



A-Antics



Bill & Mary Ellen's Beautifully Restored MGC

MGs Magic Midgets

Relubricate Your Speedo

Larry's Magnette Update

Celebrity MGs



MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF NORTH AMERICAN MGA REGISTER

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History: The Chapter was established August 14, 1976. It was NAMGAR's first chapter. We are a low-key club, dedicated to the preservation and

enjoyment of our MGA's/ Anyone is welcome to join our chapter and they are asked to join NAMGAR as well.

Chapter Dues: \$25 annually (\$40 for printed newsletter)

Nickname: Rowdies

Motto: People First!

Rowdies Site:

<http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/>

MG Car Council Site: <http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/mgcouncil/>

NAMGAR Web Site: www.namgar.com

Past Chapter Chairpersons:

1976-1980	Bruce Nichols
1981-1982	Tom Latta
1983-1984	Dick Feight
1985-1988	Dave Smith
1989-1990	Dave Quinn
1991-1994	Mark Barnhart
1995-1995	Herb Maier
1996-1996	Tom Knoy
1997-1998	Neil Griffin
1999-2002	Bruce Nichols
2003-2004	Bob Sutton
2005-2008	Gordie Bird
2009-2015	Dave Quinn
2016-	Bill Weakley



MEMBERS PAGE

Rowdies Website: Larry Pittman, Webmaster

<http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/>

Larry Pitman's Database Report: 52 Active and Paid-Up Members

Deadline for submitting material for the next issue is: June 20, 2020

For Sale-1960 MGA

Matt Wigent's 1960 MGA

It has an 1800 three main bearing from 1964. The motor was completely rebuilt. I took off the Weber carbs and put in original SU carbs on it. It runs like a dream. Started yesterday after sitting for four months.



Leather seats (Lisa and I rebuilt the interior) Built in a stereo. No antenna but can play MP3s. You can get satellite radio easily. Stainless exhaust. The coil was removed from the generator and it works great. British Racing Green with almost all new chrome. Painting was done over ten years ago and needs freshening. Clutch was replaced. Brakes were finally right after a decade. Emergency brake works. Oil cooler. Fresh mini lites for knock off wheels. It will run for a long time but I want to make someone real happy.

I am asking \$17,500 based on what people have recommended. I am not firm on the price. I want it to go to the right people. I want someone who will appreciate it and take care of it. I do not want some high schooler driving it to school. Underneath the hood is no prize winner but it all runs great. Picture above. I can send others. It won 3rd prize at Battle of the Brits and I did not wash it. It is at my shop in Waterford Michigan and I have

a lift so you can look under it. Feel free to call me. I can talk about it all day.

Matthew Wigent
2901 Middlebelt Road
West Bloomfield, MI 48324
(248) 949-3212

For Sale-MGA Parts

For Sale: Item 1: Any one wanting to up grade your MGA to disc brakes I have a complete MGB wire wheel front cross member with all the parts to do the conversion. \$200

Item 2: If you want to convert from disc wheel to spoke wheel set up, I have a pair of MGA wire wheel front hubs and a complete wire wheel MGA rear end. Asking \$200 for the MGA parts.

If you need wire wheels, I have a set of four MGA wire wheels with Kelly Springfield 165 SR tires mounted and balanced. \$200 for the MGA wire wheels with tires.

Delivery on all items available in Michigan for gas money. **Mark Barnhart** cell 810-444-2054

Letters

Is It Real, Or Is It Memorex?

Jeff Smith wrote in with a link for a video showing a pretty amazing bit of driving skill-driving a 12,000 lb Presidential limo backwards around a race track at 60 mph. Jeff says, "As I recall, the drivers in the president's motorcade are trained and able to spontaneously reverse direction in unison should there ever be a threat to the president that requires them to quickly extract the president and themselves from the danger. The attached video is about the President's limo driver in "The Beast"."

Take a look and see what you think about this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fha57O0tau4>

Is it real? Bill Weakley said "That is truly astounding. I can't even imagine being able to do that. Does anyone recognize the race course?" John Alexander says "It's Lime Rock Park. That was some amazing driving!" while Andy Hoffman sent in "Are you sure that this video is not fabricated? The smoke from the tires, the outlines of the car and the fact that no dirt was kicked up when the car drifted slightly off the track look suspicious." Finally your editor chimed in with "It sure looks real to me. I bet Dave Smith can relate to this. He's probably spent some very exciting minutes on a race track going backwards

and wondering exactly where all that will end up. As for me, my neck barely turns far enough any more to safely make a left hand turn out of the grocery store parking lot.”

WELL, make your choice. Then for the answer, click or paste this link: <https://jalopnik.com/you-know-that-limo-racing-backwards-is-fake-right-1764385747>

Vintage Watkins Glen

I was digging through racing memorabilia and realized it was 22 years ago that I last saw Stirling Moss who just passed away at age 90. It was the 50th anniversary of racing at the Glen. He was 69 years young and driving a Lotus 23 in the vintage enduro race. His wife Suzie was there too. That 1998 race weekend was memorable for me as well. In addition to getting Stirling’s autograph I got autographs from John Fitch, Phil Walters, Brian Lister, and met Briggs Cunningham II, who’s father drove and sponsored LeMans teams when I was in France. Plus my co-pilot for that trip was a young Neil Griffin! Here is a great video of MG vintage racing in 1994 at the Glen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ux9htRSNSp0&feature=youtu.be> It brings back great memories for me. About one minute in you will see Mark & Marji Barnhart in the center of the crowd. Those of you who participated in vintage racing as fans or were connected with a team will certainly recall the cars and stars. The Friday downtown festival that is repeated each year is always awesome. Even if you missed this great stretch of vintage racing at memorial tracks all over the eastern half of the country I think you will enjoy this.

Dave Quinn

Stay Safe

Dave and Donna Quinn managed to safely celebrate St. Patrick’s Day this year even in spite of Covid-19.

See their technique in this picture Dave sent.



Eureka!

Guys A good article on the methodology of trouble shooting. Credit to Hagerty for this article.

Dave Smith

Rob Siegel had just finished a three-part series about shimmed valve adjustment in his 1974 Lotus Europa Twin-Cam Special in the Hagerty newsletter. You wouldn’t think he could get a fourth article out of the process—and you’d be wrong. The car won’t start. Time to troubleshoot. Click on the link below and start troubleshooting with Rob.

<https://www.hagerty.com/media/maintenance-and-tech/the-rare-eureka-moment-when-troubleshooting-finally-pays-off/> sent.

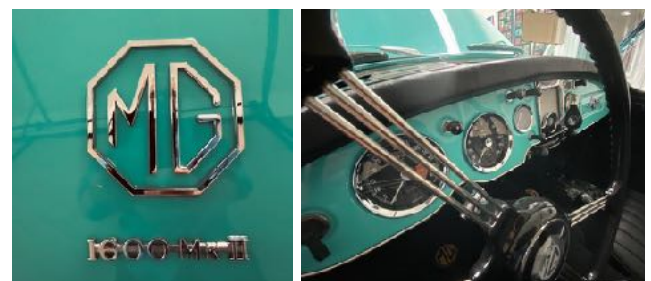
Back In The Day

No MGs or Rileys, but I thought this was a neat old shot.



Dave Quinn

Some Pics of Bruce Mann’s Latest MGA ‘Better Than New’ Paint Job



CANCELED: ROWDIES 2020 EVENTS-THE LIST THAT NEVER WAS
Currently Our Club Events Are Either Canceled Or In Limbo-Stay Tuned!

May

- 2 Drive Your MG Day**-Curt & Stephanie Smith-Location & Time TBA
- 16 Camp Dearborn by WDMGC**
- 23 Classics at the City Club**-Noon-3:00 pm
1830 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, MI

June

- 1-5 GT-45 Colorado Springs, CO**
- 7 Brits Return to FT. Meigs**
Toledo, OH
- 14 Wings & Wheels** 10 am-4:00 pm-to support Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run Airport
- 20-21 Motor Muster**- Greenfield Village
- 23-26 GOF Central MGTD**-Marshall, MI
- 26-28 Mid-Ohio Vintage Gran Prix Races**
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Lexington, OH
John Alexander
- 28 Michiana Brits Car Show**-10 am-3 pm
St Mary's College, South Bend, IN-across from Notre Dame

July

- 10 Rolling Sculpture**-Ann Arbor-Featuring Vintage British Cars!
- 11-12 Mad Dogs Car Show**-Gilmore Museum, Hickory Corners, MI

August

- 1 Rowdie B'Day Party**-Janice & Lloyd Herring's-7600 Jericho, NE-Rockford, MI
- 9 Alden Car Show**-Alden, MI
- 22 Tom Fant's Fantabulous Beach Party!**-Portage Lake, Pinckney, MI

September

- 6 Battle of the Brits**-Camp Dearborn
- 17-20 SE British Car Festival**-Peachtree
MG Registry-Dillard, GA. NAMGAR Regional Meet
- 18 Cars on the Green**-3:00-7:00 pm Friday
Dixboro, MI
- 20 Orphan Car Show**-Ypsilanti, MI
- 29 to Put-In-Bay Races, OH**
- Oct 2**

October

- TBD Rowdie Fall Color Tour**-Dave Quinn
- TBD Colour Tour Weekend North**-Tom Fant

December

- 6 Rowdie Christmas Party**-Chelsea, MI



"Wait a minute...I think I see a banana peel down inside here!"-submitted by Steve & Diane Mazurek

Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!

Join over 2,000 enthusiastic owners in the restoration, preservation, and sheer enjoyment of driving an MGA, Magnette, or variant of this noble breed. You'll receive six bi-monthly issues of *MGA!*, our full-color, award winning magazine, invitations to National and Regional Get-Togethers throughout the U.S. and Canada, plus a knowledge base and support group second to none. All this for just \$37.50 per year (North America), or \$52.50 (International). **Get more information at <http://www.namgar.com>, or contact registrar@namgar.com.**



BEETLE-INK

"So for our wedding anniversary, you bought me chocolate, and yourself an MG... and you don't see the problem!"

**CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER** by

Bill Weakley –

I just reread my last column, written not quite two months ago. How the world has changed. So many plans have been scrapped or delayed. Two months ago, we had heard about the corona virus, but we were told

everything was under control. So we weren't expecting it to upset everything. Now we are stuck at home except for the runs to the grocery and drug stores. Of course, being home is not a bad thing, but too much of a good thing is not always so good. It certainly affects retired folks much differently than those who are still trying to work.

I had planned to leave for Pensacola in two days, and I was pretty much on schedule with my MGC rebuild until a few weeks ago when everything was being cancelled. Now I am taking the time to do some of the things I would have skipped over to stay on schedule. The main problem I have in finishing the car is installing the windshield. I'm pretty sure I will need at least two guys to help me to compress the seal between the windshield frame and cowl, so that isn't going to happen until at least May. I also have been doing a few jobs on the MGA, nothing big. I have driven it a bit.

Unfortunately, it's hard to look like you are doing anything essential driving an MGA. One of the minor problems with this situation that I am sure many of you have experienced is the loss of the sense of time, especially keeping track of what day it is. With none of our regular activities, every day is Saturday or Tuesday or whatever. If it weren't for our cell phones and digital clocks, we would quickly lose track the dates.

Another problem is that I miss my hardware store. I typically visit them several times a week, sometimes more than once a day. I'm not good at planning these trips, when I know I can run over and pick up whatever I need. Now I have resorted to buying some things on line that I would normally have shopped for locally.

So far, I have not heard of any Rowdies who have contracted the virus. I certainly hope it stays that way. This has really messed up just about everything, but if we get through it with our health intact, I guess it will be worth it.

I don't know when we will be able to resume any of our planned activities. There is some hope that we might start resuming some normal activities in May. However, it sounds like we may be wearing masks and gloves for a while longer. It's going to make for some odd but memorable photos of Rowdie events. It would be great to get out on Drive Your MGA Day. We'll just have to wait and see. Stay tuned, as they say.

