

The Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG "T" Register, Ltd.

The Square Rigger

November 2008



Chairman's Comments

I hope you all enjoyed a really great fall driving season. Don't be afraid to continue driving your T's during the winter when the weather permits — they do much better on the road!

As mentioned in the last two Newsletters, we planned to hold an election this year for our club and asked Members for nominations. Although a number of attempts were made, we received no nominations for club officers and were therefore unable to hold an election. After consulting with current Board Members, there was a unanimous consensus in favor of allowing volunteers from our club to assume the available officer positions. Thanks to the hard work of Martha Ludtke, we were successful in identifying a group of qualified persons who have stepped forward to fill those positions. We greatly appreciate your efforts, Martha, and we are truly in your debt.

Since some Members who have stepped forward are relatively new to our club, I have agreed to stay on as Vice Chairman to help with the transition over the next year or so. I will also retain my position as British Car Day Chairman until a suitable replacement can be found.

Effective January 1, 2009, Chapter officers will be:

Chairman: Shaun English
Vice Chairman: John Tokar
Treasurer: Michelle Cattaneo
Membership Chairman: Milton Babirak
Newsletter Editor: Tom Carolan
Historian: Tom Carolan
Technical Advisor: John Wright
Activities Chairman: Lin Snider
Regalia Chairman: (Acting): Lin Snider

I am very pleased with the new suite of officers and confident they will do a great job in running our organization.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your Chairman, and I hope I have met your expectations. I extend my sincere thanks to the Board Members who have served with me, and I wish the best of luck to the new officers as they begin their terms in 2009.

My very best to all for a healthy and happy Holiday Season!

Sincerely,

John M. Tokar

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Editor's Comments

We welcome articles for the Newsletter from the Chapter membership. You can submit them via the email, telephone or "snail" mail addresses shown under my name on this page. Articles of technical, historical, or personal interest — including yarns, jokes, photographs, ads, etc. — are greatly appreciated.

We also sorely need every member's active participation in Club affairs. Remember, it's **your** Club. If its activities and events are to be successful we need the assistance of **everyone**, not just a few!!

Although this mailed version of *The Square Rigger* is in black and white, the full color version can be downloaded from our Club web site at:

<http://www.chesapeakechaptermgtclub.com>.

New Circulation System

We have received almost no feedback regarding our idea of circulating future issues of *The Square Rigger* electronically to Members who possess email capability. As of now, we still have it in mind to do a trial run in connection with the February 2009 issue.

Here, again, is how it will work:

Members whose email addresses we have on file would receive their Newsletters electronically in Adobe Reader's PDF format, which can easily be transformed into readable, printable text with color photographs, etc. An application tailored to the requirements of your particular computer can be downloaded free of charge from the internet at Adobe.com and by clicking on Get Adobe Reader.

Members who use email but prefer to continue receiving their Newsletters in black and white by regular mail should notify the Editor to that effect no later than December 31, 2008. Otherwise, they will be considered as having agreed to participate in the new, electronic arrangement.

Members who do not possess email capability need not do anything. They can expect to continue receiving their Newsletters in black & white by regular mail, as in the past.

We still want to hear from you on this, so don't hesitate to let us know what you think between now and December 31.

Upcoming Events of Interest

Winter Eat-Out

Once again, our popular annual winter function will take place at Gabriel's Inn, Ijamsville, Md. on Sunday, February 8, 2009. Members can expect to receive flyers with menu selections, directions and other details. Please indicate your menu choices and submit them as directed.

Mini GoF 2009

We are still exploring the idea of holding a Mini GoF in early May at Chestertown, on the historic upper Eastern Shore of Maryland. While quite removed from the bigger, more touristy towns on the Shore, Chestertown and its environs have plenty of history, having been the governmental seat of Kent County since 1706, having served as a Royal Port of Entry in colonial times, and known today as the hub of a thriving agricultural and seafood industry. It is also the home of well-regarded Washington College, founded in 1782 under the patronage of George himself. Once a well-known steamboat destination on the scenic Chester River, the area contains many historic homes and landmarks, as well as great driving roads. Visits could be made to some of those homes and their gardens, as well as to an air museum, a vintage boat restoration shop, the nearby Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge, and the waterfront at historic Rock Hall Harbor where good seafood restaurants abound. We hope to furnish more specific information as plans become concrete.

