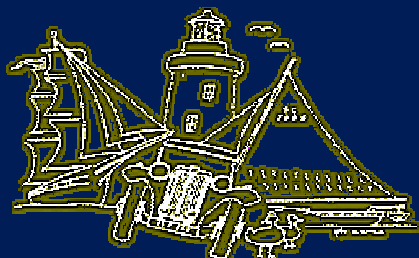


THE SQUARE RIGGER



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

www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com

FALL 2011



Paul Tucker's TC Jewel

Chapter Officers

Chairman

Shaun P. English
9318 Brambly Lane
Alexandria, VA 22309-3010
(703) 229-3317
spenglish@aol.com

Vice Chairman

John Tokar
4935 Tall Oaks Drive
Monrovia, MD 21770
(301) 865-1339
jtokar51@verizon.net

Secretary/Treasurer

Michelle Cattaneo
772 Oak Grove Circle
Severna Park, MD 21146
(410) 647-6060
mcatta6799@aol.com

Membership Chairman

Milton Babirak
47539 Coldspring Place
Sterling, VA 20165-7446
mbabirak@babirakcarr.com
(703) 406-4753

Events Chairman

Lin Snider
P.O. Box 145
Walkersville, MD 21793
(301) 845-6381
snidelf@aol.com

Regalia Chairman

Lin Snider (Acting)
[see above]

Technical Advisor

(Vacant)

Newsletter Editor

Tom Carolan
1513 Red Oak Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 587-8177
tjcarolan@comcast.net or
thomascarolan@me.com

Historian

Tom Carolan
[see above]

Chairpersons Emeriti

Len and Ruth Renken-
berger
8245 Ingleton Circle
Easton MD 21601
(410) 822-6061
renk@atlanticbb.net

Editor's Corner

09/01/2011

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, along with previous issues of this Newsletter, on our Chapter's website: www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com

Our 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.

Cover Page Photomontage

Our plan to run a photomontage of additional T-Series cars on this issue's Cover Page fizzled. We received only two photos, those of Paul Ticker's elegant red TC, for which we thank him.

MG Racing Glory

A famous chapter in MG racing history unfolds on page 8 of this issue. We hope to carry a companion story in our Winter issue. □

Membership News

Milton Babirak, Membership Chairman

We welcome:

John Debelius
60 Maryland Avenue, #301
Rockville, MD 20850.
(301) 318-3522
jdebelius@mccourt.com
1952 MGTD

John ("Jack") and Elizabeth Edsall
1101 Francis Hammond Parkway
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703) 370-0063
jm.edsall@comcast.net
1953 MGTD

Douglas and Barbara Breithaupt
12175 Brecknock Road
Oakton, VA 22124
(703) 620-1112
douglasbreithaupt@yahoo.com
1950 MGTD

Sean and Hilary O'Hollaren
4610 Rodman Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016
(202) 686-7326
seanohollaren@honeywell.com
1949 MGTC

Casey Priester and Suzie Hastie

11745 Ledura Court, 102
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 725-9538
cpriester@gmail.com

The Original British Car Day, 2011

British Car Day 2011 was a smashing success!. I was very pleased with the turnout of volunteers this year, and we are deeply indented to all who helped with the show. It's good to know that we have now put together a dedicated working group that hopefully will continue to make OB-CDay a great event for years to come. Thanks again to all for a job well done!

Don't forget, next year will be the big one: Our 35th!!!

Sincerely,
John Tokar, Chairman

Tour of Vintage Restorations Ltd. and Historic Downtown Union Bridge

We welcomed visiting MG fans from Australia at Union Bridge on August 20. Mr. and Mrs. Douglas and Louise Hastie -- he being Captain of the Touring Register of the MG Car Club of Victoria, (1,501 members!) -- spent over four hours with us viewing the facilities and inspecting the cars and large-scale model trains being worked on at Vintage Restorations, Ltd., soaking up local history at the nearby Western Maryland Railroad Station Museum, and enjoying lively conversation over a tasty lunch at The Buttersberg Inn. The Hasties, accompanied by their daughter Suzie and her husband, Casey Priester, briefed us on the very active MG scene Down Under. They are pictured below with Diana Thompson (at left).



OBCDay Financial Statement

INCOME SUMMARY

Pre-registration (119)	\$1,865.00
Drive-in Registration (115)	\$2,670.00
Vendors, Pre-registered (2)	\$60.00
Vendors, Drive-in (5)	\$175.00
Spectator Cars (402)	\$2,010.00
Stuffer Ads (2)	\$200.00
Program Ads (2)	\$1,050.00
Regalia Sales	\$220.00
Vendor Donation (0)	\$0.00
Total	\$8,070.00
Cash Box Advance	(-) \$400.00
	\$7,670.00

EXPENSE SUMMARY

Copy Services (ballots, instructns.)	\$307.61
Radio Rental	\$50.00
New Tents (2)*	\$939.98*
Trophies	\$968.65
Post Office Box Annual Fee	\$40.00
Post Card Printing/Postage	\$1,224.87
Program Printing/Graphics	\$1,359.98
Tee Shirts/Graphics Design	\$232.92
Dash Plaques	\$497.95
Porta-John Rental	\$590.00
PA System Rental	\$0.00
BCDay Planning Meeting/Lunch	\$394.00
New Computer & Software*	\$628.13*
BCD Trailer Registration	\$51.00
Total:	\$7,285.09

GROSS INCOME \$384.91

DONATIONS

LHS Band Boosters	\$500.00
Frederick Scottish Pipers & Drums	\$250.00
TOTAL DONATIONS	\$750.00

NET INCOME Total: - \$365.09*

* These items were badly needed and long over due.



