 8, 2022 (Sat) | Planning Meeting, Marcia's House | Marcia & George |



Here's our preliminary schedule which is bound to change as state and local requirements change, but at least we're trying. Hopefully we can add some more events towards the end of the year as restrictions lighten up.

Thanks, Andy



From the Editor

Hello, MG Fans,

"How are you?" is in no way a trivial question these days. But now we are hearing of more people getting vaccinated and of fewer getting sick from the virus. What plague will next be sent upon us? As a student of history, the recent past has been remarkably peaceful and prosperous.

Mike J. said this newsletter seemed familiar. We have covered MG and the RAF in the past and I am reusing some good artwork. (It is a great topic.) There are some other familiar themes and we again lack new event information. I hope I am not getting in too much of a rut but that is ever a danger. Carrying on is a challenge, too. Whack me if I veer off the road on either side. My main approach has been to pack in as much content and as much variety as I can.

I had to cancel the New Years Tour due to the virus travel restrictions and it rained that day as well. The next day, Thuy and I drove the MGA to San Jose to view two of the Spanish Missions that Thuy had not seen. The MGA has not be out much this past year but it ran fine. The redone (drum) brakes seem good.

George Steneberg reports that he and Marcia have been exploring many back roads as a way to get out of the house. Perhaps we will discover some new tours as a result. He especially mentioned Highway 160 along the river to Sacramento. My father calls these, "Joy Rides," as we did in my youth.

May you be encouraged.

28 January 2021



Dan



LEVER SHOCKS REBUILT BRAKES SLEEVED AND REBUILT

EXCHANGE OR YOURS REBUILT
BRAKES: SLEEVE ONLY OR
COMPLETE REBUILDING
FAST SERVICE

Apple Hydraulics

1610 Middle Road
Calverton, NY 11933

1-800-882-7753

(631)369-9515

<http://www.AppleHydraulics.com>



APR09



CLASSIC AUTO RESTORATION & REPAIR
BRITISH PARTS DISTRIBUTOR

WWW.UNIONJACK.COM

13555 Depot St. PO Box 551 San Martin, CA 95046

408 686-1101 Fax 683-2447

MGOC Planning Meeting using Zoom

10:00am, Saturday Jan 9, 2021

Minutes

Call to Order: Andy Preston at: 10:05

Attending: Rick Anguiano, Marcia Crawford, Tom Doyle, Ken Gittings, John Hunt, Mike Jacobsen, Steve Kellogg, Mark McGothigan, Kirk & Amy Prentiss, Andy & Marla Preston, and George Steneberg.

President's Report: Andy Preston: Today we would have been at Marcia's for the annual Planning Meeting. We have to be extremely careful with any events this year, and abide by the health guidelines. We will try to plan outdoor events for the first part of the year. Online meetings & tech sessions are also possible. Possible St Paddy's Day tour on March 17.

EVENT DISCUSSION

Outdoor events, pack your own lunch, limit number of attendees. Mark suggested an outdoor, drive-in movie. He has equipment. This would be a summertime event. Kirk asked Mark to put together a proposal for such an event for possibly April or May.

- St. Paddy's Day Tour , March 17
- Dixon planned for May 16
- GOF West at Welches, OR (Mt. Hood) for July 26-30
- All-MG national in Atlantic City, June 12-17
- MGs by the Bay possible on June 12
- John proposed a tour to Larkspur in August or September to watch a cricket match
- Concourse d'Lemons on August 14 in Pacific Grove
- Annual Picnic planned for October 9
- Kirk mentioned the Scottish Highland Games for September; may not happen due to large attendance
- Ken & Dan to work on Mt Hamilton tour for September 14
- December 11 for Holiday Tea at Elaine's
- Planning meeting on January 8, 2022 at Marcia's
- Steve will plan a Monterey-area weekend event for 2022

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dave Laughlin died on 12/26/2020. Don Cowgill passed away too.

Meeting adjourned at: 11:10

Submitted by: Mike J



Cartoon by Abingdon Rough Rider member Brian Sonner.



New 'All Creatures Great & Small'

From Marty Rayman

The new version of **All Creatures Great and Small** has lots of interesting vintage British cars rolling around like this gorgeous early Rover. (at right)

And the fellas who were in the original version have a British road trip show, **Vintage Roads: Great & Small**, where they explore in a Morgan.

Christopher Timothy and Peter Davison, stars of All Creatures Great & Small, host this journey into the golden age of motoring.