April 14 – I finally got the bottom seal on the MGC windshield, trimmed and ready. Even though I knew that it is supposed to take at least three people, I had to put it on the car just to see how it looked. So once it was there, I had to mess with it and see how hard it was going to be to get the attaching bolts in. So with a lot of effort, I managed to get one bolt in. It was all downhill from there. So the windshield is installed. Now I can reinstall the dash and seats. Then after a check of the electrical system, I can install the battery and finally start the car. I started stripping the car last August. If it is on the road on this week it will have been an eight month project – almost on my original schedule. We were supposed to leave for Pensacola today, so I am two or three weeks behind the schedule which went out the window when the coronavirus came to town.

April 18 – We should have had the Kimber party today. We probably would not have had many MGs attending, since it snowed all day yesterday, and there was a generous amount of salt on our local roads. I hope we have a nice rain soon, because I am getting close to driving my MGC. The dash is in. I have no idea how they installed the dash in the factory, but the way that finally worked for me was to leave the tach out to be able to install the last nut holding the top of the dash. Hooking up the speedometer with the dash in place may not be impossible, but I think hands the size of a seven-year-old would be necessary. Thanks to Allen Bachelder for some helpful advice. He's done a dash conversion on his C as well. Working on the MGA dash is a piece of cake compared to the B/C dash.

April 21 – First drive of the MGC. It feels great to have it on the road again. There are a couple minor items I can work on, but there is obviously no rush. It's just nice to have it "done". Please, please stay safe. Surely we'll driving as a group by the next issue. **Chairman Bill**
(Check out Bill's Beautiful Cover Picture!)

Installing A Speedometer Cable

When installing a speedometer cable (flexible drive), check to be certain that the inner cable is fully seated into the receiver/drive assembly at the back of the speedometer or tachometer and that (with the cable affixing nut slid back on the outer cable), without exerting any pressure on the cable housing, the end of the outer cable housing sits flush against the threaded post that the cable was inserted into. If there is any gap between the end of the cable housing and the threaded post, either:

- The inner cable is too long.
- A piece of broken cable is jammed into the drive socket at the rear of the unit.
- If the inner drive cable is too long, it will exert pressure on and quickly/permanently damage the internal cradle assembly.

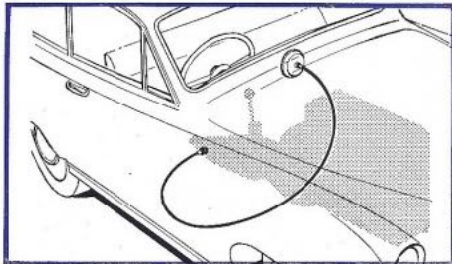
Check for the correct inner cable dimension. Before checking the dimension, be certain that the inner cable is fully seated into the outer cable/housing.

The absolute best lubricant to use is graphite. It sprays in with a solvent carrier. This carrier quickly evaporates, leaving a dry coat of graphite behind, which is an excellent dry lubricant. Caution - this lubricant sprays on - and permanently marks - like black spray paint, so be careful where it drips!

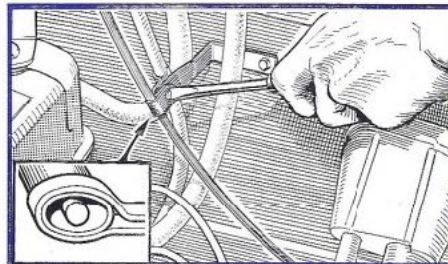
www.vintagebritishcables.com
Quality SMITHS Speedometer Cables

The condition of the flexible drive to a great extent controls the performance of the speedometer or revolution indicator, and poor installation or subsequent damage to the flexible drive will be shown up as an apparent instrument fault. It is, therefore, important that the flexible drive be correctly fitted and properly maintained.

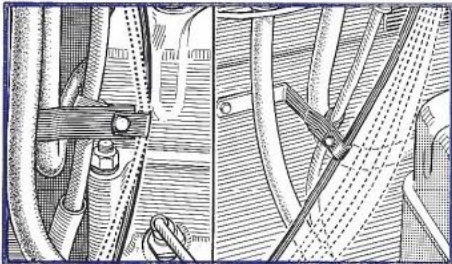
The following illustrations give general information for fitting and maintaining your flexible drive.



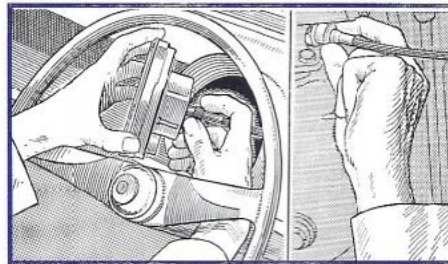
1. SMOOTH RUN Run of flexible drive must be smooth. Minimum bend radius 6". No bend within 2" of connections.



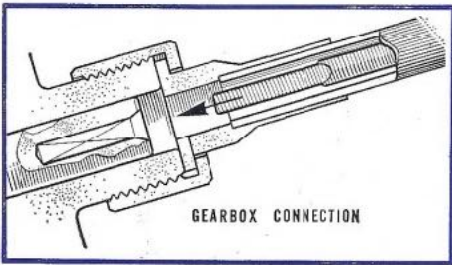
2. SECURING Avoid crushing flexible drive by over-tightening clip. Flex can be crushed between moving components.



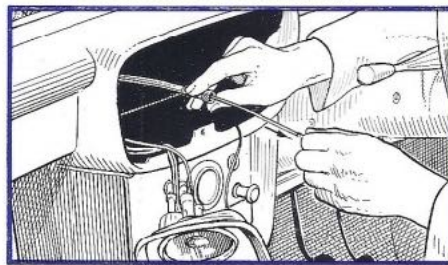
3. SECURING Avoid sharp bends at clips. If necessary alter position of clips. Excessive free movement of the flexible drive should be avoided. Fit extra clips if necessary.



4. CONNECTION Ensure that threaded end connections are secure with no looseness of the outer casing end collars. Connecting nuts should be tightened by hand. Spanner or pliers should not be used. It is important that the drive to which the flexible drive connects is free from dirt and grit.



5. CONNECTION OF INNER FLEX Where possible, slightly withdraw inner flex and connect outer casing first to point of drive. Then slide inner flex into engagement from the other end. It may be necessary to rotate flex.



6. REMOVAL OF INNER FLEX Most inner flexes can be removed by disconnecting instrument end and pulling out flex. Some must be removed from point of drive end after first taking off C. washer at instrument end. Broken inner flex will have to be withdrawn from both ends.

MGA H4 SU Carburetor Jet Centering ***by Bruce Mann & John Casey***

If you ever discover your carburetor needle binding in the jet bore due to mis-alignment, consider these steps to remedy the problem (having the carb snug in a vice simplifies this procedure immensely):

PREPARATION:

Tighten the mixture adjusting nut to its full-up (lean) position so that the jet is all the way up and is level with the top of the jet bearing and the bridge.

Loosen the carburetor jet bearing with a 13/16 wrench (Big Nut on the Bottom).

Loosen the dome screws and remove the dome and piston.

Loosen the needle retaining screw at the base of the piston.

Pull the needle out of the piston about 1/8" – 3/16" so the needle shank is visible. Once 1/8" – 3/16" of the shank is visible, re-tighten the needle retaining screw.

WHY: Because when using the carb needle to center the jet, we want the tapered needle to be all the way down into the jet and the needle collar seated on the top of the jet. This allows the needle to center the jet with its largest (thickest) diameter (explained later).

After you have the needle screw re-tightened, with 1/8" – 3/16" shank visible, insert the needle and piston into the carb body, then put the dome on in the proper orientation and snug the three dome screws.

ALIGNING THE JET:

Next, find a screw driver that will easily fit into the piston damper tube without scratching the sides of the damper tube.

As you keep light downward pressure on the piston, slowly tighten the 13/16 jet bearing nut.

CAUTION:

Don't push down too hard on the piston or you might force the needle shank up into the piston.

ALMOST DONE:

After the jet bearing nut is tight, check that the piston moves up and down without the needle binding.

If the needle rubs just a bit, don't worry because that portion of the needle shaft used to center the jet will be above the jet once the needle is returned to its correct position in the piston and the jet is lowered when adjusting mixture.

Remove the dome screws and the dome, pull out the piston, loosen the needle retaining screw and reinsert the needle so the shank is even with the bottom of the piston.

Tighten the needle retaining screw, re-assemble the piston and dome, return to the carb body and tighten dome screws.

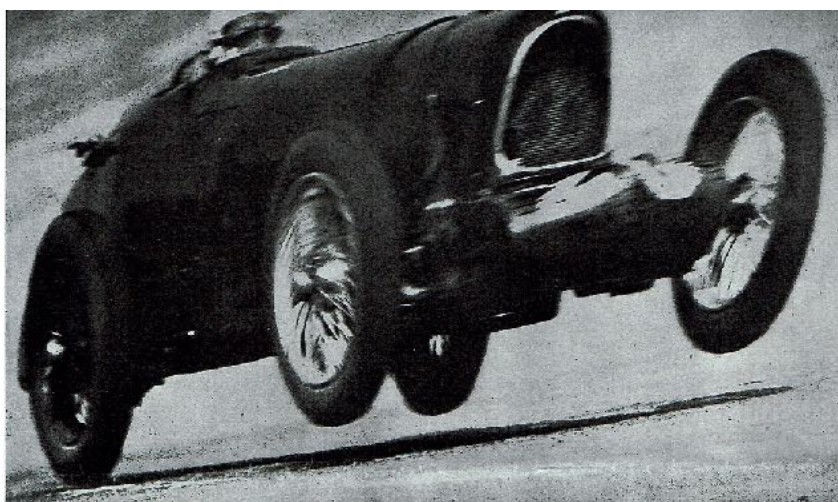
After re-assembly, turn the mixture nut two and half turns, check for free piston travel and no binding of the needle in the jet bore.

If it moves freely as designed. **Success!**

Bruce Mann & John Casey

We're all aware of the many famous MGA racers and record breakers, but how many of you have read about the record breakers that came before WWII? Brian Beery sent us an article explaining them written by Dennis May from Sports Cars Illustrated of June 1958. Read about George Eyston and others below...

SPORTS CARS ILLUSTRATED



R. T. Horton clearing "Big Bump" at Brooklands, during 1932 "500", which he won at 96.29 mph—representative of...

Abingdon's

by Dennis May

IN RACE and record projects, same as in love and war, the hit-or-miss attack is OK as long as hits outnumber misses. The competition history of the MG Midgets that really were midgets—mostly 750s but with the 850 cc kin chipping in occasionally—is a study in the haphazard. Design and development progressed with about as much premeditation as a Calypso ballad. New chassis were built first and drawn afterwards. Uncalculated risk was a factor that Abingdon's technical faculty never feared and often embraced. Individuals' responsibilities crisscrossed and overlapped, the committee principle seldom went further than random meetings of minds in the mens' room, and if anybody had been pompous enough to write an interoffice memo, nobody would have read it.

But if MG did a loose job of knitting, they seldom dropped a stitch. During the period they built cars to the international Class H limit, 1929 to '35 inclusive, the *tour de force* became a habit, *tours de force* intervening only rarely. A Midget was the first seven-fifty to do 100 miles per hour, a hundred in *one* hour, two miles per minute and a century and a half. MGs have been the world's fastest Class H cars without interruption since 1931, and still are. The little Abingdon factory, commanding views of an apple orchard on the south side and a cemetery to the north, built the only seven-fifties that ever won the TT and Britain's emasculated Le Mans, the Double Twelve at Brooklands. At Le Mans itself, a J4 Midget finished

sixth on general classification in 1933, highest placement in Sarthe history by a 750.

Combing the haystack for a key to these long-ago triumphs by MG, we come up with some seemingly irrelevant comments by *SCI* on Chevrolet's expensive but abortive Sebring campaign last May: "It was a wonderful organization . . . and the result was chaos." Conversely, the organization behind those midget-sized Midgets was a short remove from chaos . . . and the result was wonderful.

