

Editorial

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On a busy time enjoying the MGB at events up and down the country

How quickly the time passes when you are enjoying yourself, I seem to have only just completed the last four page edition when I now have to sit down to complete the next.

This month we have a very varied menu for you to enjoy. Two semi technical articles from David Cronshaw and Richard Searle. Our world tour takes us from South Africa to France with the Yellow Peril.

It has been a very busy time for Team Boys. The Boneshaker (1964 MGB) has taken part in a number runs all around the south of England.

The MGB Register weekend in Kent

This event in Kent in early May was a great success; the participants have asked me to say a big thank you to Colin and Doreen Lanning for again organising the event, (it's rumoured to be Holland next year) and also thanks must go to Keith and Monica Langstaff for the road runs. The run around the lanes of Kent finishing at the fantastic town of Rye was particularly memorable, so much so that Team Boys stayed a further night to do it again, one of us wanted to buy a handbag.

The ACE Run

The ACE Run setting out from Okehampton coincided with a week's holiday on Dartmoor so we joined in and had a great day. The route goes through the town centre of Exeter and we were determined not to lose the route this year. The naggiator was primed to concentrate hard and Paddy the Westie was stood up in the back on look out duty. As we approached a major junction following an MGA, it turned left and an MGB went right, our shouted instruction was, straight on. Well what does a simple driver do? He went straight on and yes we were lost. Then suddenly a sign mentioned in the instructions was seen and we were all able to relax, we were in fact right on track. So do not doubt the naggiator.

The Cotswold Caper

The Cotswold Caper celebrated 30 years of the Gloucestershire organising club. They chose a very hot day, my ice cream melted over the seat and Paddy had to clear up the mess!

Vales and Valleys Run

Next it was off to South Wales for the Vales

and Valleys Run. Here we joined 60 other cars on a brilliant run up into the Brecon National Park. Our car was the only one displaying a St George flag, well the World Cup was taking place and England was involved. There was lots of super banter about this, ending with the Boneshaker being covered with an enormous Welsh flag at the end of the run, great fun.

I think this is a great opportunity to say a big thank you to all of the people in the MG world who work so hard putting on all the wonderful events for us to enjoy. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

A Satisfied Customer

I received an email from Hugh Boddington who has had an excellent experience with a

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UK supplier, in this world that is becoming increasingly cynical it was nice to hear a good story hence I will pass it on.

Hugh wrote - "As promised a few words of my experiences with The Carcoon Storage Systems which I keep my Roadster in, It was purchased in January 2002 with a 12 month warranty I managed to tear it last month and the warranty had expired but after a telephone call, I arranged to take it to Manchester, where it was repaired whilst I waited. The zip, which goes round the whole tent, was replaced together with the micro filters, FREE OF CHARGE. I am not used to this type of service these days. If anybody is interested, here are their details: Carcoon Storage Systems International Limited, Manchester M6 6FL Telephone number 0161 737 9690 (George Page)"

More news of Hugh is that his car was keen to get back to the Carcoon on the Register Weekend. A flooding carburettor meant that HB33 arrived back early, on the trailer. Perhaps its home is now too comfortable? Enjoy your MG. Roger

Sitting down to write these Chairman's comments on the Monday following the Silverstone Weekend I must obviously devote almost all my comments to this event. However, I am sure that the event has been very well covered elsewhere in *Safety Fast* so I will focus my comments on the event as viewed from the perspective of an MGB Register committee member.

The MGB Register Committee has for many years been involved with setting up aspects of the event including putting up all the directional signs, laying out the register parking areas, moving seemingly hundreds of barriers and then generally helping the hard pressed Kimber House staff with erecting marquees, putting up flag poles, all this activity gives a real sense of involvement in the event. The only down side being that on the Sunday afternoon and evening it all has to be taken down and put away. As usual we put up notices asking for help and as usual nobody came forward. If events like MG Silverstone are to continue it is essential that more of you Register Members offer your help.