Doug Hastie & His 1950 TD

[Upcoming Chapter & Chapter-Related Events](#)

[Fall Ramble 2011](#)

This popular annual event will take place on Friday, October 14 through Sunday, October 16. Registration of participants exceeds that of last year's event, which by all accounts was a great success.

Starting from Leesburg on Monday, the 14th, our group will follow scenic Virginia byways north of Route 7 up to the West Virginia and Maryland state lines, passing through the historic towns of Waterford, Taylorstown, Hillsboro and Round Hill. Lunch will be had at the Battletown Inn (c.1809) in Berryville, followed by onward travel to Strasburg. On Saturday, the 15th, the group will drive south from Strasburg along the historic and scenic eastern side of the Shenandoah Valley on old Route 11 to New Market, and then back up the Western side of the Valley on Route 42. The southern portion of Route 42 follows a low ridge from which there are beautiful panoramic views on both sides of the Valley.

On Friday and Saturday nights Ramble participants will stay at the Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott in Strasburg. This is a new hotel with many modern amenities including breakfast and a pool. Special parking arrangements have been made. A major portion of the dining room at the nearby historic Hotel Strasburg (circa 1902) has been reserved for diners on both Friday and Saturday nights. The Hotel Strasburg's dining room is highly regarded and has an elegant Victorian Age ambiance. Each night, a shuttle will shuttle our group from the Fairfield to the dinners at Hotel Strasburg and back again.

To date, fifteen cars have registered for this event and fifteen rooms have been reserved at the Fairfield. While registration for this event closed on July 31, other members wishing to participate may still contact Milton Babirak at (703) 501-7924 or mbabirak@babirakcarr.com. It may be possible to reserve more hotel space and make additional dining arrangements if, in the meantime, the hotel and dining facilities have not filled up.

[Vintage Restorations Open House](#)

A flyer containing details of this event on Saturday, October 1, has already been circulated to our members. In contrast to the August 20 Union Bridge Tour (see page 3) which was restricted to CCNEMGTR members, this Open House will be open to the public. It will feature a shop tour, running large-scale model railroad trains, and a car show involving not only British but other makes of cars as well. □

Special Alert: Free, Live International Tech Session Via Skype

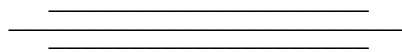
WE'LL BET YOU'VE NEVER ATTENDED A TECH SESSION QUITE LIKE THIS!

Our Chesapeake Chapter plans to host, free of charge, a live international tech session at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 10, 2011. It will feature as speakers several renowned T-Series experts from England, Arizona, Massachusetts and California. Participants will be able to view them on a high definition wide-screen monitor at **Philip Carolan's house, 20506 Middlebury Street, Ashburn, VA 20147**. The experts will give their 30- to 45-minute presentations over the Internet via a software program called "Skype." Participants will not have to fuss with anything technical. We'll need only to watch and listen. We'll also be able to ask questions, which the speakers will answer in real time. Coffee and donuts will be available at 9:30 a.m. Pizza and sandwiches will be served between noon and 1 p.m. We expect the program will end at approximately 3:00 pm.

The experts who have confirmed their participation in this event are:

1. Stephen Challis, who will be visiting the U.S. from the Cotswolds, in England, where he owns a company called Earlswood Vintage and Classics. It specializes in the production of authentic, correctly perforated tax discs for vintage and classic vehicles manufactured between 1921 and 1992. For over 15 years, Earlswood has supplied replica tax discs for some of the world's most interesting vehicles, and its products have been displayed in the UK at the National Motor Museum Beaulieu, the Heritage Motor Centre Gaydon, and Ace Cafe London. Mr. Challis will address us in person.
2. Doug Pelton will address us from Mesa, AZ. He's the owner there of "From the Frame Up", a well known restoration facility that specializes in locating hard-to-find MG parts. He has restored an award-winning TC and will discuss "Restoration Tips."
3. A representative of Nisonger Instruments in Mamaroneck, NY will discuss the maintenance and restoration of T-Series dashboard instruments.
4. Last, but by no means least, Pete Thelander from the Vintage MG Car Club of Southern California will speak to us about MG History. Pete's a renowned MG racer. He spoke on this topic at the MG International 2011 in Reno in June. You may recall reading about Pete and his 1934 NE Magnette in Bob Schoeplein's article in The Square Rigger's Summer 2011 issue.

Members desiring to attend should mark this event on their calendars and make their interest known to Milton Babirak by emailing or phoning him at mbabirak@babirakcarr.com or (703) 501-7924. □



Upcoming Events Sponsored by Others

Virginia Scottish Games

To be held at the Great Meadow, The Plains, VA, on the weekend of September 3-4. www.vascottishgames.org/

Labor Day Economy Run 2011

Welcomes all British cars, modern and vintage. Conducted by Triumphs around the Chesapeake, Ltd. at Mt. Heron High School, Ellicott City, MD on Sunday, September 4.

www.tracltd.org/EconoRun/ER-11/EconoRun11.html

British Car Club of Delaware 2011 Show: Brits by the Bay

To be held at Delaware City, DE, on Saturday, September 17.

www.bccdelaware.com/

Hagley Museum Car Show

On Sunday, September 18, 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 24.

www.mgsofbaltimore.com

Fall Carlisle Collector Car Exhibition and Swap Meet

To be held at Carlisle, PA, for 5 days, beginning on Wednesday, Sept. 28. www.carlisleevents.com/ce/events/fall-carlisle/

SVBCC Fall Festival

The 25th annual version of this event, hosted by the Shenandoah Valley British Car Club, will take place at Waynesboro, VA on Wednesday through Friday, September 30 to Sunday, October 2. www.svbcc.net

AACA Eastern Fall Meet

This regional show mounted annually by the Antique Automobile Club of America at Hershey, PA will run from Wednesday, October 5 through Saturday, October 8.