Carlisle Import & Kit/Replicar Nationals

This large show of sports and exotic cars, with a large number of vendors of parts, accessories, regalia, etc., will be held at Carlisle, Pa. May 15-17, 2009. Details at www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/import.

OBCD 2009

Our 32d annual Original British Car Day is scheduled for Sunday, June 7, 2009 at Lily Pons Water Gardens. More details will be provided as the date draws closer, but Members may wish to begin thinking now about preparing their cars for the Big Day. Volunteers are needed, so please phone John Tokar at (301) 865-1339 to find out how you might help.

NEMGTR GoF 85

The New England MG T Register has announced that its Gathering of the Faithful will take place from June 10-14, 2009. Watch www.nemgtr.org for precise details regarding venue, etc.

News Items

In Memoriam — Phil Hill (1927-2008)



Those of us who follow Formula 1 racing were saddened to learn of the death on August 28 of Phil Hill, America's first F1 World Champion (1961) and three-time Le Mans Grand Prix Co-Champion (1958, 1960 and 1962). Having begun what became a storied career at age 18 in California, he cut his racing teeth there on July 24, 1949 with his first major victory — at the wheel of his own MG TC.

Photo shows Hill driving a Ferrari 156 Sharknose in the Dutch GP at Zandvoort on May 22, 1961.

Hunt Country Classic

This colorful annual show sponsored by The MG Car Club, Washington DC Centre, took place as in past years at the Scott Farm near Middleburg, Va. on Sunday, October 12. More than 250 cars representing a wide variety of British marques took part, including approximately 27 T-Series MGs. The latter were grouped together in a single category, with TCs sweeping all three prizes. Our congratulations to Paul Tucker, whose '47 TC took 2d place. Congratulations also to Chapter members Mike and Lucy Hughes, whose '66 MGB/GT won 2d place in the MGB/C GT category, and Bob Schoeplein whose '60 MGA took 2d place in the Race Cars category.

Show, Shine, Shag & Dine

This event, held recently at Henderson, NC, saw Charley Howard introduce his lovely blue TD to a Tarheel audience. Their reaction must have been ecstatic, since — even though Charley says the car hadn't been washed or cleaned — it won the Best in Show award for cars in the Antique Original '41-'57 category. Our congratulations to him and Marty.

Activities

Hagley Museum Show

Ron Chiste reports:

In April 2008, I received a phone call from the Director of the Annual Hagley Museum Car Show to be held on September 14 of this year. At the time I had never heard of the Hagley Museum, but soon learned that I was being INVITED to exhibit my 1950 YA at the show. I thought that if I were being invited, I ought to accept, and did.

After our goodbyes, I immediately did a Google search to see what I had committed to. It turned out that the Hagley Museum and Library are the original E. I. DuPont estate and gunpowder works established in 1802 on the banks of the Brandywine River outside of Wilmington, Delaware. The property contains 235 acres of the most beautiful gardens, restored buildings, museums, mansion, and scenery you can imagine. It is truly a well-kept secret and one of the hidden jewels of the area. The Hagley grounds would truly be a wonderful place for an all-day relaxing visit.

Several of the old restored outbuildings are small museums in themselves housing collections of antique cars (especially the very luxurious DuPont), horse drawn carriages and sleighs, an original Conestoga wagon whose rear wheels measure almost seven feet in diameter, and more. The original mansion is restored to its original splendor and filled with period antiques. The gardens are simply gorgeous.

For about thirty years the Hagley Museum has sponsored a car show for any and all vehicles manufactured prior to 1980 and vehicles may be entered only by pre-registration. This year there were 750 vehicles on display. Each year fifty spots are set aside for a theme display. This year, and the reason for my YA being invited, the theme was European Classics. The fifty theme vehicles were on display in a separate park-like area set apart from the main show fields.



British cars were prominent. Beside my YA there were TDs, TCs, MGBs, MGBGTs, Triumphs, Austin Healeys, Morris Minors, Jaguars, Rolls-Royces, Rileys, Allards, and Wolseleys, plus Porsches, Messerschmitts, etc.