Right in character, it was partly by a godsent accident that EX120, the first 750 that MG ever built, found enough power to push it over the 100 mph hump in 1931. With George Eyston driving, EX120 turned 103.13 for five kilometers, 102.67 for five miles, 102.43 for ten kilometers, and 101.87 for ten miles. To avoid the power snuffing encumbrance of the silencers that were obligatory at Brooklands these runs were made at Montlhéry. The French track, however, could only be turned counterclockwise, so the flying mile and kilometer records, which Malcolm Campbell had taken to 97 mph at Daytona on a supercharged Austin 7, had to be dealt with separately at Brooklands, where bidirectional motoring was in order. In the interval between the Montlhéry and Brooklands gallops, somebody tore down the MG's carburetor and fuel lines and found them fouled up with a heavy greenish deposit of unknown chemistry and origin. Naturally thinking they'd stumbled on a short cut to a few bonus mph, they there-

upon purged the system—including the jet, which was halfway blocked—of every last molecule of the stuff. But this appendicitis operation, so far from curing the patient, had the opposite effect: with a clinically clean SU and attendant plumbing, EX120 at first wouldn't even hit a hundred for the kilometer. It was therefore a logical deduction that without the gratuitous infiltrations it certainly couldn't have lapped Montlhéry at three figure speeds.

Subsequently, in the process of working back up to the Montlhéry standard of performance, the engine blew to bits at Brooklands, throwing a conrod out through the side and over the top of the banking. Although EX120 was afterwards rebuilt and became the first 750 to average 100 for an hour, it fell to this car's direct successor, EX127, alias the Magic Midget, to relieve Austin of their flying mile and kilometer laurels.

It was the dramatic climax to EX120's 100 in the hour feat at Montlhéry that led to George Eyston being temporarily classified, for the first and last time in his checkered life, as a missing person. After maintaining his target speed for sixty minutes, George, just to wrap everything up safely, kept going for a couple of extra laps. Halfway through the second of these, at a point on the Autodrome where he could be heard but not seen by encouragers assembled at the timekeeper's box, his motor cut dead. Fearing a wrecked engine but nothing worse, two of the MG men, Jackson and Marney, scrambled

aboard a pickup and lammed off in the direction of the silence. The silence, when they came alongside of it, wasn't as complete as they'd thought. EX120 was a roaring belching inferno of flames and smoke. Having often assisted in the difficult operation of insinuating George, a big man, into the Midget, a very small car with high gunwales, the rescuers couldn't conceive that Eyston could be anywhere else but slumped down inside the cockpit and frying fast. But when at last they managed to lever off one of the cockpit sides, they found, to their boundless relief and bewilderment, that EX120 was empty. To quote from *Maintaining the Breed*, by John W. Thornley, general manager of MG: "The banking was too steep to climb, and in any case the safety fence at the top was intact . . . But search over a wide area on the inside of the track failed to show the slightest sign of him".

What had happened was this. A few minutes after the timed hour elapsed a main bearing had failed, quickly running up such a temperature that the sump oil ignited. In seconds the flames started invading the cockpit. Cutting the throttle and eeling himself back and up towards his narrow manhole, Eyston bailed out at around sixty an hour, hitting the republic

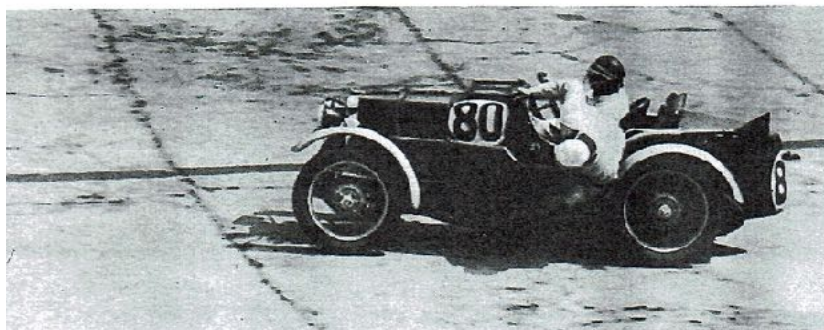
his scorching in EX120, he was obliged to pass. Into the resulting vacancy stepped the portly and ageing figure of Ernest Eldridge, a onetime Land Speed Record holder who was associated with Eyston in the manufacture of the Powerplus blower that MG used on all the supercharged Midgets of the period. Tailored around Eyston's personal measurements, the cockpit of EX127 was an interference fit on Eldridge, who therefore realized from the outset if *this* one caught fire or became lethally untenable from any other cause, he wouldn't stand a chance of getting out alive. To make the outlook worse, he only had one eye, having lost the other in a mishap while breaking records years earlier. The remaining eye had to gauge perspective by memory, and, hazy behind a lens, was in all respects an imperfect piece of optical equipment.

It was against this background of physical handicaps and infirmities that Eldridge, bare headed, without goggles and wearing a business suit, set up history's only daylight records with the help of headlamps. At Monthéry, as readers familiar with the local geography will know, the road circuit branches obliquely out of the *piste de vitesse* on the back stretch. Eldridge figured he could feel his way

came by its striking and aerodynamically efficient body contours. Its efficiency was, needless to say, largely accidental; more precisely, it was the result of some intuitive visual guesswork by Reg (Jacko) Jackson, a rule of thumb practitioner whose thumb should by rights be pickled and put in a museum when he dies. Down at the plant during normal working hours, Jacko devoted his time exclusively to EX127's chassis and running gear, featuring angular offset transmission to locate the driver alongside the cardan shaft, his pants six inches from the road. If Jackson officially had any title at all it was probably head racing mechanic, although members of Cecil Kimber's Apostleship of the Sacred Octagon were mostly too busy and too dedicated to worry about titles. But whatever Jackson was or wasn't called on paper, it was tacitly accepted that EX127 was his personal baby, subject only to academic guidance from Eldridge as a freelancing consultant. It therefore never occurred to anyone to enquire about his plans for a body design, nor did Jackson confide them to anyone, not even the firm's founder and managing director, Kimber aforesaid.

When finally he did come across it was with a *fait accompli* in the form of a

Mighty Midgets



Above: Riding mechanic helps combat centrifugal force at one of the earlier events at Brooklands. This is a hotted-up M-type, founder of the midget line. Right: An R-type has heavy cornering roll, due to the parallelogram-action of suspension.

with an impact that knocked him cold. First on the scene, quite unknown to the MG contingent, was a gigantic Frenchman who'd been lapping lonesomely and practically forever in a stock Citroen sedan. With a strength befitting his physique, this benevolent gorilla had dandled Eyston into the back seat of the Cit and ducked out of the track precincts en route for hospital, unseen by anyone.

As it is perfectly possible that detailed drawings of EX120 still didn't exist when the car burned to a cinder, it was probably just as well that its offspring, EX127, was already completed at the time. It had in fact been taken over to France on the same trip for the purpose of setting new five kilometer figures. Eyston was booked for the driving role on this younger and faster Midget, but, detuned as he was by

safely around nine tenths of the high speed track but he had an uncomfortable feeling he might angle off onto the road course at the junction unless something special was devised to hit him in the retina. So a passenger car with headlamps blazing — and no occupants in case even candlepower was unavailing — was parked at the apex, facing upstream to fat Ernest's line of approach.

He made it—110.28 mph for five kilometers. And that was the last record ever set by Ernest A. D. Eldridge, whose hand to hand fights with *Mephistopheles*, the 27 litre F.I.A.T., biggest car that ever raced at Brooklands, have passed into the hymnals of English speed sport.

The cosy aura pervading MG's racing department in the early 30s is reflected by the story of how EX127, the Magic Midget,



quarter-scale model he'd built subrosa in what was laughingly called his leisure time, evening and weekends. The miniature was a hybrid embodying elements of three Land Speed Record contenders of the day—rump in the likeness of Segrave's Golden Arrow, midworks after Campbell's current Blue Bird, nose simulating Don's Silver Arrow. Eyston, EX127's driver elect and himself a highly qualified automobile engineer, took a look at Jackson's homework and forthwith arranged for it to be windtunnel tested by Vickers Armstrong, the country's leading aircraft constructors.

Eyston, as it developed, never had any need of his gasmask, but little Bert Denly, who shared the 12-hour drive with George, surely had. At the time of year this campaign was mounted — December — it naturally wasn't possible to do the whole 12-hour job in daylight. Eyston accordingly had the Midget equipped with quickly detachable headlamps and planned a schedule in which the first and last stints would be run in darkness. George took the pre-dawn spell and assigned Denly

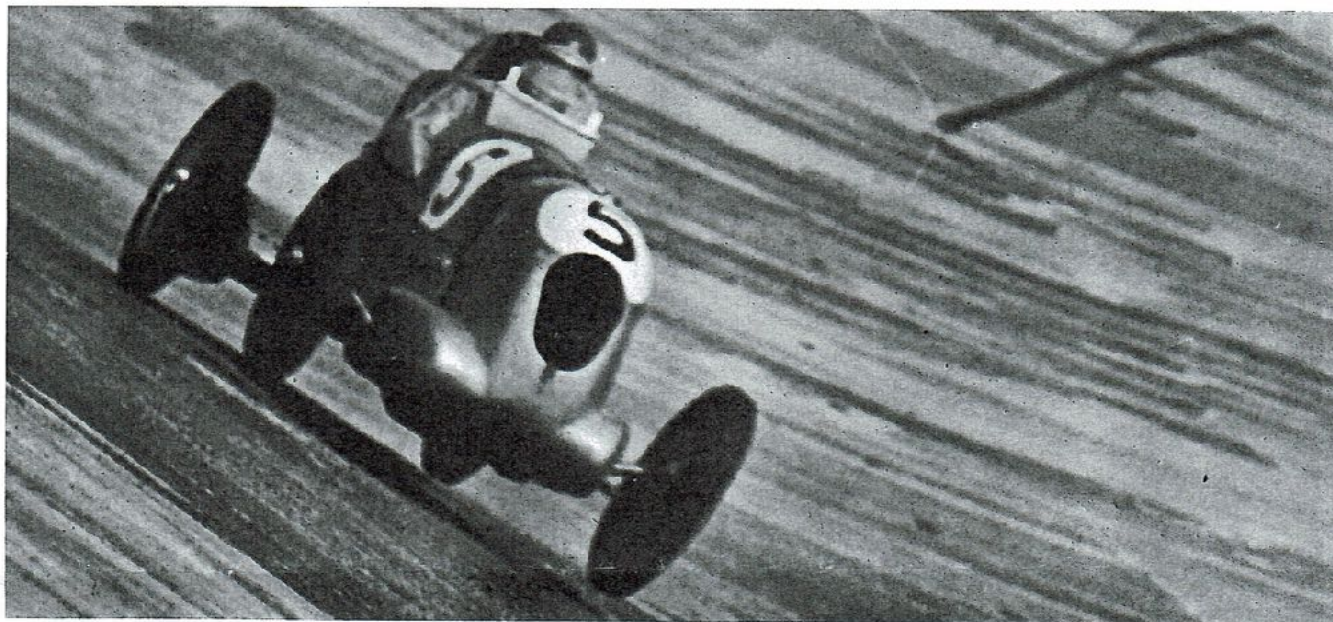
in the pan. Part of the rear main bearing, it afterwards transpired, had broken up. When the tank and sump were refilled, oil started gushing into the cockpit via the clutch, which for some inexplicable reason kept right on clutching throughout this ordeal by ooze. Not only liquid Castrol but gusts of hot oil vapor came through into the office, forcing Denly to jettison his bubble top to save himself from being gassed insensible. At the finish (the overall average, easily a record, was 86.67 mph) mechanics were able to wring over a gallon of "R" out of Bert's clothes. During the final hour he'd been sitting in a pool of it, up to the slits into his pants pockets.