On the Road Again Classics
Classic & British Auto Restorations & Repairs

call now to talk about your dream...

408.782.1100



*MG, Austin Healey, Jaguar,
Triumph, Rolls/Bentley, Lotus*



I like those caps! - Dan



16840 Joleen Way, Unit G-4, Morgan Hill, CA 95037

408.782.1100 Fax: 408.779.0938

bhiland@ontheroadagainclassics.com www.ontheroadagainclassics.com



President's Ponderings

Garage Door Openers

We use our garage door as our front door because we always park the car in the garage so the double door goes up and down all the time. I'd guess around 6 times a day. Now that doesn't seem like a lot but that's over 2,000 times a year and over 20,000 times in 10 years. I forget how old the opener is but it's at least 10 years old and finally decided it had opened the door for the last time.

I called the local garage door guy and Casey arrived at the house. Unlike the washing machine man (President's Ponderings March 2019), Casey knew his stuff. He increased the tension on the springs, lubed the hinges and the door was far easier to lift but even then the opener struggled to lift the door. Casey performed several other tests and checked out the control board but sadly reported the logic board was dead and said I needed a new opener.

Casey was also a car guy and noticed that I have a car lift in my garage and is planning on installing one himself. He asked me if I've heard of a "Jack shaft garage door opener." He said they fit onto the end of the torsion bar. They open and close the garage door by turning the torsion bar; very simple and easy. The advantage of this method is that you do away with the conventional opener and rail hanging from the ceiling so you can virtually install a car lift in any garage by using this type of opener.

In my case I'd like to raise my garage door by 3" to give me more clearance with cars on the lift. This requires raising the track by 3," which in turn requires raising the complete torsion bar mechanism. Unfortunately the cost to do this is almost as much as the jackshaft opener itself, so I think I'll have to pass on this one and revert to the conventional opener. Don't get me wrong I think the Jackshaft garage door opener looks great in the online videos and thought I'd pass on the information to everyone who might be in the market for a new opener.

On a completely different topic we had a very productive Zoom planning meeting earlier this month and at least have some events on the calendar albeit tentative. Any events held will be in strict accordance with State and Local guidelines. Marla and I have planned a St. Paddy's Day drive and picnic for March 17 and will advise you closer to the date if it's a go.

Finally I was saddened to hear that one of our long-standing members, Don Cowgill, lost his battle with Glioblastoma earlier this month. Don was a fun loving guy with a wonderful disposition and was always happy and smiling. I never tired of talking to him on any topic; he will be sadly missed.



Stay safe and hope to see you soon,

Andy



Balancing Rostyle Wheels

by Andy Preston

Rostyle wheels were very popular on MGs in the 70s and 80s and still look good today. They were made by a company called Rubery Owen, West Bromwich, England and hence the name R. O. Style wheels.

The problem with these wheels is that they are 'Lug Centric' and not 'Hub Centric' like modern wheels and its difficult finding a shop that has the old school equipment to balance them correctly. Let me explain why.

Hub Centric wheels are centered by the center bore of the wheel and the hub flange. The wheel is perfectly concentric with the center hole and is easily balanced with modern balancing machines.

Lug centric wheels are centered by the lug nuts when they are tightened against the hub. The hole in the center of the Rostyle wheel is not necessarily in the center of the wheel nor is it perfectly round and it is not in the same plane as the lug nut holes. So if the tire shop uses a modern balancing machine with cones placed on the back and/or front of the wheel it'll be hit and miss if it's mounted correctly on the machine. They'll normally tell you that your wheels aren't round and they'll do the best they can.

This is exactly what happened to me when I took my 2 front wheels to a local McLea's Tire shop for balancing. They didn't even remove the existing weights and just added more weights at different places around the rim. They were terrible even worse than before. That's when I did more research and found that shops need to mount the wheels onto an adaptor plate using the lug nuts so it replicates they way they are mounted on the car. And then balance them on the machine with the adaptor plate. Of course McLea's didn't use an adaptor plate and don't have one. I phoned every shop and no-one has an adaptor plate for MG wheels! Go figure!

The Solution. I normally have all my wheels balanced and tires mounted by Dependable Tire and Brake in San Rafael about 30 miles from where I live. I gave Ron the proprietor a call and asked him if he had an adaptor. He said no but he can balance the wheels on the car which is even better. I drove the car to



Dependable Tire and Brake and Ron removed all 4 wheels and balanced them on his State of the Art 'Hunter Road Force' machine and took the 2 best wheels and put those on the front of the car. He then re-balanced those wheels on the car with his 'on car wheel balance' machine. The result is the best it's ever been. I can now drive all day at 70 mph in comfort and not shake to death. Many thanks to Ron who as far as I know is the only shop who can still balance wheels on the car in the Bay Area. BTW he also mounts and balances wire wheels on the car as well.

