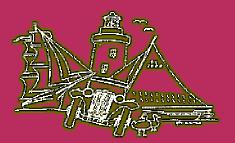
THE SQUARE RIGGER



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CHESAPEAKE CHAPTER OF THE NEW ENGLAND MG-T REGISTER

www.chesapeakechaptermgtclub.co

SUMMER 2010



Chairman's Comments

Since the February issue of The Square Rigger, the Chesapeake Chapter had two events which were attended by a good number of members.

First, there was the two-day technical seminar in early April which was attended by close to 20 members. It featured John Twist of University Motors, who went over every aspect of caring for our beloved MG's, from shop safety to the intricacies of the electrical system. I was happy to host the affair in my garage which was able to accommodate everyone, including a couple of spouses. Many of the attendees commented that they feel more comfortable attempting to make certain repairs now that some of the mystery has dissipated.



The second event, the annual mini-GOF, was hosted by John and Barbara VanOver in Mathews, Virginia. There was plenty of entertainment with a rallye, a crab feast, boat rides, a car show, a tour of a local car museum and an awards banquet, among other activities. Obviously, with all this happening there was plenty of socializing and good old fashioned fun. My congratulations and thanks to John and Barbara for a job well done.

There are pictures in TSR of both these events.

Coming up in a couple of weeks for the 33rd year is The Original British Car Day, which we all know is held at Lilypons Water Gardens at Adamstown, Maryland. We also know that this is the premier event sponsored by the Club and that volunteers are necessary for its success. Don't hesitate to contact John Tokar if you can lend a hand with some of your talents. The featured marque this year will be the Range Rover.

Planned for the fall is a Shenandoah Tour. Milton Babirak is heading this up and is currently finalizing the route and dates. If you would like to participate, please let Milt know. Milt is also continuously updating the membership directory, so if you see an incorrect entry please let him know.

We've had a good time in the first half of 2010 and look forward to the second half for more fun. If anyone has any thoughts on additional activities, please be sure to let me know.

Safety Fast!

Shaun English

Membership News

Milton Babirak Membership Chairman

We Welcome:

Michael and Lisa Eaton 2118 Carrhill Road Vienna, VA 22181 Tel. (540) 242-1768 dohc59@hotmail.com 1954 MGTF (2) David Kurke 9695 Carrhill Road Fairfax, VA 22031 Tel. (703) 352-2341 david@kurke.net 1952 MGTD Jerry and Babara Vitarelli 7124 Swift Run Trails Drive Fairfax Station, VA 22039 Tel. (703) 978-7940 vitarell@cox.net

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Editor's Corner 05/30/10

Origins and Purpose

The Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG-T Register was organized during the summer of 1971 by Register members in the Baltimore-Washington area where local interest in classic MGs was high. Its purpose was and still is to encourage the maintenance, preservation and enjoyment of T-Series and other vintage MGs. We welcome new members who share our interest in these unique cars. Membership in our parent organization, the New England MG-T Register, Ltd., and payment of modest annual dues are the only requirements. Membership application forms can be found on our Chapter's website: www.chesapeake.chaptermgtclub.com

This Newsletter is circulated electronically on a quarterly basis to Members who possess email capability, and by regular mail to Members who do not. The electronic version contains color photos, whereas the regular-mail version is in black & white. In any event, the full color version is always available for subsequent viewing on and downloading from our website.

We are always on the lookout for stories, technical submissions, anecdotes, jokes, cartoons, photographs and other contributions of interest to MG fans. In addition, we seek to encourage fullest possible participation by Members in Chapter events, mention of which can be found in further pages of this Newsletter.

Circulation Reminder

Please remember that in order for electronic circulation of this Newsletter to operate effectively, **IT IS IMPORTANT** that you notify us of any address changes, especially those pertaining to email. Many of you are taking this advice to heart, for which we thank you.

Early MG Road Tests

Since August 2008 this Newsletter has featured a string of seven early MG road tests that first appeared in the UK many decades ago. They began with the 1929 MG "Midget" Two-Seater and gradually over time worked up to the 1939 MGTB. Unfortunately, space considerations force us to leave the next iteration out of this current issue. But never fear! Our Fall issue, due for circulation in early September, will make up for the hiatus by carrying not one, but **TWO** road tests. And not of just any MGs, dear readers. They both will focus on the TC, "the sportscar America loved first," and probably the first MG that some of us ever laid eyes on. We are happy to count at least 18 of them in the hands of Chapter Members at this writing.

By way of celebrating the event, we invite you to send us your favorite stories and reminisences about TCs you own, have owned or wish you had owned. Open your memories and hearts and let nostalgia run riot! Isn't that, after all, an important part of what loving MGs is all about?