Bert Denly, who had started out as a butcher's boy, at Byfleet, in the shadow of the Brooklands banking, then graduated through motorcycle racing to a coveted berth as George Eyston's lieutenant, was a trackcraftsman of unusual ability — at least the equal of Eyston himself. Moreover, as a Midgeteer he had one asset his boss didn't and never could possess. He was small. Very small. Catching on

this shape, and powered by a Q-type engine with a three bearing crankshaft, that it passed into the possession of Bobby Kohlrausch, the German racing driver and record man. Kohlrausch added a bronze cylinder head of his own design, reworked the *lebensraum* to locate his feet higher than his posterior, and, in 1935, drove his beloved "Magic", as he always called the car, at 140.6 for a flying mile. This record was destined to stand for eleven years, and when it was eventually beaten it goes almost without saying that another MG beat it. The last word in the argument, of course, came from Goldie Gardner, whose EX135 streamliner, fitted with a downscaled 6-cylinder Magnette engine, hit 159.15 mph in 1946. EX135, however, can't by any stretch of the imagination be classified as a Midget, and therefore doesn't really rate space here.

When Kohlrausch imported EX127 into Germany its hood bore decor in the form of a cloverleaf — his personal insignia — entwined with a Union Jack. On orders from his local *Gauleiter* he was forced

G. N. Harvey on Bankings in special-bodied single-seat Midget. Car set record 122.4 mph in Class H in '37, never beaten.



to the evening one. The only thing he overlooked was something to illuminate the instruments. Having a phantom set of thermometers and pressure gauges built into his belly by Mother Nature, Eyston wasn't personally inconvenienced by this omission, but the dial-happy Denly felt he had to be able to check revs, oil and water periodically. So, before setting out on the last and decisive round of the hunt, he strapped a flashlight to chest, beamed at the clock cluster.

If he hadn't done so the 12-hour record probably never would have fallen and another expensive engine might have been irreparably wrecked. Around the eleven hours juncture an ominous drop in oil pressure warned Bert to come in for investigation. The oil tank, piped to replenish the sump automatically as the level fell, was empty, and only a quart remained

to the potentialities of Bert's low frontal area, George renounced his own place on EX127's crew and arranged with MG for the cockpit to be narrowed to Denly's statistics; also he had the regular steering wheel replaced by a Tom Thumb tiller only ten inches in diameter. Even for Bert, who was strong for his size, this toy wheel made it dangerously difficult to keep the Midget going where he pointed it at the speeds he finally hit at Montlhéry. These included a lap at over 200 kilometers per hour in 1933, an exploit that fulfilled a personal ambition of his. Special badges were awarded to 200 kph lappers at Montlhéry and he was the first man to cop one on less than 2 litres.

In the ultimate stages of its development, fitted with a Zoller blower running a boost pressure of 39 psi, EX127 developed 146 horse at 7500 rpm. It was in

to overpaint the Union Jack. Nonetheless, these tests proved, not for the first time, that guesswork by Jackson was worth a bookful of trigonometry, and an upsized body was constructed without a single modification being made. A subsequent embellishment was added on location at Pendine beach, South Wales, during prepping for record attempts in 1932: on the suggestion of a movie cameraman who'd been assigned to the story, exterior screw heads little larger than a lentil were painstakingly faired off with Plasticene, a species of modelmaking goo popular with kids in Britain.

However, even this masterstroke failed to secure success for the bid (the target, later attained by the same car, was two miles per minute), because during a long and exasperating sojourn at the beach the weather and the state of the sands alter-

nated between bad and worse. The only time the conditions were momentarily favorable, and Eyston did get his dog down to the tune of 122 mph by hand timing, the ink ran dry in the RAC's box of chronometric tricks and the spurt couldn't be officially recognized. Even the courtly Eyston, eye-witnesses recall, conjugated some pretty irregular verbs at the RAC's expense on this occasion.

Reg Jackson always had and still has a rare gift for spur of the moment improvisations. The Pendine stopover in 1932 recalls a typically humorous and practical makeshift of his. By prearrangement, each time George Eyston made the first of his two-way runs, Jacko followed him down the foreshore in a pickup for the purpose of changing plugs at the far end before the turnabout. The *super-laggeva* EX127 wasn't weighty enough to sink into the soft and sea-soaked sand while parked, but the truck was. So each time Jackson alighted to check George's candles he tethered the truck's steering onto full lock with his handkerchief, engaged low gear, and turned 'er loose to amble around in circles, driverless.

It was Jacko, too, who licked another problem arising out of this Pendine venture. Prior to the South Wales sortie, Eyston, with forebodings about the conditions that might have to be faced in a region notorious for bad weather, had invited suggestions for some way of getting clear straight-ahead vision. A normal windshield, he feared would quickly become obscured by flung spray and sand particles. It would have, too. Well, Jacko had the answer, as usual. This took the form of a laterally bifurcated windshield of peculiar design he'd noticed on some of Vickers' planes during his earlier visits to their windtunnel. The lower half had a single pane, the upper half dual panes with an air space between them, and the two sections were gapped horizontally at the sighting line. High pressure wind hitting the nether pane would, according to theory, escape obliquely upwards between the two upper ones, and none would enter the cockpit.

They made a mockup of this device at MG, mounted it on a car and conducted tests that were a characteristic blend of Jacksonian method and madness. With a straightman driving, Reg seated himself sidesaddle on the hood, facing backwards, and solemnly threw handfuls of confetti at the aperture. The stuff obligingly angled up between the dual panes and nary a speck went into the driver's eyes. So they adapted the thing to the Magic Midget, with most satisfactory results.

Following his foretaste of cremation at the wheel of EX120, George Eyston decided it would be prudent to wear an asbestos suit for all of his future record attempts on Midgets. And when EX127, its cockpit fully enclosed, was shipped to Monthéry to draw a second bead on the two miles per minute target they'd flubbed at Pendine, he took sartorial precaution a stage further by wearing a fireman's gasmask. On "the Captain", the least theatrical man in racing, these bizarre effects seemed to sit rather uneasily, but they provided the news photographers with some useful lensfodder.

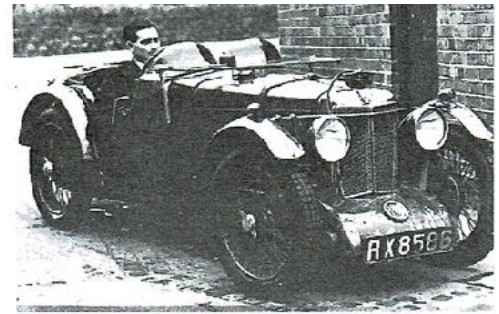
The French timekeepers contrived to keep their ink wet for Eyston and he duly cracked the 120 mph nut. This exploit, at the back end of 1932, was part of a wholesale records onslaught involving two Midgets — EX127 and one of the then new J3 supercharged sports cars. The former picked every international Class H plum up to twelve hours (excluding the ones already held by MG), and the J3 continued the kill clear to twenty-four hours, taking in the distance records covered by this span. When the '32 season closed there was only one name left on the Class H books — MG.

Daimler-Benz, whose masterminds would have laughed themselves ill if they'd been privy to Abingdon's hit-or-miss way of life, thought it worth while to acquire the Magic Midget from Bob. Nobody knows to this day whether they asked him or just told him to surrender the car.

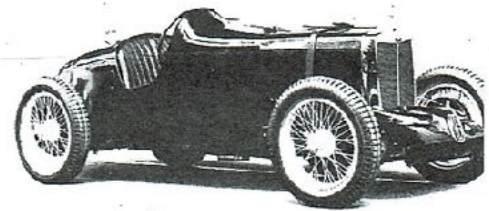
In races *per se*, the immortal EX127's career was limited and unsuccessful. I believe it only contested two events and it didn't finish either. The result of the first, though, brought ample consolation to the Octagon mystique. This was the 500 at Brooklands in 1932, which, after the "Magic's" spell was broken by a pulverized piston, was won by a privateer Midgeteer on a C-type fitted with a special trackster body. The driver's name, for the record, was R. T. Horton, and his race average, 96.29 mph, compares interestingly with the same year's winning speed at Indianapolis: 104.14 mph by Fred Frame's Miller. Don't forget the MG's displacement was 746 cc, as against the Miller's 2459 cc.

This belated reference to the C-type or Monthéry Midget, the first production racing car that ever came out of Abingdon, necessitates a backtrack to 1931, in which year this impudent insect erupted with stunning effect onto the British racing scene. The story of its speed debut can be told in a couple of paragraphs. By a piece of timing that was probably accidental but was to prove salutary beyond Kimber's wildest dreams, the 750 cc Monthéry Midget was publicly announced as a stock competition line a month or two before the date fixed for the Double Twelve at Brooklands. Attracted by its sensationally low price, less than 900 pounds sterling, ready to race, and with expectations fired by the fact that in the previous year's Double Twelve a trio of privately owned 850 cc Midgets of much milder mould had collected the team prize, well-known amateurs beat a path to the sign of the Octagon, hoping to buy these hot looking Cs. Orders were forthwith accepted for as many as could be built in the little time remaining before Britain's two-piece Le Mans was due to come off. In the event, fifteen were thrown together — but securely — in the twelve days immediately preceding the first training session for the race. Quantitatively, 1931 turned out a "750 year" for the Double Twelve; out of a total of 49 entries, 23 came into the Class H bracket and 13 of these were brand new and untried C Midgets.

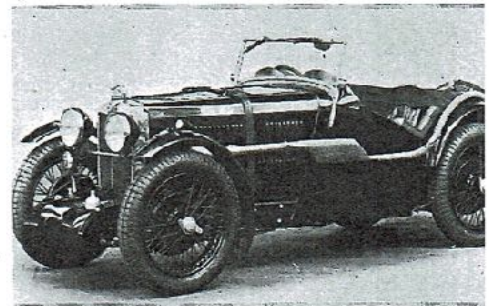
Came the day and, with the rather patronizing handicap treatment their debut status seemed to rate, the Cs simply ate



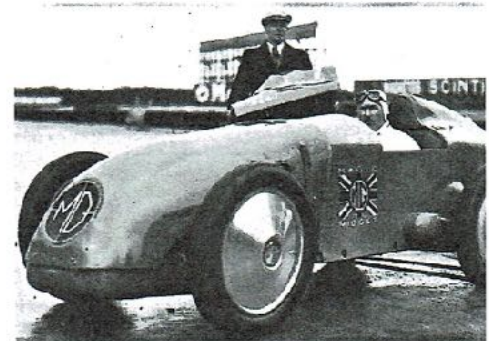
J2 Midget of 1932, one of the most popular sports cars to come from Abingdon.



Standard type Q-type racing car with two seat body, Zoller blower for 113 hp.

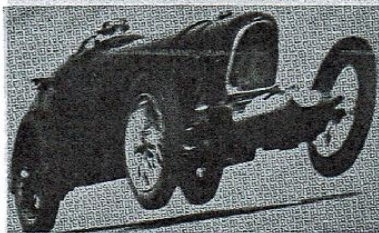


Standard J4 MG, fastest member of the J family. Note SU dashpot protruding from supercharger between dumbirons.



This you recognize—EX127, the Magic Midget, with cockpit cowling lifted to reveal worried looking George Eyston.

ABINGDON



(Continued from page 29)

the competition alive, placing first, second, third, fourth and fifth. This sweeping victory naturally sent the Midget sales curve into a vertical climb, and finally sold MG on the future pursuit of speed honors in every available field — but always, as before, at the customers' expense. Apropos, it should perhaps be reemphasized that before World War II the MG company never participated directly in racing or record breaking. The many celebrities who drove their equipment were customers in the literal sense, though it is probably true that the more successful ones weren't exactly the victims of profiteering at MG's hands. The company pursued this policy consistently until the melancholy day in August of 1935 when Lord Nuffield, who'd been virtually the sole proprietor of MG, sold it as a package to Morris Motors, in which his sway was something less than absolute. Morris wanted no part of racing and records, and many years were to pass before another competitions department was established in a quiet corner of the little plant across from Abingdon's cemetery.