The other notable feature of this year's event was the drop in numbers of MGBs attending. For the first time ever we were run very close by the MGF register. Was it that you just did not come or have you sold your B and brought an MGF? We need to know what you thought of Silverstone 2006, what you liked, and what you did not like, what you would like to see done differently in the future and if you did not come to this year's event was this a one off or are you bored with the format? Please put pen to paper, or if you prefer e-mail to either me at Conifers, Mam Street, Sutton Bassett, Leics, LE 16 8HP or to my email address which is renggerb@btinternet.com. Alternatively contact the Club Chairman, Peter Best at Kimber House. As MGB Register Chairman I cannot guarantee to change anything, but I can promise to pass on any comments to Peter Best and to raise issues at the next Council Meeting.

Enough of the negatives, it was great to meet many of you on the Register desk and I hope to see more MGBs and their owners at forthcoming events particularly the Autumn run on the 3rd September and the MGB Focus day in November. Happy MGB motoring
Bernard Rengger

My adventures in La Charente

Memoirs of an MGB Roadster

They call me "Yellow Peril" and I am a 1980 South African MGB Roadster I live in the depths of rural South West France and moved here four and a half years ago with my best friend and his wife. Life here is very different from what I was used to in England. I entered the family when Charlotte, my friend's daughter, purchased me and after three years of daily use it was decided that I would be healthier if my friend took me under his wing. We trolled around at MG Car Club events and as my friend is an historic racing fan we visited race meetings where we met his friends and I was able to catch up with the gossip.

What a shock when he told me we were off to France, and what a lovely journey. As we got further south the traffic thinned out and the sun shone. Although I was a trifle overloaded, we kept up a steady 70mph and soon I was introduced to my new home, a large barn that I share with his wife's Renault. Being left in the barn by myself was rather spooky, my friend and his wife having returned to England for the Renault and to guide the removal van to our new home. I was comforted by two little feral cats who played in the barn loft, but not so happy when they used my hood as a sleeping platform.

It was not long before I was introduced, through the MG Club de France, to David Gaffyne's immaculate MG TD, the same car that made an epic journey to Estonia and back to France with no problems. David introduced us to the "Classic Car De

L'Acropole" a club dedicated to touring La Charente in interesting cars of various nationalities and ages, visiting places of interest and the best restaurants in the region. Recognising that life here is fuelled by good food and wine, I could see that we were in for a gastronomic adventure!

Once settled in, it was fettling time and we drove off to the local garage to discuss the itching I was experiencing in the nether regions. With much arm waving, lip pursing and discussions with other customers, the garage owner who has since become a good friend, decided that if I were left in his care for a few days the red spots would be cured. After metal was cut out and new pieces welded in, anti-rust paint and a couple of coats of primer and undercoat and finally a coat of snapdragon yellow applied I was looking good. I



recall my friend's astonishment at the invoice, labour charges at €26 an hour I was sure I would be visiting this garage again. Often my friend and his wife would visit brie a brae and antique fairs as well as village fairs where the streets were dosed for the stalls selling local produce and wine. I was surprised to find that he only locked the boot, didn't even take out the radio, and didn't cover me with the tonneau. People would come up to me and look in, obviously very interested in me. Alas



my French was not yet good enough to understand their comments. It was strange no one touched me, just looked, and I soon relaxed.

After a full service in the barn, I was ready for the first adventure. "Route Du Pineau Des Charentes" started at the unearthly hour of eight in the morning. My cover was taken off at seven and **I was ruddy started** up and pushed at some speed **the thirty or so** miles to the start. Did I tell you **that my friend's wife** is not a morning person! **The start was at** a museum dedicated to pedal cars **for children**. **Route** maps, road books and rally plates **were attributed** and after my friend and his **wife had drunk coffee** and eaten a warm croissant and **the various merits** of MGBs, Lotus, Ferrari and the **ever present 2CV** discussed, it was off into the **countryside**. **It was** not easy driving seldom used

country roads. There were many very tight corners and narrow streets in the villages where people came out to welcome us, waving and clapping. It was not long before I could hear my friend gently admonishing his wife for getting her left and right mixed up and there were several reversing manoeuvres necessary. The lack of traffic made life easier, though a tractor could always be blocking the road just around the next corner.

The first stop, a Pineau Producers farm, was welcome as it was very hot and tiring trying to keep up with some of the French in their Traction Avant who know the roads. Pineau is a local wine drunk mainly as an aperitif and we were fascinated to see the way it was distilled and several degustations (tastings) were made. Then on to the next stop, another producer of Pineau, more degustations and then the dash for lunch at a restaurant on the banks of the Charente river. At this stage I must point out the abstemious nature of my friend, alas not so his wife but then she doesn't like driving.

