

Here we are back again with the four-page spread for the MGB Register, it's autumn here in the UK and it's time for me to begin planning for the winter work on the Boneshaker ('64 B Roadster) I intend to have some body repairs completed on the rear wings as the dreaded tin worm has had a bit of a munch. Then a complete respray providing I can persuade Nicky that this will make a great Christmas present. I have found a man who can do the work at a price she can afford. Well what else would she buy for me?

I must thank those who have contributed to our pages this month. John Watson has written about his first time with MGs On Track at Castle Combe. Then of course there are the notes from the Chairman. Bernard Rengger. Derek Matthews, a local Natter pal, has written about the journey he had to Switzerland to attend the MGCC European Event in his modern MGB! Thanks go to you all. To fill the space remaining I have provided a couple of technical articles of my own, if I can do it what about you? We are getting a bit short of articles again, lots of

promises are made but not many seem to come to fruition. Please don't be shy, commit your thoughts about your B to paper and enjoy the fame!

Now we are looking for some help. During a recent Committee meeting Peter Neal gave a presentation on the archive material held at Kimber House. Peter is working as part of a team with Colin Grant to compile an index of the considerable quantity of varied information and photographs, which charts the history of

This work involves identifying and listing each item and is a long job. If you live locally and would like to join them in this interesting work for a few hours, please volunteer by ringing Kimber House on 01235 555552. Peter also asked for any other interesting information concerning MGBs to be forwarded to him, of particular interest would be original advertising literature on the MGB.

MGB are designed to be used in winter, will yours get out? I hope so.



Stuart & Sue Hill in their 1972 1150hp Roadster getting ready to attack Castle Combe at the recent register track day.

Instruments Panel Illumination

Most of you will recall the correspondence that we had recently concerning the improvements suggested to the clicking noise made for the MGB indicators. During this time Bill Nixon from Jersey contacted me with his suggestions. What fascinated me in Bill's email was that he had made, as part of his solution, an LED bulb that proved to be highly successful.



Later he came back to me with an Internet site that provided 3mm negative earth LEDs (light emitting diode) that fitted the 'mes' holder used in each of the instruments of the MGB. I got in touch with Robert Bennett, Managing Director of Ultraleds, who proved to be very helpful by providing me with a sample to try in the Boneshaker. The standard original fit 2.2-watt tungsten bulbs provide a yellow light, which seems to get less bright as time passes. However, the 6 LED white wide angle (see picture) replacement produces the equivalent of 5 watts of white light. I fitted my sample into the rev counter and compared the illumination provided during a night-time drive, it was apparent that the LED proved to be much better. So much so that I ordered three more (part number U987W) at a cost of £3.50 each and replaced the complete set. Now for the first time I can read the instruments in the dark. Many thanks Bill and Robert.

Contact details are:

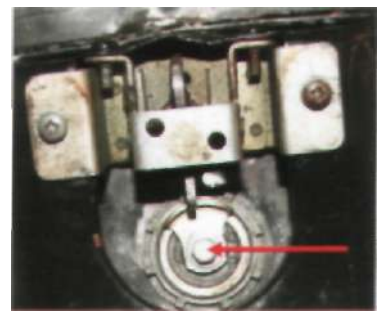
www.Ultraleds.co.uk

2 Store Street, Bollington, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 5PN
01625 576778

Timely warning

A pal, Terry Whiffin, has just returned from a holiday in France with his wife Pauline, they were using their MGB for transport. When we saw him following his return the boot lid of his immaculate MGB was looking a bit worse for wear. The story, which unfolded, is a timely warning for us all.

When they arrived at the holiday location after the long drive down to Montignac, 35 miles southeast of Bordeaux, Pauline went inside leaving Terry to unload the car. Unfortunately the boot would not open, no matter



how he tried it proved The bolt to be checked. Photo: Roger Boys.

impossible. It transpired that the bolt on the underside of the boot lock (see picture) had worked loose allowing the catch plate to move causing it to no longer make contact with the unlock mechanism. With this bolt missing there is simply no way that the boot can be opened and all their luggage was still in the boot. "Don't panic," said Terry "there must be a way." It so happened that the owner of the hotel had a well-equipped workshop. After numerous tries with WD40 and a hammer and lots of head scratching, the problem was eventually solved by using an angle grinder. The lock was cut in three places and removed, causing some damage to the boot lid, resulting in a hefty repair bill once back in the UK.