This was really a “Classic Car Show;” and with so many different examples it was almost overwhelming — one of the most all-encompassing car displays I have ever seen. Nothing is judged and no prizes are awarded. It is simply a beautiful display of motor vehicles and should be included on our members’ calendars of must-attend events next year.

Technical Department

John Wright
Technical Advisor

The MOTTO MGs

Much like it is today in vintage racing, there was a time when T-series MGs were the staple of the sports car racing scene. You might remember my last article about the 1954 race at Andrews AFB. Of the 165 cars on the entry list, 40 or so were MGs. There was an all-MG race featuring mostly sporting TDs alongside some equally-prepared TCs and a few hot MG Specials. This was the norm in early 1950s racing. The TD with its independent front suspension and rack & pinion steering became an instant hit with MG racers in spite of the biggest problem of a production sports car: its weight. There were many, many MG specials over the years. One of the most pleasing to the eye was the Italian-bodied Motto MG TD of David Ash.

That first Motto MG started life as a relatively stock TD raced by David Ash, “Mr. MG,” of east-coast importers J.S. Inskip Motors. Ash had the TD body removed, and a cigar-shaped alloy body was fabricated on Long Island. He raced the TD with this body at Watkins Glen in '51 and then at Sebring in '52. Success was his with the “cigar” Motto MG at Sebring, where the team of Ash and Jack Van Driel placed 6th overall and 2nd in class.



Photo 1

Mechanically, the spec sheet of the Motto TD listed the engine as #1 of a series of 6 “experimentals” similar to that of Ken Miles [Ed. Note: Miles was a British-born sports car racing engineer and driver who emigrated to the United States after WWII, where he pursued a highly successful racing career until his untimely death in 1966.] The engine was a 1466cc affair with 10.7:1 compression, special rods and Laystall crank and camshaft along with special pistons and valves, and 1¼” SUs, etc. Does that make you wonder what the “etc.” was? Also at some point very early on, the TD chassis was modified to accept a Mercedes Benz swing-axle rear.

To further prove that the TD running gear could be competitive against the OSCAs and the silver 550 Spydres from Porsche, Ash soon had a fully enveloping body built by Rocco Motto of Carrozzeria Motto in Turin (hence the name, Motto MG).

Eventually, 2 more Rocco Motto-bodied MG Specials were constructed with tubular chassis being built by Gilberto Columbo. All 3 competed in races at such road courses in the east as Watkins Glen, Marlboro, and the 12 hours of Sebring, where one of the Mottos was the highest placing MG in 1954. Additionally, they raced at Brynfyf Tyddyn, the Hillclimb at Giant’s Despair (both in Pennsylvania), and various other eastern locations. Yet another fine showing was at Nassau, The Bahamas in 1956.



Photo 2

These were successful MG specials, both beautiful to look at and fast to drive. After passing through many hands, the first Motto TD now resides in Japan, fully restored. Photo 1 above shows the TD chassis cigar-shaped special in the 1952 Sebring race, and Photo 2 shows one of the tubular chassis Mottos at the Glen in 1953. My special thanks to Mike Eaton for the info and pics for this article.

Oil Changes

Mike Hughes draws our attention to the following article:

“More Than an Oil Change”. by Jonathan A. Stein, reprinted courtesy of HagertyPlus, LLC, copyright 2008, at www.hagerty.com

Formula modifications could mean it's time to reexamine the oil you use in your collector car.

Most car enthusiasts can probably rattle off the automotive products that they've relied on for years. But when it comes to oil, recent composition changes driven by environmental concerns could mean your preferred brand of oil may not work so well in your collector car today. Many older vehicles use overhead valve engines with flat tappets that contact the camshaft lobe on one end and the rocker arm assembly on the other. The rocker arm assembly is relatively heavy and generally has a big valve with a heavy spring, resulting in a lot of pressure on the tappet and camshaft.