Oakland J2 Report

This past Saturday I visited with Art and son Fred Loeser at Jim Silva's auto upholstery shop, San Leandro, California. The interior is all tan, the seats are leather.

Art is 92 and Fred about 70; both are enthusiastic about the J2. Art is very sharp and agile. After this virus is under control, I'll visit them at their home in Oakland. Art tells me they have a lot of photos to show. Eric Baker has seen the car in the past.

Art purchased the J2 in 1955 from local 'auto racer enthusiast' Monroe Dunham and he in turn purchased the J2 from another local sometime before. So, J2 3006 has been here in our SF Bay area since the early 1950's or late 40's. Art joined the MGOC back in the 1960s.

One of the prior owners replaced the engine with a Ford V8 flathead 60. That must have been quite a beast! This J2 also has Dutch history.



At some point (late 50's - mid 60's?)

Art contacted Steve Dear in the UK. Steve was instrumental in arranging the purchase and shipping of an 'original type' engine.

Art and his family made several visits to the UK (5 or 6) and were hosted in the home of "J2 Man," Mr. Stewart Lightbody. Stewart was an "East End cop" and drove a J2 as a daily driver.

The J2 desperately needs replacement windscreen side supports; they may have been forgotten at a chrome plater shop years ago. Jim completed a lovely new interior for the J2. It is off to a mechanic next.

Art was a sheet metal worker and the front side panels are well done. The fuel tank was in very bad condition. Art saved the fluted side panels and recreated the tank in new metal. But, he forgot the arrangement of the reserve cock and filler as seen in prior photo.

My J2 will be at Silva's shop for interior in two weeks from now - or when Jim is ready

Bill

Bill Traill, J2 3343
San Jose, California

Fred and Art with their J2 at top. Anyone have a spare J2 wind screen laying around?

Above, Jim Silva & Friend with Barry Swackhammer at Jim's shop.

Right, Bill Traill's J2 nears completion after 50+ years with Bill and his father.



“Flying ace Douglas Bader flew his last sortie from RAF Westhampnett (now Goodwood Aerodrome) on 9 August, 1941. Having joined the RAF in 1930 at the age of 20, he tragically crashed his Bristol Bulldog fighter a year later which led to the eventual amputation of both of his legs in 1933. He was discharged from the RAF, but was determined to keep flying. He learnt to walk again using prosthetic legs and in 1935 was allowed back into the RAF. His first solo flight back in action was over the Dunkirk evacuation in which he successfully shot down a Messerschmitt 109.



Bader arrived at RAF Westhampnett on 18 March 1941 to take command of three Spitfire squadrons of Tangmere wing including 610, 616 and 145 Squadrons. He flew with 616 Squadron from then on, leading the formation with his personal Spitfire marked 'DB', in the 'finger four' formation he adapted from the Luftwaffe tactics.

Bader had lost one of his false legs when he was shot down, and the Germans offered free passage to an RAF aircraft to drop a replacement near St. Omer, where he was being held. The RAF refused, and a few days later mounted a bombing operation during which a new false leg was dropped by parachute.

Bader was released after the war and won a DSO and bar (Distinguished Service Order) and DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross) and bar. Today, a statue to Douglas Bader is positioned outside of the Aerodrome Building."

In closing, let us take a moment to reflect and give thanks to all the pilots, service people and citizens who banded together to saved Britain and helped keep the world free from tyranny.

(Ed. Note. For more info, see **The Octagon** issues January, 2018, and July, 2019. While the Spitfire gets most the attention, the Hawker Hurricane fighter used the same engine and was credited with more bombers shot down during the Battle of Britain.)



Art by James Dietz. Print edition sold out. Get his large format hardback book from used outlets, **Portraits of Combat**. \$30 or less.



Ghost Track: Candlestick!

By Chris Prevolos

In the mid-1960s Juan Marichal's fastball may have ruled Candlestick, but the park was also known for another kind of speed. From 1963 until 1965 Candlestick was the site of Sports Car Club of America races in the parking lot outside the stadium.