<http://www.hersheyaaca.org/>

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 9. www.mgcarclubdc.com.

Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show

Will take place from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm on Saturday, October 15 at the Glenview Mansion, Rockville, MD Civic Center Park. www.rockvillemd.gov/events/carshow.htm

The MG Car Club Washington D.C. Centre,

in connection with a series of events held around the world in celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the founding of the MG Car Club in Abingdon, England, will host a "Drive to Lunch" on Sunday morning, October 17. It will begin at Manassas, VA and after traversing scenic backroads, finish at Brock's Riverside Restaurant in historic downtown Fredericksburg. For details, contact the DC Centre's Activities Co-Director, Carl Kratzer, at (703) 319-8235. □

"Stump the Chapter" Quiz

Answer to Question No. 5

(Summer 2011 issue)

No one took a stab at identifying the type and model year of the MG Midgets pictured in the accompanying photo. Maybe we should have included a larger version of the photo. Or maybe we might have zoomed in to see that the cars are not early T-Types, J-Types, or even P-Types. Their slab-sided doors and partitioned windscreens reveal them to be M-Types from the 1929-32 era, the first iteration in the long line of MG Midgets that were produced until 1980. We reviewed the first M-Type in our August 2008 issue (pp. 11-12). For confirmation, and to view color photos of seven beautifully restored M-Types, please click on the thumbnails at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MG_M-type

Here's Quiz Question No. 6:

What connection did a fellow with the colorful name of "Goldie Gardner" have with the MG Car Company, Ltd., and what were his contributions to the reputation of the MG marque? □



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 results of your ad and/or whether you want it to appear again in the next issue of the Newsletter.

FOR SALE:



MG-TD Left Front Fender (with bulge for shock).

Professional job on body work. The dull spot in photo is a demo sanded area to show that all that is needed is a light final sanding to make this excellent fender ready for color coat. Located in Germantown, MD. \$975. Call Bob Eicher at 240-432-2676, or email RWEICHER@MSN.COM.

TO SWAP:

Would like to trade two (2) MG TD/TF brake master cylinders for one (1) new MG TC brake master cylinder. Local transaction. No mailing, please. Richard Embick 5805 Brookview Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310 Tel. (703) 971-2196 ☐

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MG-Related Websites

Members interested in the history of the MG Car Company, Ltd. may find the following web sites useful:

<http://www.britishv8.org/Articles/Abingdon-For-MG-Enthusiasts.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abingdon,_Oxfordshire

<http://www.squidoo.com/mg-cars-in-abingdon#module68334001>

Members interested in photos of classic vintage cars in general, and MGs in particular, will find these web sites rewarding:

www.conceptcarz.com

www.supercars.net ☐

And if you'd like to read about and drool over Morgan's all new version of their fabulous 3-Wheeler, the first since 1946, you can click on:

www.nytimes.com/2011/09/04/automobiles/autoreviews/2-wheels-or-4-lets-just-split-the-difference.html?ref=automobiles

It's a WOW!! ☐

1933: When MGs Astonished the Racing World

Sources for this article included, but were not limited to, Chapter 7 of Kenneth Ulyett's *The M.G. Companion* (1960), Chapter VII of John W. Thornley's *Maintaining the Breed: The Saga of MG Racing Cars* (1950), and Wikipedia.

Italicized passages have been excerpted from the Ulyett work.

Color photos on pages 9 & 13 courtesy of Conceptcarz.com

Not too many of us are left who can remember the Mille Miglia in its heyday, those grueling, sometimes lethal races over 1,000 Roman miles (c.1,600 kilometers) of open roads spanning half the length of Italy, from Brescia south to Rome and back again. They riveted the motoring world's attention on the 24 occasions they were run between 1927 and 1957 under the auspices of the Brescia Automobile Club. Entrants, numbering in the scores (even over a hundred in some years), were mostly high performance sportscars and GTs powered by engines whose displacements grouped them into six Classes (Class 1: 1,100cc; Class 2: 1,200cc; Class 3: 1,300c; Class 4: 1,400c; Class 5: 1,500cc; and Class 6: over 1,500cc). They were built by many of Europe's foremost manufacturers — e.g., Alfa Romeo, Mercedes Benz, Bentley, Lancia, BMW, Aston Martin, Bugatti, Jaguar, Maserati, Fiat, Bianchi and (after 1947) Ferrari. Additional categories were reserved for “utility cars” and “saloon cars” (sedans).

The course on which the race was run was a mixture of main roads, secondary roads and, especially in the early years, unpaved roads. They were never exactly the same roads from one year to the next. In some years the course actually formed a figure-eight, with the north and south legs crossing each other. Spectators in a particular town or city might thus get a chance to view a race twice, as the cars made their way south and returned later, headed north. (Residents of Bologna would have this opportunity in 1933 and again in 1957.)



Participants raced against the clock, starting from Brescia at regular, one-minute intervals, with the smaller-displacement cars departing first. Their route was lined mile after mile by spectators whose enthusiasm sometimes rendered the rudimentary safety precautions inadequate, resulting in horrific accidents like those that injured and took the lives of drivers and spectators alike in 1938 and 1957.