Upcoming Chapter Events

The 33rd Original British Car Day

THE 33rd ORIGINAL BRITISH CAR DAY IS UPON US! WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD ON SUNDAY, JUNE 6, TO GLORIOUS WEATHER AND A RECORD TURNOUT AT LILYPONS WATER GARDENS NEAR ADAMSTOWN, MD.

Last year's OBCDay drew upwards of 300 cars and motorcycles. Prizes this year will be awarded in up to 50 separate categories.

We encourage everyone to bring their families, leashed pets and picnic lunches. We're sure they will enjoy viewing the many marques on display, not to mention the beauty of the gardens in full bloom. Vendors will offer quality food and drinks at reasonable prices. \Box

Shenandoah Fall Excursion

Chapter officers are working to organize a weekend automotive excursion this Fall during Mother Nature's autumnal change of colors among the hills and mountains that surround the scenic Shenandoah Valley. Plans call for the trip to take place over the weekend of October 8-10, with rain dates set for the weekend of October 29-31. Routes, lodgings, eateries, entertainment and other considerations are currently under discussion. In order to enhance prospects for reserving adequate hotel space in timely fashion, a Chapter member may contact you shortly to ascertain whether you would be interested in participating in this event. Later on, once hotel and related arrangements have been clarified, we will supply registration forms via email to those who indicated a possible interest. In the meantime, please mark the above dates on your calendar if there is any possibility you could be interested. No firm commitments are required for the moment, but we hope as many of us as possible will eventually want to take part.

NEMGTR GOF 88

Our parent organization, the New England MG "T" Register, will hold this regional event at Mystic, CT from Wednesday to Sunday, September 22- 26. For details, visit: www.nemgtr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=159

Recent Chapter Events

EatOut 2010 John Twist Seminar MiniGOF 2010

For reports and photos on these three events, please see pages 5 through 9.

Upcoming Events Sponsored by Others (For details, click on the blue links)

Annual British Motorcar Gathering

Hosted by the Keystone Regional MG Club and the Lanco MG Club at Hellertown, PA on Sunday, June 13.

www.keystonemg.com

British Invade Gettysburg

Sponsored by the Lancaster County (PA) MG Club, this show will take place at Gettysburg on Sunday, July 11.

www.lancomgclub.com

Taste of Britain British Car Show

Also supported by the Lancaster County (PA) MG Club, this show will again take place at Rothsville, PA, on Sunday, August 22. www.lancomgclub.com

Virginia Scottish Games

Held at the Great Meadow, The Plains, VA, on the weekend

of September 4-5, this festival includes an antique and British car show.

www.vascottishgames.org/VSG2010Cars.html

Classics on the James Green

This show, sponsored by the Central Virginia British Car Club, is scheduled for the weekend of September 18-19 at the New Kent Winery, New Kent City, VA.

www.cvbcc.com/classics/classics2010.htm

Hagley Museum Car Show

On Sunday, September 19, an impressive display, selected by invitation only, of more than 600 antique and restored cars dating from the early 1900s to the 1980s. Venue: the Museum grounds near Wilmington, DE.

www.hagley.lib.de.us/events.html

MGs on The Rocks

Mounted by MGs of Baltimore at its usual venue, The Rocks State Park near Jarrettsville, MD, on Saturday, September 25. www.mgsofbaltimore.com

Fall Carlisle Collector Car Exhibition and Swap Meet

To be held at Carlisle, PA, for five days, beginning on Wednesday, September 29.

ww.carlisleevents.com/ce/events/fall-carlisle

AACA Eastern Nationals

The Eastern Fall Meet, a regional show mounted annually by the Antique Automobile Club of America, Hershey, PA, for four days starting on Wednesday, October 6.

www.aaca.org/Calendar

Hunt Country Classic

Willoughby Farm near Middleburg, VA, remains the traditional venue for this show, put on by the MG Car Club (DC Centre) on Sunday, October 10. www.mgcarclubdc.com.

Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show

Will take place Saturday, October 16 at the Rockville, MD Civic Center Park.

www.rockvillemd.gov/events/carshow.htm

Brits by the Bay

This show, sponsored by Triumphs Around the Chesapeake (TRAC), will take place at a new location, Carroll County Farm Museum, Westminster, MD on Saturday, October 9. www.tracltd.org



EatOut 2010

Blizzard 2010 forced cancellation of our traditional winter get-together at Gabriel's Inn at Ijamsville, MD. Since we were to have been the Inn's final customers before it went out of business, we had to scramble to reschedule the event at some other venue. So on Sunday, March 21, twenty-three of us turned out at the Old Angler's Inn at Potomac, MD. A decent turn-out, an excellent menu, a warm atmosphere, and good camaraderie made the affair a success. Here's a selection of photos snapped during the proceedings. \square

















John Twist Seminar



Seventeen of us gathered in Shaun English's well-equipped garage at his home near Alexandria, VA on the weekend of April 10-11 to meet and hear John Twist, owner of University Motors Ltd. at Ada, Michigan, conduct a technical seminar on the care, maintenance, repair, and restoration of T-Series cars. We didn't leave disappointed, after John devoted a combined total of almost 14 hours over two days to presentations, exhortations, and demonstrations filled with technical advice, hand-drawn diagrams, illustrative stories, hand-outs, Q&As, quips and reminiscences covering virtually all aspects of our cars — some of it pertinent for those of us who also own an MGA, MGB, or perhaps some other classic MG.



He covered in depth and in detail a comprehensive array of topics starting with workshop safety issues and moving on to a refresher on the history and durability of the XPAG/XPEG engine. He also reviewed tune-up procedures, explored the mysteries of compression, valve adjustment (camshaft and timing technique), examined ignition particulars, and diagrammed and discussed at length the workings of electrical components (generator, distributor, control box/voltage regulator, condenser, coil, spark plugs, battery, starter, wiring, etc.). He also spent considerable hands-on time with SU carburetor design and operation, and eventually concluded with overviews on the operation/maintenance of the clutch, transmission, steering mechanism, drive shaft, and differential.

A lot of what we heard from John came in the form of advice on a host of topics and issues — including "how to's," "what not to do's," and "what if's" raised either by us or in most cases anticipated by John himself.



Here, in no particular order and by no means comprehensive, are examples of what he spoke to us about:

The need to pay attention to the safety aspects of jacking and towing — the blessings of white-painted walls, bright lights, blasting cabinets, and compressed air systems in the workshop — dealing with workshop emissions — what to do if gasoline can be smelled in your engine's oil — never tune an engine when it's cold — how to check an engine's compression — what to look for when examining a camshaft — testing to see if a battery is discharging properly — automatic battery chargers are wonderful! — adjusting valves need not be completed in one fell swoop, but engine temperatures must be consistent throughout the process—it's useless to re-solder SU carburetor floats, since they won't work — a distributor rotor is a \$2 part, but if it fails you're off the road — platinum spark plugs are not necessary as for the electrical system as a whole, "how it all works is very complicated" — how to achieve proper tension when tightening the fan belt — what to look for when inspecting an air cleaner - how and under what conditions should a spark plug be "read"? — you can replace the condenser with electronic ignition, but they are expensive and can fail too, so you'd better buy



Some more examples: Dirty engines lead to electrical problems — proper timing is critical to good horsepower — condensers and coils almost never go bad — always soak new gaskets for carburetor float bowls in warm water before installing them — accurate centering of carburetor jets is extremely important — fuel pump points can be cleaned with sandpaper — don't worry

about grease; grease is your friend — the single most beneficial improvement for your T- Series MG is an anti-sway bar — how to synchronize the descent of carburetor pistons — inner wheel bearings on the rear hubs never run out of grease; outer bearings can and do — installing an aftermarket 5-speed transmission is "heresy," but it beats messing with the differential — if you do mess with your differential, you'll need to recalibrate your speedometer — NEVER install an English Ford Sierra transmission in your MG, since they rattle like the devil; a Japanese gearbox would be better — if the gearshift lever moves backward when you press on the clutch pedal, your motor mounts are shot.



"Don't forget," John was wont to say cheerily, "everything is repairable!" He even had a cheery sort of motto to leave with us: the "Three Cs," which stand for watchwords that have characterized his attachment to MGs over many years: "Cleanliness, Consistency, Confidence."



It goes almost without saying that two days listening to John Twist hold forth on T-Series MGs constituted an interesting and worthwhile experience for all members present, regardless of

whether they qualified as technical experts, semi-skilled tinkerers, or simple duffers like the rest of us. \Box

MiniGOF 2010



Barbara Van Over calls the peninsula which forms Mathews County, VA "the Pearl of the Chesapeake." One should take care not to contradict her, judging by the happy reactions of some two dozen Members who enjoyed a memorable MiniGOF weekend hosted by Barbara and husband John at their home overlooking the Piankatank River on the weekend of May 1-2. There were, as always at such gatherings, a rallye, a car show, time for tire-kicking, and a Saturday night dinner dance and awards ceremony (at the local yacht club). There was, in addition, time for relaxing and laid-back socializing around the Van Overs' comfortable veranda and swimming pool, plus a number of special events: a boat tour to two historic lighthouses on the Bay, a visit to a local antique car museum-(mostly Model T Fords)-cum-gas station-(ESSO), late-evening country music entertainment at nearby Donk's theater, and what seemed to be an endless supply of hard-shell crabs provided by the Van Overs at their poolside on Friday afternoon.