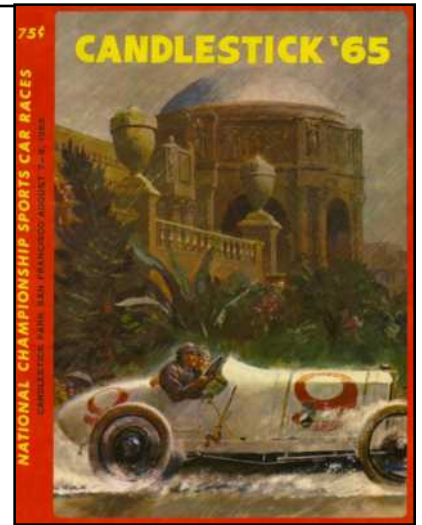
It had been nearly a decade since San Francisco had seen auto racing,

since a series in Golden Gate Park in early 1950s and organizers from SCCA's San

Francisco Region sought to utilize the large paved parking lot at Giants' relatively new stadium.

The course that was designed for the Candlestick parking lot was notorious among the drivers, who cited the "tightness of the circuit, various obstructions and a generally bumpy surface" in a 1965 article in the Chronicle. A 1.9 mile temp road course was used from 1963 through August 11th, 1965.

It was so treacherous that racing legend Phil Hill, the only American-born driver ever to win a Formula One World Championship, said that Candlestick was the most dangerous course he had ever driven.



driver ever to win a Formula One World Championship, said that Candlestick was the most dangerous course he had ever driven.



The SCCA course at Candlestick Park, 1963-1964.

Those fears were borne out when a pair of fatal crashes in August 1965 spelled doom for the site as a road racing venue. Bart Martin, a young driver from Hayward, was the man to beat at the Candlestick track in 1965 as the winner there the previous year and coming off of six SCCA wins in 1964. But Martin, driving a Ford-powered Brabham BT8, died in a crash that day which led to the cancellation of the race.

Thousands of spectators witnessed the horrific crash and fire which was captured by *Chronicle* photographer Bob Campbell. Only a day before, Ken O'Neill, Jr. of Saratoga, was killed in qualifying when his car flipped over a guardrail.

Racing was officially over at 'The Stick,' as the next day's *Chronicle* Sporting Green declared "Death Dooms Candlestick Races," with auto racing writer Gordon Martin going on to say "Candlestick Park is undoubtedly doomed as a site for sports car racing."

Gordon's words would prove true as Sears Point Raceway would open in 1968 and the SCCA would have a long and continuing history with that track. The first event at Sears Point was, in fact, an SCCA endurance race. However Candlestick has been often used as an autocross venue.



There is an amateur Youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-I8Z6LjLxqg> (photo still above)



Tim Mulgrew's Winter Vacation

So, with our friend COVID there's no place to go. Which means we turn to the yellow brick road saying of, "There's no place like home." So, with time on my hands and the projects finished on my bride's honey-do list, my attention turns to Ruby (not the slipper), our MG and part time sleigh. In need of new carpet she underwent an overhaul of the inner parts.

Here's some photos of her stripped apart, fitted with a new space suit and finally redressed in new carpeting.

While I was at it and the battery was pulled, I decided a few electrical components were ready to be renewed. Of

course I saved the old parts because like the car- it's almost all original parts. You can see these are the original

Lucas components from day 1.

Finally, Dawn test drives the new copilot spot custom fit with a new period accurate seat belt. After our trip to Goat Rock she wanted to feel more secure, so a seatbelt was the best I could offer! She loves her new spot, I fitted mine with the same.

And all electrical parts are working again. We learned in

Petaluma from another driver we had no tail lights! And we've been without turn signals for a while so it was high time to spend some time!

All is well with Ruby's inners and next some work under the hood but not likely until later in January.

Motoring on!

Tim

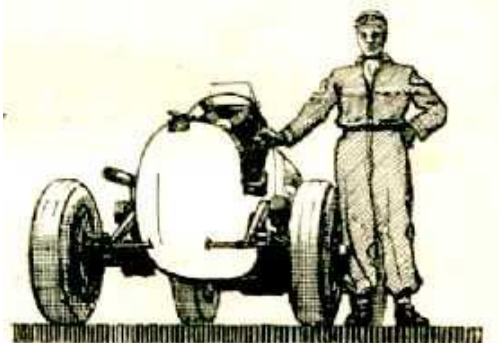
We can't see the road ahead, so we must take it as it comes, not as we wish it would be.