In April 1933, the pre-race buzz was all about Alfa Romeo's 8-cylinder 2,300cc Spider Zagato and its famous driver, Tazio Nuvolari (1892-1953), who will be remembered as arguably the greatest racing driver of all time. Idolized in his native Italy for his indomitable will and ferocious driving style, and having previously finished first overall in the Mille Miglia of 1930, he and his Alfa were odds-on favorites to post the fastest time and win the overall top prize once again. And since Italian cars (Maserati, Fiat, etc.) and drivers had always been dominant in the lower classifications, the racing world naturally expected Italian domination to continue in that area as well.

As things turned out, Nuvolari and his Alfa would not disappoint his fans. But when it came to the lower classifications, both fans and experts were in for a huge surprise.

Most Britons in those days did not think of themselves as “Europeans” (to put it mildly), their attitudes reflected in the old newspaper headline: “FOG IN CHANNEL. CONTINENT CUT OFF.” Nevertheless, contacts and personal relations between British and European “sportsmen” active in auto racing circles had been growing for some time. Many on both sides tended to be men of well-to-do, often aristocratic backgrounds with records of distinguished military service in the Great War. By the 1930s, many of them had formed close personal ties with counterparts across the Channel.

One such fellow was an Italian Count, automotive engineer, racer, and journalist named Giovanni (“Johnny”) Lu-

rani, whose Mille Miglia expertise had won him easy entrée into British racing circles and a close friendship with Viscount Francis R. H. P. Curzon, 5th Earl Howe. The latter was a war veteran, former Member of Parliament, founder in 1928 of the British Racing Drivers Club, and himself an accomplished racing driver (in his own Bugattis) who had competed internationally, *inter alia* in the 24 Hours of LeMans each year since 1929. It was no surprise that with Bentley having withdrawn its factory entries from racing on the Continent after 1930, Howe responded positively to Lurani's suggestion that another British marque should be found to replace them in the 1933 Mille Milglia, scheduled to take place on April



8.

Howe knew, of course, that MG Midgets for several years under the imaginative direction of Managing Director Cecil Kimber had been racking up impressive racing performances all over the U.K. While he realized those little cars with their 4-cylinder engines would be outmatched in international competition, Howe had heard that the MG



Racing Department at Abingdon had recently introduced a new series of MG Magnettes: the K-Type, of which the latest iteration, the K.3, boasted a thoroughly re-designed 1,086cc six-cylinder engine fitted with a No. 9 Powerplus eccentric-vane supercharger (mounted in front of the engine) which boosted power output to a robust 120 bhp. All this — together with the revolutionary (for racing) Wilson 4-speed preselector epicyclic self-changing gearbox, a steering mechanism based on the design used in the K-Type, and other refinements — resulted in a car that meant serious business in racing terms.



A year before, in 1932, someone had entered a supercharged MG Midget in the Mille Miglia and completed several stages of the race in impressive fashion before being sidelined by mechanical failure. It seems fair to assume that Kimber had somehow been connected with, or at least aware of, this adventure. He was known to have developed considerable interest in the Mille Miglia, and to have earlier demonstrated the first experimental Magnette to Count Lurani, who predicted a brilliant future for it.

There was one potential obstacle, however. Lord Howe knew that Sir William Morris, founder of MG's corporate parent, the Morris Motor Company, was not only opposed to factory involvement in automobile racing, but also increasingly uncomfortable with the racing enthusiasms and aggressive marketing personality of his subordinate, Cecil Kimber.



All the same, the 5th Earl Howe was a formidable, determined and highly resourceful man, not one to be put off or taken lightly. (Two of his ancestors, General William Howe and Admiral Richard Howe, had commanded British forces successfully against George Washington and our Continental Army during the American Revolution.) He was therefore not the kind of man to shrink from active efforts to realize his ambitions in regard to the Mille Miglia. In late 1932, he called in person on "Sir Willie," used every argument he could think of, and finally induced him to agree to place three K.3s at his disposal — but not until he had offered "very sportingly" to bear the entire cost of organizing and managing the project himself. In other words, Howe made the proverbial offer that Morris found impossible to refuse. After that, Kimber's Racing Department began working flat out to produce a K.3 prototype.



Lord Howe then turned his attention to assembling a world-class racing team, and he knew where to look. Lurani signed up for Car No.1, riding with Capt. George Eyston, a much decorated war veteran, engineer and inventor of the Powerplus supercharger, whose racing successes at the wheel of Bugattis in Europe in the 1920s (and later in land speed trials in America) made him a paragon among British drivers. Hugh ("Hammy") Hamilton, experienced in racing Rileys and Maseratis, would drive with Lord Howe in Car No. 2. Car No. 3 would be handled by Sir Henry "Tim" Birkin and Bernard Rubin, both former "Bentley Boys" from the disbanded Bentley factory team.