It would not surprise us to learn that some Members hung around long enough to hit the crabs again before heading home (burp) on Sunday.

Prizes at the car show were won by Paul and Louise Tucker (1st prize MGTC, plus Best Car in Show), Steve and Nancy Woodall (2nd prize MGTC, plus a Special Honor Award for their ef-

forts to provide an extended tech session), Barbara and John Van Over (1st prize MGTD), Dale and Eleanor Lindsay (2nd prize MGTD), Jim and Ginny Bradley(1st prize MGTF), Mike and Mary Lutz (2nd prize MGTF), and Hank and Stevie Giffin (Variant 1st prize 1934 MGNA). Rallye awards went to Mike and Lucy Hughes (1st prize MGTF), and Paul and Louise Tucker (2nd prize MGTC).

Our Chapter owes Barbara Van Over a huge vote of thanks for working so hard to make this MiniGOF a rip-roaring success.

Lin Snider announced at the awards dinner, to the surprise of Jim and Ginny Bradley, that they would be planning MiniGOF 2011. Jim accepted and is proposing that it be held at Alexandria, VA. If you have suggestions, please call Jim (at 703) 683-7675. \Box































Adventures in Nickel Plating: A Clinical Study of the Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

By Milton Babirak

In my last article, I said I would attempt to nickel plate the three ID plates on my 1951 TD. In this article, I report on my efforts and their results.

The plates in question are: a small patent plate, listing various patent numbers applicable to the car; a somewhat larger plate, identifying the Body Type and Number; and an even larger plate bearing the Chassis and Engine numbers. Each plate is brass. (They are listed in the Moss catalogue as Parts No. 408-740, 408-730 and 408-580, respectively. Abington Spares carries them, too.) According to various authorities, these plates were originally nickel plated. In the case of the Body Number and Chassis Number plates, the lettering stamped in them was painted black. The Patent plate has raised lettering with no paint on the raised letters, and the background was painted black. My goal was to restore the brass plates to their original condition.

Nickel plating them was not a hard job. Of course, the plates had first to be thoroughly cleaned. I purchased 100 grams of nickel acetate on eBay (about \$9.00) and I mixed it with 500 ml of malt vinegar (from a local grocery store for about \$3.00) to form an electrolyte solution. I put the solution in a glass jar. I purchased a nickel anode for \$5.50 from another online retailer offering scientific supplies to schools. [www.shopminiscience.com; MiniScience, Clifton, NJ, 973-777-3113.] Then I put the anode in the nickel acetate solution. The cathode is the ID plate, and I inserted it into the solution. I connected the anode and cathode to a power supply using alligator clips. For a power source, I used my 12-volt battery charger, which promised to work faster than a couple of D-size batteries.

It took 5 to 7 minutes to plate each piece. I put two coats of nickel on each plate. I had to redo one plate because I inadvertently let the nickel anode slip so far into the solution that the base metal alligator clip, which was attached to the top of the anode, slipped into the solution — thereby contaminating the otherwise pure nickel being transferred to the ID plate. Otherwise, this part of the restoration was easy and went quickly. Caution: The nickel acetate solution is highly toxic. [Ed.note: See http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts 15.html].

The hard part was getting the black paint into the stamped lettering. To get started, I sprayed each plate with black paint, my goal being to remove the paint except for what was to remain in the stamped lettering. There are two frequently described techniques to do this: Wipe off the excess paint with a solvent, leaving paint in the stamped lettering, or rub the excess black paint off with rubbing compound. (In the case of the patent plate, the goal was to rub the black paint off the raised lettering, leaving the black paint as the background.) I tried both of these techniques and neither worked for me. The solvent removed too much paint in the recessed lettering, and the rubbing compound would not remove the paint in what I considered a reasonable time.

So I "invented" my own techniques. I tried very fine wet sand paper (800, 1000, 1200, and 1500 grits), and this worked better

because I retained some control by using progressive grits. But it also removed the nickel plating on the edges of the two thinner plates.

I tried using a pencil eraser to remove the paint and this worked better, but it still removed paint from the recesses, and the eraser was hard to control for accuracy. I tried plastic utensils and all sorts of other tools. I spent hours trying to figure out an effective technique.