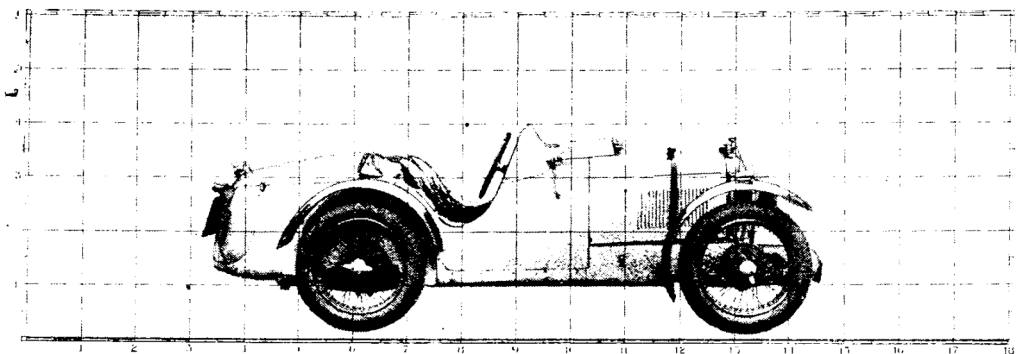
Years ago, oil companies and automakers discovered that zinc dialkyldithiophosphate (ZDDP) was effective in reducing cam and lifter wear, as the compound interacts with the iron of the cam lobe and creates a sacrificial barrier. As of 1988, the ZDDP concentration in oils certified by the American Petroleum Institute (API) standardized at up to 1200 PPM (parts per million) phosphorous. However, phosphorous levels were brought down to the 800 PPM level by 2004 because high phosphorus concentrations shorten catalytic converter life in modern cars, and modern roller cam engines don't require ZDDP's protection.

Soon, rebuilders of flat-tappet engines — particularly those from the 1950s to the 1970s — were noting increased cam failure on newly assembled engines. Many engine builders have tied the failures to the reformulated oils, although API spokesman Dennis Bachelder asserts that API-ranked oils are compatible with older vehicles and the ZDDP levels in current SM-rated oils are sufficient to protect flat-tappet engines.

(continued on page 8)

Next two pages: Continuing our series of ancestral Midget and T-Series road tests from *The Autocar*, we feature the 1931 Montlhery Mark II Midget.

"THE AUTOCAR" ROAD TESTS



The illustration above represents the size, in feet, of the Montlhéry M.G. Midget two-seater

No. 678 (^{Post-War} _{Series}).—MONTLHERY M.G. MIDGET TWO-SEATER

WHATEVER one's experience of cars may be, there is a new thrill in handling the Montlhéry Mark II M.G. Midget, especially the supercharged model. It is not a question of how extremely well this small car goes, but, by contrast, how extraordinarily good is this car among cars as a whole. Apart altogether from the personal interest, great as that is, there exists as a background the fact that this particular model has become famous in about the shortest possible time on record, and has to its credit the winning of the three classic British races in 1931—two of them without being supercharged—as well as averaging over 92 m.p.h. for 500 miles in the last big race of the year. Few cars have achieved success so rapidly.

The point of the machine is that it is produced to be a competition car, and to that end is complete with every imaginable specialised fitting, and each machine is built individually and with an amount of painstaking hand workmanship of which the price of the complete car is a reflection.

The dimensions of the two-seater body conform to the international regulations, and one glance round the machine suffices to show that nothing need be added to enable one to take the car at once into a race. The instrument board has every conceivable gauge, the brakes can be adjusted while the car is moving, the back shock absorbers also; clip fillers are used for the radiator, fuel tank, and oil tank, the rear fuel tank is really usefully big, the bonnet has not to be lifted for oil replenishment since the tank in the scuttle supplies the engine as required, the wire mesh screen folds flat, there is a stone guard for the radiator, the wire wheels are of racing type, and the hand brake has a racing pawl mechanism.