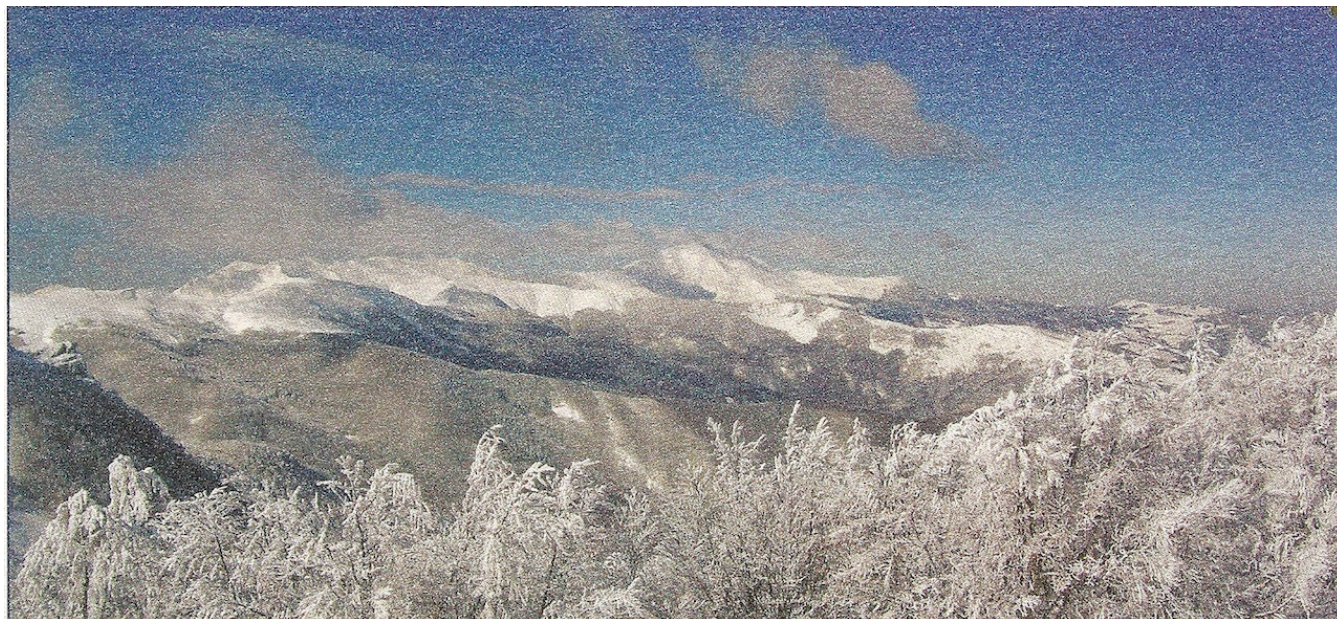
By the end of the first week in January, the K.3 prototype and its engine had been built and tested at Abingdon. It was shipped to Milan, where the six drivers and a squad of Abingdon technicians were waiting to try it out on

10

stretches of the actual Mille Miglia route. First, however, they were royally received by King Victor Emmanuel III and called on Benito Mussolini, Prime Minister since 1922. Lord Howe then took them on a pilgrimage to visit the great Ettore Bugatti, who was delighted to learn about the new K.3 Mignette. After the Great Man had pored over the car's technical details, however, they were startled to hear him state flatly that the its front-axle beam was too delicate to withstand the stresses of the Mille Miglia. Yikes! Alarms were wired immediately to Abingdon, where they generated frenetic efforts to build and install stronger axle beams in accordance with Bugatti's advice.

That was not the first of their problems, by any means. Test driving the prototype had produced others: transmission issues that required the redesign of certain gears and the gearbox oil seal; road wheels showing signs of weakness (cracking), and their hubs which needed strengthening. Thanks to effective telegraphic communications with Abingdon, it proved possible to correct these problems and ship the prototype back to England by the third week of February.

Three weeks later, work on the three racing K.3s was completed, whereupon they were shipped from England on March 12. Bad weather produced the roughest crossing of the Bay of Biscay the Italian crew could remember. Their ship lost part of her funnel, swept away by gales, but as luck would have it, the cars arrived at Genoa unharmed.



Winter in Italy had been severe. Many passes in the Appenines were still blocked by snow, with other roads ice-covered and foggy. Nevertheless, once on Italian soil, test runs were begun, and various modifications were made to remedy cooling and electrical problems. Team members made good progress in memorizing the different sections of the course, and high-speed trials were made to see how far the cars could travel on one tank of gas. (Mille Miglia rules specified that its 1,000 miles had to be done with no more than three refills). Lord Howe took himself on a fast trip to Florence, 197 miles distant, and wired back that, with only 43 miles to go to the planned MG pit stop at Siena, he had seven gallons left. This showed that with luck, four tankfuls would suffice — three of them to be obtained at pit stops at Siena, Perugia and Bologna.

Days passed, then weeks. The beefed-up axle beams arrived and were installed. Warmer weather made it possible to conduct cornering trials at high-speed on the new Italian *autostrade*. A host of other issues involving spongy brakes, erratic steering, faulty brake drums (improved ones also shipped from England) had been corrected. Oil-fouled spark plugs presented chronic problems, dealt with simply by storing quantities of fresh replacement plugs in each car.



When the team moved to Brescia, they discovered that all the furnishings at their new headquarters, the Hotel Moderno Gallo, were decorated with the hotel's initials 'M.G'. An omen of good luck! By Friday, April 7, excitement in the town had risen to fever pitch. The streets were packed with cars and people; cafés and restaurants were filled to overflowing. Bands played all night long, and the crowds of mingled nationalities talked only of the morrow's race.

As dawn broke on Race Day, April 8, the entire population of Brescia seemed to have gathered in the streets surrounding the starting area. Black-shirted Fascist officialdom stalked around the guarded paddock, joined by delegates from almost every conceivable automobile club. Unauthorized gate-crashers, male and female, infiltrated their way past the *Carabinieri* sentries. And the bands played on.

The smallest cars started off first (0700 hours). Then, amid ear-splitting booms from their exhausts, the Class 1 racing cars drew near. A ripple of excitement, then mass cheers rang through the throng, as the three MG K.3 Magnettes, accompanied by the whistling roar of their blown engines, were first to arrive at the starting point.

Very businesslike they looked, their green slab-tank bodies gleaming in the early sunshine, their drivers in spotless overalls. Newsreel cameras panned down to them. Lord Howe made a neat little speech, saying how much the team appreciated the welcome given them by the Italian people — and the burst of cheering which followed was drowned out by a discordant rendering of "Soldiers of the King" from the loudspeakers.