Cecil Kimber, the executive head of MG up to the time of his death, was personally a burning enthusiast for racing. Although big enough to delegate authority to qualified subordinates, he sometimes found it difficult in the heat of races to button his mouth against utterances conflicting with the orders issued by his appointed team controller. The 1931 Double Twelve produced a case in point. At the end of the first twelve hour round (business was spread over two days, with an overnight armistice between them), the Midgets were leading comfortably; so comfortably, in fact, it made him uncomfortable. He therefore adjured Cecil Cousins, the works employee who was controlling the vanguard team of C-types, to make them for Pete's sake take it easy the following day. Cousins, convinced that his schedule made sense as it stood, wriggled out of the quandary by arranging with the drivers that when he hung out GO SLOW signals, this meant keep right on going as you are. He did, they obeyed the code implicitly, and Kimber noted with satisfaction his counsels were being heeded.

1931 was the Midget's *annus mirabilis*. Four weeks after the Double Twelve, C-types finished first and third in the Irish GP at Phoenix Park, Dublin. Less than three months later again, Phoenix history repeated itself exactly at the Ards circuit, Northern Ireland, where Cs placed first and third in Britain's *grande epreuve*, the TT. These races were of course run on handicap, and by a coincidence the two top Midgets were separated by a blown

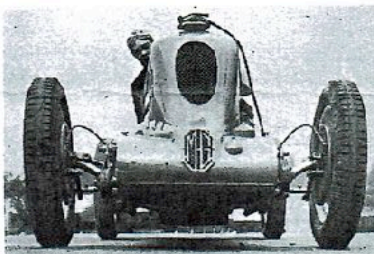
ABINGDON

(Continued from page 48)

Alfa Romeo at Dublin and Ards both. After the Irish GP and before the TT, Powerplus blowers, rotating at 68 percent of engine speed, were grafted onto the Midgets, hung between the dumbirons and driven through internally cut reduction gears. The C engine had been designed with a switch to blowers in mind, and the supercharging experience already gained with EX120 proved valuable when the makeover was tackled.

The C-type MG, a derivative of the slow but serviceable M model which had founded the Midget strain in 1929 and was to stay in production until mid-'32, was one of the prettiest cars ever to be hung with octagons. Establishing a practice that would become an Abingdon tradition, it had a twin, the D-type, of generally similar design but with an extra 100 cc under the hood and without specific competition pretensions.

In 1932 the Double Twelve was ditched and replaced by an integral 1000 miler at Brooklands. In marathons like these, Midgets and midget-sizers generally enjoyed an incidental advantage insofar as their lightness and accessibility lent themselves to trackside renovations on a scale that the weightier competition couldn't even contemplate. By this token, a pit operation perhaps without precedent was undertaken by MG during the '32 Thousand Miles. Hugh Hamilton, who *SCI* readers met in Russ Kelly's *This was Nuovolari* last June, severely loused up the bottom end of his C-type's engine while the race was yet young. Diagnosing that no repair job was practicable, the pit manager decided to switch a complete engine out of a practice car on the sidelines. It wasn't surprising that the equipage hadn't provided itself with a crane for such a purpose, but they weren't going to be beaten for the lack of a make-do dodge. Cousins, nearly six and a half feet tall and



What passed for the narrowest car in the world, in '35—a super-streamlined MG Midget, built around Miss Doreen Evans, who raced it at opening meet.

strong to boot, was slung into position, a rope was passed under the damaged engine and over Cousins' arched neck, two men heaved on the end of the line, and the mill was out. When all was set to replace the substitute, Cousins stiffened his spine and played cranes all over again. Hamilton got back into the act, finished the race and enabled Goldie Gardner's C-Midget trio to win the team prize.

(Continued on page 64)



Successor model to the C was the J4 competition car. The J family, which included the usual eight-fifty sisters with more displacement and less performance, originated the exposed slab tank and sawed-off body shape that was to characterize every Midget built (with the exception of the Q and R racers) right down the line until the MG-A's advent in 1955. Sharing many features with its forebearers, the J4 had an iron 4-cylinder engine with a bore and stroke of 57 by 73 mm (746 cc), a single overhead camshaft driven at the front end through the vertically mounted generator, valves slightly inclined the "wrong way" (stem tips inclined *inwards*), and a fully counterbalanced two-bearing crank that was machined from the solid. The front main bearing ran on balls and the intake and exhaust ports, like those of the later C-types, were located on opposite sides of the head. Blown, the J4 gave 72.3 bhp at 6000 per minute, a respectable turnover for a crank without center support. The J4's unblown counterparts, designated J1 and J2, initiated the Abingdon fashion for dual SU carbs, which of course persists to this day. The C/D cousins having outgrown their small and flaccid brakes, bigger stoppers were borrowed for the J4 off the contemporary 6-cylinder Magna.

In spite of the formidable stressing to which the J4 engine was subjected, it proved remarkably reliable. It was this one, as mentioned earlier, that finished sixth at Le Mans in 1933. Too, in the Mannin Beg race at Douglas, Isle of Man, the same year, an absolute mechanical massacre, two out of the only three cars that finished were J4s, and these included the winner.

Though quite an *objet d'art* in its way, the two-bearing crank was the limiting factor in the Midget engines of the early 30s, so the next move was obviously to build in a midships bearing. This feature duly appeared on the Q-type, a production racing car that succeeded the J4 two-seater in 1934. The resulting extra stiffness at the bottom end made radical increases in boost pressure possible, and the Q engine, blown by Zoller, responded with the astonishing output of 113 horsepower at 7200 per minute. In spite of its conventional chassis and hard semi elliptical springs, features that had been common to all Midgets up to this date, the Q was a taut and roadable baby, partly perhaps by virtue of its good weight distribution and increased tread and wheelbase dimensions. These were 45 and 94 inches respectively, compared with the J4's 42 and 86 inches. Among its other competition achievements, the Q, driven by Hugh

Hamilton's business partner, Bill Everitt, set a Class H lap record for the Brooklands Mountain circuit that was faster than Dick Seaman's contemporary Class C (1100 cc) mark with a K3 Magnette. Everitt's Q also set international 750 records for the standing kilometer and mile — 69.75 and 79.88 mph — that overtopped the corresponding G-class figures of the day.

Every Abingdon design had to have its quaintness and the Q was no exception. Fitted as it was with a preselector gearbox, it would not, in the normal order of things, possess a clutch. Nonetheless it did have one, its peculiarity being that no means of operating it was provided. "An elegant safety device", as John Thornley calls it in *Maintaining the Breed*: it was there for the sole purpose of allowing a degree of slip on full power and thereby cushioning the heavily stressed transmission.

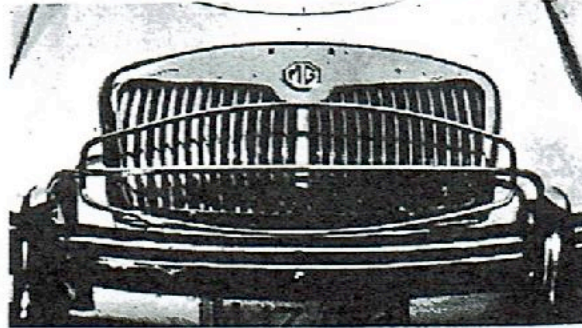
Last of the mighty Midgets was the remarkable R-type, launched only a few months before the ax fell on MG racing interests in 1935. Designed by chief engineer H. N. Charles, who with the clever and hard headed Sydney Enever had played a leading part in the development of its predecessors, the R chassis was every inch an *hors d'usage* concept. All wheels were independently suspended by means of double wishbones and low rate torsion bars, the frame itself being a fabricated backbone, crotched at the front to enclose the engine between its thighs. In the nature of its suspension geometry, the car heeled like crazy on turns, the wheels adopting an alarming looking out-at-the-top attitude. Nevertheless, once you got over being frightened by these gymnastics the cornering power proved at least equal to the Q's. At speed in a straight line, moreover, the ride was phenomenally flat and the comfort comparable with state limousines. I remember asking Hubert Charles, a big, round Jello of a man with a boy's zest for life and laughs, what put him onto the idea of using torsion bars, which of course were a relatively undeveloped springing medium twenty-two years ago. "This", he said, pulling an ordinary cigarette case out of his pocket and flicking it open. Somehow it'd never occurred to me that the spring in a cigarette case was a torsion bar.

The 746 cc engine used in the R-type Midget was in all major respects a direct hand-down from the Q, and developed the same power at the same revs. The Q in turn had derived its engine from the P series brethren — PA in the long established eight-fifty size and PB at 950 cc. These P wagons never were competition cars, so strictly they have no place in our scholarly rundown. We are, to be honest, just dragging them in by the dumbirons to give one last glimpse of the empirical drolleries that were practiced in the infancy of the Octagon. The PA, after a short spell in production, was judged to be short on power for its weight and size. By siamesing the outer pairs of cylinders, Enever could get some but not all of the extra volume he was looking for. Stroking, for technical reasons, was out of the question. So-o-o-o . . . damned if he didn't make his cylinders and pistons oval. Don't laugh — it worked.

Dennis May.

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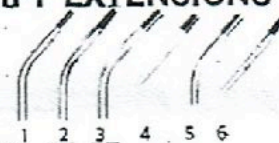
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[youtube.com/watch?v=qVvlzc7oceU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVvlzc7oceU)

NOTICE! We planned to open registrations for Dillard 2020 on April 1st. However, the PMGR Board has decided that, in view of the Corona Virus Pandemic, it would be best to hold off opening reservations until later. **However, The event is not cancelled!** We will revisit the situation in mid to late June and make a final decision about the event at that time.

However, because of limited availability of rooms, we recommend that all who want to attend the Dillard weekend this year, go ahead and make your reservations at the Dillard House. You can cancel them later, if appropriate. When you call the Dillard House, ask for Emily. Reservations 706-746-5348 Toll Free 800-541-0671, Ext 1.

The Group Code is SEBF2020MG

The Dillard House website is: <https://www.dillardhouse.com>

If Dillard House fills up or you prefer other housing, here are 2 links:

<http://www.rabuncountyrecreation.com/.../lodging-information....>

<https://www.dillardgeorgia.com/lodging/>

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Steve Ratcliffe, pmgrwebmaster@gmail.com

MG Magnette Update

By Larry Pittman

It's been quite a while since I provided any update on what's going on with the restoration of my '58 Magnette ZB. If you happen to read MGA! magazine I have provided some updates there so some of my comments may be duplicates of what you've read there.

Here's a brief history of my time with the Magnette:

Hard to believe, but I've had the car for 3½ years already. I purchased it in August of 2016 from the previous owner in Parma, OH. The car had been purchased new by his father-in-law and it had passed to him after the death of both his wife's parents. There was never any title transfer during that time so he didn't have a valid title. He had told me on the phone that he would have it in hand by the time I made my scheduled trip to pick it up. When we arrived, still no title so I withheld \$500 from my promised purchase price and headed home with the car.

I wasn't sure at first about getting started on restoration without the title, but finally started in on it with the thought I wouldn't spend any money until I had the title. Turns out I did spend some money in the fall of 2017 on a 5 main 1800 engine that I got from Forrest Johnson since I'd already decided I wanted to make that change and he had one available. Promises kept coming for the title but one never arrived. I finally decided I was going to see

what I could do about getting a title on my own. Turns out that a trip to the Secretary of State gave me the guidelines on how to proceed. I had to have a local police officer stop by and validate the VIN with a signature on a form I'd received. Then I had to take out a surety bond for twice the value of the car. I did that through Hagerty and it was surprisingly easy – apparently not all that unusual for them. I then applied for a title and received it soon after. That was in the spring of 2018, already a year and a half into my ownership. Wasn't long after that that the previous owner called to say he had finally gotten the title. I said, thanks but I'd already gotten one on my own. Besides I wasn't going to finally give him the extra \$500 at that point.



That finally got me more serious on charging ahead although nothing has moved fast on this car. There were numerous changes that had to be made to the engine to make it work in a Magnette. I should mention here that the NAMGAR Magnette group led by our own Allen Bachelder was a big help. It's basically an email group that usually manages to meet up once a year at the national GT.

Allen was the one who came up with how to convert the 5 main 1800 to work on a Magnette. You should know that the original Magnette engine is a 1500 very similar to the MGA engine, but with a different oil pan and some other minor differences. If you take a look at the photo of the engine you'll see that the oil pan is "flattened" at the rear of the car compared to other MGA and MGB engines with their equal depth oil pan. That is due to the location of the steering rack on the Magnette. The following issues have to be resolved to fit the 1800 5 main:

- The Magnette oil pan needs to be installed on the 5 main.