FLYING TIGER 2STROKE OIL CANDLE

Bored of Glade Plugins whiffing of scented pine and lavender? Rather spark up something that smells like the Mallory Park paddock instead? Well, look no further than Flying Tiger's frankly amazing two-stroke scented candle. The smell of two-stroke (or Castrol R) is one of the sensations that lingers long with any race fan, and now you can take the aroma home with you without upsetting the wife too much thanks to motorcycle brand Flying Tiger Moto's scented candle range. Each is hand-made with two-stroke essence infused into all-natural soy wax. It's far better than revving up your supermoto in the living room...

\$32 (£24), flyingtigermotorcycles.square.site



Start Planning for 2021



SPRING

Wed., Feb. 10, Drive Your Triumph Day. Crash it!

Wed., March 17, St. Patrick's Day Tour, Sonoma, Marla and Andy Preston, Virus Permitting

April TBD, Drive-in Movie Night, Mark McGothigan

April 9-11, Vintage Races, CSRG

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



SUMMER

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

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



The **Blaze EV Classic** has been introduced in Japan. It is licensed as a moped and can reach 31 mph on 4hp.

I think an MG grille shell would look great on it. I'm sure a larger motorcycle motor would fit. I like its built-in "bowler" hat — Dan

GETS A WHOLESOME RESPECT FROM THE BEST

THE driver of the big sports car has no regard for the mere "sports models" he meets on the road. There is no serious rivalry.

But for the M.G. Midget he has a wholesome respect. For here is no challenge to be shaken off with a flick of his accelerator. He has seen the breath-taking acceleration of the Midget... seen it rush, with unabated speed and with a steadiness he envies, at corners where even he must tread with care... watched it climb, scoring the gearbox, on hills where bigger engines clamoured for second...

From whatever point of view you judge, you will find that the M.G. Midget commands respect from the best of sports cars... commands... and gets it.

Even to read the catalogue of such a car is refreshing. Write for one to-day to Publicity Dept., THE M.G. CAR COMPANY LTD., ABINGDON-ON-THAMES



Mr. G. E. T. Evans, who drove the M.G. Midget which recently secured every International Class 11 Record from one to 100 miles

THE FIRST MIDGET CAR TO DO 100 MILES PER HOUR

The Midget Story

By Reinout Vogt, Atlanta, GA

Painting: Racing M type Midgets at Brooklands

Father Of The Midget

The Midget has been the longest running model name of the MG Car Company. In 37 of the 57 years (from the start in 1923 to the closing of the Abingdon factory in 1980), one could drive a brand-new Midget off the showroom floor. Launched in 1928, the first M-Type Midget rolled out of the factory, still in Oxford, in 1929 and was soon followed by C, D, J1, J2, J3, J4, PA, PB, Q, and R Midgets, all with overhead-cam 4-cylinder engines.

These were succeeded in 1936 by the TA Midget, the first of the T-Series. Production of the TB was stopped at the outbreak of WWII, and restarted in Fall 1945 with the TC, followed by TD and the TF which was replaced by the MGA in 1955. The Midget name was absent from 1955 - 1961, when it returned to the line-up with the Midget Mk. I, followed by the Mk. II, Mk. III and, 1500. The last Midget produced late 1979 at Abingdon, shortly after the announcement to close MG for good in 1980. In the thirty nine Midget years, a grand total of 287,786 units* of 20 different Midget models were built.



For some reason, I always thought it was Cecil Kimber's vision as founder of MG to make an 'affordable' sports car for 'regular' people, and the M-Type Midget was his first attempt to build such a car and shape a new market segment. That idea lasted until I read the article - Engineer, tuning wizard, communicator and thoroughly nice man - A personal appreciation of Reg Jackson (1906-1976) - by Mike Allison in the 2018 Triple-M Register Yearbook of The MG Car Club. Reg Jackson joined MG in 1928, specifically to work, directly under Cecil Cousin, on Cecil Kimber's newest project to develop a 6-cylinder car, later known as the 18/80 (previous MG's used 4-cylinder engines). Mike Allison, honorary chairman of the MGCC Triple-M Register, author of *The Magic of MG*, and a living MG encyclopedia, worked directly under Reg Jackson in the 1960's. During their daily morning meetings, Mike recorded, in longhand, the stories Reg shared with him.

Mike published these stories, written in the first person, as Reg told them, in *Safety Fast* (the MGCC UK monthly magazine) and the yearbook mentioned above. I re-read the yearbook article several times as it provides a fascinating first hand account of the history of the Triple-M models. Eye-opening was the story about the Midget. Out the window went the idea of Cecil Kimber's grand vision when I learned that Reg Jackson should be considered the father of the M-Type Midget and said: "It was 'sassy', smart and above all, cheap. The sort of price which with a bit of saving, I could have afforded".