It is extraordinarily interesting, first of all to test the car on Brooklands

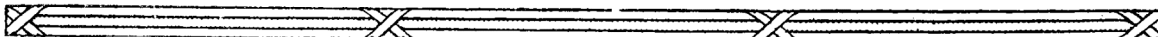
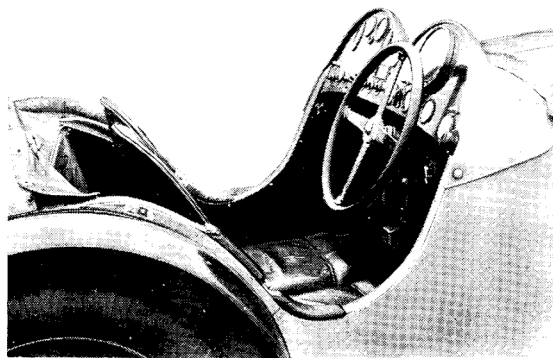
track for maximum speed and other data, and then to take it on the road for a long run. This impresses one forcibly with the fact that so many of the features at present regarded as racing practice are actually the best and most efficient for everyday work. For instance, nothing could be better than the big fuel tank, with its touring range of over 350 miles, the quick-acting filler caps, and the method of brake and shock absorber adjustment.

In spite of the fact that this is a proper competition car, there is nothing which makes the machine unsuitable for touring. The car, in fact, constitutes a concrete instance of the value of the developments that are encouraged by modern racing. The exhaust note means that one has to be careful in going through towns, but no trouble need be experienced with the authorities. One would not expect the slow running on top or even third gear to be good; but, in fact, no one interested in a car of this nature would want to make it run slowly on the higher ratios.

With touring plugs in the engine, all the speed that can be ordinarily used on the road is obtainable, and there was no suggestion of any plug oiling up, racing plugs being used only for the fast work on the track. As to the timed speed figure for the half-mile, it is obviously outside everyday requirements, yet is by no means a

limit for the car as a type. It may be mentioned that the actual machine tested was one that ran unsupercharged in the Double-Twelve, and was a practice car for the Tourist Trophy, being an early example, used a good deal by all sorts of people. Something close on 90 m.p.h. is an amazing speed for a 750 c.c. car that is also a practical vehicle on the road; and for all its power the engine is remarkably smooth.

Apart altogether from the maximum, the car has



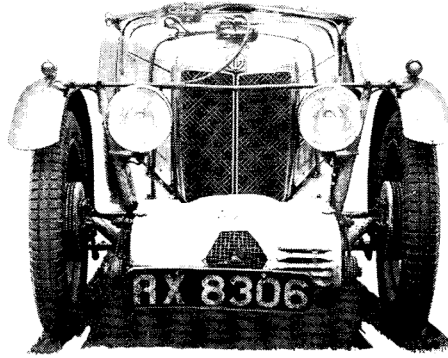
“THE AUTOCAR” ROAD TESTS

fascination beyond the measure of cold words, for it handles beautifully, is as steady as the proverbial rock, is comfortably sprung as well, possesses a gear change that is a delight in consistency, meaning that the same treatment produces similar results each time, has brakes which recorded the shortest stopping distance during the past twelve months, steers literally to an inch, almost irrespective of road surface, and has terrific acceleration.

Acceleration figures have not been taken for top and third gears for the reason already indicated, and that on second from 10 m.p.h. gives but the slightest impression of the capabilities. It is over the middle range of speed, say from 20 to 50, or 30 to 60, that the car literally shoots away, of course using the indirects, and in the circumstances something rather unusual may be introduced as conveying an idea of what the car can do. From a standing start, going through the gears, it is possible to reach 60 m.p.h. in 20 $\frac{1}{5}$ sec.

A normal limit for the engine is 5,500 r.p.m., and at that the equivalent road speeds on the indirects are 20 on first, 40 on second, and 60 m.p.h. on third. Far higher revs are possible, and during the test the engine held 5,750 r.p.m. on top gear, going actually to 6,200 when entering the timed section.

The car is compact, meaning that it can be slipped in and out of traffic with the greatest of ease, but the impression gained from the solid, steady feel is of a machine far bigger than the actual dimensions. The performance is a combination of opposing qualities. With the car once under way at a steady pace it is possible to climb most main-road hills on top gear, even accelerating up them, so considerable is the power developed; but the real joy of the machine lies in employing the indirects to the proper extent, and on a long run one finds one is maintaining in this way a steady speed, whether the road happens to be level, downhill, or ascending, all of which helps in giving a good average.