At the restaurant I was delighted to be parked under a shady tree. 30 degrees in the shade was preferable to sitting in the sun and there I snoozed for about three hours whilst my friend and his wife enjoyed a simple five course lunch commencing with Foie Gras, a main course of Confit de Canard and ending with a Roule Marquis aux Framboises. The setting was idyllic. My friend said that sitting under the sunshades and hearing the river gently flow by was the stuff dreams are made of. Alas there was another one hundred and fifty kilometres to drive and

with perhaps a little more right foot than in the morning. There were two more stops to visit Pineau Producers before the end of the route ceremony at, yes you may have guessed, a Pineau Producer. Several bottles from different producers were loaded into my boot.

As my friend was a little tired it was decided to take the easy route home, along the Route Nationale, and as we left the vineyards of Cognac behind us and sped up to the legal maximum of 110 kph, it was a relief to feel the cold air through my cooling system, I could see that the summer heat may pose a future problem, especially as I could hear the bad language from my friend concerning my heater that had at long last decided to work. His wife heard not a thing, head on the headrest she was sound asleep.

A battle with wheels and tyres

By Richard Searle

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After 16 years and 14782 miles my MGB GT'S Pirelli P4s were starting to show their age - concentric cracks in the outer walls. The Pirelli's, when originally fitted including balancing cost £156.17.

It soon became apparent that none of the major manufacturer's make 165/80 R14 any longer - although there are a few Uni-Royal 380 still around (I'm not sure if they're still made, but they're certainly difficult to get hold of). The only other option if I wanted premium brand tyres was to upgrade to 185/70 - a call to Danny Walters MGB Register Technical Guru confirmed that the Rubber Bumper Bs came out of Abingdon shod with 185s when fitted with LE wheels.

However after long deliberation I elected to go with what are commonly referred to as 'budget' tyres - in effect this seems to mean you are not paying a premium for a 'Brand' name or the latest technology - for a number of reasons. One being the limited mileage the GT now does (the P4s still had enough tread for another 30k!). Secondly, should I be unlucky enough to suffer serious tyre damage, would I be able to get a matching Uni-Royal? - possibly not without a great deal of phoning around and a lot of luck Thirdly I had driven for the last 18 years on 165s with no problems, so didn't feel the need to go up to 185s. The saving of around £ 100 was an added bonus.

Now there are budget tyres and there are budget tyres, or should I say there are reasonable priced tyres that may be as good/better than the major brands of 15-20 years ago (so OK for an MGB), and that there are similar priced tyres that appear to be of poor quality, some with quite bizarre tread patterns, shoulders etc., that just wouldn't look right on a B'.

A search of the Internet for tyres came back with a number of names, all of which I'd never heard of. After a number of phone calls and research on the Internet I managed to find two makes which appeared to meet my needs:

- GT Campiro's are made in Indonesia. The parent company is called Gajah Tunggal - hence the UK brand name GT - and Michelin own a 10% share.
- Ceat tyres supply to divisions of Honda and Mazda in the southern hemisphere and appear may be supplied to UK outlets by Pirelli - suggesting Pirelli may have a share in the company.

I visited Rob Stevens of Toadsmoor Garage (located between Brimscombe and Eastcombe in Gloucestershire - tel 01453 882360), to view my options. I finally decided to go for the GT Campiro 80s as the tread pattern and tyre shape and style was very similar to the P4s they were replacing - and with Michelin having a share in the company they couldn't be too bad - could they?



Wheels

I'd always fancied a set of reproduction MiniLites. After looking at lots of Bs I eventually came to the conclusion that although silver MiniLites look OK on rubber bumpered Bs, they suit chrome bumper models much better - probably due to the bumpers complimenting the wheels on the older cars. I therefore decided to recondition the original Rostyles - saving myself around £200 and space in the garage by not needing to store the old Rostyles.

Rob Stevens gave me a very good price on four tyres (£ 16 cheaper than the P4s of 16 years ago) and was happy for me to take the wheels in two at a time, for him to remove the tyres from the rims, so that I recondition the rims at home.