However, just like Edison and the Curies (but without the scientific significance or the Nobel Prize), I finally figured out how to do it after many trials and errors. My right thumbnail and copious amounts of tap water worked best. No other toxic chemicals, no expensive equipment, no advanced chemistry. Just hold a painted ID plate under a running tap and scrape the unwanted paint off with your thumbnail. A thumbnail does not rub off the nickel; it does not even scratch the nickel; you can thumbnail-scrape small areas or large areas; you can accurately vary the pressure; and, most important, it doesn't remove the paint from the recesses. With this technique, I could remove the paint from one plate in about 30 to 45 minutes.

I finished the process with a magnifying glass and a dental probe to clean off very small spots of unwanted paint. I let the paint on each plate dry for a couple of days and then applied a clear-coat to protect them against dulling from oxidation. I also clear-coated the ten small brass bolts and distinctive square nuts used to secure the plates to the firewall. (Don't get too much clear coat in the slots of the bolts, and don't get any clear coat on the threads of the bolts or nuts.) I let everything dry for a week before I installed the three plates on my car.



(Photo by Kyle Babirak)

This process involves a lot of work, and it's not something everyone will want to take the time to do. However, it's a project you can do yourself, and the result is closer to the original finish than a brass plate. Should a couple of Chapter members express an interest, we can get together for a tech session in my garage on some Saturday morning.

Advertisements

Note: Chapter Members are encouraged to submit classified ads free of charge to the Editor via email or snail mail at one of his addresses shown on page 2. Photographs are accepted. Also, **please remember** to let us know the result(s) of your ad and/or whether you want it to appear again in the next issue of the Newsletter.

FOR SALE: TD/TF Parts

TD engine #12362 — complete starters — generator — brake shoes — front end "kingpins" with drums — exhaust pipe — sump oil pan (large capacity) — brake master cylinders — wheel brake cylinders (rebuildable) — miscellaneous other parts. All to be sold locally, nothing to be shipped.

Contact Richard Embick, Tel.: (703) 971-2196

Brand New MG to Take Centre Stage at Silver-stone



Abingdon's MG Car Club is thrilled to announce that MG Motor UK has chosen MGLive!, the marque's largest International event, to exclusively pre-launch the highly anticipated MG6 saloon car. Speculation has been rife amongst MG owners about the whereabouts of the pre-launch preview, and the MG Car Club can now confirm the MG6 will be proudly showcased at MGLive! which takes place at Silverstone on June 4th, 5th, 6th.

Huge excitement surrounds the MG6 — the first new MG since 2001. With thousands of enthusiasts expected to descend on Silverstone in June, the award-winning MGLive! event will provide a perfect portal for an official preview. MG Motor UK will have a high-profile, three-day presence at the event in a prominent central location.

MGLive! has been staged consecutively at the iconic Northamptonshire circuit since 1950 — and is set to celebrate 60 glorious years in 2010. The MG Car Club, which has raced on Silverstone's International circuit since the early nineties, will now make the exciting transition to the full 3.2 mile Grand Prix track.

The switch will allow MGCC competitors to experience the thrill of Stowe and Abbey — famous corners which will now roar to the sound of MGs from across nine decades.

Guy Jones, Sales and Marketing Director for MG Motor UK said:

"We strongly believe that the loyal fans of the MG brand should have the first opportunity to see the new MG6 and what better opportunity than at the world famous Silverstone race circuit at the MG Live! event in June. This is already a great event and a testimony to the strength of the MG brand, so it is fitting that we take the all new MG6 there as part of the celebrations surrounding the MG brand. The MG6 will be the centre piece of the MG Motor stand at the heart of the action for the weekend at Silverstone."

MG Car Club Chairman John Day said:

"We are ecstatic that MG Motor UK have chosen *MGLive!* to officially preview the MG6. I know our members will be excited by this announcement and the presence of the manufacturer at *MGLive!* continues the exceptional relationship between the MG Car Club and MG Motor UK."

[Ed. Notes: This advertisement courtesy of Milton Babirak.

The MG6 is a 5-door hatchback built by Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation, derived from the Roewe 550 [?] and hence distantly related to the Rover 75, sharing its front subframe. It was announced in April 2009 at the Shanghai Auto Show and is expected to go on sale in the UK from the start of 2011. Like the Roewe 550, most of the development and styling of the MG6 was done at SAIC Motor's UK Technical Centre. The most popular engine option is expected to be the N-Series 1.8 engine, available in two states of tune, 133 bhp (99 kW; 135 PS) and 158 bhp (118 kW; 160 PS) (with turbo). The N-series is derived from the Rover K-Series engine. It is expected that this model will be assembled both in China, starting in 2010, and at the MG Motor UK Longbridge plant in 2011.]□