Turns out that the bolt pattern also changed between the 1500 and the 1800 5 main. Allen came up



Check out the oil pan shape used on the Magnette

with a ¼” plate to fit between the block and the Magnette oil pan to handle the change. That plate was purchased from MG Specialists, a Magnette supplier in the UK. It was necessary to modify some of the hole locations on the Magnette oil pan, too. As you can imagine, two gaskets are also needed to handle this change.

- The oil pick-up has to be moved from the rear to the front of the engine. This is handled by installing the original Magnette oil pick-up at the front. It can be mounted to the (Bachelder designed) ¼” plate that has mounting holes available in it. The 5 main oil pump stays, but the connection to the oil pick-up is handled with the original Magnette part.

- Finally, the scariest part is that the oil dipstick has to be moved to the front of the engine. This means drilling a new hole in the 5 main block and was the scariest part for me. The drilling itself is easy in the cast iron material but getting the correct angle for the drilling was the difficult part. It has to miss the oil pickup and bracket and needs to end up at the stop at the bottom of the oil pan so it reads the oil level correctly. I was only close and had to move the stop slightly to make it all work. I then plugged the original dipstick hole location with a brass set screw.



Allan Bachelder's mounting plate to mount the Magnette pan on the MGB engine

As a by the way, there is no frame on a Magnette. I think this may have been MG's first unibody car. The condition of the body on the Magnette wasn't great so I was forced to order many replacement panels. They are only available from UK suppliers so I went to MG Specialists again who I understood had the best fitting panels. What happened was that their shipping costs were very, very high and they actually advised me to find someone who could provide shipping for me. I wasted several months and never found another shipper willing to do the work. In the end I used NTG Services, also in the UK. Turns out they sourced their panels from MG Specialists so I knew the panels would work out. Since they are a much larger firm, they have better shipping rates. Shipping costs were still high but the parts arrived without issue. Parts I'd ordered in Nov, 2018, finally arrived in early June, 2019.

Also in late 2018 I arranged for the body to be sandblasted. There's a short article on that in the Nov-Dec, 2018 A-Antics. I next needed to find a painter who also did bodywork. My painter for both my MGA and for my TD no longer wanted to take on complete bodies but I finally located Paul Crouch who Bruce Mann has used. I was happy that Paul lives close to me. Paul's main negative is that he's difficult to make contact with and that he is also still a full time employee. He works in the body shop of a nearby car dealer so they're still open, meaning he's continuing to work even in this lock down world. Some of the smaller body parts went to Paul in May and June of 2019 with the main body and new panels going to him in Nov, 2019. Work has gone very, very slowly and I haven't had a chance to visit there in quite some time now. I'm not sure how long it'll be before he finishes up.

Meanwhile, I've continued to work on what parts I can. I've had a lot of parts powder coated, but still find others that I want to take that route with. Most parts are engine compartment parts but there are also underbody parts not easily seen but I'm hoping the powder coating gives them a little more help living underneath the car. There are a lot of parts that need to be re-chromed and I haven't yet gotten started on them. I've mostly finished up the rear suspension with both the rear leaf springs and the rear end ready for install. Both of those parts are very similar to the 'A' but with some minor differences. I purchased a 3.9 rear end from Dave Smith and that's now installed in the rear end. I hope to get started soon on front suspension parts.

Just for a bit of info, I've planned on the following upgrades:

- Change to a 5 main 1800. Purchased with some assembly work still needed.
- Front disk brakes – all parts have been purchased. Some work has started.

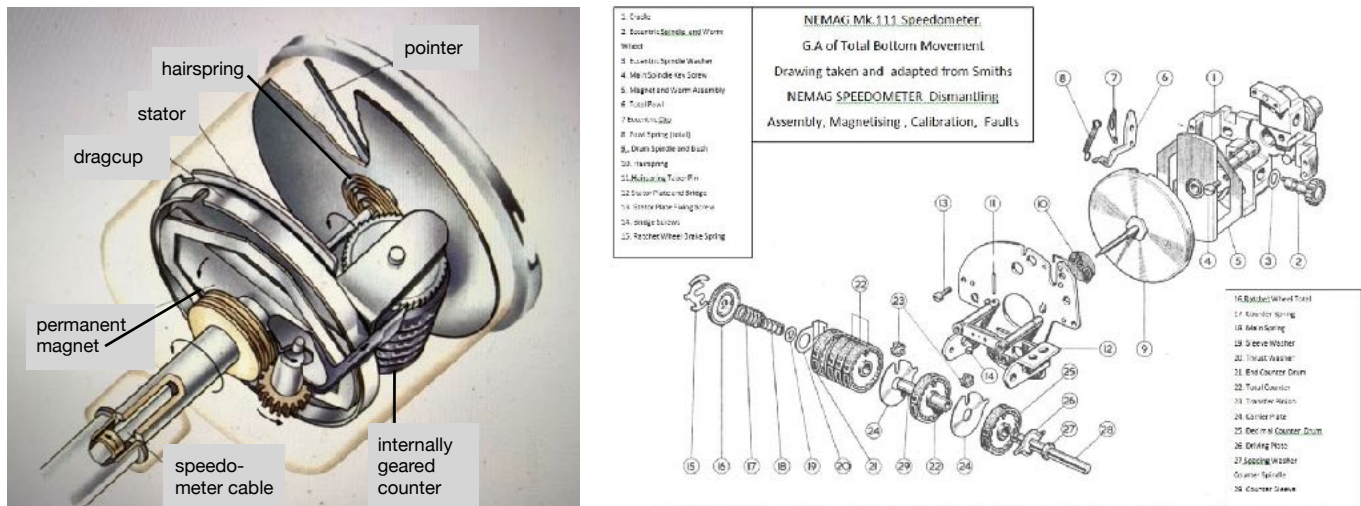
- Rear end ratio change to 3.9 – purchased and installed.
- Change to a 5-speed. Transmission has been purchased and preliminary work that can be done before installing into the body has been completed.
- Add insulation to the interior – has been purchased.
- Install seat belts – parts have been purchased and body modifications have been made.
- Air Conditioning is the big unknown right now. My main concern is the major tear up to the dash area, which is already quite full in a Magnette.

I have yet to figure out how to handle the interior seats refinishing nor do I have a plan for the woodworking needs of the dash and other interior pieces. But I will say that the restoration continues to move forward even though much slower than I expected. I suspect that re-assembly will be a long process when the body is finally back to me. I had planned on this being a 5-year project but I'm now down to just a year and a half from that goal so it may not happen by then. Stay tuned!! **Larry Pittman**



REPAIRING THE JAEGER SPEEDOMETER-by Ken Nelson

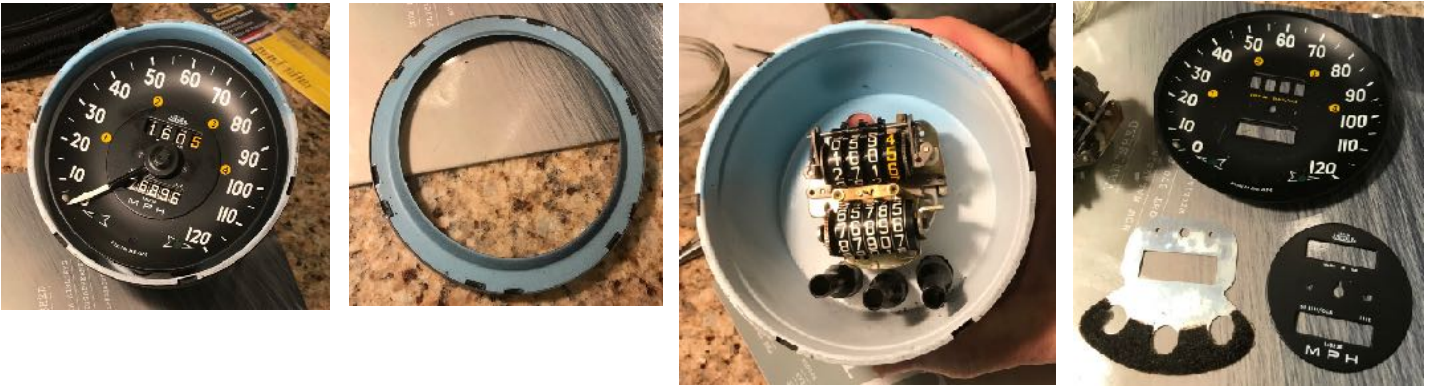
The Jaeger speedometer in our MGAs is the same design used in many British cars of the late 1950s and 1960s. The main mileage and trip odometer assemblies work separately from the speed dial indicator, so any of the three could malfunction separately or all together. Commonly the main shaft which the speedometer cable connects into at the back of the speedometer case seizes solidly in the frame due to drying out of lubrication, causing the cable to break and everything to quit working . Here are 2 drawings that show the general parts of the this type speedometer.



The pictures below are of a Rover unit, but very similar to the MGA one.

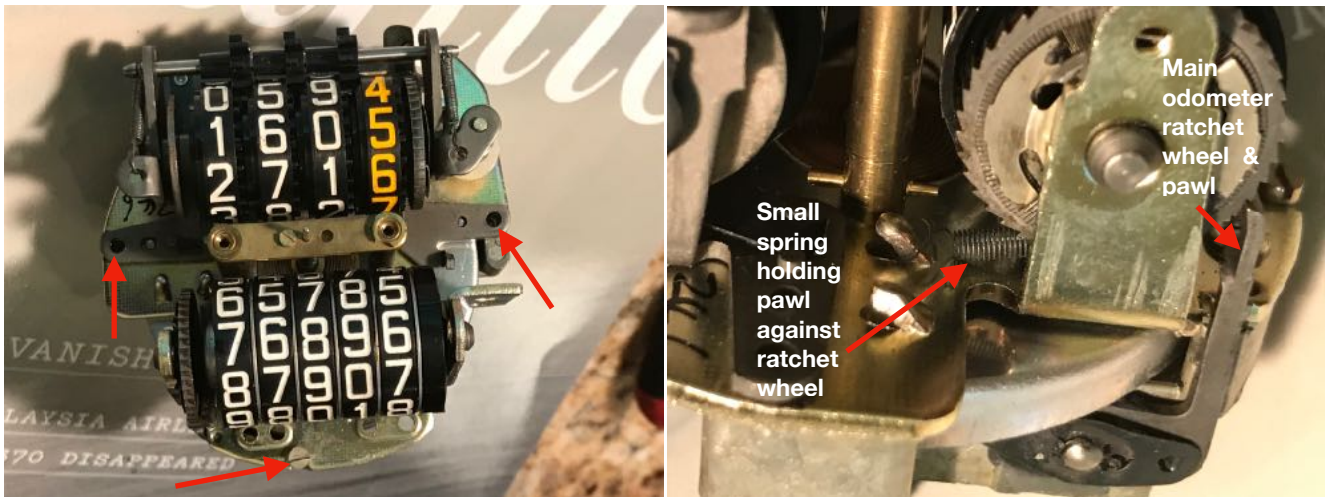
The speedometer works using a spinning bar magnet. Closely aligned with the bar magnet is an aluminium disc with a lip, called a 'drag cup', which is connected to a main central spindle. The speed indicator needle is a press fit on the end of this spindle, so as the aluminium disc turns, the needle also turns over the dial to indicate the car's speed. As the speed of the spinning magnet increases it creates an electromagnetic field, which induces electric 'eddy currents' that create an opposing magnetic field in the aluminium cup. That in turn causes it and the attached dial needle to be dragged along with the bar magnet, and the faster it turns, the more force is produced, turning the needle further. There is a fine hairspring around the thin central shaft opposing the movement of the cup, and returning the needle to its resting point when the bar magnet (and car) stop moving.