Well, there was no doubt the British venture was popular. It appealed to the Italian sense of the dramatic that three small English cars should cross the seas to do battle with their national heroes. Of course a scarlet car would win, but . . . well, the Italians always had won, except two years back when Caracciola's white Mercedes humbled the pride of the Alfas and OMs. It was brave and sporting of the Inglesi to start, but of course they would not finish, for their chief rivals (and, indeed, the favourites) in their class were a brace of very efficient Maseratis, thoroughbred racing cars from a famous stable, and piloted, one of them, by the redoubtable Tuffanelli, last year's 1,100cc winner.

Then came the moment for the 1,100s to be away. Starace, General Secretary of the Fascist Party, stepped forward, gave the Mussolini version of the Roman salute, and waved the flag. . . . Engines screamed to 5,000 rpm, clutches were engaged, and one by one the three little British cars roared away, turning left and left again before they hit the road to Cremona.

The Birkin/Rubin K.3 soon forged ahead of the other two, having received strict orders to set the pace in the early going. Driving superbly, Birkin averaged 88 mph over the 130 miles to Bologna, breaking all Class 1 records by 13 minutes. Later, while negotiating the hairpins turns of the Futa Pass in the Appenines, the K.3s began to take full advantage of their agility, supercharged engines and pre-selective gearboxes to increasingly outdistance their many Class 1 competitors. On certain stretches, all three cars exceeded 100 mph.

Having shown their heels to the pack, Birkin/Rubin were forced by a broken valve to slow down on the winding roads between Florence and Siena. While they managed to reach their first pit stop, they then had to retire. Nevertheless, they had accomplished the most important thing they had been instructed to do: destroy the Maserati opposition by forcing their drivers to over-rev. Now the two remaining MGs were really outstripping their Class 1 competition, their nearest rivals no longer Maseratis, but a flock of Fiats and Bianchis.

By the time they reached Rome, after 6h. 18m. over 380 miles of hard going, Eyston/Lurani had knocked 25 minutes off the existing Class 1 record. Hamilton/Howe arrived some 19 minutes behind them. The pace had been brutal, however. Dynamos and brakes showed signs of trouble. The Wilson gearboxes had to be used as brakes on the difficult descents though the hairpins. Severe vibrations on the mountain roads via Perugia to Ancona led Eyston to suspect his chassis might be cracked. Nevertheless, a brief halt to verify matters showed that all was well. As expected, spark plug failures continued to plague the cars, requiring frequent stops to replace fouled plugs. (The Eyston/Lubrani K.3 would use up a total of 157 plugs from start to finish.)

At Ancona on the Adriatic coast, 606 miles from the start, both cars were averaging nearly 56 mph. *Then, with headlamps cutting a path through the darkness, they shot through Pesaro, Forli, and on to their second passage through Bologna.*

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Now Eyston stopped to check his failing battery. *A bite of food, a drink hastily gulped down, and he and Lurani roared off once more across the Po Valley and into dark, mountainous roads, having had only 14 minutes respite. Seven minutes before they left Bologna they had the satisfaction of seeing Lord Howe and Hamilton drive up, and knew that all was well with their teammates.*

Racing along at top speed on a brand new *autostrada* toward Padua, Hamilton managed to make up some time on Eyston. Later, in the mountains around Feltre, just over 100 miles from the finish, the two MGs found themselves only a few seconds apart. Eyston, his eyes straining in the darkness, was driving as fast as his failing battery would allow. Near Bassano del Grappa, however, Hamilton/Howe had to stop in order to repair a punctured tire. The same thing happened to Eyston/Lurani as they approached Verona, only 65 miles from Brescia. To make matters even worse, they couldn't lay hands on their jack-handle in the dark.

Groups of men, many running, materialized from the shadows. They had seen the car stop and heard Lurani shouting for help. They enthusiastically lifted the car bodily off the road and held it there while Lurani changed the wheel — with Eyston still sitting in the driver's seat.

Those last 60 miles were sheer agony. Eyston drove almost mechanically, switching off his headlamps to save the battery on straight stretches of road. Lurani, cramped after the long drive, was leaning out to warn him of turns and corners ahead. In the second Magnette, Lord Howe sat impassively while Hamilton, getting even more dashing as the end of the race drew near, skidded the bends in fine style, and charged down the long road to Brescia and the final Control.

The correspondent for Motorsport Magazine (May 1933 issue) described what happened next:

“At two o'clock in the morning we stood at the finishing point, a street on the outskirts of Brescia. All around thronged a dense crowd of Italians, excitedly discussing the possible winners of the various classes. So powerful were the street lamps that it was almost like daylight, but up above the mysterious foliage of the budding chestnut trees held the darkness. Suddenly the sound of a bugle rang out (how well the Italians can stage-manage a motor race!), and simultaneously a car with blazing headlights appeared down the road from Verona. It was difficult to distinguish the make of the car in its dazzling lights, and we screwed up our eyes in an effort to overcome this disability. Then the car came so near that we could see, and a great shout went up from the crowd, such as to gladden the hearts of the few Englishmen present.”

Into the glare of the arc-lamps shot the leading the car, reeking of hot metal and castor oil.

“For the car first to arrive and winner of the 1,100cc class, at an average of 56.89 mph, was the dusty and mud-stained M.G. Magnette driven by George Eyston with Count Lurani beside him. Hardly had the two weary drivers recovered from the congratulatory embraces of pressmen and officials, and Eyston had driven off to the official park, before the second Magnette arrived, followed by a steady stream of travel-stained Alfa Romeos.”

The British had defeated the Fiats and Maseratis! And they would snatch the team prize from the Bianchis. (No team had finished intact, so the prize went to the team with “the most meritorious performance.”)