The warning therefore is to regularly make sure that this tiny, insignificant bolt is tight - **you have been warned.**

Roger

We travel to Switzerland

This year's European Event was held in the lakeside town of Zug, and incorporated Switzerland's diamond anniversary of 60 Years of Friendship. With deliberate reference to the MG octagon, it was scheduled for the eighth day of the eighth month in the eighth year of the second millennium. Having enjoyed previous gatherings in Germany and France, we were looking forward to the Swiss event and had booked up as soon as the website opened.

We would camp again, and this year the posh frocks had won the battle of the boot, the spare wheel was left at home and a small can of foam travelled instead. The outward journey would be in excess of 600 miles, and whilst dashing across France in a flash of autoroutes was well within the capabilities of the car, this was not our choice. In less than two hours we turned off the A26 at Junction 13 to the *Circuit de Gueux*, on the outskirts of Reims. This had been the scene of many historic French Grand Prix races, and also where Jaguar had endurance successes during the 1950s. We had stumbled across the grandstand complex some years ago, when it was in a very sad state, but it is now being restored, and I believe a revival meeting is proposed for this autumn. The pits are now in fine condition, vibrant in fresh paint, gleaming in the sunshine, which prompted us to drop the hood for a relaxed afternoon drive through the beauty of rural France. We stopped briefly by the *Chateau de Haroué*, and drove on to a convenient, although scruffy, campsite at Bayon. A dusty green MG had completed its long day of 601 miles; the small vehicle attracting a swarm of inquisitive children as we book in at reception.

Next morning we remained en *plein air*, following the southern course of the Moselle through the florally-adorned town of Epinal, and turning east, rising on sweeping forested roads, into the hills of Les Vosges, our first taste

of twisting roads hanging of the edge of towering cliffs. It was only a minor deviation to explore the temptations of the Route des Cretes, and eventually we stopped for a salad lunch and local myrtle berry tart, to let the engine cool and allow us to watch other drivers and bikers enjoying the flowing curves. I doubt that they noticed the long stunning views over the wooded hills. It was an easy drive to *Camping les Cigognes*, where a neat and tidy site, just outside the medieval walls of Turckheim, embraces its resident stork. Once pitched and secured with additional guy ropes, in anticipation of an approaching storm, we explored the Alsatian architecture of pastel rendered, timbered buildings. After a relaxed and enjoyable gourmet menu at the *Auberge do Veilleur* we returned to the tent in just a gentle warm breeze. Thunder and lightning exploded at nightfall and it rained hard 'till morning. As a technical note, I do not advise erecting an MG hood at night, during a thunderstorm, especially when dressed in pyjamas. Plan for the worst, or leave the tonneau to fend for itself!

The hood stayed up next morning. We splashed along the attractive Route des *Vms d'Alsace* under a cloudy sky, and eventually parked at the Schlumpf Auto Museum in the outskirts of Mulhouse. The world's greatest Bugatti display is only a part of what this place has to offer, and if you need to know more, go and take your own tour. It deserved more than the four hours we spent there, but we had a date in Zug, so we left France via the Passwang Tunnel and slipped undetected into Switzerland. Apart from a brief, erroneous incursion onto a Swiss motorway we arrived at the showground without problem. We had arrived. Once registered, we received an enormous goody-bag, which promised to test the boot capacity, and proceeded to the designated camping area establish base on

the best available pitch within the enclosure. A continual stream of MGs flooded into the arena. Once parked by type, the occupants decanted to wander amongst the cars, reviving old acquaintances, repatriating lost travelling companions and generally feeling satisfied that their mission had been accomplished. An exciting day was crowned by a sumptuous BBQ of enormous grilled sausages with salad, wine, beer and desert, but not necessarily in that order. It was a tremendous effort to feed so many people, and by nightfall we were well and truly ready for a good night's sleep.