Of mechanical noise there is remarkably little, and except at quite low speeds the blower can scarcely be heard at all, while the exhaust possesses a remarkably satisfactory crackle to delight the ear of the enthusiast. Perhaps the most striking thing of all is that the car feels safe, so absolutely steady is it under all conditions, taking corners with very little diminution in speed, answering at once to the wheel, and never deflecting from the straight—even when the brakes are applied hard. As another aspect of this machine—one able to win races, as has been amply

demonstrated, and a practical touring car as well—there is the further point that it is perfectly capable of shining in a reliability trial, since first gear is low and there is sufficient power to take the car up the fiercest gradients. Further, the engine runs very cool.

The equipment has already been mentioned—in fact, it is this which appeals, next to the performance. The instrument panel is entirely free from unnecessary

decoration, and carries a most imposing array of dials and push-and-pull switches. Both ignition and fuel supply systems are duplicated. In view of the way in which the car can be used, it should be worth providing a speedometer and lighting for the instruments.

The bucket type seats give support exactly as they should, that for the driver being adjustable; accessibly behind the passenger's seat is the battery; behind the driver's seat is space for oddments and small baggage, whilst in the tail, where the spare wheel is carried, there is additional space. There is a hood of the type fitted to the larger-engined Midgets, which, with its supports, is also stored in the tail.

Starting from cold is easy when the carburetter has been flooded; the fuel used is an 80-20 per cent. mixture of benzole and petrol. Unsupercharged, the machine costs £490.

Using a much misused word, the Monthéry Mark II M.G. Midget is unique—and is a development that is essentially British.

SUPERCHARGED MARK II MONTHÉRY M.G. MIDGET TWO-SEATER

DATA FOR THE DRIVER

8 h.p., four cylinders, 57 x 73 mm. (746 c.c.).
 Tax £8.
 Wheelbase 6ft. 9in., track 3ft. 6in.
 Overall length 11ft. 6in., width 4ft. 4in., height 4ft. 1in. (with windscreen raised).
 Tyres: 27 x 4in. on detachable racing wire wheels.
 Engine—rear axle Acceleration from Timed speed
 gear ratios. steady 10 to 30 m.p.h. over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.
 21.5 to 1 — —
 10.75 to 1 5 sec. —
 7.3 to 1 — —
 5.37 to 1 — — 87.80 m.p.h.
 Turning circle: 36ft.
 Tank capacity 17 gallons; fuel consumption 27 m.p.g.
 6-volt lighting set cuts in at 25 m.p.h., 4 amps. at 30 m.p.h.
 Weight: 13 cwt.
 Price, with sports two-seater body, £575.

(continued from page 5)

If you're in doubt about using the current generation 800 PPM SM-rated oils, try these options:

- Oils rated for both diesel and gasoline engines (up to 1000 PPM) are available from Shell (shell.us/views/consumers.html) and Chevron (chevron.com/products/extramile/).
- Valvoline's VR1 Racing Motor Oil (www.valvoline.com/racing) has up to 1300 PPM of ZDDP.
- Castrol's SYNTEC 20W/50 full synthetic product (Castrol.com) has 1200 PPM of ZDDP (check that the rear label says Recommended for Classic Cars), and Red Line Motor Oils (redlineoil.com — also synthetic — have about 1300 PPM zinc and 1200 PPM phosphorous, although synthetics aren't suited for the break-in period.
- BRAD PENN Penn Grade 1 Racing Oil (bradpennracing.com) is a mineral-oil alternative with nearly 1500 PPM of ZDDP.
- Classic Car Motor Oil (classiccarmotoroil.com) from the Indiana Region of the Classic Car Club of America manufactured and bottled by D-A Lubricant Company, Inc. (dalube@dalube.com) contains 1500-1600 PPM.
- Use a ZDDP additive such as ZDDPLUS (zddplus.com) or Cam-Shield (camshield.com) with every oil change.
- Additional protection, essential during the start-up phase for any fresh engine, can be provided by generous use of an assembly lube with a large dose of ZDDP like GM E.O.S. Assembly Lube (PN 1052367) (newgmpartsusa.com).

With these options, there's no need to worry about your camshaft. But it's always a good idea to line up supplies along your route before you take to the road."

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