This excerpt is reprinted with permission of the author, Mike Allison, and the Triple-M Register of the MGCC. The two comments in italics are Mike Allison's.

As told by Reg Jackson

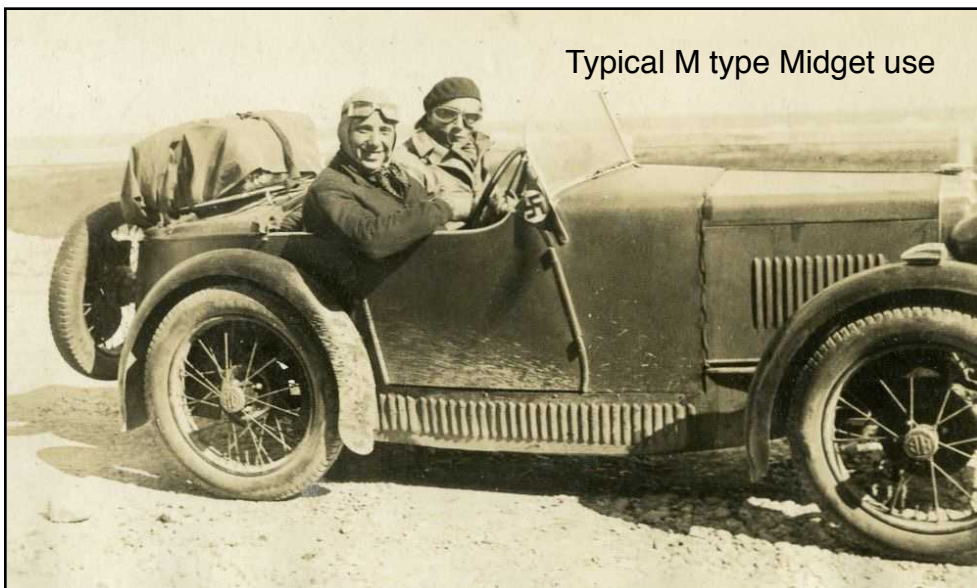
"One day I had to go to Cowley and spotted the Minor. Cous and I were always talking about the Austin Seven racing achievements, and I was soon taken on a flight of fancy about a small MG, and Cous and I talked it over.

He took the idea to Kimber, who pooh- poohed it, but also chatted to HN** about our ideas, and he took it to Kimber, who said he might get a chassis up for development work... but we had to concentrate on getting the Six ready for the Motor Show... I think it was in late '28. (Actually, it was August). We cobbled together a body with a pointed tail, Harry Herring made the framework, and we stretched Rexine over it as a covering...The Six was to be fabric covered, and so were some of the old 14HP jobs, so this was a natural thing for us to do. I made up a smaller version of the 18/80, as the Six had become known, radiator shell in German silver, and polished it and fitted it over the Morris radiator. It looked OK, but a bit amateur-ish, so Kimber got Carbodies to make a couple of proper bodies up in a few days, which looked a lot better. When Kimber tried it, he was pleased. (Cecil Cousins had told me a very similar story.)

"The prototype caused a tremendous impression at the Motor Show, and Kimber told me that he had taken 250 orders for the Midget, which caused him heartache as he was trying to sell the idea of a luxury sports car to Billy Morris and the press! Anyway, the Midget went into production and more and more effort went into that car, as we were selling five or seven of those to every 18/80.

"I can't say that I was ever enthusiastic about the 18/80 which was really old-fashioned, but the Midget was a different story: it was "sassy", smart and above all, cheap. The sort of price which with a bit of saving, I could have afforded.

"The Midget had proved a success, and early in 1929 Cous, Frankie Tayler and I were to take three cars to Brooklands and run them in a High-Speed Trial organized by the MCC, with "named" drivers, of course, we three as riding mechanics. This was largely CK's idea, inspired by Harold Parker of the Shell Company, to show the cars could stand up to one hour at maximum speed. I think we all three did sixty miles in the hour, which made good advertising copy at a time when neither the Morris Minor nor the Austin Seven could do much over forty in standard tune.