However, our Luxemburg neighbours had other ideas. In the first act of aggression by this little country, our territory had been invaded; but by flanking their masterful blockade we gained access to our tent. This was only a temporary respite; the advance of the marauding Luxemburg troops was heralded by resounding trumpet blasts and reinforced by drunken gibberish and shrill cackles that amplified off the enclosing walls and roof. Despite an English riposte at midnight, their bombast continued into the early hours, and then the rain started, dripping loudly off the overhanging roofs onto the tents. So much for the 'Marque of Friendship', tomorrow would require a tactical withdrawal!

An early morning jog to the Municipal campsite, situated on the edge of the lake, secured the last available pitch. Clearing skies promised a top-down tour, crews delaying their departures until the weather confirmed its sunny intention. It is a short drive to Kussnacht, and ample time to make the official opening and enjoy delicious lunch snacks, which were accompanied with generous measures of beer and wine. After lunch we boarded the paddle steamer for the group trip around Lake Lucerne. It was a beautiful afternoon, perfect for enjoying the views of the lake and distant mountains. Once back on land we took the road, which curved around the shore of the lake, revealing breathtaking views at every turn. We pushed on back to Zug, since we needed to complete our retreat, and be washed and changed for the Gala Dinner Dance at Baar. Anne looked trim and pretty in her summer frock, the spare wheel sacrifice was vindicated, and we had a wonderful time, and later enjoyed a peaceful night's sleep.

Sunday lived up to its name and allowed a sizzling day of relaxed activity at the showground. Over 300 MGs were on display, mostly from Britain (90), followed by Switzerland (75) and the Netherlands (51). Fourteen European countries were

Great selection of MGs. Photo: Derek Matthews



represented. The oldest cars were two black 18/80s from England; other pre-war cars included a K3 Magnette, two N Types, and a couple of L Type Magna Sports. There were a few PBs, TA and TB Midgets, some VA Types, two SA Saloons plus a longer WA. Most post-war models were represented; I didn't see any ZA/ZB Magnette Saloons, any Farina-styled Saloons, nor a single Metro, Maestro or Montego. MGBs were in abundance, and many MGF/TFs made the trip. There were other displays, plus rocker cover races, gymkhana and *Concours d'elegance* competitions.

Monday was our first experience of high alpine passes. The processional pace through the narrow and wooded Prigel Pass caused several over-heating problems, but nothing terminal. At midday the cars were rested in the car park whilst the crews were swept up the mountain in a cable car for lunch. Replete and revived, the crews approached the internationally famous Klausen Pass, the site of frightening hill climbs of the 20s and 30s. Winding down the far side of the mountain we arrived at small museums, one recording the motoring heritage of the Pass, whilst the other explained the legendary exploits of William Tell. Large drops of rain were beginning to fall from a darkening sky, and it wasn't long before heavy rain accompanied our journey to the open air cinema. There was more food, and the ram paused briefly for a live overture provided by an orchestra of a dozen wooden alpine horns, each one at least ten foot long. The film which followed was *The World's Fastest Indian*, which was nothing to do with feather head dresses or

attempts to break the world speed record on an old Indian motorcycle. I would tell you more, but in the comfort of our cosy cockpit, with quadraphonic theatre sound emitting from our seldom-used radio speakers, we fell asleep!

Tuesday was dull, damp and cold for our day on the track. Not a racetrack, but an old **steam** railway. Our hosts had booked three **complete** trains, which left Realp Station at 40-minute intervals on narrow gauge tracks, **helped** by cogs up the steep bits. After a couple of hours we had chugged up the valley and through the Furka Tunnel and trundled down to Gletch to another fine lunch at the *Hotel Glacier du Rhone*. The railway construction **started** before the Great War, but was not **completed** until the mid-1920s. Although an **engineering** marvel, it was never a financial and was restored with state aid and is now run by volunteers. We returned to Realp, **and** carefully negotiated the damp twisting

roads to eventually arrive at the huge barn at Morgarten, where another grand meal was provided. By now the rain had assumed biblical proportions, I don't believe anyone ventured from the shelter of the fine old building to explore the adjacent historic battleground and enjoy the promised sunset over Lake Aegen.