The Eyston/Lurani K.3, followed by only two-thirds of the cars that had started the race, was timed in at 18h. 01m. 04s. (average speed: 56.89 mph). The Hamilton/Howe K.3 was timed in at 18h. 02m. 34s. (average speed: 56.82mph). That would place them 20th and 21st overall, first and second in Class 1, and made them not only “first home” but also, and most important, winners of the prestigious Gran Premio Brescia team trophy — a Mille Miglia distinction never before awarded to a non-Italian team. Their nearest Class 1 competitors, a Bianchi Tipo 35 and a Fiat 508S Balilla Sport, finished 28th and 29th overall, well behind the times of the two British cars.

Unsurprisingly, the crowd reserved most of its cheers for overall winner Tazio Nuvolari in his blown straight-eight 2.3 liter Alfa Romeo, who finished in a sparkling time of 15h. 11m. 50s. (average speed: 67.45 mph). Trailing him across the finish line were an additional eighteen big Alfas and a single Lancia (all Classes 4 and 5).

Fifty-two cars eventually crossed the finish line out of the eighty-five that had started the previous morning. Of those starters, thirty-three cars, including the Birkin/Rubin K.3 and fifteen other Class 1 cars, never made it to the finish line. Among them was the Maserati driven by “the redoubtable Tuffanelli.”

And so ended the 1933 Mille Miglia, gloriously indeed for the Little British Cars. They had displayed their stamina, performance, and grit to the entire world in one of the fastest, most grueling road races in Europe. Their spectacular victory is remembered today as one of the finest achievements in the storied history of British motor racing.

Epilogue

Tazio Nuvolari was impressed by the K.3 performances in the Mille Miglia. Shortly afterwards, he sought and obtained (with Kimber's and Lurani's encouragement) the opportunity to drive one in the 1933 Ulster Tourist Trophy race in Northern Ireland. He won that event by a whisker ahead of "Hammy" Hamilton, finishing with only ounces of gas left in his reserve tank. Asked afterwards what he thought of the K.3's brakes, Nuvolari said he really couldn't tell, since he hadn't used them that much.

Abingdon ceased production of the K-Series Magnettes in 1934, shifting to the N-Series Magnette, the NE iteration of which would achieve great racing success in the mid-1930s. Out of a total of 234 K-Series cars, only 33 K.3 Magnettes, including the "works" racing models, were produced. (Purchase price in 1934 was £795 — c.\$46,000 in today's money.) Over the years, quite a few K.1s and K.2s have been converted into K.3 replicas, the best of which can command prices in the neighborhood of \$200,000 in today's vintage car market.



In 1935, Sir William Morris announced the withdrawal of his companies from all factory-sponsored racing: "The directors have decided," he said, "that . . . for the present time, racing for the purpose of development has served its useful purpose."

Three years later, in 1938, Sir William received a second elevation within the peerage, exchanging the title of Baron Nuffield for that of Viscount Nuffield.

And three years after that, with World War II under way, he succeeded in finding a pretext on which to sack Cecil Kimber, whose life would later end tragically in a bizarre train wreck at London's Kings Cross Station in 1945. (See pp. 5-6 of TSR's September 2009 issue.)

Lord Nuffield died in 1963, not living to witness a few decades later the virtual collapse of the British automotive industry he and other industrial magnates like him had done so much to create and — in the longer run, by virtue of their blinkered, ultra-conservative management styles — to render increasingly uncompetitive and ultimately bankrupt. □

Historical Notes

Evidence in our History Archive tells us that the first public announcement of the formation of the Chesapeake Chapter, NEMGTR, was made in a flyer dated October 31, 1971.

The first issue of our newsletter (Vol. I, No. 1) appeared in January 1972. It was followed that year by five more issues, dated March, April/May, June/July, August/September (no copy extant), and October/November. Its current name, "The Square Rigger," made its first appearance in the October/November 1972 issue.

In March 1972, our Chapter counted totaled 37 members. By the end of that year, that number had grown to 64. Today, we number around 80.

On the following page are two technical articles, among the first of what would eventually become many, contributed by our fellow member (and erstwhile Treasurer and Co-Editor), Chip Old.

Technotes by Chip Old

The Square Rigger, August/September 1972

Cylinder Heads, XPAG & XPEG Style

At our July 23 Technical Session two different people asked the question "I'm using a TD head on an TF block. Will this cause any problems?" The answer is no. TB, TC, TD, and TF 1500 heads are not all exactly the same, but they are interchangeable.

The TB-TC-TD head has combustion chambers of 45.5 cc each, giving a 7.25-1 compression ratio. The intake valves in this head are 33 mm diameter, and the exhaust valves are 31 mm. This head is usually fitted with 1¼ inch carburetors. Used on any 1250 cc block (XPAG) regardless of whether the block is from a TB, TC, TD, TD Mk. II, or TF, this head will produce standard TB-TC-TD power: 54 horsepower. If this head is used on a TF 1500 (XPEG) block, you will lose power because this head has smaller valves and carburetors than the standard TF 1500 head.

The TD Mk. II and TF 1250 head has combustion chambers of 43.75 cc each, giving an 8.1 to 1 compression ratio. Valves are larger: 36 mm intake and 34 mm exhaust. This head is fitted with 1½ inch carburetors. Used on any 1250 cc block, this will give you about 57 horsepower. Used on a 1500 cc block, you will get a compression ratio of 9 to 1, and about 75 horsepower. but you will have to polish the combustion chambers to eliminate detonation-causing hot spots.