"HN** got me to have a look at the engine of one of the original press cars, and when I checked the valve timing, I found there was no overlap at TDC, which I knew wasn't much cop, and I asked Wolseley Motors to send me an unground camshaft over. HN did some calculations, and I worked on grinding the blank on the workshop lathe, and had it hardened at Birmingham, to a different profile which gave us a little overlap, and the car went much better! We could get it up to around 73mph, but it was running weak, so I said we then needed a bit of polish and port alignment carried out. I did all this myself, and the result was a Midget which would just nudge eighty, and we knew we were on to something good. This car was called "Shinio" by the lads because of all the elbow grease I had used on the internals. I had balanced the bottom end up, equalised the combustion chambers, lined up the manifolds and so forth, and fitted a larger carburettor, and it really did scurry along then. The camshaft was put into production, production examples being ground on a proper machine, but I think that was a bit later, as they had to be slipped in between batches of Minor cams.

"We were by then moving the Factory to Abingdon, and the Essex "market gardeners" got onto Kimber for a team of Midgets to run in the Double-Twelve Race at Brooklands. We prepared half a dozen cars for that, and won the Team Prize, while CK's "baby" the Tigress, blew up. After that it was Midgets all the way, and the 18/80 died off."

* Sources: MG by McComb and Wikipedia

** HN refers to H.N. Charles, the early MG Senior Designer and good friend of Cecil Kimber

The Car of My Dreams

By new member T.J. Marrone

My first car in my dreams was a '52 TD, the poster was on the wall in my room from the time I was quite young until I moved out of my parent's house.

My first car was an MG 1100. I was 15. It was 1971, and I was dating a girl who just turned 16 and got her license. I bought the car for \$100 with the engine and tranny apart and in boxes in the back seat, we needed a way to get around. I let her keep the car when we split up months later.

Second car was a joint venture with a friend, a mid 60's MGB with all kinds of issues. We did finally chase all the gremlins with a complete wiring harness replacement. My friend ended up with that one. There were a whole lot of cars between then and now, including a Ford based TD kit car.

I bought a 1967 Midget last year, sort of an impulse buy. I didn't do a lot of research, but knew I wanted a car with the Datsun 5 speed conversion. Didn't take long to discover the PO had butchered the tunnel and battery/heater tray installing the tranny. Got frustrated and put that car aside and bought a 1974 Midget, also with the 5 speed, this one done very well, a great driving car. I'm now slowly fixing the 67 and will sell one.

I have watched "T" series cars for years and for the last few the market has softened for these cars. I started doing "wishful thinking" bidding on BAT and Ebay, and last year I won an auction for a fully restored TF, the car had been sitting for a time and needed some maintenance (carbs, brakes, tune up, etc) and now is real runner and driver as well. As much as I love the TF,



it's still not the TD that I stared at so many nights. That and with retirement coming on in a couple years, I decided to look for a real project. The last time I did a total restoration was when my kids were small (mid 80's). That's how I ended up with the TD and the MGA. I look forward to working on them.

Dr. Donald Cowgill, 1942-2021

Resident of Livermore and Club Member

Don Cowgill lost a battle with Glioblastoma the morning of January 1, 2021. He was surrounded with the love of his family.

Don had a lifelong passion for science and only recently retired from 46 years with Sandia National Labs as Principal Physicist. He held multiple patents and contributed to many global scientific endeavors. Don graduated from Wichita State University with degrees in Physics and Math, later receiving a Masters and PhD in Physics from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.

His love for exploration and understanding led him in many creative endeavors. Don was musical, played the guitar and piano quite well. He backpacked throughout New Mexico and California and hiked the entire Colorado Trail. He loved to tinker, to build and fix anything he could, from electronics and machines, to home projects and restoring cars. He was a long time member of the Sorry Safari Touring Society (an MG car club) and the MGOC British Car Club. Don also loved travel and adventure, which meant many road trips, hiking, skiing, sailing, volunteering at wineries and cruising.

Don is survived by his wife, Maris, his sister, Catha Cowgill, his children, Jefferey Glen Cowgill, Christine Marie Loftus, Cindy Lou Paiz, Joe Loftus, Jr., and Marcianna Loftus Howard, as well as 8 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Don was kind, generous, an amazing husband, father, grandfather, brother, co-worker and friend. His passions touched the lives of many people. He could do absolutely anything he set his mind to.

A Celebration of Life will be determined at a later date when it is safe to be with family and friends.



Above, Don and Maris cruised around the British Isles in 2019. Don came back properly kitted out for the Highland Games where he displayed his MG TD. (At right.)



Notes from Maris:

"Wiskers" whiskers were painted on by our daughter, Marci. Don thought it would be a neat idea since "Wiskers" reminded him of "Mr. Mistoffleese" from the musical **Cats**. He later used wire from a tomato cage, cutting, shaping, and welding pieces together to make removable whiskers after "Wiskers" was finally painted. They fit on the badge bar.