There was a degree of bailing and drying next morning, but a quick wipe down soon restored sparkling bodywork. We opted out of the organised rally, and in weak sunshine made our own way to the lunch stop by way of Lucerne. The entire town of Sempach had been reserved for MGs, and the main street was a fantastic sight with both sides lined with gleaming cars. After a *free* afternoon we met for the final dinner at an old farmhouse, where a decorative array of cold meats, cheeses and salads were laid out for us to enjoy at our leisure.

Thursday was the final day of the event, and we used the optional rally route over the Panorama Strasse as a springboard to launch us towards our next destination. After a fantastic drive we reached the north shore of Lake Brienz, and found a perfect lakeside terrace to enjoy a light lunch, with bright sunshine glinting off the pale blue water. We passed through Interlaken and on up a deep-sided valley to Lauterbrunnen at the foot of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau peaks. We filled in the afternoon with a gentle walk to the thundering Trummelbach Falls, and prepared for tomorrow's adventure on the Jungfrauoch railway to the highest train station in the world.

Unfortunately, rain stopped play, and low cloud kept us on the well appointed site. We could catch up on some reading, and also watch the Olympics on the camp television, a thoroughly lazy day. But Saturday was fine, and once we had taken a significant share-holding in

the Swiss Railway, we embarked on a journey of a lifetime. It was a full day and an extraordinary adventure, and difficult to imagine what inspired anyone to undertake such an incredible project. The train was full and so it would seem to have been worth all the effort, and remains one of those things that have to be done. Once at the top (3,454 metres above sea level) you can walk out onto the snow-covered glacier and survey the top of Europe, without a strenuous hike. There was a small museum, an ice palace and many outside snow activities. The return was just as dramatic. We left the train at the village of Wenger, enjoyed a well-earned dinner and afterwards walked down to our camp.

Our missions completed, we could now relax and complete our leisurely return in mostly good weather. We glided effortlessly up and down minor passes in the Alpine foothills. We paused at the south side of Lac Lemman for one night and then continued west through France with more winding passes, clear roads, pretty villages, fine food and good campsites. In Burgundy we called on old acquaintances, and topped up our supplies of wine from the Drains (Raymond Drain & Fils, Givry, Bourgogne). Yes, we found room for a dozen bottles! The trip was rounded off with a visit to the Palace of Versailles, which was frankly an anti-climax, following the glories of our Swiss experience, which was a triumph of organisation, and fully justified the 2,134 fantastic miles of super motoring.

Next year the event is to be held at Geiranger in Norway, which presents a few logistical problems, but 2010 in Croatia looks unmissable.

Derek & Anne Matthews

The glory of Switzerland. Photo: Derek Matthews.



MG Registers on Track

My day started at 6:20am, I was late, and so the MGB had a good warming up down the A34 and along the M4 towards Castle Combe.

Our friends at MGs on Track had sent a fully detailed time sheet for the day so after parking and signing on, I filled out the indemnity form declaring that every thing I do wrong would be my fault. In return I was told I would be in the Blue Group this was for all MGBs and, as I found out later, some were really hot road-going cars.

Dave Livingstone of MGOT and friends from Castle Combe, gave everyone participating a full briefing as to what to do and what not to do. Out of the 50 or so drivers nearly half were attending the MGs on Track day for the first time.

Next was the noise test, Castle Combe Circuit is very close to *the village and a 100db* limit at 4500 rpm is enforced, my B was okay but some others had to fit extra silencers to ensure they could continue.

The Blue Group of MGBs were to follow the MG V8 group, with the Midgets following us, then a mixed group with some V8 ZTs, V8 ZT-Ts and a lone MG SVR.

At 9:30am I was first in the queue behind the pace car, which would show us the quickest line around the track. With my crash helmet tightened and my track wrist passes in place we took off, slowly at about 40mph, building up to 60mph. On the first laps I was able to note the

coloured cones placed on the correct points for braking, turning and the apex of each corner. The pace car then drove off into the pit lane leaving me with some very fast MGBs desperate to get past. At the briefing we were told to keep an eye on the rear mirror to allow faster cars to overtake on the right side, and only on the straights.