To take your speedometer apart you first need to remove the bezel by twisting counterclockwise until the locating bayonet tabs match the cutouts in the case. This may take some careful manipulating if things are tight from age and old rubber, but take your time with it and perhaps try some WD-40 along the edge. Then undo the 2 screws on the back of the case, and remove the entire assembly. With the speedo at rest, i.e. the needle resting on the stop, make a mark on the side of the frame with a felt tip pen and, adjacent to this, mark the drag cup so that you can reassemble the pointer in approximately the correct position on reassembly. Then you can remove the indicator needle, which is a



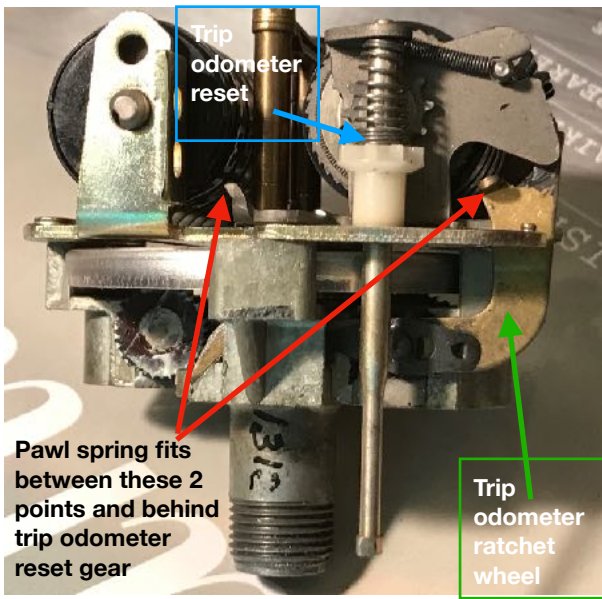
press fit. To do this, pry the needle carefully off with 2 levers after placing a thin card between the levers and the dial face, to prevent scratching it. Pry up against the needle boss. You can even use 2 small spoons as pry bars, or it can also be removed by pulling straight out and *carefully* twisting while holding the drag cup from turning.

Remove the 2 small screws in the middle of the dial face that allow the face to come off. To disassemble the mechanism further, there are 4 screws (top, 2 sides, and bottom) holding the stator plate that mounts the odometer and trip odometer wheels to the speedometer frame (see picture & arrows-top screw is hidden). The **trip odometer** is



removed first by taking out the top 3 screws (one on top & one on each side of the plate) and leaving the bottom screw loosely in place. There are, however, 2 small springs holding the 2 odometer pawls against the ratchet wheels. These must be removed before taking off the trip and main odometer. Use fine precision tweezers for this. See pictures.

Once the trip odometer assembly is removed, the **reset mechanism** is freed up. It consists of a shaft plus plastic gear, spring, and short pin through the shaft that holds the gear from slipping. Be careful not to lose the pin which slides loosely through the shaft, and fits down into a groove on the top of the reset plastic gear. The shaft slides down & out of the stator plate. It is located on top by a hole in the trip odometer housing. (*Note: The MGA shaft runs up and down and not front to back as in pictured speedometer below. It also uses a small cotter pin or screw to locate the assembly.*)

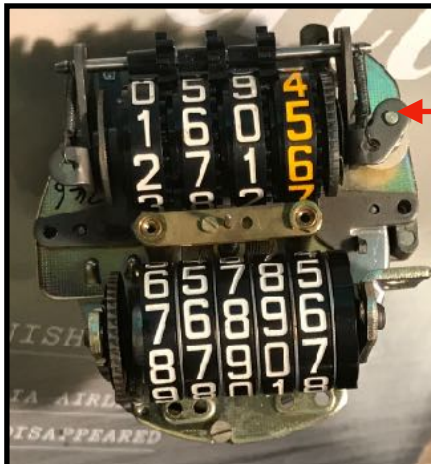


Top of reset shaft through hole in trip odometer mount. Short pin through shaft is at top of plastic gear, hidden by bottom of coarse spring.

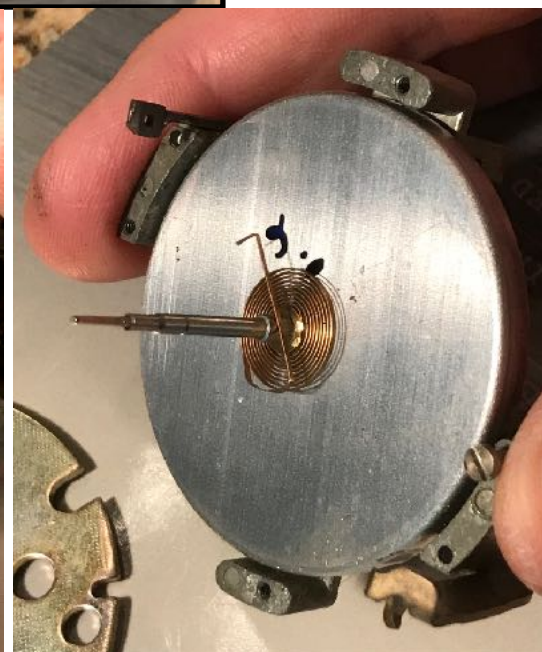
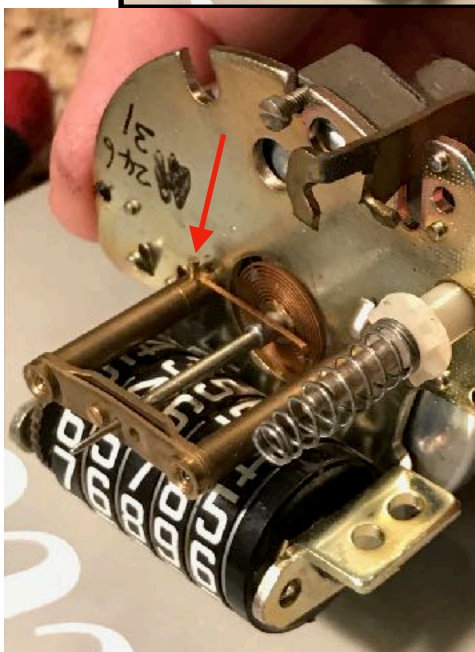
Once the trip odometer assembly is removed, you will be able to remove the stator plate and main odometer assembly, **but you must be EXTREMELY CAREFUL with the**



The reset shaft with coarse spring and plastic gear over it after the trip odometer is removed. When putting trip odometer back together, this shaft must be put back in place first with gear and spring. Note fine hairspring also.



The hole in the trip odometer housing that locates the top of the reset shaft



hairspring which is soldered to the drag cup disc, and held at the other end by a pin into one of the support posts (see pictures above). You can pull this pin out carefully with needle nose pliers and free the spring. This allows you to remove the last of the 4 mounting screws and pull the plate and main odometer assembly carefully forward from the hairspring and the drag cup.

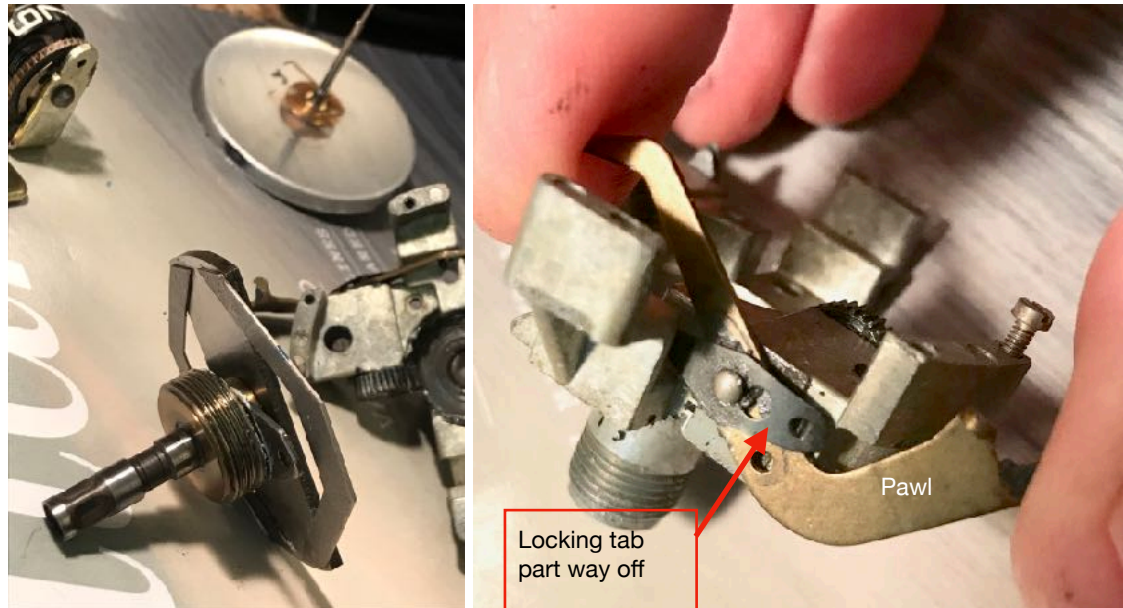
You can then lift off the drag cup and see the pivot point on the back end of the



spindle shaft. There is debate over whether any lubricant is used here and, if any, powdered graphite or a drop of very light machine oil (sparingly) is suggested. Once apart, you can see the bar magnet assembly and shaft which goes through the back of the frame. This is where the square end of the speedometer cable is inserted, and which spins the bar magnet causing the drag cup with the attached dial needle to turn, and indicate your speed (see pictures above). The bar magnet assembly is held in the frame by 2 screws. After removing these 2 screws the assembly and shaft may be withdrawn from the housing, and the worm gear and 2 fibre drive gears for the odometers may be inspected. The fibre drive odometer gears are attached to a shaft which runs through the frame and has an eccentric smaller shaft at the other end that turns and drives the odometer pawl to turn the mileage wheels. These gear shafts can also seize up due to drying out of old grease and cause a breakage of a couple of teeth on the gear, so best to remove them to clean and re-grease. These gears and shafts can be withdrawn by



removing the flat locking spring tab holding the pawl onto each shaft. Once the main shaft and the 2 odometer gear drive shafts are removed they should be cleaned of all old



grease and dirt, and re-lubricated with a light grease.

Then the odometer gears may be reassembled, and the main shaft with bar magnet reinserted. You must first clean this shaft and the hole in the frame it fits in. I polished lightly with fine emery cloth, and applied some light grease and secured it with the 2 screws. Put the drag cup with hairspring back in place, and then very **CAREFULLY** put the stator plate and main odometer assembly back onto the frame with only the bottom screw holding it on. When doing this ***you must be careful to not damage the hairspring which has to come up through the stator plate center hole*** so the bent end of the spring may be secured to the support post with the longer of the 2 pins (the short one is for the plastic gear on the trip reset mechanism).

At this point you are almost done reassembling the speedometer. The hairspring is now re-attached and undamaged, and you can gently turn the drag cup clockwise (looking at the face) and it should easily spring back when released. The needle and dial face are still off, and the stator plate is held to the frame by the single bottom screw. The main odometer assembly is on the stator plate (and was never removed), but the trip odometer mechanism and wheels need to be mounted on the stator plate with the remaining 3 screws. When you slip the trip odometer onto the stator plate, you will have to first reinstall the reset shaft, plastic gear, pin, and coarse spring in place. You need to be sure that the top of the reset shaft is located in the hole in the trip odometer housing, and that the gear, spring, and short pin (*or screw or cotter pin*) are all in the proper position. Then tighten all 4 stator plate screws, and replace the 2 small springs in position again to hold the 2 pawls in place against the ratchet wheels.

Finally assemble the dial face and screw the 2 tiny screws holding it on. The needle is a push fit over the shaft. The drag cup and frame marks should be aligned and held in

place while the needle is pushed on near the rest pin at “0”. The hairspring should now hold it lightly against the “0” stop when you release the drag cup. Install the speedometer back in its case with 2 screws. Fit the bezel and glass temporarily and install it in the car and connect the speedometer cable. Go for a test drive. Compare the dial reading with a GPS app on your iPhone and note how far off it is from true speed. If it reads, for example, 43 mph when you are going 60 mph you should remove the bezel and glass, take mechanism out of the case, hold the drag cup with the needle reading 43, and then gently turn the needle clockwise until it reads 60 mph. Reassemble and test, and repeat if necessary. When satisfied replace unit back in dashboard. (For additional reference I highly recommend reviewing the excellent article **Repairing Jaeger and Smiths Speedometers** by Anthony Rhodes at http://obswww.unige.ch/~wildif/cars/docs/Smith-jaeger_speedo_repair.pdf and also a YouTube video showing Dr. Mike Flannery removing the needle at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yG6-KpkVbsA> He apparently offers a repair service as well.)