It took a long time to decide to paint "Wiskers" because a lot of the SSTS club members wanted Don to keep it with its original 7 colors and just clear coat it. If you can imagine that!

It has been a rough road without Don but we are trying to make the best of it. One day at a time.



New Members

Welcome Anthony (T.J.) Marrone of Sebastopol with a restored 1954 MGTF, nice driver 1974 Midget, in progress 1960 MGA, and finally a basket case 1951 MGTD

"Thanks for your email. I will be happy to get you some info about me and my cars. Cheers, T. J." (See page 18.)

Strive for perfection in everything. Take the best that exists and make it better. If it doesn't exist, create it. - Sir Henry Royce (Rolls Royce)

Welcome Roy Hawkins of Ceres with a yet to be put together 1976 MGB

"I have owned the MG about 1 month. First time that I have owned one. Never even driven it yet because it needs putting back together. I got it as a present for Christmas. I have a lot of parts I need to put on but am not sure about the smog stuff. It is a 76 and I believe it is an early 76 so I don't think it needs a catalytic converter and it also has a Weber carburetor and manifold so I don't think the smog is set up correctly. I am in the process of trying to find someone who knows for sure what needs to be done. - Roy"



Classified Ads

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

1933 MG L-type, 1937 MG SA Sedan & SA Convertible: Original condition, apart. Were running. Lots of new parts. Sell as a package. In Watsonville. Nancy Reader, Former Peninsula T Register members. 831-722-5128 (Posted 2/21)

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)

1965 MGB: Nice, rust-free example. Red. Overdrive, 5-main MGB motor; new tires; three tops. In Arizona, Bob (602) 762-5733 or rhrierson@gmail.com (Posted 2/21)

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

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)

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 MGOCsf.org

Member Notes

From Marty Rayman:

We participated in the **Breakfast Club Rally** 01.01.2021: "Not The Anti-Football Run." Here's a link to my Google slide show: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/KTiVK7tQCydJervq8>

We had to drive in the MINI roadster because TeD has a leak in the left front brake hose. Phooey. We would have made a splash as there were about 3 or 4 British autos in the rally & no MG's. Happy New Year!

From Dan Shockey:

Drive Your Triumph Day is Wednesday, February 10th. Might be a good day to drive your MG!

Midget Wanted:

Andy and Dan got a call from a guy seeking a Midget: Daniel in Berkeley, 646-823-5725. Any Midget except 1500.

From Rick Feibusch:

"Napa business owner had huge cache of weapons and ammunition, authorities say." Well, apparently another local British Car Shop will bite the dust!!! You just can't make this up. Hat tip: Bob McGarvey https://napavalleyregister.com/news/local/napa-business-owner-had-huge-cache-of-weapons-and-ammunition-authorities-say/article_942a1921-a468-5c24-be69-5f5957a848e1.html

From Andy Preston:

I've worked out a very nice route for the St. Paddy's day drive with bathrooms (running water ones) at each stop. I'm not going to put the flyer out at the moment just in case things (Covid) get worse. If it looks promising towards the end of Feb I'll send out an email blast and we can put the flyer in the newsletters in March which still gives us 17 more days. BTW, we'll head east instead of west for a change.

Andy

From Mike O'Connor:

Jim Silva is in the hospital with Covid pneumonia. Think good thoughts. Jim thinks he will be released soon and will come home with supplemental oxygen. He had all of the symptoms we've heard about with serious Coronavirus cases. It's caused me to take a more careful approach than what I had previously thought was a careful one. This thing is very nasty and not over yet. Stay safe.

From John Hunt:

John Twist has been holding on-line tech sessions (via Zoom). Check them out! Rock on: johntwist@universitymotorsltd.com; University Motors Online, 100 E Beltline Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

More from original owner Ed:

(See January **The Octagon**.) Current mileage 163,021. I still live at the same address as on the 1969 Bill of Sale. I am a member of the **Original Owner Register** and the **100,000 Mile Register** of "Namburger" (NAMGBR).

Marty Rayman sent this photo of a car he sighted while on his human-powered travels. Anyone know the car? Eight-Ball?



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 registran@namgar.com.




North American MGB Register



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



See the tentative
events schedule for
2021.

Stay Safety Fast!

***Stuart Locke took
First Place at this
local car show. He
also was in last
place as the only
participant.***