On the first 15-minute session we managed about five laps, by this time I had discovered it was better to go down to third for Quarry then overdrive third dropping out of overdrive for the Esses, then on all the way round with overdrive to Bobbies, the other chicane, changing up to fourth for the rest of the lap.

EBW 45B, my 1964 Roadster, has a standard but balanced engine, which means I am able to rev it into the orange in safety. The engine was built back in 1992 by Geoff Allen, the V8 guru; with a Manifold exhaust manifold and system. My main improvement is on the front suspension, with slightly shorter and stiffer front springs and a thicker anti-roll bar. Contact with the track is with standard 165 Firestone tyres on 4j disc steel wheels; my brakes are standard apart from having Green Stuff pads on the front. During my runs the cooling system maintained an acceptable temperature only getting a little warmer than during normal road use on a hot day. It was, however, the brakes that got hot, as they had to work hard as I



David Russell Wilks getting ready.

reduced speed for the various bends; however there was no appreciable brake fade, which is always a concern when warming up the braking system.

During the day I covered nearly 50 track miles driving my car, I also had a passenger ride with Michael Sparks in his 4.8-litre 300bhp V8 MGB GT. This machine, with its modified suspension and sticky tyres, goes like the clappers!

The ride home seemed very tame after the excitement of the day; common sense has to be switched on as there is a huge difference between driving on the track and public roads. I thoroughly recommend you invest in a day with your MGB on an event promoted by MGs on Track. It is a great opportunity, if you want to get the most out of your car and yourself by driving 'safety fast'. Everyone involved in the day enjoyed the experience and were friendly, offering advice and constructive criticism in what proved to be a great day.

John Watson

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Reading these comments in early November many of you will be putting your MGB away for winter, if so make sure at the very least you grease everything, put plenty of wax oil in the vulnerable sections, pump up the tyres and change the engine oil, better still do all the above and keep driving your car.

Some of you will be restoring your car and will be aiming to obtain an age-related number plate for the car when finished or, in some cases, hoping to reclaim the original number plate allocated to the car. The DVLA are tightening the rules related to clubs supporting these applications and in many cases are requiring a physical inspection of the car, the MGB Register has therefore decided to publish a set of charges related to completing an inspection visit. A member of the Register may be asked to carry out an inspection following the initial application, which should be sent to MGCC at Kimber House. For MGCC members we will charge a standard inspection fee of £25 (non-members £50) plus a mileage charge

of 50p per mile return journey from the inspector's house to the place where the inspection is to be carried out. The good news is that, for MGBs, very good factory information exists and in many cases this may overcome the need for a physical inspection. When applying to the MGCC the MGB Register will require in all cases a Heritage Build Certificate, this is available from the Heritage Motor Centre, Banbury Road, Gaydon CV35 0BJ (www.archive.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk), the Register will also require photographs to validate that the car is the car to which the Build Certificate refers, along with a copy of the listing from our Register (if applicable) and any other relevant documentation supplied. If you supply a Build Certificate for a car with a GHN 3 chassis number and pictures of a rubber-bumpered GT then do not be surprised if we decline to support your application. If you are hoping to reclaim an earlier registration number the DVLA also require you to supply other information,

which is listed in full on their V765 form. It may seem a bit of a pain to have to get a Heritage Build Certificate to check if the car is on our Register and to provide relevant photos but, given the costs to all parties of carrying out an inspection, I think you will agree it is worth the effort.

Turning to lighter events, we are now planning our 2009 events programme starting with the Spring Run on April 26 which this year will be from the Newbury area to the New Forest, full details and entry form will be in January's *Safety Fast!* There are still a few places on our Register Weekend in County Durham, full details are in the advertisement and you'll find the entry form in the August edition of *Safety Fast!*, or take a look at the website (www.mgb-register.org) where you will see we have found a good hotel, quiet roads and great company, so don't delay contact John Watson on 01235 522122 for more information and to book your place.

Bernard Rengger