Ken Nelson

THE GEARSHIFT KNOB-by Rob Alper
(from 'Meshing Gears' NJ Car Club 11-19)

I bought myself a brand new, 1972, British Racing Green, MGB after I graduated from college. I'd been saving my money from the summer jobs and the days I worked after school and Saturdays for a long time. Tuition at the City University of New York was free in those days so I was able to save almost enough for the car. I started working full time after graduation and in a short time I had enough saved to buy my MGB. I'd been wanting it for a very long time and when I finally got it I knew that the car was perfect in every way but one. The gearshift knob was a small, round black piece of bakelite. Aside from the fact that it was uncomfortable in my hand, it was ugly. How, I wanted to know, could the people at British Leyland design and produce such a magnificent car that was perfect in every way except for this? How could they put this excuse for a gearshift knob in this car?

Back in the day, before the onslaught of Japanese sedans, it was difficult to get foreign car parts. There weren't a lot of foreign cars around and for most dealerships foreign cars were the orphan child of the group. There weren't large inventories of parts. As a result, a number of foreign car/sports car shops sprung up. They'd carry typical parts and accessories for foreign cars and sports cars. One Saturday afternoon, after a ½ day of work I took a walk over to The Motoring Shop on 6th Avenue and 18th Street in Manhattan. Much to my delight they had a whole showcase full of wooden gearshift knobs, some with the car's emblem on top. I was delighted. My MGB would now be completely perfect. I found a wooden knob with the MG emblem on top, bought it, took it home and in an New York minute installed it.

It was perfect. It looked great and felt great in my hand. Better yet as time passed it developed a patina.

Driving through some twisties a little too fast my hands would sweat and the knob would absorb it. On a date with a pretty girl my hand would sweat and the knob would absorb it. On a 90 degree day my hand would sweat and the knob would absorb it. Before long, the gearshift knob had so much of my skin oils on it that it became a part of me and my ownership of the car. Years later my MG was vandalized and I sold it. I wish I could still find the gearshift knob, but I don't know where I put it.

In 2002, after years of driving Honda Accords and Civics, I bought myself a Honda S2000. Much like my MGB my S2000 was perfect in every way but one. The designers at Honda made the car with a Titanium gearshift knob. I think they thought it looked modern but they didn't realize that it was very cold in the winter and very hot to the touch in the summer. No, this would never do.

A few years later, while looking at the vendor tables at Britfest, I found a wooden gearshift knob with the MG emblem on top. All of a sudden it occurred to me that this would be perfect for my S2000. I bought it and headed to Sears to find a 150x2 mm tap so that I could make the gearshift knob fit into my S2000. Most people don't understand why I have an MG gearshift knob in a Honda S2000, but it makes perfectly good sense to me. You see, in my mind my S2000 is the same as my MGB, the only difference is 30 years. My love of sports cars started with my MGB and evolved to my S2000. The gearshift knob is the link tying the past to the present.

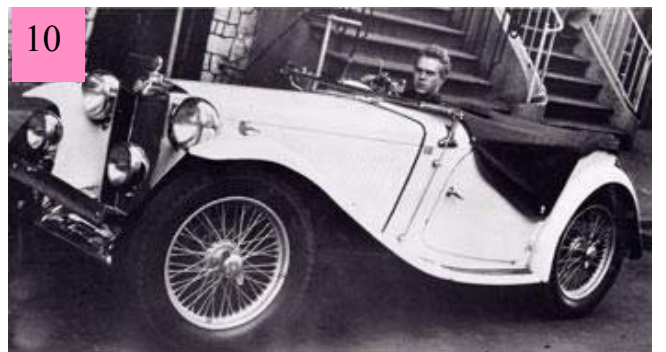
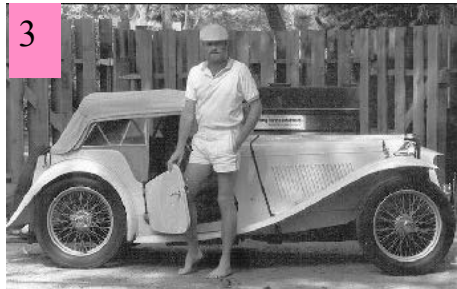
So, if you see my S2000 with the MG gearshift knob please don't laugh. To you it might look out of place, but to me it is a part of my history.



Celebrities & Their MGs

MGs have always been popular with the average person, but loads of celebrities have also owned and enjoyed them. Can you name all these famous owners?

Answers below.





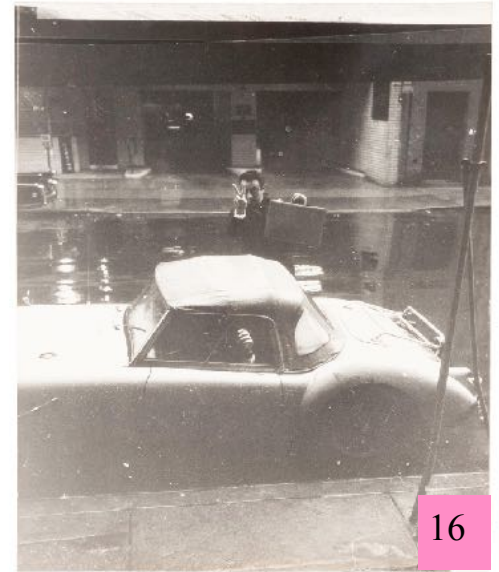
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18

1. Petula Clark 2. Bill Wyman (Rolling Stones Bassist) 3. Mike Love (Beach Boys) 4. Prince Charley 5. The Monkeys 6. Kate Moss 7. Roy Orbison 8. Carroll Shelby 9. Sharon Stone 10. Steve McQueen 11. Booker T. and the MGs 12. Steve McQueen 13. Kate Moss 14. Sting 15. Elvis (in Blue Hawaii) 16. Lenny Bruce (he owned an MGB) 17. Tommy Steele (an early British Rocker) 18. Emma Thompson

Living In The Days Of Covid-19: Rowdies Report

Chairman Bill and Mary Ellen's Report:

I hope this finds you all safe in your own homes. It looks like we will be in this situation for at least another month. If you haven't figured it out by now, all Rowdie events are on hold until further notice. This holds true for any car events that I know of. Even the Indy 500 is put off until September. The official end of the coronavirus restrictions is the end of April, but I'll be surprised if it is not extended for at least another month. Until we can do extensive testing, the virus will continue to spread, since people with the virus can spread it before they show symptoms. Let's all hope that the medical, scientific and production communities can catch up with the needs.

In the meantime, the weather is getting nicer, so that is one less excuse for not working on your MG. Of course, if you need any parts, that could be a problem. I see that Moss has completely closed down for now. LBCarCo is still taking and shipping orders and other on-line suppliers are working for now. Our local hardware stores and auto parts stores are still open, but I am reluctant to make trips around town unless really necessary.

I took the MGA out to the gas station yesterday. I figure it won't hurt to keep all the gas tanks full for now. Yes, I sanitized everything I touched before getting back in the car. While we were out, we went to a park for a walk while keeping our distance from others. It was nice to get the A out on a sunny day.

So please keep following the official guidelines and keep looking forward to this summer. Maybe we'll be lucky and be able to start events by Memorial Day. In any case, we should all try to keep in touch. If you have an MG project you are working on, please share with other Rowdies. This would also be a good time to write a little article for Ken to put in the A-Antics.

Safety Fast (but mostly not going anywhere at all),

Chairman Bill

From Dave & Chari Smith

Great to get a note from you & family. Chari and I are in our 25th day of Home "visitation". On the car front, The Austin Healey Sprite is out of Winter Storage. The battery was duff, but still under warranty, so with Mask & gloves in place, I procured a replacement. Then the upper radiator hose developed a pin hole leak. Tempted to use duct tape, but donning my PPE, I took the old formed hose to Auto Zone. The young man behind the counter did not have a computer listing, but was able to take the old fashioned route and hand matched the duff hose to

two formed candidates. Selecting one, and by cutting off 3 inches on one end, I had a perfect fit. Then a simple matter to top off the radiator and holding tank with antifreeze.

One trip to Speedway to get 5 gallon of 93 octane into the tank worked well. The 5 month old 2 gallon of dregs blended well & the 1275 runs & starts very well. On other sunny days I made a trip to Delhi Café for Carry out. Elaine and Demetria are good people and appreciated the patronage.

Daughter Katherine and Grandson Joe are teaming up at her home in Nashville MI on restoring a 1974 MG Midget. So Far this spring they have drained the gas tank (the last year that MG put a drain on the tank) and also changed the Brake Fluid and Clutch Fluid. The Battery also took a charge, so the next step is to Flush the Radiator.

Chari and I are also concerned on when the Covid-19 will Peak and then taper off. Glad to hear that GT-45 is still scheduled. Think positive thoughts for that one. Love to hear about any Rowdie winter or Spring MGA projects going on. I have been in touch with Bill Brown of St. Paul MN recently. He is doing a frame up restoration of the Smith 1959 MGA red roadster. He sent lots of pictures and is doing a beautiful Job. ***David Smith***

From Dave & Donna Quinn:

I have not touched the MGA. We are adjusting to living together. Donna can't go to the barn and I can't go to the bar.

I am trying to figure out where to best to spend my Treasury CARE money. I could buy something that will hold a lot TP but MGs never made a truck. I could buy something to protect me from the radiation of 5G towers. Maybe a Rover? Wasn't that built as a rolling nuclear bunker?

As for positive thoughts during this trying time. I re-discovered how to make really good popcorn. Found the best detective series I have watched in many years. If you have Amazon Prime, do not watch "Bosch" because it makes you want to binge watch it and there are only 6 x 10 = 60 shows by my math and we have seen 40. We re-discovered the joys of having a puppy; it's been 15 years since we had one. Mini Aussie. 11 weeks old, hell on wheels – and we love her.

Did you know that an iPhone will ask you (remind you?) if you want to set your alarm to go off for the 3:30 am for

the puppy pee break – mine did. Tonight’s a full moon, I think. I know I will get to see it.

I let Donna sleep since she takes over most of the day duties while I cook (ha, ha, ha, ha, ha). “Since we can’t go out, would you like a PBJ or hot dog?”

We had a campfire (portable) in the driveway Saturday night, Bluetooth speaker playing moldy oldie stuff, and enjoyed ourselves.

Life’s short, enjoy it and wash those hands. *Dave Quinn*

From Kathy Bertolini

Converting a whole school district to online and distance learning while a quarantine is in full effect has been interesting to say the least...

For those of you who haven't met me yet, I am Dave and Chari Smith's daughter and a LONG TIME Rowdie who spent the last 11 years quarantined on my own out in the Dakotas. It is great to be back, but man what a ride this has been! Many of my Superintendent Colleagues have absolutely nothing to compare this to, and unprecedented is a word that gets used a lot for us, so spending Sunday bleeding the brakes and swapping out Dot 3 in the Clutch master cylinder provided a much needed dose of normal for me and my son Joe. He reminds me of me when I was his age and it makes me smile to think of so many of you who helped , oh let's be honest, tolerated my enthusiasm! I loved growing up with all of you so much and I am so glad to be back knowing my son will get to know you all too. It is good to be home and back in Rowdie territory. I love and miss all of my Aunties and Uncles who showed me the Rowdie way. Hope to see you all soon under healthier circumstances! Hang in there Rowdies, we have an indomitable spirit in us and that goes a long way!



Laura Smith and Dr. Kathy Smith/Bertolini in their younger and wilder days

Lots of love and wishes for Safety Fast soon!

Kathy

Dr. Katherine Bertolini

Superintendent Maple Valley Schools




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