The TF 1500 head has 45.5 cc combustion chambers, just like the TB-TC-TD head, but because of the larger bore of the 1500 cc XPEG engine you get a compression ratio of 8.3 to 1. This head uses the same large valves and carburetors as the Mk. II and TF 1250, and on a 1500 cc block it will produce 68 horsepower. Used on any 1250 cc block, this head gives you standard TB-TC-TD compression ratio (7.25 to 1), but power will be raised very slightly because of the larger valves and carburetors.

As I said earlier, these heads are all interchangeable, but as you can see from the above you may end up with either more or less power than you originally had. There is only one important thing to watch for when you are swapping heads from one engine to another. The heads used on TB, TC and TD engines up to engine number XPAG/TD2/22734 were cast with oblong water holes

(actually sort of banana-shaped). This head is often referred to as the "banana head," and it is designed to use ½ inch reach spark plugs (Champion L-series). Starting with engine number XPAG/TD2/22735 and continuing with the TF and TF 1500, the heads were cast with round water holes. This type head is often called the "round head" for obvious reasons, and it is designed to use ¾ inch reach spark plugs (Champion N-series). You must use the correct plugs for whichever head you are using, regardless of which type plug your engine originally called for. Half-inch reach plugs will work in a round head, but the engine probably won't run very well because the plug will be shrouded by the longer plug hole. Three-quarter inch reach plugs will extend out into the combustion chambers of a banana head, and once carbon builds up on the exposed threads you'll never get the plugs out. These exposed threads are also a potential hot spot which can cause pre-ignition or detonation. What's even worse, the over-long plug might interfere with the top of the piston in some cases, and I don't think I need to tell you what that will do to your engine.

Since I mentioned some engine numbers earlier, the "TD2" designation in the engine number does not mean it is a TD Mk. II engine; it simply means that the engine has a larger flywheel and an 8 inch clutch instead of the 7¼ inch clutch used in earlier engines. A lot of TD owners seem to be confused about this, judging by the application forms we have been receiving.

TD Clutch Linkage

This one's a quickie. At the tech session someone asked whether or not an early TD with a cable-operated clutch can be converted to the rod-operated clutch used on later TDs. The answer is yes, and you end up with a smoother and more trouble-free clutch. All you need is the correct rod from a late TD to replace the old cable, and you have to modify some of the brackets slightly. The best idea is to examine a rod-clutch TD to see exactly what parts and modifications are necessary. The rod is adjusted in the same manner as the old cable. Someone else at the tech session supplied the answer to this one; I don't remember who, but thanks anyway. □

Oil Change Instructions

(Submitted by Dan Howard)

Oil Change instructions for Women

1. Pull up to GM Dealership when the mileage reaches 3,000 miles since the last oil change.
2. Drink a cup of coffee.
3. 15 minutes later, scan debit card and leave, driving a properly maintained vehicle.

Money spent:

Oil Change: \$24.00
 + Coffee: Complementary
 = TOTAL: \$24.00

Oil Change instructions for Men

1. Wait until Saturday, drive to auto parts store and buy a case of oil, filter, kitty litter, hand cleaner and a scented tree; use your debit card for \$50.00.
2. Stop by Beer Store and buy a case of beer, (debit \$24), drive home.
3. Open a beer and drink it.
4. Jack truck up. Spend 30 minutes looking for jack-stands.
5. Find jack stands under kid's pedal car.
6. In frustration, open another beer and drink it.
7. Place drain pan under engine.
8. Look for 9/16 box end wrench.
9. Give up and use crescent wrench.
10. Unscrew drain plug.
11. Drop drain plug in pan of hot oil: splash hot oil on you in process. Cuss.
12. Crawl out from under truck to wipe hot oil off of face and arms. Throw kitty litter on spilled oil.
13. Have another beer while watching oil drain.
14. Spend 30 minutes looking for oil filter wrench.
15. Give up; crawl under truck and hammer a screw-driver through oil filter and twist off.
16. Crawl out from under truck with dripping oil filter splashing oil everywhere from holes. Cleverly hide old oil filter among trash in trash can to avoid environmental penalties. Drink a beer.
17. Install new oil filter making sure to apply a thin coat of oil to gasket surface.
18. Dump first quart of fresh oil into engine.

19. Remember drain plug from step 11.
20. Hurry to find drain plug in drain pan.
21. Drink beer.
22. Discover that first quart of fresh oil is now on the floor. Throw kitty litter on oil spill.
23. Get drain plug back in with only a minor spill. Drink beer.
24. Crawl under truck getting kitty litter into eyes.
25. Wipe eyes with oily rag used to clean drain plug. Slip with stupid crescent wrench tightening drain plug and bang knuckles on frame removing any excess skin between knuckles and frame.
26. Have cussing fit. Throw stupid crescent wrench.
27. Cuss for additional 5 minutes because wrench hit truck and left dent.
28. Beer.
29. Clean up hands and bandage as required to stop blood flow.
30. Beer.
31. Dump in five fresh quarts of oil.
32. Beer.
33. Lower truck from jack stands.
34. Move truck back to apply more kitty litter to fresh oil spilled during any missed steps.
35. Beer.
36. Test drive truck.
37. Get pulled over: arrested for driving under the influence.
38. Truck gets impounded.
39. Call loving wife, make bail.
40. 12 hours later, get truck from impound yard.

Money spent:

Parts: \$50.00
 +DUI: \$2,500.00
 + Impound fee: \$75.00
 + Bail: \$1,500.00
 + Beer: \$24.00
 = TOTAL: \$4,149.00

But you know the job was done right!

**SEND THIS TO WOMEN WHO NEED A LAUGH
 AND TO ANY MEN YOU THINK CAN
 HANDLE IT. ☐**



This couldn't be one of us, right?