Two weeks later, once painted, I returned with new looking Rostyles where Rob and his assistant treated them with kid gloves (plastic protectors on the tyre machine etc), before finally balancing them using a hub adaptor - I'd asked Rob if he could do this as when I had the P4s fitted in West London, 'centre lock' balancing proved to be unacceptable above 50mph. I've since read that the centre hole in a Rostyle may not be concentric with the rim!

Painting

I spent many hours (approx 5hrs/wheel - possibly more if I'm really honest) rubbing the old paint down, finishing the rim edges with a file etc, before priming, applying silver wheel paint and finally lacquering - total cost approx £20/wheel.

I wasn't aware that modern acrylic paint is so much easier to apply than the cellulose paint I remember using 15- 20 years ago - touch dry in minutes and very difficult to get a run! The down side is that the metallic wheel paint needs a coat of lacquer to protect it as it's really quite delicate.

Tip - getting black paint off the silver metallic is virtually impossible without rubbing through the silver coat and into the primer - it may be better to paint the whole wheel silver and lacquer before finally applying the black, or if you're happy with gloss black (rather than the original satin finish), paint the black quarters first and then apply the silver before finally lacquering the whole wheel.

Finally, I invested in twelve stainless steel wheel nuts and new centre caps from Moss and painted my existing locking wheel nut covers to match. Was it worth it? Yes. Would I spend another twenty plus hours doing it again? Not tomorrow, but ask me in 16 years time and who knows.

Unstable fuel gauge

By Keith Cronshaw, Schifferstadt, Germany

Last year the fuel gauge in my 1968 MGB started to become erratic and would register anything between nearly full to empty within a ten minute period. OK the car is still drivable but it gradually gets on one's nerves keep trying to estimate how much fuel is in the car I immediately assumed that either the tank sender unit or the fuel gauge were the likely culprits, with the former being my first bet. A visit to England coincided with the Stoneleigh Parts Fair so I made a visit and was able to buy a new sender unit quite cheaply. On extracting the old unit I observed that the plastic float chamber was half-full with petrol so this made me feel confident that my first assumption was correct. With the new unit installed I switched on the ignition and happily watched the fuel gauge swing up to the full mark. Perfect except that when I drove away the gauge soon drifted down to empty again and in the following weeks rarely made any effort to move at all.

So the next step was to take out the fuel gauge and to post it to England for an overhaul. The joy of receiving it back again was soon dampened by



the fact that once installed it behaved just the same as before.

The more gifted tinkerers amongst you will already have worked out the problem, but for me it meant a visit to a service workshop where the electrician and I together looked at the wiring diagram and discovered an item named the 'instrument voltage stabiliser.' 'Where is it?' asked the electrician. I certainly had never seen it and so I said that I would find out and come back with a new one. Back home a search in the Haynes manual showed this match-box sized part but did not give any indication of its precise location. By

lying down face upwards in the driver's footwell of my RHD model and shining a torch behind the instrument panel, I finally found the rascal located roughly in the mid-region of the panel and just high enough to make it difficult to get at and remove. Could a more accessible place not have been found for it? A quick call to Moss in the UK and a replacement part was soon in my post box. I thought it polite to go back to the workshop and let the electrician have the pleasure of installing the new part and observing that the problem was now solved. Actually the German electrician in the workshop was young and quite interested in the old voltage stabiliser and asked if he could open it up and look inside. It was quite amusing for us to see the bi-metallic strip with a wire wound around it. It took me back about forty years to my GCE 'O level physics classes at school. There doesn't really seem to be anything much there to go wrong but I suppose that nothing is eternal.

Maybe this little tale will prevent someone else from being driven unstable by their fuel gauge stabiliser

MGB Rebuild Update



I am sure you will recall the pictures that were published of the rebuild being undertaken by Keith Allen in February 2006. These indicated that there was a considerable amount of work to be done to get it back into the condition that Keith required.

Well Keith has kept in touch and has provided some more pictures which show that progress has been made. I understand that the car is now running. Keith is planning to take the car down to the Le Mans Historic meeting at the end of July. He has maintained a record of the work as it progressed, so we are expecting pictures of the finished car with an explanation of the fun that he has had with the project. Watch this space!

